



Chaz Equipment exec convicted of trying to bribe public employees argues for new trial

By Susan Spencer-Wendel, The Palm Beach Post
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Lawyers for Robert H. Wight asked a judge on Wednesday either to set aside the Chaz Equipment Co. vice president's recent conviction or to grant him a new trial.

Last month, jurors convicted Wight on the lesser charge of conspiracy to commit unlawful compensation or reward for official behavior, but acquitted him of two first-degree felonies — racketeering and conspiracy to commit racketeering.

The conspiracy charge is a third-degree felony punishable by up to five years in prison. With no criminal history, the 57-year-old Wight probably would face probation rather than prison under state sentencing guidelines. Sentencing is tentatively set for July 21.

Attorney Gina Leiser argued before Circuit Judge Edward Fine that arguments prosecutors used at trial — including that other defendants who had pleaded guilty impugned Wight's presumption of innocence — should warrant a new trial, and that prosecutors had not met their burden of proof.

Fine said he would take the matter under consideration and rule later.

Prosecutors Scott Richardson and Danielle Croke argued at trial last month that Wight plied government officials with gifts to secure business, and to keep millions of taxpayer dollars flowing to the Wellington company. He was one of 13 people arrested in a corruption sting in March.