

Leslie Hannan v. Jeff Jerrell, Clerk

McCracken County Circuit Court: CASE NO. 12-CI-395

Timothy C. Clark, Special Judge

Plaintiff: Shane C. Sidebottom, *Wolnitzek , Rowekamp & DeMarcus, PSC*,
Covington and Bobby Miller, *The Miller Law Firm PLLC*

Defense: Hon. Lisa Carter, Benton

Cause of Action: Whistleblower (K.R.S. 61.102, seq. et.)/Retaliation

Facts: Leslie Hannan was a 20 plus year employee in the McCracken County Clerk’s office when she was “laid off” on January 31, 2012, for alleged “budgetary” reasons. At the time of her “lay off”, Hannan was just over one full year away from qualifying for full retirement benefits in the State pension.

Within the year before her “lay-off”, Hannan had sent two letters to multiple State Agencies disclosing what she perceived to be unethical, and possibly illegal, county clerk recording practices, including tax recording fraud. The McCracken County Judge Executive was copied on the letters.

The County Clerk, Jeff Jerrell, was made aware of Ms. Hannan’s reports at the time that she sent them. After Ms. Hannan sent her reports, her work environment became extremely hostile. A camera was installed on her work area and co-workers refused to help her. Hannan testified that co-workers told her to “go to hell”, called her “Satan” in front of customers, and on one occasion, a co-worker bumped her into a wall. Ms. Hannan testified that she went to Mr. Jerrell to intervene with her co-workers and his response was that he couldn’t do anything to his employees because everyone is entitled to their “free speech” in this Country. Ms. Hannan was soon thereafter, laid off for “budgetary reasons”.

In an interesting twist, the McCracken County Judge Executive testified in support of Ms. Hannan’s claim. The Judge Executive testified that he saw the camera that was placed on Hannan’s work area and he disagreed with Jerrell that lay-offs were needed in the Clerk’s office for budgetary reasons. The Judge Executive called Hannan a “whistleblower” in his testimony.

Hannan filed a whistleblower lawsuit on April 11, 2012. The Case was settled a month before Trial (Scheduled to begin February 11, 2014).

Settlement Amount: **\$345,000.00**