



Billy Corben Not in Contempt of Court: Judge KAREN FRANKLIN

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Filmmaker Billy Corben, who posted on social media while he served as a member of a jury, was not found in contempt of court Wednesday despite accusations by an attorney, a Miami-Dade judge ruled.

Corben, represented by David O. Markus, was accused of violating a court order after he posted on his Facebook and Twitter accounts during the armed robbery case of 24-year-old Angelo Williams.

“Despite Mr. Markus’ brilliant argument, I think you did violate my court order, but I don’t think you violated it to the extent, after thinking about it for weeks, where you should be held in contempt of court,” ruled Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Jose L. Fernandez.

Fernandez also told Corben that despite the issue at hand, he was a “model juror.”

“I remember him sitting in the front,” Fernandez said. “He was attentive, he sit up, he was listening, he would look at the lawyers as they asked questions, he would look at the witnesses as they answered.”

Markus, who showed the judge a timeline of the social media posts, argued that his client did not intentionally violate a court order because he did not tweet about the case, but only posted about menus and elevators in the courthouse.

“If he had thought that he wasn’t supposed to tweet at all, he wouldn’t have posted at all,” Markus said. “He understood that he wasn’t supposed to post about the case, and in fact he didn’t.”

When questioned about a tweet that read, “Live-tweeting jury duty. Until battery dies. Or a judge holds me in contempt. Whatever comes 1st. Joking, your honor!” Markus showed Fernandez the tweet was a joke and that it was written before the court order was issued.

Fernandez also dismissed Sara Yousuf’s motion for the retrial of Williams, who was found guilty of armed robbery, despite her claim that he was prejudiced.

“This is the kind of misconduct that involves outside communication that has the potential to affect a verdict,” Yousuf said.

Williams faces up to 30 years in prison and is scheduled to be sentenced June 29.

After court, Corben told NBC 6 he took pride in being a member of the jury, but was sorry his actions were doubted.

“What I am sorry about is that anybody would doubt for a second that based on what I did that this was somehow an unfair trial and that justice wasn’t done,” he said. “Go Heat, go Heat!” he later added.

Corben has over 5,000 Facebook friends, according to statements in court, and at last check has 8,500 followers on Twitter.

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