

## CONVICTION: Theft Under a False Pretense

Written by Jeff Wagg

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The [San Jose Mercury News](#) reports the following:

A 27-year-old woman who allegedly is from a family of fraudulent psychics has been sentenced to 60 days in jail for tricking a brokenhearted woman out of \$108,000 and a Corvette, after she promised to rid her of evil spirits.

The conviction was for "Theft Under a False Pretense," which I think is a fine charge to make against those who claim psychic abilities and ask for money to demonstrate them.

But wait! There's more to this story...

It turns out that Lisa Miller, whose conviction is mentioned above, has company in the court house. The article also mentions Lola Miller, her mother-in-law and Danielle Miller, her sister-in-law facing similar challenges.

Lisa Miller's lawyer, Scot Candell said the following:

Being a psychic is perfectly legal. The so-called victim had problems of her own. I believe the amount the victim claimed stolen was inflated. There's no evidence of what the victim lost. Yes, money was paid and a service was provided.'

Interesting comments from someone who should probably know better. We agree that being a psychic is - and should remain - legal. Our problem is... we've never seen an actual psychic, despite offering \$1,000,000 for a simple demonstration of such an ability.

That aside, Candell claims "the amount the victim claimed stolen was inflated." Mr. Candell, how much do YOU think your client stole?

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At the JREF, we're often asked why we waste our time pursuing something that is just "harmless" fun. Consider that the victim only came forward after hearing that her "psychic's" mother-in-law was arrested with a similar scam. Now consider how many more people will hear about this successful lawsuit. Wouldn't it be nice if that effect snowballed?

I have to give kudos to Lisa Fernandez for not mentioning the name of the victim here. "Psychics" love the fact that if their scam is exposed, the victim is often too embarrassed to come forward. Ms. Fernandez recognized that this victim's courage outweighed her lack of judgement in employing Lisa Miller in the first place, and protected her identity. We will do the same.

So there it is.. if you or someone you know has been taken in by a con-artist pretending to be "psychic," the courts could render judgement in your favor. Have the courage that this victim did, and come forward. And if the JREF can help in any way, we'll try to do so.