

Bird Marella Secures \$16.3 Million Judgment for Client Defrauded Through Elaborate Personal Scheme

A Bird Marella team led by name partner [Ron Nessim](#), including attorney [Kimmy Yu](#) and counsel [Cameron Partovi](#), secured an over \$16.3 million judgment on behalf of their client, plaintiff Anita DePauw. Ms. DePauw was defrauded of her entire life savings, \$5.225 million, by the defendant, Jacques Poujade, who exploited her Catholic faith and a feigned romantic relationship to carry out the scheme. Ms. DePauw was 75 years old at the start of the fraudulent scheme.

After a six-day court trial in Superior Court in Orange County, Judge Nick A. Dourbetas ruled in Ms. DePauw favor on all contested legal and factual issues related to her elder abuse and fraud claims. The damages included compensatory, past and future emotional distress, and punitive damages. As to punitive damages, the Court granted Ms. DePauw's motion in limine to preclude Poujade from offering evidence of his financial condition. Despite a prior court order permitting pre-trial financial discovery, Poujade failed to comply, leading the Court to draw an adverse inference that he possessed sufficient assets to pay the awarded punitive damages.