

## Attorney: Dentist did nothing illegal with pills

Beauchamp was on mission trip to Haiti, stopped at airport

BY CHRIS SMITH • THE LEAF-CHRONICLE • April 28, 2010

The attorney for Dr. Jeannie Beauchamp says the Clarksville dentist had only the best of intentions when she was stopped and arrested by Nashville police for carrying prescription painkillers on a mission flight to Haiti.

"Of course, the laws aren't just governed by intention," said David Raybin, a Nashville-based defense attorney.

Beauchamp, owner of Clarksville Pediatric Dentistry, was booked and released on bond April 18 after being arrested at Nashville International Airport with several bottles of prescription painkillers. She was charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver.

Fellow mission worker Dr. Tom Grabenstein said last week the pills were for a dental facility startup at a hospital in Haiti.

"There's nothing illegal about her possessing the drugs because she's a doctor," Raybin said. "I don't think this is a criminal offense."

"She has a license and can prescribe these medications. She could have prescribed this stuff," he said.

But Beauchamp did not have official documents allowing her to take the medicine to Haiti. Federal law has prohibited taking narcotics out of the country without permission since the 1970s.

But Raybin said he has "absolutely no problem" with the way airport security and Metro Police handled the situation.

Airport security first stopped Beauchamp, he said, to inspect a bottle of dental equipment cleaning solution. During the inspection, the security workers noticed the bottles of pills and called in police.

"There was a question in their mind about it," so they arrested her, but they treated her with dignity, Raybin said, and she didn't spend any time behind bars, posting bail immediately after booking.

"She had every intention of complying with the laws, and this was to help people. This is somebody doing the right thing to try to help folks," Raybin said.

Beauchamp posted a \$2,000 bail and continued to Haiti the next day. She spent most of the next week setting up dental equipment and serving patients at a hospital in the earthquake-ravaged country. She is now back in Clarksville, and on Raybin's advice she has directed all requests for comment to him.

Beauchamp has been to Haiti many times to volunteer through Immaculate Conception Catholic Church's regular medical mission trips. She is no stranger to charitable works and has for decades been involved in fundraising and other efforts for local projects.

The next step in the process is an arraignment on May 10 in General Sessions court in Nashville. If convicted, she faces three to six years in jail.

Raybin believes Beauchamp will be vindicated. In addition to her history of charitable service, she has no criminal record.

"Dr. Beauchamp has been to Haiti multiple times at her own expenses," Raybin said.

On a previous trip, the clinic ran out of pain medication and that's why she was taking the pills in April.

"When the drugs ran out, they were pulling teeth without anesthesia," Raybin said. "No one wants to see that happen."

Gannett Tennessee contributed to this report.