

Dressed for Defeat? Jury Quadruples Verdict After Noticing Defendants' Shoes

A pair of Atlanta litigators reveal the prevailing trial strategy—and how the witness' outfit affected the outcome.

May 19, 2026 at 09:39 AM By  **Cedra Mayfield**



Jon David Huffman (left) and Shelby McKenzie with Poole Huffman. Courtesy photos

What You Need to Know

- Gwinnett County Superior Court jury quadruples verdict award in business debt dispute.
- Jury noted defendant's designer attire in post-trial debrief with prevailing Poole Huffman plaintiff counsel.
- Defendants represented by Pratt and Wall Attorneys at Law in Suwanee.



A pair of Atlanta litigators convinced a Gwinnett County Superior Court jury to more than quadruple the payout of a debt owed to their plaintiff client.

And they're saying the defendant's expensive designer shoes helped seal the victory by causing jurors to lean in their client's favor.

In addition to revealing their prevailing trial strategy, Poole Huffman attorneys Jon David Huffman and Shelby McKenzie are exposing the unexpected impact witness attire might have had on the dispute.

"Definitely be mindful of what you wear," Huffman told Law.com.

Assets Transferred

Huffman and McKenzie represented plaintiff Kia Amusement Games LLC in pursuing a debt of more than \$65,000, owed in connection to a coin-operated amusement machine lease arbitration award.



"The arbitrator found that the

Jon David W. Huffman, managing partner of Poole Huffman in Tucker, Georgia. Courtesy photo

defendant had already moved his business operations from one shell LLC to another to avoid his obligations. When we learned in a post-judgment deposition that the defendant had done it again to avoid our client's judgment, we filed a case for fraudulent transfer and breach of creditor fiduciary duty," Huffman told Law.com. "We also learned that the defendant had been transferring assets to his wife during the case to try and hide them from any collections efforts against him."

In an amended complaint filed in Gwinnett County Superior Court in August 2025, plaintiff counsel alleged defendants Shaistah Enterprise 3 LLC, Shiv Krupa 3341 Inc., Ruchit Patel, Dhru Patel, Sabiha Vanjara and Yusufali Lorgat fraudulently transferred business assets to avoid paying the \$65,801.86 arbitration award the Fulton County Superior Court confirmed in 2022.

Per the complaint, Lorgat stopped operating a convenience store in Augusta under Shaistah in May 2023. Lorgat then allegedly transferred the store's operations to Shiv Krupa 3341 Inc.—a newly created company allegedly managed by Dhru Patel and owned by Ruchit Patel.

Plaintiff counsel contended the defendants intentionally restructured the business operation to allegedly "hinder or delay Kia's efforts to collect on its judgment, constituting a fraudulent transfer under Georgia's Uniform Voidable Transactions Act," according to the complaint.

"Kia is seeking recovery of the unpaid judgment, punitive damages, attorney's fees, and damages for alleged breach of fiduciary duty. The company claims the defendants acted with fraud, malice and conscious indifference to its rights," the complaint read.

READ: [Complaint](#)



Kevin J.
Pratt of
Pratt
and Wall

Kevin J. Pratt, managing partner of Pratt and Wall, Attorneys at Law in Suwanee. Courtesy photo

Attorneys at Law in Suwanee represented the defendants against the allegations. Pratt did not respond to a Law.com request for comment about the litigation, but contended in a consolidated pre-trial order that his clients had done nothing wrong.

In addition to arguing that Shaistah and Lorgat had been legally separate entities, defense counsel deemed the transfer of store operations a legitimate financial decision based on performance.

"Shaistah did not own the property but was leasing the property from another. The store operated by Shaistah was not doing great and the LLC decided to sub-lease the business property to another party for operation," defense counsel briefed. "The company would then generate some

revenue without the risk and substantial labor involved in the actual operation of the store. The lessee has since abandoned and returned the store to Shaistah to which Shaistah has surrendered and released the property to the owner."

READ: [Consolidated Pre-Trial Order](#)

With the parties remaining at odds over the fraudulent transfer claims, plaintiff counsel told Law.com efforts to resolve the matter failed.

Defense counsel offered \$15,000, but with the outstanding \$65,000 judgment still unpaid, Huffman said plaintiff counsel rejected the pre-trial resolution attempt.

The dispute advanced to a jury trial before Gwinnett County Superior Court Judge Laura Tate on May 4.

Plaintiff Trial Strategy

During trial, plaintiff counsel focused on presenting the plaintiff's business dispute in a relatable manner for the jury.

To help explain complex legal concepts including insolvency, creditor fiduciary duty and voidable transfer law, Huffman created a flow chart that helped illustrate the asset transfers.

Rather than explain away confusing elements when the defendant's trial and deposition testimony began to differ, plaintiff counsel leveraged the perplexity to discredit Ruchit Patel.

McKenzie said she believes the jury became skeptical after the defendant claimed to be divorcing his wife while continuing to live with her, share bank accounts and refer to her as "his wife" throughout trial.

Throughout the bifurcated trial, plaintiff counsel deployed strategic lines of questioning to aid the jury in recognizing inconsistencies for themselves.

Instead of waiving closing arguments during the initial liability phase of the trial, Huffman capitalized on the opportunity to again explain fraudulent transfer and breach of creditor fiduciary duty to the jury.

"This meant that the jury was listening to the defendant's counsel's closing argument trying to see how those argument fit into the framework Jon David had already described," McKenzie said.

During the subsequent punitive damages phase of the trial, plaintiff counsel fortified their case by presenting the jury with the defendants' divorce decree that revealed he'd transferred most of his property to his wife in the divorce.

"The jury's suspicions that it was a sham divorce were confirmed, which was a very validating moment for the jury," McKenzie claimed. "In closing, [we] reassured the jury that, 'It's okay to be confused here. It's not that the jury isn't smart enough to understand. It's confusing because it's not true.'"

'Be Mindful of What You Wear'

After three days of trial and an hour of deliberations, the Gwinnett County Superior Court jury made up of 10 women and two men returned a verdict in favor of the plaintiff. In addition to finding the defendants liable for fraudulent transfer, the jury found Ruchit Patel liable for breach of fiduciary duty, per plaintiff counsel.



Shelby McKenzie of Poole Huffman. Courtesy photo

"Want to turn a \$66,000 debt into a \$282,000 verdict? Lie under oath and dare a jury to care," Huffman said. "The jury awarded \$105,000 in damages, \$91,900 in attorney's fees and \$85,000 in punitive damages."

Huffman deemed the matter "a very unusual and complicated case," but said the outcome brought relief to their client after years of seeking financial restoration and legal accountability.

READ: [Verdict](#) & [Judgment](#)

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CONNECTICUT COUNTY OF MIDDLETOWN

KIA AMUSEMENT GAMES, LLC, Plaintiff, vs. SHAISTA ENTERPRISE 3, LLC, SHIV KRUPA 3341 PATEL, DHRU PA VANJARA, and YU Defendants.

VERDICT FORM

A. **Amount of General Damages, Punitive Damages, etc.**

We, the jury, find in favor of Plaintiff, Kia Amusement Games, LLC, and award damages in the amount of \$394,000.00.

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B. **Branch of Damages Due:**

We, the jury, find in favor of Plaintiff, Kia Amusement Games, LLC, and award damages in the amount of \$394,000.00.

2

C. **Attorney Fees & Disbursements:**

We, the jury, find in favor of Plaintiff, Kia Amusement Games, LLC, and award damages in the amount of \$394,000.00.

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KIA AMUSEMENT GAMES, LLC, Plaintiff, vs. SHAISTA ENTERPRISE 3, LLC, SHIV KRUPA 3341 PATEL, DHRU PA VANJARA, and YU Defendants.

FINAL JUDGMENT

The above signed verdict was read to the jury by Judge John Ties, Jr. on May 12, 2023.

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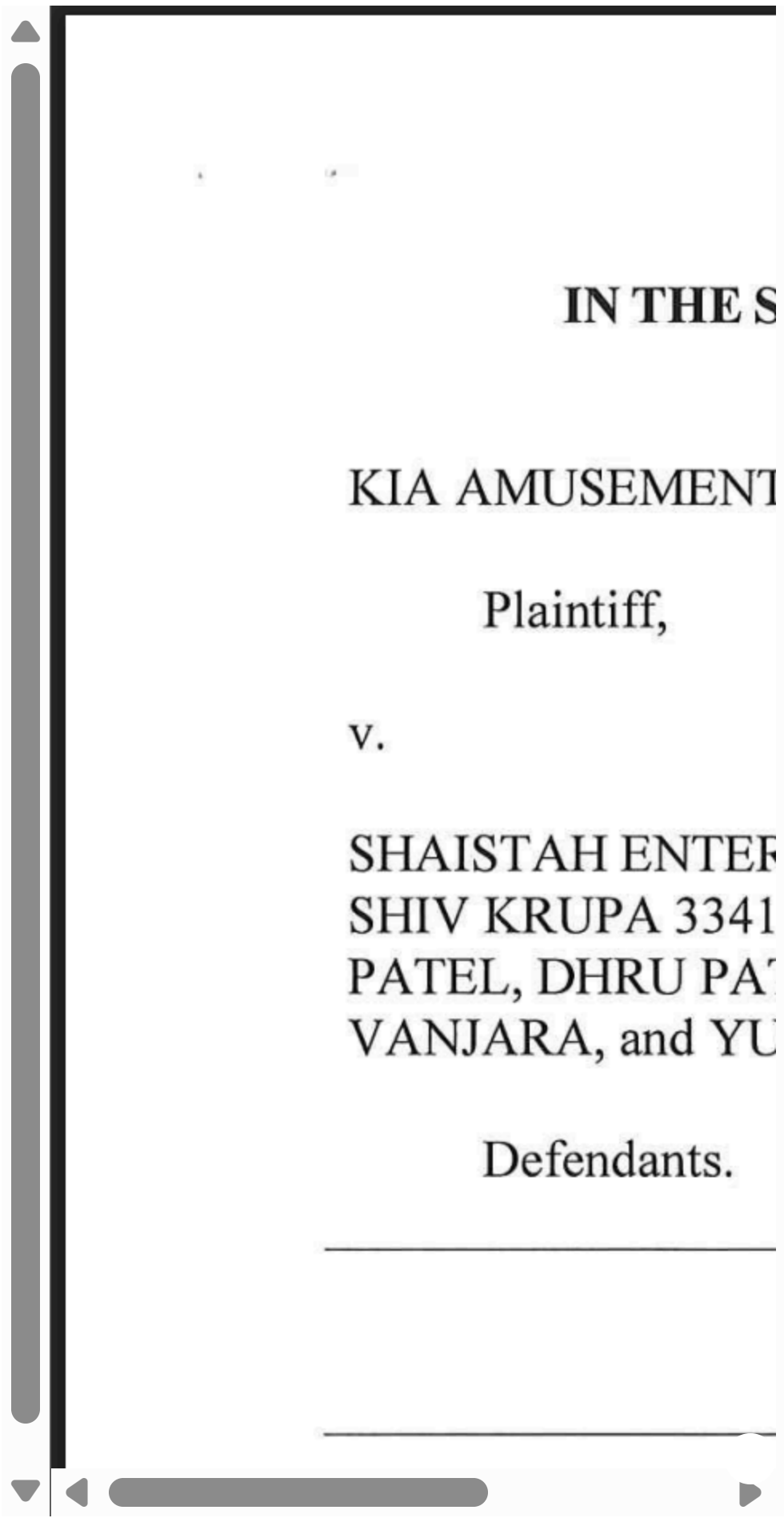
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Albeit pleased with plaintiff counsel's ability to obtain the six-figure outcome for Kia, Huffman

credited the outcome, in part, to defendant decisions on the stand that didn't sit well with jurors.

Huffman noted that, while plaintiff counsel had hoped to seat small business owners who possessed prior knowledge about the underlying business concepts as jurors, the personal experiences of many helped tilt the outcome in the plaintiff's favor.

For instance, a juror with experience as a litigant deemed plaintiff counsel's attorney's fees reasonable, while another with administrative experience contended the defendant improperly conducted business given the absence of contracts, agreements and financial records.

But that's not all the defendant did that didn't land well with the jury.

According to plaintiff counsel, the defendant's wardrobe struck a nerve, too.



"A juror told us that she 'can't respect a man who wears

Jon David W. Huffman, managing partner of Poole Huffman in Tucker, Georgia. Courtesy photo

Louboutin shoes to court while he lets his wife wear Crocs," Huffman said. "While this was a more humorous observation, I think it's important to remember that the jury is watching and noticing things that the attorneys may not."

Huffman said jurors revealed that, after awarding damages fulfilling the judgment owed to Kia, they awarded additional damages to send "a message to the defendant that he cannot defraud the people he does business with." For Huffman, the jury feedback served as a reminder that "having a really unlikable, untrustworthy defendant can be just as effective as having a really sympathetic plaintiff."

Huffman added that it's better for attorneys to be honest about a difficult fact in their case than to lie and have the jury catch them.

"I think a lot of attorneys want to have a clear narrative for the jury, but sometimes it's OK to acknowledge the confusing, complex nature of the case."

Plaintiff counsel also encouraged litigators to be strategic during voir dire to increase their odds of crafting a favorable jury. Huffman suggested lawyers ask prospective jurors about their previous jobs, rather than just their current employment. He also recommended asking prospects who've been involved in previous litigation about their feelings toward the attorneys in the case and the outcome.

However, Huffman cautioned that while "looking for a specific kind of juror is a good starting point," each juror possesses their own diverse experience that attorneys might not anticipate, as indicated by the unexpected distaste for the defendant's designer shoes.

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