

St. Louis: Judge Removes Soros-Funded Prosecutor from McCloskey Self Defense Case

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St. Louis, Missouri: A judge removed Democrat prosecutor Kim Gardener, who was funded by George Soros, from the case against the McCloskeys, the armed couple who defended themselves and their property after a Black lives Matter group broke down the gate in the gated community in June. The judge said that Gardner's campaign emails raised the appearance that she "initiated a criminal prosecution for political purposes." The judge will appoint a new prosecutor from another jurisdiction in the case of Mark McCloskey, but the ruling does not apply to Patricia McCloskey's case, as she has a different judge. Governor Mike Parson has offered to pardon the McCloskeys should they be found guilty of a crime, saying the state's Castle Doctrine allows people to use lethal force to protect their private property.

ST. LOUIS – A judge on Thursday cited improper fundraising emails by Circuit Attorney Kimberly M. Gardner's campaign in disqualifying Gardner and her office from a gun case against Mark McCloskey, who with his wife pointed firearms at protesters outside their Central West End home in June.

Circuit Judge Thomas Clark II's order said two fundraising emails that Gardner's reelection campaign sent in response to political attacks before and after she charged Mark and Patricia McCloskey with felony gun crimes in July raised the appearance that she "initiated a criminal prosecution for political purposes."

"Like a needle pulling thread, she links the defendant and his conduct to her critics," Clark wrote. "These emails are tailored to use the June 28 incident to solicit money by positioning her against defendant and her more vocal critics."

The judge's order deals a political blow to Gardner, whose office has waged numerous legal challenges to defend her practices and reform-minded agenda during her first term.

In a text message, Gardner's spokeswoman Allison Hawk said the Circuit Attorney's Office "will review the court order and determine our options."

The McCloskeys **pleaded not guilty in October** to charges of unlawful use of a weapon and evidence tampering related to the confrontation with protesters outside their home on Portland Place, a private and gated street. The protesters were walking past en route to a demonstration blocks away outside the home of Mayor Lyda Krewson. The McCloskeys said they felt threatened by the group as it walked by.

The couple was later **indicted on charges they illegally brandished weapons** at protesters and altered a pistol to make it appear that it was not functioning at the time.

They **sought to disqualify Gardner from the case**, arguing that she exploited their case for political gain when her campaign mentioned them in fundraising emails weeks before the Democratic primary in August.

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