

FROM: DORIS L. SASSOWER

2/11/92

7:45 p.m.

DATE

TIME

ELAINE ELLIS, GANNETT--and her editors:  
Jeff Walsh, Mike Brown, Carolyn Treadway

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

694-5018

FAX NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

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This fax consists of a total of \_\_\_\_\_ pages, including this cover sheet. If you do not receive the indicated number of pages, or if there is a question as to the transmittal, please call (914) 997-8105

MESSAGE:

This is to memorialize a conversation with you about an hour ago wherein you stated that you are writing a story without benefit of the documentary evidence offered you as to the facts and law--neither of which are reflected by Judge Collabella's purely retaliatory Decision and Commitment Order--the latest product of his totally biased rulings and refusal to disqualify himself from a proceeding in which I was involved. He was required to do this by law and the Code of Judicial Ethics, compelling a judge to disqualify himself "in a matter in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned".

As you were informed, I served as pro bono counsel for <sup>the past</sup> two years in litigation in which Anthony Colavita was a named defendant, based on the Three Year cross-endorsements deal struck by him and his Democratic counterpart back in 1989, trading seven judgeships of the Ninth Judicial District, including the Surrogate position. Mr. Colavita's first choice for Surrogate was Nicholas Colabella. Indeed, Judge Colabella's long and close friendship with Mr. Colavita got him on the bench in the first place. Judge Colabella had been Mr. Colavita's law partner up until then, they had been childhood chums, gone to school together, and their families had been friends from childhood on.

The reason Judge Colabella did not move into that position as per the 1989 deal was because the Democrats would not accept him--or anyone else who had taken, as he did, a Right to Life endorsement.

Judge Colabella was hand-picked by Administrative Judge Ingrassia to preside over the Wolstencroft case--a fact which he acknowledged "on the record", as well as the fact that Judge Ingrassia told him that he "could have some fun" with this case.

Ex "N-1"

FROM: DORIS L. SASSOWER p. 2  
TO: Elaine Ellis

Politically motivated decision-making was precisely what I complained about in the Breslaw case, which Gannett sensationalized and never reported fairly or accurately. Your paper has refused my repeated requests for retraction and correction.

Because you stated that you did not have the faxed pages of the Commission on Government Integrity's Report, "The Blurred Line"--which my daughter transmitted at about 4:30 this afternoon--she retransmitted those pages. Also transmitted is my October 24, 1991 letter to the Governor calling for the appointment of a special prosecutor. That letter was previously both hand-delivered and faxed to Gannett newspapers--which refused to print anything about it.

I might add that this is consistent with Gannett's protection of certain judges and political interests--Justice Fredman being one of them. Indeed, Gannett has never printed anything about the political relationship between Justice Fredman and Harvey Landau. Will Gannett, likewise, suppress the facts relative to the relationship between Justice Colabella and Anthony Colavita?

This letter reiterates that we do not intend to tolerate a repeat of Gannett's sensationalized distortion of the proceedings before Justice Fredman in its reporting of proceedings before Justice Colabella.

*This page  
corrects  
errors in  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> page  
previously  
sent.*

*ERS.*

Ernie  
Ellis

694-5018

**The Blurred Line:**  
**Party Politics and Government in**  
**Westchester County:**  
**Report and Recommendations**

*New York State Commission on Government Integrity*  
*June 1990*

Ex "N-2"

FAX

694-5018

Elaine Ellis

I.

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Government Integrity has completed an eighteen month investigation in Westchester County culminating in public hearings on November 28 and 29, 1989. The Westchester investigation began as part of two broader Commission inquiries into government procurement practices and the financial disclosure practices of political party committees throughout the State. As a result of allegations made and information provided to the Commission, the investigation evolved to focus on political party influence on contracting, budgetary and personnel matters, with particular emphasis on the administration of Playland Amusement Park.

The Commission's investigation revealed a case study of the relationship between party politics and government in a county dominated by a powerful local political party and its leader. The investigation disclosed that the local Republican Party and its leader, Anthony Colavita, wield considerable power and influence in county personnel and budgetary matters and that Colavita is perceived by people both in and out of government as able to influence the processes of Westchester County government. The inves-

tigation revealed that Colavita has worked himself into the processes of both the legislative and executive branches of the county government to an extent that makes him a de facto official of that government.

Commission inquiries over the past two and a half years have revealed that local governments throughout the State are often dominated by party leaders who are not elected by or accountable to the voters. In Westchester County, the Commission found a graphic illustration of this reality. In making recommendations, the Commission takes into account the inherent symbiotic relationship between leaders of government and the political parties from which they emerge, but at the same time seeks to eliminate practices which needlessly foster the perception that access to government may be obtained by making contributions to particular parties. In short, the reforms sought are aimed at drawing clearer lines of distinction between the political and governmental structures where appropriate and possible, and, to the extent that divisions are not feasible, making party leaders more accountable under the law for the influence they exercise.

In response to revelations made at the Commission's public hearings in November, 1989, County Executive Andrew O'Rourke has indicated that he will propose several