

CENTER *for*  
JUDICIAL  
ACCOUNTABILITY



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April 28, 1994

Mr. Dennis Duggan  
New York Newsday  
2 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

RE: Your April 26, 1994 Column, "Cops Hang Easily"

Dear Mr. Duggan:

The enclosed letter to Frank Laghezza reflects our follow-up to your superlative April 26th column wherein, in response to your skepticism that the Criminal Investigation Division of the Brooklyn D.A.'s office would investigate "the 'culture' of judges, elected officials and city agencies", its chief, Dennis Hawkins, is quoted by you as "stress[ing]", "We are going to investigate public corruption".

It is our intention to give you--and, through you, your readers--an opportunity to evaluate whether Mr. Hawkins will, in fact, prosecute a documentable pattern of on-going corrupt and criminal acts by public officials "at the [top] of the food chain."

As discussed briefly with you yesterday, this "corruption" involves the abuse of judicial power by high-ranking Appellate Division Justices for the singular purpose of retaliating against a "judicial whistle-blower". Such corruption is the focal issue of the Article 78 proceeding entitled, Doris L. Sassower. v. Hon. Guy Mangano, et al., NOW before this State's highest Court--the Court of Appeals.

To give you a preview of the papers I will send you today for express mail A.M. delivery tomorrow--I am faxing herewith pp. 5-8 of the letter of my mother's attorney to the Court of Appeals in support of its taking jurisdiction of that extraordinary and important case. Additionally, to permit you to understand the politically-explosive context of my mother's "judicial whistle-blowing" activities, I am also faxing a copy of her October 24, 1991 letter to Governor Cuomo--referred to in my enclosed letter to Mr. Laghezza. That letter, in which my mother called for the appointment of a special prosecutor, outlines the significance of

the case of Castracan v. Colavita--in which my mother was pro bono counsel until the Appellate Division's retaliatory suspension of her license.

Thus, the story we offer is one that will enable you to chronicle precisely what Maurice Nadjari was talking about when he intimated that those going after judges suffer "repercussions".

Additionally, this story will enable you to demonstrate how the top echelons of state government--among them, the Governor and Attorney General--exemplify the "code of silence" that your article describes. It is these highest elected officials, and not only local prosecutors and judges, who "cover-up" and "sweep under the rug".

We believe that our documented entreaties to Governor Cuomo and Attorney General Koppell to do something and not "stand idly by" when presented with irrefutable evidence of profound corruption affecting the very integrity of the government of this state make a most timely story in this election year when they each face the voters. As my mother's October 24, 1991 letter to the Governor and her extensive correspondence to the Attorney General<sup>1</sup> highlight, there is no leadership at the top which is setting an example to the "lower rungs". Indeed, the only conclusion from such correspondence--and from others we are eager to show you--is that those at the "helm" of this state put their own desires to avoid the "repercussions" to themselves politically that would result from speaking out against political interests--upon whose support their re-election depends--above their obligations to protect the people and the processes of government. Indeed, such contention was directly stated by my mother in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Albany--a copy of which testimony--and the Senate's "cover-up" thereof--I will mail to you.

In short, we take your statement:

"We have had reams of stories about bad cops but almost nothing about judges and prosecutors who let obviously perjured testimony slip by without reaction" (emphasis added)

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<sup>1</sup> See, Supplemental Exhibits "2", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9" to the March 14, 1994 ltr the Court of Appeals. (cf. New York Times' 4/28/94 article "The Attorney General Rushes to Build a Platform, enclosed for your convenience, together with a 12/11/93 Times' article, "A Meeting with Cuomo Brings Out the Critics".

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as a recognition that coverage is long over-due about how lying, perjury, and cover-up affect all levels of government, not just the police department and a willingness of your part to tackle such important stories.

We believe we have a more extraordinary and shocking story than you could possibly imagine--even in your wildest fantasies. And it is not only demonstrably true, but readily verifiable.

Yours for a quality judiciary,



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator  
Center for Judicial Accountability

Enclosures:

- By Fax:
- (1) 4/27/94 ltr to Corruption Investigation Division
  - (2) 10/24/91 ltr to Governor Cuomo
  - (3) pp. 5-8 of 3/14/94 ltr to Court of Appeals

- By Mail:
- (4) Our two submissions to the Court of Appeals
    - (a) Jurisdictional Statement
    - (b) 3/14/94 ltr in support
  - (5) 9/7/93 testimony before NYS Senate Judiciary Committee, with Compendium of Exhibits
  - (6) 12/15/93 testimony before NYS Senate Judiciary Committee, with of Compendium of Exhibits and transcript excerpt of 9/7/93 NYS Senate Judiciary Committee and Senate sessions
  - (7) New York Times, 4/28/94, "The Attorney General Rushes to Build a Platform"
  - (8) New York Times, 12/11/93, "A Meeting with Cuomo Brings Out the Critics"

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