

CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

P.O. Box 69, Gedney Station
White Plains, New York 10605-0069

Tel. (914) 421-1200
Fax (914) 428-4994

E-Mail: judgewatch@aol.com
Web site: www.judgewatch.org

Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator

BY FAX: 212-949-2069 (11 pages)

February 14, 2000

Mr. Salvatore Arena
Daily News
c/o Press Room
Supreme Court, NY County
60 Centre Street
New York, New York 10007

RE: Scaling back to a SIMPLE STORY PROPOSAL:
The "Steering" of the Commission Case by and to
Politically-Vulnerable and Self-Interested Judges

Dear Mr. Arena:

Following up our phone conversation, in which you stated that you cannot commit the time to an *investigative expose*, please advise as to whether you would be willing to do a *regular story* about this important public interest lawsuit in which the NYS Commission on Judicial Conduct has been sued for corruption (NY Co. #99-108551).

In particular, I propose a story about how Administrative Judge Stephen Crane *twice* interfered with the random assignment of the case – the second time, to "steer" it to Acting Supreme Court Judge William Wetzel, who was more disqualified than *any* of his six judicial predecessors. Establishing this interference is the enclosed copy of the computerized docket sheet (#4 and #7) AND the November 5, 1999 recusal order of Acting Supreme Court Justice Barbara Kapnick – Justice Wetzel's judicial predecessor – which expressly refers to the Administrative Judge's "directive" that the case be assigned to Justice Wetzel.

Also enclosed is a copy of my unresponded-to December 2, 1999 letter to Administrative Judge Crane, inquiring as to the basis for his two-time interference with random assignment AND whether he was aware of the facts pertaining to Justice Wetzel's disqualification *before* he directed the case to him. On February 7, 2000, I telephoned Judge Crane's chambers (212- 374-4726) and spoke to his


February 14, 2000

Administrative Assistant, Ray Denton, who confirmed that Administrative Judge Crane had received the letter, but had not responded and was not planning to respond.

As you know, Administrative Judge Crane is presently seeking appointment by the Governor to the Appellate Division and Justice Wetzel, whose appointive Court of Claims term expired on June 30, 1999, is a "hold-over", daily dependent upon the Governor to remain on the bench. On that subject, I enclose a copy of CJA's February 7, 2000 letter to the Executive Director of the Governor's Judicial Screening Committees about the official misconduct of each of these judges in the case and transmitting a 2-page memorandum to the Attorney General and Commission on the subject. As soon as CJA has finalized the referred-to extensive presentation detailing the misconduct of Administrative Judge Crane and Justice Wetzel—*warranting their removal from the bench* -- I will provide you with copy.

In the event that even this minimal proposed story is too much to expect in a case whose transcending significance to the public should be plain to you from the copy of the Verified Petition sent under CJA's January 18, 2000 story proposal -- including the fact that it implicates the Governor in the Commission's corruption¹ -- please return the Verified Petition to us. CJA is an *unfunded* citizens' organization and it is extremely costly and time-consuming for us to duplicate and assemble such voluminous documents.

Yours for a quality judiciary,



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

Enclosures

¹ See, *inter alia*, Exhibit "A", Exhibit "B", Exhibit "E", p. 2.

TRANSMISSION VERIFICATION REPORT

TIME : 02/14/2000 12:53
NAME : CJA
FAX : 9144284994
TEL : 9144211200

DATE, TIME	02/14 12:47
FAX NO./NAME	12129492069
DURATION	00:05:54
PAGE(S)	11
RESULT	OK
MODE	STANDARD ECM