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(REFILING TO REMOVE GARBLE)

DISBARRED GADFLY FOUND COMPETENT TO FACE CONTEMPT CHARGE
BY FRANCES ANN BURNS

NEWARK, N.J. (UPI) -- A DISBARRED NEW YORK LAWYER WHO HAS FILED HUNDREDS OF ALLEGEDLY FRIVOLOUS MOTIONS IN A NINE-YEAR BATTLE AGAINST FELLOW ATTORNEYS WAS FOUND COMPETENT TUESDAY TO STAND TRIAL FOR VIOLATING A JUDGE'S ORDER TO STOP ABUSING THE SYSTEM.

GEORGE SASSOWER, 65, OF WHITE PLAINS REGARDS HIMSELF AS A WHISTLEBLOWER FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION. CIVIL LIBERTARIANS WHO HAVE COME TO HIS DEFENSE SAY JUDGES HAVE ABUSED THEIR POWER BY ATTEMPTING TO BAR HIM FROM NEW FILINGS OF LEGAL MOTIONS AND ORDERING HIM HOSPITALIZED FOR PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION.

"THIS ISN'T RUSSIA, AND YOU DON'T PUT PEOPLE IN JAIL FOR QUESTIONING THE SYSTEM," HIS DAUGHTER, CAREY, TOLD A REPORTER.

BUT SASSOWER, WHO HAS BEEN JAILED EIGHT TIMES FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT, HAS ALSO BEEN CALLED A "LEGAL TERRORIST," AN "OUT-OF-CONTROL LITIGANT" AND A "FRUITCAKE."

TUESDAY'S HEARING BEFORE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE NICHOLAS POLITAN WAS PUNCTUATED BY SASSOWER'S OBJECTIONS. SASSOWER ACTED AS HIS OWN ATTORNEY WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THOMAS HIGGINS, CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE IN NEWARK.

"YOU ARE NOT GOING TO DISTURB THE LEGAL SYSTEM AS FAR AS THIS COURT IS CONCERNED," THE JUDGE SAID. "THIS COURT WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED BY YOUR BARRAGE OF LEGAL PAPERS."

JUDGE POLITAN ORDERED SASSOWER'S ARREST IN MAY FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING AN EARLIER ORDER TO FILE NO LEGAL PAPERS WITHOUT COURT PERMISSION AND THEN ORDERED HIM IMPRISONED FOR EVALUATION. DOCTORS AT A FEDERAL PRISON HOSPITAL IN ROCHESTER, MINN., FOUND HIM COMPETENT TO CONDUCT HIS OWN DEFENSE.

SASSOWER FACES UP TO SIX MONTHS IN PRISON IF HE IS CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL CONTEMPT. POLITAN SCHEDULED THE TRIAL FOR AUG. 22 AND ALLOWED SASSOWER TO BE FREED ON A PERSONAL RECOGNIZANCE BOND, BUT WITH STRICT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

SASSOWER'S CRUSADE BEGAN IN 1980 WHEN HE CHARGED THAT LAWYERS APPOINTED AS RECEIVERS IN THE DISSOLUTION OF A BROOKLYN COMPANY "PLUNDERED" PUCCINI CLOTHES LTD.

SASSOWER, WHO REPRESENTED A SHAREHOLDER, CALLED LAWYERS WITH THE MANHATTAN FIRM OF FELTMAN, KARESH, MAJOR & FARMAN "CRIMINALS WITH LAW DEGREES WHO HAVE RAPED PUCCINI OF ALL ITS TANGIBLE ASSETS, LEAVING NOTHING FOR LEGITIMATE CREDITORS AND STOCKHOLDERS."

JUDGES WHO HAVE RULED AGAINST SASSOWER HAVE OFTEN BECOME DEFENDANTS IN HIS COMPLAINTS. ONE FILING LAST YEAR IN NEW JERSEY NAMED 65 DEFENDANTS.

AFTER YEARS OF FRUITLESS LITIGATION IN NEW YORK, SASSOWER SUCCEEDED IN TRANSFERRING HIS OWN PERSONAL BANKRUPTCY CASE TO NEW JERSEY, GIVING A NEWARK WASHING-MACHINE REPAIR SHOP AS AN ADDRESS. HE THEN FILED MORE MOTIONS ABOUT PUCCINI.

U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE DANIEL MOORE DISMISSED THE NEW JERSEY CLAIMS LAST YEAR, SAYING HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO RETRY MATTERS THAT HAD BEEN DECIDED IN NEW YORK.

SASSOWER'S DAUGHTERS HAVE BECOME INVOLVED IN HIS FIGHT AND IN GATHERING SUPPORT. ELENA SASSOWER, WITH WHOM HE LIVES, WAS CHARGED IN MAY WITH DISRUPTING A HEARING.

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