

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:40 AM

To: 'richard.white@cuny.edu'
Cc: 'graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu';
'andrew.mendelson@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'gpowell@gc.cuny.edu';
'judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu';
'barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu';
'greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu';
'yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu';
'elba.rodriquez37@journalism.cuny.edu';
'zoe.grueskin66@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'david.bralow@journalism.cuny.edu';
'david.bralow@theintercept.com'; 'dkaplan007@gmail.com';
'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu'; 'errol.louis@charter.com';
'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu';
'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu'

Subject: **FOIL -- CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism: (1) News Integrity Initiative (2) Scholarship on Press Performance (3) Courses in Legal Journalism/Court Reporting (4) Courses in State Governance-NYS (5) CUNY Journalism Council (6) E-Mail Block**

Attachments: [9-7-22-committee-report.pdf](#); [9-7-22-testimony.pdf](#);
[9-7-22-testimony-oral-williams.pdf](#); [9-7-22-testimony-oral-crowell.pdf](#)

[TO: CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Executive Counsel & Records Access Officer Richard White](#) –

Following up my below November 17th e-mail – to which I have received no response from you or from any other recipient, excepting an [automated e-mail acknowledgment](#) from CUNY J-School Faculty-Student Disciplinary Chair Barbara Gray – I hereby request, pursuant to FOIL:

- (1) records reflecting the date on which the News Integrity Initiative, [publicly announced by CUNY J-School on April 3, 2017](#) and further elaborated upon by [Professor Jeff Jarvis' April 4, 2017 blog](#), was [eliminated as “a stand-alone entity” and “refocus\[ed\]” to “improving diversity, equity, and inclusion \(DEI\) practices in the news business”](#) – and, additionally, the person who proposed same; the reasons therefor; the persons who approved it; and CUNY J-School’s public announcement about the change;
- (2) records reflecting whether the News Integrity Initiative received further funding during its existence as a “stand-alone entity”, over and beyond the initial \$14 million from philanthropists and other private funders;
- (3) records as to the amount of funding the News Integrity Initiative expended during its existence as a “stand-alone entity” – and how much remained when it was eliminated and “refocus[ed]”;
- (4) records as to whether the “applied research and projects” funded by the News Integrity Initiative pertaining to “getting media to listen to the public” -- the objective highlighted by

[Professor Jarvis' April 4, 2017 blog](#), thereafter phrased as "[inclusive civic discourse](#)", "[inclusive community conversations](#)", "[inclusive civic dialogue](#)" – was inclusive of members of the public who were not merely the "audience" or "consumers" of media, but who had direct, first-hand interaction with its journalists, editors, publishers, and owners, and who had filed complaints with them and lawsuits against them pertaining to their news reporting and editorializing;

- (5) records reflecting the names of the J-School professors engaged in scholarship of press performance – and whether such scholarship has included:
 - (a) examination of complaints filed by members of the public with the press pertaining to its news reporting and editorializing – and how they are handled;
 - (b) examination of lawsuits filed by members of the public against the press pertaining to its news reporting and editorializing – and how they are handled;
 - (c) qualitative assessment of press reporting and editorializing on New York City and New York State governance and whether it enables citizens to intelligently vote in elections – and for which offices;
 - (d) qualitative assessment of whether philanthropically and publicly-funded non-profit press, such as [The City](#), [Gothamist](#), [WNYC](#), [Gotham Gazette](#), [City Limits](#), [New York Focus](#), [Investigative Post](#), [Rochester Beacon](#), [Pro Publica](#) are, in fact, non-partisan, as they implicitly and explicitly purport themselves to be, and operating within the parameters of their §501(c)(3) tax-exempt status;
 - (e) critical examination of such "legacy" press as the [New York Times](#), [New York Daily News](#), [New York Post](#), [Newsday](#), [Gannett](#), [Albany Times Union](#), [Buffalo News](#), [Syracuse Post-Standard](#) – and such other press as [The New York Law Journal](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), [City Journal](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Crains New York Business](#), [Politico](#) – with respect to reporting on non-partisan, public integrity, and constitutional issues pertaining to New York State and New York City governance – and the records, in office, of incumbent public officers.
- (6) records reflecting who are the professors teaching legal journalism and reporting on the courts – and why the J-School has no concentration in this area;
- (7) records reflecting who are the professors teaching state governance – and why the J-School has no concentration in this area, in contrast to its concentration in "urban reporting" – and why, seemingly, it offers not a single course on New York State governance;
- (8) records with contact information for the members of the "CUNY Journalism Council" of which the J-School is "an originator and active partner" and consisting of "the directors and interested faculty of all undergraduate journalism programs across CUNY", or, alternatively, contact information for CUNY's "14 undergraduate journalism programs", with which the J-School is involved, referred to in its 2019 "[Self-Study Report for Accreditation in Journalism and Mass Communications](#)" (at pp. 28, 52, 127, 130-1);

(9) records as to who put a block on e-mail from elena@judgewatch.org, resulting in the bounce-back of the below November 17th e-mail, thereafter successfully re-sent, an hour later, from elenaruth@aol.com.

Pursuant to FOIL [Public Officers Law §89.3(a)], your response is required within five business days of receipt of this written request.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: elenaruth@aol.com <elenaruth@aol.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2022 12:29 PM

To: 'graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu' <graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'gpowell@gc.cuny.edu' <gpowell@gc.cuny.edu>; 'richard.white@cuny.edu' <richard.white@cuny.edu>; 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu' <errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@charter.com' <errol.louis@charter.com>; 'barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu' <barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu' <travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu' <greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu' <ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu' <yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu' <daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'elba.rodriguez37@journalism.cuny.edu' <elba.rodriguez37@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'zoe.grueskin66@journalism.cuny.edu' <zoe.grueskin66@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'david.bralow@journalism.cuny.edu' <david.bralow@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'david.bralow@theintercept.com' <david.bralow@theintercept.com>; 'dkaplan007@gmail.com' <dkaplan007@gmail.com>; 'andrew.mendelson@journalism.cuny.edu' <andrew.mendelson@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu' <amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu' <judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu>

Subject: FW -- Violations by CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism of its Ethics Code, the University's Conflict of Interest Policy, Public Officers Law §74 -- and the Jan. 28, 2020 memorandum of its own General Counsel & CUNY's Vice Chancellor...

TO: Relevant CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Staff, Faculty, and Students

Immediately upon sending the below e-mail, I got a [bounce-back](#) reflecting that delivery had failed to every recipient – excepting Dean Mochkofsky and 1st time e-mail recipients Ethics Officer Powell and General Counsel/SUNY Vice Chancellor White.

In the event some kind of block was placed on e-mail sent from my CJA e-mail address: elena@judgewatch.org, I am now re-sending the e-mail from my personal e-mail address: elenaruth@aol.com and, if that bounces back, request that Dean Mochkofsky, Ethics Officer Powell, and General Counsel/SUNY Vice Chancellor White ensure the forwarding of this e-mail to the other recipients.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>

Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2022 11:36 AM

To: 'graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu' <graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu>

Cc: 'gpowell@gc.cuny.edu' <gpowell@gc.cuny.edu>; 'richard.white@cuny.edu' <richard.white@cuny.edu>; 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu' <errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@charter.com' <errol.louis@charter.com>; 'barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu' <barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu' <travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu' <greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu' <ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu' <yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu' <daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'elba.rodriquez37@journalism.cuny.edu' <elba.rodriquez37@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'zoe.grueskin66@journalism.cuny.edu' <zoe.grueskin66@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'david.bralow@journalism.cuny.edu' <david.bralow@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'david.bralow@theintercept.com' <david.bralow@theintercept.com>; 'dkaplan007@gmail.com' <dkaplan007@gmail.com>; 'andrew.mendelson@journalism.cuny.edu' <andrew.mendelson@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu' <amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu' <judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu>

Subject: Violations by CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism of its Ethics Code, the University's Conflict of Interest Policy, Public Officers Law §74 -- and the Jan. 28, 2020 memorandum of its own General Counsel & CUNY's Vice Chancellor...

TO: [CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Dean Graciela Mochkofsky](#)

Yet another week has passed – and I have received no response from you to my below November 10th e-mail, nor any responses from the 16 other J-school recipients, 12 of whom are administrators or faculty and the other 4 students.

Is there any explanation for this other than a multitude of institutional and individual conflicts of interest impacting upon the discharge of your duties with respect to my November 3rd conflicts-of-interest/ethics complaint – and with respect to answering the straight-forward questions asked by my November 10th e-mail, the most important, in bold type and with underlining for added emphasis:

“What kind of ‘courageous and ethical journalism’ does New York’s taxpayer-supported J-School model and teach in its own New York City backyard when it steers its students away from investigating and reporting on a MAJOR corruption story pertaining to the New York City Council and New York City governance, involving, directly, the corruption of New York State governance – and this year’s elections for governor, attorney general, comptroller and all 213 state legislative seats, 90-plus of which are for districts in New York City – whose consequence is that corrupt incumbents have now been re-elected or elected to other and higher offices.”

To assist you in articulating such explanation as you have, I am now cc’ing the J-School’s “Ethics Officer”, Geraldine Powell, who, according to CUNY’s webpage entitled “[State Ethics In Public Service and at CUNY](#)”, is available to guide you and, “as appropriate, consult the OGC [Office of the General Counsel of The City University of New York] on behalf of the institution.” This same webpage posts CUNY’s own [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and, by identifying that CUNY employees are “state employees...bound by the New York State Public Officers Law and New York State ethics regulations, enforced by “the [New York State Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government](#) (formerly known as the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics)”, has revealed a further conflict of interest. Indeed, the corruption of these two state ethics enforcement entities is directly part of the “**MAJOR corruption story**” -- and so-reflected by my above testimony that I presented and endeavored to present at the City Council’s September 7, 2022 “advice and consent” confirmation hearing, in the presence of students Rand and Magrino and which they presumably embodied in some “journalism” and furnished to their professor(s), together with my entreaties for investigative reporting, if not by them, then by other J-school students – and as immediately as possible because of its decisive significance to the 2022 elections, early-voting for which was then more than seven-weeks away.

As the J-School is not only under the ethics jurisdiction of the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government, but, additionally, the [New York State Inspector General](#) – a fact highlighted by the [January 28, 2020 memorandum entitled “Protocol for Reporting Allegations of Corruption, Fraud, Criminal Activity, Conflicts of Interest or Abuse”](#) by [CUNY Vice Chancellor for Risk, Audit and Compliance Richard R. White](#), who also serves as [the J-School’s General Counsel](#), I am cc’ing him as well.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>

Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2022 11:09 AM

To: 'graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu' <graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu>

Cc: 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>;

'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>;

'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu' <errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@charter.com'

<errol.louis@charter.com>; 'barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu' <barbara.gray@journalism.cuny.edu>;

'travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu' <travis.fox@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu'

<greg.david@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu'

<ruth.hochberger@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu'

<yoruba.richen@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu'

<daryl.khan@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'elba.rodriguez37@journalism.cuny.edu'

<elba.rodriguez37@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'zoe.grueskin66@journalism.cuny.edu'

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<david.bralow@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'david.bralow@theintercept.com'

<david.bralow@theintercept.com>; 'dkaplan007@gmail.com' <dkaplan007@gmail.com>;

'andrew.mendelsohn@journalism.cuny.edu' <andrew.mendelsohn@journalism.cuny.edu>;

'amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu' <amy.dunkin@journalism.cuny.edu>;

'judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu' <judith.watson@journalism.cuny.edu>

Subject: AGAIN -- Ethics Violations by CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Students Rebecca Rand & Nicolas Magrino -- & Adjunct Professor Errol Louis -- PLUS FURTHER QUESTIONS

[TO: CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Dean Graciela Mochkofsky](#)

A week has elapsed since I sent you my below November 3rd e-mail entitled: "Ethics Violations by CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Students Rebecca Rand & Nicolas Magrino – & Adjunct Professor Errol Louis". I have received no acknowledgment or response.

Have you referred it to the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee, which, pursuant to [Article IV, §C\(4\) of the Governance Plan](#), is "charged with considering violations of the Newmark J-School's Code of Ethics"? As I have not been contacted by it, I am cc'ing its [chair and members](#) so that they can apprise me of how my fully-documented November 3rd ethics complaint, with its above four attachments, will be handled.

I am also cc'ing the two J-School faculty members whose names come up on a keyword search of "ethics" on the J-School's website, as I believe review of ethics complaints should include ethics teachers. They are [Adjunct Professor David Bralow](#) and [Adjunct Professor David Kaplan](#), each teaching the required first semester course "[Legal and Ethical Issues](#)" (Jour71103). Quite possibly first semester students Rand and Magrino are their students.

Additionally, I am cc'ing [Associate Dean Andrew Mendelson](#) and [Interim Assistant Dean for Administration Amy Dunkin](#), the latter having authored the J-School's December 7, 2017 announcement "[CUNY J-School to Help Oversee an Award for Courageous and Ethical Journalism](#)" – both serving, with you, on the [Governance Council](#), chaired by [Associate Professor Judith Watson](#), also cc'd.

What kind of “courageous and ethical journalism” does New York’s taxpayer-supported J-School model and teach in its own New York City backyard when it steers its students away from investigating and reporting on a MAJOR corruption story pertaining to the New York City Council and New York City governance, involving, directly, the corruption of New York State governance – and this year’s elections for governor, attorney general, comptroller and all 213 state legislative seats, 90-plus of which are for districts in New York City – whose consequence is that corrupt incumbents have now been re-elected or elected to other and higher offices.

Please also advise as to who are the J-School professors engaged in scholarship of press performance, as the conduct of students Rand and Magrino replicates that of New York’s press, of which the J-School’s faculty is part and has financial and other ties. Do ethics instructors Bralow and Kaplan consider themselves scholars of press performance – and are they so-considered by the J-School? If not, who are the J-School’s scholars who engage in unbiased, methodologically-sound research and analysis of press performance?

Unfortunately, the J-School scrapped its [News Integrity Initiative, announced on April 3, 2017 as a \\$14 million philanthropically-funded “joint effort to advance news literacy and increase trust in journalism”](#), quietly replacing it at some point subsequent to the October 2019 J-School [Self-Study Report for Accreditation in Journalism and Mass Communications \(see pp. 27, 29, 36, 126\)](#). It is now euphemistically “[refocus\[ed\]](#)” to “improving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices in the news business”. Is this because any true News Integrity Initiative, guided by evidence, would have to confront the rightful causes of public distrust in journalism, such as those to which I can attest from direct, first-hand experience and substantiate by [an archive of primary-source, documentary evidence spanning 30-plus years](#), *to wit*, the press’ total non-responsiveness to serious, substantial, and repeated complaints about its agenda-driven, knowingly false and misleading reporting and editorializing, willfully covering up governmental corruption and rigging elections, all the while trumpeting its integrity.

Also, please advise why, with lawyers such as Adjunct Professors Bralow, Kaplan, and Louis on the J-School faculty, the J-School has no concentration in legal journalism and reporting on the courts. In any event, who are the professors teaching these vital subject areas?

I note that on March 24, 2022 the J-School announced a [Criminal Justice Reporting Initiative](#), whose kick-off was “woke” agenda-driven training session about police killing, police corruption, and police cover-up. Has the referred-to 14-week “Criminal Justice Reporting Lab”, announced for the fall semester – presumably still ongoing – been training students to follow the “paper trail” of corruption by the higher, more powerful participants of the Criminal Justice System: the judges, district attorneys, and other public prosecutors – and to expose the corruption of such complaint mechanisms to hold them accountable as the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct and New York’s court-controlled attorney grievance committees. And what about a corresponding [Civil Justice Reporting Initiative](#)? Will the J-School be training students to investigate and report on the comparable fashion in which the Civil Justice System operates – with corrupt judges and lawyers, such as now re-elected New York State Attorney General Letitia James, whose litigation fraud in defense of corrupt public officers, herself among them, and pertaining to the corruption of constitutional state governance involving pay raises and the state budget, is fully-documented in complaints to the First Department Attorney Grievance Committee, featured and linked by my above-attached September 7th testimony against City Council confirmation of Mayor Eric Adams’ appointment of the now chair of the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board, Milton Williams, Jr., Esq., whose [two-minute oral synopsis](#) students Rand and Magrino heard me present at the City Hall hearing – and whose [expanded written version](#) I gave them, *in hand*. Presumably, they produced some

“journalism” for the J-School professor for whom they were at the City Hall hearing in fulfillment of a class assignment. Was that Adjunct Professor Louis, to whom I sent the testimony by my below October 23rd e-mail, and who, doubtless and in addition to his other conflicts of interests, has years of personal and professional relationships with Mr. Williams, Attorney General James, Mayor Adams, and with New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams – all, like himself, black – impacting his “courageous and ethical journalism”.

Please let me hear from you, as soon as possible. Are you available for a conversation – or, in the words of the defunct News Integrity Initiative, “respectful civic discourse”, which the J-School, based on [News Integrity Initiative research](#), also refers to as “engagement journalism”, for which, [since 2021, it offers an M.A. degree](#).

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2022 11:01 AM

To: 'graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu' <graciela.mochkofsky@journalism.cuny.edu>
Cc: 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>;
'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>;
'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu' <errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@charter.com' <errol.louis@charter.com>

Subject: Ethics Violations by CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Students Rebecca Rand & Nicolas Magrino -- & Adjunct Professor Errol Louis

[TO: CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Dean Graciela Mochkofsky](#)

I hereby seek enforcement of the [Code of Ethics](#), which students of the CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism are required to “read, sign, and heed” – and whose violations subject them to “appropriate sanctions, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with CUNY Bylaws and the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and professional journalism standards.” Presumably, professors are also required to adhere to, if not sign, a comparable Ethics Code – and face punishment including discharge, for cause.

At issue is misconduct, born of conflicts of interest, by students Rebecca Rand and Nicolas Magrino – and by their journalism professor for whom, in fulfillment of an academic requirement/class assignment, they were at a September 7th confirmation hearing at City Hall. Such professor may have been Adjunct Professor Errol Louis, but, irrespective, his misconduct born of conflicts of interest is additionally at issue based on my below October 31st and October 23rd e-mails with the above four attachments, sent to him and to students Rand and Magrino, without response from any of them.

I am available to be interviewed, including under oath. Please advise as to your complaint "process".

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2022 3:37 PM

To: 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>;
'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>;
'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu' <errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@charter.com'
<errol.louis@charter.com>

Subject: Confirming Status -- CJA's Oct. 23, 2022 e-mail to CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Students Rebecca Rand & Nicolas Magrino -- & Adjunct Professor Errol Louis

TO: CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Students Rebecca Rand & Nicolas Magrino
CUNY/Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Adjunct Professor Errol Louis, ESQ.

I have received no responses from you to my below October 23rd e-mail entitled – and correcting the misspelling of Mr. Louis' first name – “*Was Errol Louis your CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism professor for whom, in fulfillment of an academic requirement/class assignment, you were at the Sept 7 confirmation hearing at City Hall?*”

Unless I hear from you otherwise, I will assume this is because you did not respond.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2022 9:07 AM

To: 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>;
'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>

Cc: 'errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu' <errol.louis@journalism.cuny.edu>; 'errol.louis@charter.com' <errol.louis@charter.com>

Subject: Was Errol Louis your CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism professor for whom, in fulfillment of an academic requirement/class assignment, you were at the Sept 7 confirmation hearing at City Hall?

Dear Rebecca & Nicolas,

How surprising to have received no responses from you to my two [September 8th e-mails](#) & [here](#), my [September 12th e-mail](#), and my below [September 13th e-mail](#), with the above-attached, furnishing you with a MAJOR corruption story pertaining to the New York City Council and New York City governance, involving, directly, the corruption of New York State governance – and this year’s elections for governor, attorney general, and comptroller and all 213 state legislative seats, 90-plus of which are for districts in New York City, which I discussed with you, face-to-face, on September 7th, at City Hall, before and after my two-minute oral testimony in opposition to confirmation of Milton Williams, Jr., as chair of the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board, and the preclusion of my two-minute oral testimony in opposition to Anthony Crowell’s confirmation to the New York City Planning Commission.

Please explain why you did not respond, including as minimally as confirming that you “furnished my September 7th testimony and my proposal for your follow-up investigative reporting to your journalism professors” and “who they are, so that I might contact them directly”.

AS TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, I am cc’ing [Errol Louis, whose faculty bio at CUNY’s Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism identifies that he is “host of NY1’s ‘Inside City Hall,’ the preeminent political news show in New York City”](#), so that he can identify whether you are his journalism students – and, if not, whether he was alerted to the corruption story that you were not pursuing by the professor for whom, in fulfillment of an academic requirement/assignment, you were at the City Hall hearing, presumably thereafter producing some kind of journalism about what you had seen and heard on September 7th – and which, in the complete absence of any reporting by New York City Hall reporters, who presumably had the live-stream and subsequent video, resulted in the City Council’s September 14th confirmation of the nominees. Here is [CJA’s webpage posting the video and transcript links and the evidentiary trail of public corruption at the City Council preceding it](#) which your journalism professor should have expected you to pursue, immediately, or, just as immediately, passed on to other journalism students and relevant faculty for investigative reporting so that culpable and collusive City Council members were held to account, including in [next year’s election to the City Council](#) and prevented from obtaining other offices of public trust.

I ask for your responses – and for Mr. Louis’ – by no later than tomorrow morning, as thereafter I will be communicating with both new [Dean Graciela Mochkofsky](#) and [benefactor Craig Newmark](#) about how [New York’s taxpayer-funded CUNY](#) graduate journalism school has been operating – steering students **away** from non-partisan journalism that exposes public corruption by public officers and, in so-doing, rigging both the re-election of corrupt incumbents and the election of collusive successors and challengers. Such is clearly the product of undisclosed conflicts of interest, including between the New York press which operates in precisely this fashion and the J-school’s faculty and [its former dean, the now Dean Emerita Sarah Bartlett](#), who are, or have been, part of the press. Apparently, this behavior, together with a disregard of the most basic decencies, is being inculcated in journalism students, such as yourselves

CJA's webpage posting my prior attempts to secure non-partisan, electorally-relevant, corruption-exposing journalism by CUNY's Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism and its [NYCity News Service](#), which I briefly described to you, is [here](#).

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 4:19 PM

To: 'rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu' <rebecca.rand77@journalism.cuny.edu>;
'Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu' <Nicolas.magrino35@journalism.cuny.edu>

Subject: FYI -- FOIL -- Records, Rules & Procedures pertaining to the Sept. 7, 2022 Rules Committee hearing on mayoral appointees &, in particular, Milton Williams, Jr., Esq. & Anthony Crowell, Esq.

Dear Rebecca & Nicolas,

After sending you [my yesterday's e-mail](#), I waited more than a day, hoping to hear back from you, before sending my below FOIL request to the City Council, with the above attached.

What's happening on your end with respect to your reporting on the City Council's September 7, 2022 hearing on five mayoral appointees? Please confirm that you have furnished my September 7th testimony and my proposal for your follow-up investigative reporting to your journalism professors and identify who they are, so that I might contact them directly.

Thank you.

Elena
914-421-1200

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 2:38 PM
To: 'dbarbato@council.nyc.gov' <dbarbato@council.nyc.gov>
Cc: 'jcampagna@council.nyc.gov' <jcampagna@council.nyc.gov>

Subject: FOIL -- Records, Rules & Procedures pertaining to the Sept. 7, 2022 Rules Committee hearing on mayoral appointees &, in particular, Milton Williams, Jr., Esq. & Anthony Crowell, Esq.

TO: New York City Council FOIL Officer Danielle Barbato

Pursuant to FOIL, this is to request records, including of governing rules and procedures, pertaining to the [September 7, 2022 hearing of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections for its “advice and consent” on five of Mayor Adams’ appointees](#) – and, specifically, records:

- (1) reflecting why the “[Committee Report of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections](#)”, made publicly available at the September 7, 2022 hearing, prominently identifies “Office of the General Counsel, Jason A. Otano, General Counsel” – implying that the Office of General Counsel has a role – and whether its role includes ensuring compliance by the City Council with express standards in the New York City Charter for appointees, identified in the “Committee Report”;
- (2) reflecting whether the “Committee staff” identified at the top of the “Committee Report” as “Jeffrey Campagna, *Committee Counsel*; Pearl Moore, *Ethics Counsel*; Francesca Della Vecchia, *Director of Investigations*; Alycia Vasell, *Compliance Investigator*; Ramses Boutin, *Legislative Investigator*” are actually staff of the Office of the General Counsel;
- (3) reflecting why members of the public were not called up to testify immediately after each appointee – with the appointee expected to respond thereto;
- (4) reflecting why Rules Committee Chair Keith Powers was the only member of the Committee present for the public’s testimony, relegated to the end of the hearing – and, beside him, “Committee Counsel” Campagna;
- (5) reflecting why the City Council’s webpage for public testimony, <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>, does not identify a two-minute limit for oral testimony by members of the public – or that oral testimony concerning more than a single appointee at a given hearing will not be afforded, as to each appointee, two minutes;
- (6) reflecting whether there is any precedent for what Rules Committee Chair Powers did in denying me two minutes to testify as to each of the two appointees for whom, prior to the hearing, I had submitted two separate registrations;
- (7) reflecting what investigation was done – and by whom -- prior to the hearing of my e-mails pertaining to the unfitness of Milton Williams, Jr., Esq., appointed chair of the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board, and Anthony Crowell, Esq., appointed to the New York City Planning Commission;
- (8) reflecting what investigation was done – and by whom -- subsequent to the hearing of my written and oral testimony in opposition to Messrs. Williams and Crowell – and whether findings of fact have been made with respect thereto;

- (9) reflecting whether my written testimony, sent to the City Counsel, including directly to Counsel Campagna and to Rules Committee Chair Powers prior to the hearing, was distributed to Committee members prior to the hearing;
- (10) reflecting whether, at tomorrow's Rules Committee meeting at which the mayor's five appointees are on the agenda, counsel and investigative staff will be presenting Committee members with findings with respect to my opposition testimony, including as to whether, based on the evidence, Messrs. Williams and Crowell can be confirmed consistent with the Charter's express standards – and whether the meeting will be live-streamed or recorded;
- (11) reflecting whether, prior to the City Council's session and vote on the appointments, the City Council members will be alerted to my written opposition testimony to Messrs. Williams and Crowell and findings made with respect thereto – and whether the session will be live-streamed or recorded;
- (12) reflecting when was the last time that either the Rules Committee or City Council rejected an appointee.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
www.judgewatch.org
914-421-1200
elena@judgewatch.org