

## CITY WORKERS GIVEN FINES BY ETHICS PANEL

BY MATTHEW CHAYES  
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New York City's ethics watchdog has fined a probation aide who flashed her agency ID to demand free LIRR rides and a housing authority administrator for sending subordinates to a Roslyn car dealership to fix her personal vehicle's brakes and buy a key.

Both women admitted to the misconduct and agreed to serve unpaid suspensions, according to the Conflicts of Interest Board, the watchdog agency that routinely disciplines hundreds of city workers for ethics lapses.

Tatyana Burgess, at the probation agency since 2015, will forfeit 10 work days, worth about \$1,206. Leslie James, who has worked for the New York City Housing Authority since 1991, will forfeit 20 days, worth about \$7,075.

On three occasions during her morning commute in December 2016 and January 2017, Burgess, a community service aide for the Department of Probation in Manhattan, showed her probation agency ID to a Long Island Rail Road conductor. In one of the attempts, a conductor balked when Burgess "insisted that the LIRR conductor allow me to ride the train for free," according to a statement she signed and released by the board.

It's unclear whether Burgess successfully evaded the fare and how the case came to the board's attention.

In November 2015, James gave two autoworker subordinates \$300 on a work day and instructed them to drive to Roslyn from Brooklyn to buy brakes and a key at a Long Island dealership and to install the brakes. The trip took an hour each way. The wait at the dealership was 20 minutes while the key was programmed, according to the board. The brake installation took two hours — "four hours and 20 minutes of their NYCHA workday performing these tasks for my personal benefit," she wrote in her signed statement to the board.

James will also be on work-



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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

# Lawyer who forged judges' signatures on more than 100 documents is sentenced

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BY DEBRA CASSENS WEISS ([HTTP://WWW.ABAJOURNAL.COM/AUTHORS/4/](http://www.abajournal.com/authors/4/))

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A Miami lawyer was sentenced Thursday to 364 days in jail for forging judges' signatures in more than 100 Florida civil cases involving structured settlements.

Jose Camacho

([http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/lawyer\\_is\\_accused\\_of\\_forging\\_judges\\_signatures\\_on\\_more\\_than\\_100\\_documents/](http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/lawyer_is_accused_of_forging_judges_signatures_on_more_than_100_documents/)), 47, had claimed he forged the signatures of at least eight Broward County judges because he had a high-volume practice and didn't want to wait for signoffs from backlogged judges, the Miami Herald (<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/crime/article165231737.html>) reports. His sentence also includes 10 years of probation.

Judges in Florida are required to approve structured settlements, which are paid out over time.

Camacho was able to submit the forged paperwork because lawyers were allowed to take signed orders to the clerk's office on their own, the article explains. Broward County now requires involvement of a court clerk.

Camacho's forgeries were discovered after Judge Marina Garcia-Wood noticed an order with her signature had a date when she was out of town.



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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 12, 2016

## **Baton Rouge Attorney Charged With Distribution And Possession Of Child Pornography**

BATON ROUGE, LA - United States Attorney Walt Green announced today that a federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging **CHRISTOPHER G. YOUNG**, age 53, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with distribution of child pornography and possession of child pornography.

According to the Indictment, **YOUNG** was the part-owner of a hotel in the country of Costa Rica, where he traveled frequently for business and leisure. **YOUNG** allegedly received two videos depicting prepubescent boys engaging in bestiality from an associate in Costa Rica. From 2013 through 2015, **YOUNG** allegedly distributed the child pornography videos to approximately 38 different individuals, on 33 separate occasions, through his smart phones.

The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This matter is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Cam T. Le and René I. Salomon.

**NOTE:** An indictment is an accusation by the Grand Jury. The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless adjudicated guilty at trial or through a guilty plea.

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**Topic(s):**

Project Safe Childhood

**Component(s):**

[USAO - Louisiana, Middle](#)

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Newsday August 16, 2014

# IN BRIEF

## QUEENS

### Former LI man convicted again of posing as lawyer

A former Astoria businessman has been convicted of posing as a lawyer and a registered investment adviser and bilking seven people out of \$5 million, Queens prosecutors said yesterday.

Mohammed Rafikian, 54, whose last known address was in Westbury, was convicted Thursday by a Queens jury of one count of first-degree grand larceny, seven counts of second-degree grand larceny and six counts of second-degree criminal impersonation.

The jury also convicted Rafikian, also known as Mo Kian, of

three counts of first-degree scheme to defraud and three counts of practicing law without a license after the two-month trial.

Rafikian's attorney, Steven Goldenberg of Queens, said he planned to appeal.

Rafikian was originally convicted in August 2007 on similar charges and sentenced to up to 50 years in prison.

He then represented himself at trial and appealed his conviction on the basis that he proceeded without counsel.

In September 2012, the New York State Appellate Division, Second Department, determined his waiver of counsel was not knowing and voluntary, and ordered a new trial.

Rafikian, who has been in jail in lieu of bail since his arrest in May 2004, faces up to 50 years in prison at his sentencing, scheduled for Oct. 16. — DARRAN SIMON

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**IN BRIEF**

firm that partnered with the MTA, Donovan said.  
— AMNEWYORK

**Search is on for 'Wizard's' parrot**

Have you seen Truman? The "celebrity" avian, a 4-year-old Cape parrot, took flight Monday morning from Bensonhurst's Satellite Park and his owner has been pacing Brooklyn ever since, searching for him.

Michael Sazhin, 27, known as "The Parrot Wizard," who writes about and performs with his exotic birds, has issued a \$1,000 reward for Truman's safe return, and is hoping some compassionate animal lover finds the parrot.

Anyone who sees the emerald green-bodied and brown-headed Truman, who weighs about 12 ounces and wears a band, is asked to call 917-318-6394 or email Michael@trainedparrot.com. "He's got no survival skills," said Sazhin, who lives in Bensonhurst.

Truman likes nuts, especially almonds, and "other birdlike stuff" and may also be attracted by an aluminum bowl full of water, but his best chance of recapture would be for a Good Samaritan who sees the bird to summon Sazhin. He is offering a reward of \$1,000 if the parrot is returned to his owner.

— AMNEWYORK

**Solar-powered kiosks tested in Bronx**

The MTA is testing outdoor kiosks at one station that give subway, bus and Metro-North arrival times and can withstand the elements, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo announced yesterday.

Two solar-powered information booths have been tested at the Metro-North Woodlawn station in the Bronx since November to see if they can withstand a nasty New York City winter.

Now, the kiosks will be matched against the summer heat under the one-year pilot program, according to Metro-North.

"These kiosks have the potential for deployment in any above-ground station where running conduits for electrical and data connectivity pose a challenge," Metro-North president Joseph Giulietti said.

If the kiosks hold up over the summer, the MTA will consider rolling out more, though there is no information on how many would be installed, according to Metro-North spokesman Aaron Donovan.

The kiosks in the pilot program are roughly \$10,000 each, but a 1998 recovery by Transversal Business International, a transportation

**EX-LAWYER GETS 4 YEARS FOR URGING CLIENT TO LIE**

BY JOHN RILEY  
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land Banana Co., a regional produce distributor, has been jailed since December on charges that he supplied cocaine that killed Kimberly Calo, 41, of Glenwood Landing, at a party in 2009.

He is also charged with conspiring to suborn perjury, and is charged in a separate case in state court with beating up his girlfriend. Zobkiw was convicted of grand jury perjury in 2013, and is expected to be a key witness against Hoey.

Balaban attended New York University and St. Louis University law school, and became a JAG lawyer in the Navy, but was honorably discharged after his mental illness surfaced, according to his sentencing memorandum.

Castel said Balaban was hospitalized more than 50 times because of his bipolar disorder, which placed limits on his ability to practice law. He met Hoey through a friendship with Hoey's driver, and was paid \$2,000 to represent Zobkiw, according to the defense.

Balaban faced a maximum sentence of 5 years on his plea to suborning perjury from Zobkiw, and probation officials recommended a sentence of 30 months. He will get credit for the 15 months already served, and Castel ordered continuing care and mental treatment after his release. He resigned from the bar after he was charged.

Former lawyer Barry Balaban was sentenced yesterday in federal court to 4 years in prison for urging a client to commit perjury to obstruct an investigation into Long Island banana mogul Thomas Hoey's role in a drug-related death.

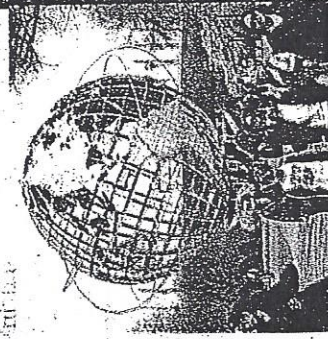
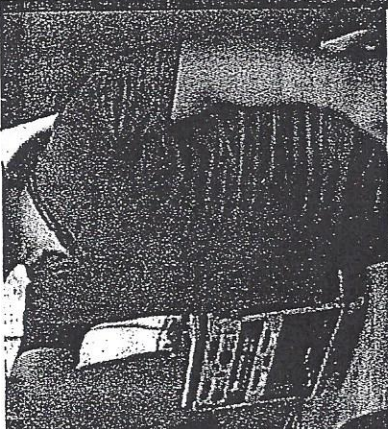
Balaban, 61, who grew up in Great Neck and has long suffered from bipolar disorder and crack addiction, pleaded guilty in January to suborning perjury from client Nicole Zobkiw about a drugs-and-sex party after Hoey allegedly recruited him to approach her.

Balaban's defense lawyer called him the "perfect fall guy," and Balaban, who has been jailed for 15 months, broke down weeping after saying, "I'd just like to say how very, very sorry I am about all of this."

But U.S. District Judge Kevin Castel said that while Balaban's mental and drug problems clearly played a role in his hiring and his vulnerability to manipulation, they did not absolve him of responsibility.

"Millions of Americans suffer from mental illness and yet they conform their conduct to what is required in a civil society," the judge said. "Mr. Balaban knew right from wrong, he knew what he was doing was wrong."

Hoey, 46, of Garden City, the chief executive of the Long Is-



**Pavilion visitors walk past the Unisphere yesterday.**

these historic treasures. This is the most exciting and most beautiful landmark of modern composition."

Molly Yavetz, 25, of Bay-side, Queens, is too young to have witnessed the fair's wonders firsthand.

But she proudly wears a tattoo of the fair's centerpiece — the gleaming Unisphere — on the back of her neck.

"This is the only symbol we have of Queens," she said. "I love Queens, and Flushing Meadows park."

PHOTOS BY CHRIS WARE



Newsday, 6/23/2014

# LAWYERS GET OK TO SCAN JURORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Lawyers have been given the green light to scan the social media sites of jurors.

The American Bar Association says it's ethical for lawyers to scour online for publicly available musings of citizens called for jury service — and even jurors in deliberations. But the ABA does warn lawyers against actively “following” or “friending” jurors, or otherwise invading their private Internet areas.

Though judges now universally admonish jurors to refrain from discussing trials on social media, the nationwide lawyers group for the first time is addressing how deeply attorneys, their investigators and their consultants can probe for information that might signal leanings of potential jurors, or unearth juror misconduct during trials.

Jurors' online postings have disrupted many legal proceedings, causing mistrials and special hearings on the effects of Facebook musings, tweets and blog writings about their trial experiences. Lawyers and judges have also been wrangling over how far attorneys can go in assembling a jury with help from online research of social media habits.

A few judges have denied lawyers permission to research social media sites as overly invasive, while others have allowed it. One company has gone so far as to develop a software product that promises to create a juror profile through social media posts and monitor jurors during the trial.

The ABA's ethics committee began reviewing the issue and concluded in April that looking at Facebook posts, Twitter tweets and other information gathered passively is ethical research.

“It's like any other publicly available information,” said Donald Lundberg, an Indianapolis attorney who helped draft the ABA's opinion as an ethics committee member. Lundberg said one of the thornier issues for the committee was whether lawyers could view LinkedIn and other social media sites that notify members that they have been searched.

Ultimately, the ABA committee decided a LinkedIn search was ethically sound, which runs counter to an opinion issued by the New York City Bar Association in 2010 that said any notice sent to a potential juror about a search amounts to an unauthorized communication.