



RHODE ISLAND FED

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FORMER HOSPITAL EXECUTIVE SENTENCED FOR DEALINGS WITH STATE SENATOR

As president of Roger Williams Medical Center, **Robert A. Urciuoli** hired Senator John Celona, ostensibly to do outreach for the Village at Elmhurst, an



assisted living center affiliated with Roger Williams. As evidence showed at two trials in U.S. District Court, Celona's real job was to advance the medical center's political interests at the state house. Celona worked to advance legis-



lation that Urciuoli deemed favorable to the hospital's agenda and kill bills deemed not. He also used his office to help Urciuoli negotiate with insurance companies for more favorable reimbursement terms.

"Public corruption is often a two-way street."

Celona pleaded guilty to federal corruption charges. Urciuoli was convicted in 2006 but the First Circuit reversed that conviction, finding that the scope of federal "honest services mail fraud" was unclear for a part time legislature in which legislators have jobs outside government.

The case was retried, with the issues that the First Circuit had raised resolved, and Urciuoli was found guilty of the same three dozen charges as at the first trial. Chief U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi imposed the same prison sentence as Judge Ernest C. Torres had imposed after the first trial — 36 months. Judge Lisi also fined Urciuoli \$30,000.



"This case demonstrates that public corruption is often a two-way street," U.S. Attorney Robert Clark Corrente said. "There are buyers and sellers — there can be no John Celonas without Robert Urciuolis."

Celona has completed a 30-month federal prison sentence.

FEDERAL DRUG AND GUN CASES

900 grams of cocaine leads to guilty plea

Eric Smyth plied his cocaine trade out of a residence on Fenner Avenue in Middletown, and stashed drugs in the basement of his mother's house in Newport. DEA Task Force agents developed information implicating Smyth and approached him after he came out of his mother's house. He fled on foot but was caught nearby and arrested, and agents recovered a bag of cocaine that he had tossed. In the Newport house, agents found bags of cocaine stashed beneath a floor joist in the basement. At the Middletown residence, they found more cocaine. Agents seized a total of 910 grams of cocaine — about two pounds — and \$4,278 in cash. Smyth pleaded guilty to a federal drug trafficking charge. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Sandra R. Hebert.*



DEA breaks up heroin ring

Hector Figueroa, also known as Bori, ran a street-level heroin distribution operation. He ordered drugs from **Ricardo Quezada**, AKA Monstro, who obtained them from a supplier named **Juan Antonio Lopez-Acevedo**, who in turn had obtained them from suppliers in New York. Figueroa's brother, **Angel Figueroa**, AKA Piyi, prepared the heroin for street sale in packages labeled "STRONG." **Pedro Ramos** and **Rosalin Chavez** distributed the heroin that Piyi packaged. DEA agents monitored conversations in which Figueroa or others directed runners to deliver heroin to customers. In March 2008, agents followed Quezada to a rest area off I-95 in Connecticut, where he met with Lopez-Acevedo. Connecticut state troopers later detained Lopez-Acevedo and DEA agents seized \$16,000 in cash from his car. Lopez-Acevedo subsequently admitted having met with Quezada at least six times to exchange drugs or cash. All six defendants pleaded guilty in Providence to federal drug charges. Hector Figueroa was sentenced to 121 months in prison, Angel Figueroa to 46 months, Chavez to 33 months, Ramos to 63 months, Quezada to 72 months, and Lopez-Acevedo to 87 months. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Sandra R. Hebert.*



FEDERAL DRUG AND GUN CASES

New Jersey steroid dealer is sentenced

Daniel McGlone sold steroids and human Growth Hormone over the internet and through body-building magazines. Operating as American Pharmaceutical Group, he advised customers what to order based on their stated needs. He then obtained prescriptions from physicians and had them filled for his customers at large, mail order pharmacies. He pleaded guilty in Rhode Island to 50 federal charges, and was sentenced to two years in prison. He also forfeited to the government about \$736,000 and has to pay Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island \$20,000 for prescriptions reimbursements that the insurer paid. Two New York physicians, **Ana Maria Santi**, and **Victor Mariani**, admitted that they wrote prescriptions at McGlone's request for "patients" whom they had never examined or seen. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein.*



One-time Latin Kings racketeering defendant is sentenced to 224 months for drugs and guns

State Police detectives found four handguns, ammunition, and 33 grams of crack cocaine in **Karim Abdullah's** apartment in Providence. When they entered the apartment, he was holding a pistol but dropped it when ordered to do so. He pleaded guilty to crack cocaine trafficking and being a felon in possession of firearms, and was sentenced to 224 months in prison. Two years of that sentence is for violating supervised release from a 1997 racketeering conviction, when he admitted to being the "chief enforcer" for the Latin Kings street gang in Rhode Island. Abdullah was sentenced then to 115 months in prison for firearms offenses and witness intimidation. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth P. Madden.*



Former police officer sentenced for tipping off a drug dealer

Paul Vittorio was a North Providence Police Officer for nine years. During that time he became friends with **Louis Romanelli**, who trafficked in pharmaceuticals. When Vittorio learned that Romanelli might be under investigation, he alerted Romanelli and advised him to relocate his trafficking base. After agents arrested Romanelli, Vittorio tried to influence the testimony of a grand jury witness and later tried to debrief the witness after a grand jury appearance. Vittorio pleaded guilty to misprision of a felony, witness tampering, and making false statements to a federal agent. He resigned from the police department and a federal judge sentenced him to five months in prison plus five months home confinement. Romanelli pleaded guilty to drug dealing, health care fraud, and money laundering. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein.*



CRIMINAL DOCKET SHEET

Guilty plea in false tax refunds

Josefina Lorenzi filed fraudulent tax refunds to receive refund checks. She used other persons' names but her own address. She tried to enlist the aid of a professional check cashing store to cash the checks, but the owner went to the IRS. Agents then monitored a conversation in which Lorenzi asked a store employee to help her cash a large number of refund checks from returns that had been filed fraudulently. Lorenzi managed to cash one check for \$8,865, and tried to cash two more. Agents found checks totaling \$22,526 at her house, and determined that she had filed additional returns claiming \$113,503 in refunds. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew J. Reich.*



Machine shop owners guilty of tax fraud

Bruce Lapierre and **Albert Martin** ran Classic Machine, a machine shop in Woonsocket, and used a series of ruses to conceal their income and avoid paying taxes. Rather than open business accounts they used the personal account of Albert Martin's wife, **Lorraine Martin**, and an anonymous "private" banking service designed to conceal income from the IRS. They also used multiple business names and made extensive use of cash and money orders. Lapierre tried to obstruct an IRS investigation of the shop's income by renaming business assets and sending frivolous letters to the IRS claiming he did not have to pay income taxes. A jury convicted all three of tax evasion and conspiracy to defraud the United States. *DOJ Tax Division Trial Attorneys John Kane and Jorge Almonte.*



Asbestos contractor extorted kickbacks from workers

Michael Macaruso's asbestos abatement company performed abatement projects for several public entities, including municipal housing authorities. Working on government projects, he was required to pay a prevailing wage, as formulated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Macaruso submitted documents reporting that he was doing so and had paychecks generated that reflected the prevailing wage. However, he cashed the checks himself and paid his workers in cash at considerably below the prevailing wage. Macaruso pleaded guilty to extorting kickbacks from public works employees and filing a false income tax return. A federal judge sentenced him to two years in prison, fined him \$50,000, and ordered him to pay \$117,840 restitution to his workers. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee H. Vilker.*



CRIMINAL DOCKET SHEET

Former hospital security guard sentenced in ID theft



Michael Bermudez was a contract security guard at Rhode Island Hospital. He stole patients' identification data and parlayed the information into cell phone contracts and RadioShack credit cards. He sold the cell phones as pre-paid phones. After Bermudez pleaded guilty to credit card fraud and aggravated identity theft, a federal judge sentenced him to 39 months in prison for credit card fraud and identity theft. Three RadioShack clerks admitted helping Bermudez in the fraud scheme.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein

Florida man looted Rhode Island trucking firms

Patrick Crow purchased Dean Transportation Services, an East Providence trucking firm. He quickly defaulted on the company's financial obligations, and failed to pay over payroll deductions taken from employees' paychecks for health care premiums and payroll taxes. He then purchased C-Line Trucking, based in Warwick, and repeated



his practice of not paying over health care premiums and payroll taxes. Crowe had several prior federal convictions in New York for wire fraud and bankruptcy fraud. He pleaded guilty to federal charges for looting the Rhode Island companies and was subsequently charged in Florida and Connecticut with passing bad checks. A federal judge in Providence sentenced Crowe to four years in prison, and ordered him to pay a total of nearly \$300,000 to health insurers, a payroll company, and other creditors. He must also pay the IRS about \$127,000 in payroll taxes.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein



Bank robber tries to swim to freedom, gets ten years in prison



Alvin Murray used a threatening note to get \$10,000 in a robbery at a Sovereign Bank branch in Cumberland. When Cumberland police spotted him after the robbery, he ran, and then jumped in the Blackstone River. Murray swam toward the Central Falls shore, where Central Falls police were waiting for him and, during the swim, lost the bag containing the robbery loot. Police never recovered the bag. *Assistant U.S.*

Attorney Zechariah Chafee



ANTI-TERROR: A VIEW FROM “CAMP WRITMO”

As the country heads toward closing the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as ordered by the President, the Rhode Island U.S. Attorney’s office has lent its hand to resolving one of the issues connected with the detainees – court-ordered access to civilian courts through the Writ of Habeas Corpus.

In the Boumediene decision, the United States Supreme Court granted prisoners detained by the U.S. military at Guantanamo Bay access to U.S. civilian courts. As a result, a group of federal prosecutors and defense lawyers has been working with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to resolve hundreds of petitions filed by hundreds of lawyers on behalf of those prisoners under the “Great Writ” – The Writ of Habeas Corpus.

The Guantanamo Bay Litigation Unit became known as Camp Writmo, a takeoff on Gitmo, the familiar name that Guantanamo goes by. It is staffed by volunteers with diverse backgrounds from DOJ litigation components across the country.

Among them was Assistant U.S. Attorney Gerard B. Sullivan, who served a six-month detail with the litigation unit at a nondescript office building in Washington, D.C. During his detail in Camp Writmo, the unit reviewed available information and prepared narratives for the Court describing the factual basis for holding each prisoner.

The legal issues are largely unprecedented in the history of this country. Each of the participants in these court proceedings is faced with many competing interests. But, in their own way, all are striving to preserve American ideals and Constitutionally protected rights while balancing the need for national security and not compromising the vitally important mission of our military. As Assistant U.S. Attorney Sullivan summarized the mission, “Each government attorney, petitioner’s counsel, and judge is struggling to achieve the same goal– to preserve and protect our American freedoms and way of life.”



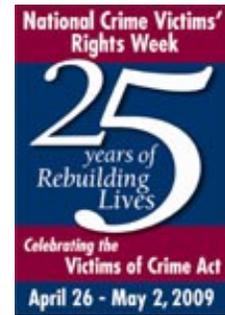
PARTNERS AT WORK

50 years in law enforcement



Vincent Vespia, Jr. marks his 50th consecutive year in law enforcement this year. He has been South Kingstown’s Police Chief for 28 years, and prior to that served 22 years with the Rhode Island State Police, retiring as lieutenant in 1981. In 1959, when he became a trooper, the service weapon was a long-barreled revolver and his first assignment was on a motorcycle — with no radio. In 1981, when he was named South Kingstown’s chief, revolvers were still in vogue, although 9 millimeters were on the horizon. Faxes were new and rare, e-mail a medium of the future, and interoperable communication and patrol car laptops the stuff of science fiction.

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK AWARDS CEREMONY



Michael Pleshaw (IRS), Asst. U.S. Atty. Lee Vilker, Troy Niro (IRS), Alexander Rosania (HUD), Legal Assistant Paula Horsey, Cheryl Barnes and Susan Murphy (DOL) put together a case against Michael Macaruso, an asbestos contractor who extorted kickbacks from his workers.



U.S. v. David DiSanto: John C. McGehearty, Fatima Ash (RI AG), AUSA Milind Shah, Peter Cote, (HHS), and Cindy Soccio (RI AG) assembled a civil case against a doctor who overbilled for procedures and shortchanged Medicare and patients.



Diane Chabot, an EPA attorney, was one of the prosecutors of Southern Union, a utility company that abandoned toxic mercury at a site in Pawtucket. Also honored: Terrence Donnelly, Kevin Cassidy, Stephen Foster, Judy N. Carone, Vallie Byrdson, Libana Steele (DOJ), Stephen Creavin, Catherine Lavender, Regina McIntyre (EPA), Kurt Schatz, and Jack McIlmail (RI DEM)



James Bachman, Steve Souza (Postal), Russell Griffiths (FBI), AUSA Andrew Reich, Peter LaMonica (Postal), AUSA Lee Vilker, Troy Niro (IRS) and Craig Marech (Secret Service) worked on the prosecution of the principals involved in Mix-it-for-Me, a discount electronics firms that bilked customers out of millions in undelivered merchandise.

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