



*United States Attorney  
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**UNION LAWYER CHARGED WITH EMBEZZLING FROM  
AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE DANCERS AND STAGEHANDS**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and RALPH E. GERCHAK, the New York District Director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards ("DOL-OLMS"), announced today the arrest of long-time union lawyer LEONARD LEIBOWITZ for embezzling funds from the Independent Artists of America Union ("IAA"), a small independent union of approximately 80 dancers and stagehands at the American Ballet Theatre ("ABT") at Lincoln Center.

According to the Complaint filed in Manhattan federal court:

In 1994, ABT dancers and stagehands worked with LEIBOWITZ to found a new independent union, the IAA. LEIBOWITZ served as the union's attorney from its commencement until 2007. LEIBOWITZ's retainer for his services was initially \$2000 per month, eventually rising to \$3500 per month. The IAA averaged about \$80,000 per year in dues, which were deposited into a bank account over which LEIBOWITZ and certain other union officials had signatory authority. LEIBOWITZ had sole possession of the union checkbook until approximately 2005. In 1997, LEIBOWITZ told a union official he was having financial difficulties, and LEIBOWITZ's request for an advance on his retainer, understood by the union official to be for less than \$100,000, was approved by that official. Thereafter, from 1997 to 2005, LEIBOWITZ wrote IAA checks to himself, his law firm, and his wife, in the total amount of more than \$350,000, rather than take his retainer. In 2003, as a result of a DOL-OLMS audit, the union official who had approved the advance learned that it exceeded \$100,000, and DOL-

OLMS instructed the official and LEIBOWITZ that a formal loan agreement, which LEIBOWITZ said he would take care of, was required. In 2007, new union leadership learned that LEIBOWITZ owed the union approximately \$150,000, the difference between checks he had written for himself and his foregone retainers. New union leadership also reviewed reports the IAA filed with the DOL. The reports listed the "loan," but most of the union official signatures on the reports, which LEIBOWITZ was responsible for gathering, appear to have been forged, including certain signatures forged at LEIBOWITZ's request by the union official who had initially approved the advance. In early 2007, when confronted by new IAA leadership about his withdrawal of union funds for personal use, LEIBOWITZ stated, among other things, that by the year 2000 he realized that he had borrowed more than he could pay back and asked the union officials to "cut [him] some slack."

LEIBOWITZ, 70, is charged with one count of embezzlement of union funds, which carries a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison.

LEIBOWITZ surrendered to federal authorities this morning and is expected to be presented today in Manhattan federal court before United States Magistrate Judge JAMES C. FRANCIS IV.

Mr. DASSIN praised the work of the Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorney RUA M. KELLY is in charge of the prosecution.

The charge contained in the Complaint are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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