



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**UNION LAWYER PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO FALSIFYING RECORDS FILED ON BEHALF
OF AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE DANCERS AND STAGEHANDS**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that union lawyer LEONARD LEIBOWITZ pled guilty to one count of falsifying reports filed on behalf of 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. LEIBOWITZ pled guilty in Manhattan federal court before U.S. District Judge DENISE L. COTE.

According to the Indictment, the Complaint, and statements made in Manhattan federal court today:

In 1994, LEIBOWITZ, with ABT dancers and stagehands, founded a new independent union, the IAA. LEIBOWITZ served as the union's attorney from its inception through 2007. The IAA averaged about \$80,000 per year in dues from its members and those dues were deposited into a bank account that LEIBOWITZ controlled.

In 1997, LEIBOWITZ told a union official he was having financial difficulties and obtained an advance on his monthly retainer. It was later discovered that LEIBOWITZ wrote IAA checks totaling more than \$350,000 to himself, his law firm, and his former wife.

In 2007, new union leadership learned that LEIBOWITZ owed the union the difference between the checks he had written for himself and the retainers he was paid -- approximately \$150,000. New union leadership also reviewed annual reports the IAA was required to file with the U.S. Department of Labor -- reports that LEIBOWITZ helped prepare. While the reports listed the amount LEIBOWITZ had advanced himself each year as a "loan," the signatures on the reports from the union officials who purportedly had reviewed the forms had been forged in the names

of individuals who no longer served as union officers at the time the reports were filed. In addition, certain signatures were forged at LEIBOWITZ's request by the union officer who LEIBOWITZ initially told about his need for an advance.

When confronted by new IAA leadership about his withdrawal of union funds for personal use, LEIBOWITZ stated, among other things, that he needed the money because he owed money to the government, and his children attended private school. LEIBOWITZ also admitted that by 2000 he realized he had borrowed more than he could pay back.

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LEIBOWITZ, 72, of Highland Beach, Florida, faces a maximum sentence of one year in prison. As part of the plea agreement, he agreed to forfeit the proceeds of his crime and to pay restitution in the amount of \$76,071 to the American Guild of Musical Artists, which is the successor union to the IAA. In addition, LEIBOWITZ faces a maximum bar from representing a labor union of 13 years. He will be sentenced by Judge COTE on October 14, 2011, at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney CARRIE H. COHEN is in charge of the prosecution.

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