



## Today's Judicial Misfit is: New Hampshire Judge Patricia Coffey

### Judge Coffey's Crooked Attorney John

In 2005, Patricia's attorney-husband, John, was disbarred for swindling an elderly woman (Natalie Hopkins), 81 at the time and suffering from Alzheimer's out of her oceanfront cottage in 1998. (*The Eagle Tribune* – Aug. 31, 2007) Johnny Baby conveyed a deed on Ms. Hopkins' \$500,000 oceanfront property to allegedly settle \$30,000 in legal fees he claimed she owed him.

Attorney Bernard Pelech of Portsmouth facilitated the deed transfer and later testified that he thought Ms. Hopkins owed Johnny \$40,000 in past legal fees and that her oceanfront cottage worth \$500,000 would cover past legal fees and any future legal fees. Give me a break Bernie! Claiming you thought Mrs. Hopkins voluntarily agreed to pay Johnny \$460,000 in advance fees when she was debilitated and 81-years-old is pure bunk and you knew it to be when you testified. Unfortunately, Mr. Pelech continues to practice law in Portsmouth.

Subsequently, Court records proved that Ms. Hopkins actually owed Johnny Baby a mere \$5,035 when he swindled her. In other words, for every dollar Ms. Hopkins owed Johnny attempted to collect \$92.

Defrauding an 81-year-old woman suffering from Alzheimer's is truly disgusting. Unfortunately, this type of attorney fraud involving senior citizens is commonplace. In truth, Johnny should have been disemboweled in the public square in Rye and the event should have been televised so everyone could enjoy it. And while televising the event, they could have played that ol' ditty "Another one bites the dust."

### Sham Trust to Defraud Creditors



Trust me,  
I'm not a crook!

As a result of Johnny's disbarment, Patricia well knew that he would be ordered by the Supreme Court to ultimately pay for the costs (approximately \$75,000) associated with his disbarment.

While Johnny Baby was under investigation for defrauding Ms. Hopkins, Patricia was involved in creating a sham trust account to shield properties they jointly owned from his creditors. In so acting, Patricia assumed sole ownership of all jointly owned assets, thereby negating Johnny Baby's legal interest in them.

It is obvious to anyone with an I.Q. higher than the legal speed limit for semi-trucks on I-89 in Manchester that Patricia engaged in fraudulent concealment of Johnny's assets so that he could effectively plead poverty in regards to the \$75,000 he owed the Supreme Court. In addition, Patricia's fraudulent conduct was also aimed at shielding said assets from the heirs and/or family members of Ms. Hopkins in the event they and/or any other Johnny victims sued him.

In 2005, the Judicial Conduct Committee (JCC) filed a formal complaint against Patricia, charging her with fraud in concealing Johnny's assets. Four days after the PCC's final hearing

on Johnny's fraud involving Ms. Hopkins, Patricia and Johnny Baby executed legal documents establishing the "Coffey Family Revocable Trust," of which Patricia was the sole trustee and beneficiary. The trust included a "spendthrift provision" that prohibited any interference or control by any creditor, and that all payments would be free from the control or influence of any spouse (that'd be Johnny Baby). Patricia and Johnny then funded the trust with the following assets:

- 100% of the condo that served as Johnny's law office
- All furniture and furnishings and personal property from Johnny's law office
- Transferred their personal residence and piece of property located in Rye
- Transferred all household contents, furnishings, items of personal ornament (Halloween costumes?), and residual personal property and effects at their personal residence

On May 24, 2004, approximately five months after the Commission ruled against Johnny and let it be known it would seek reimbursement for costs, Patricia, as trustee, sold the Pioneer Road property for over \$400,000. Of course Patricia never provided notice to the PCC of this \$400,000 sale in order that it could promptly recover the \$75,000 Johnny owed. And she could ill afford to do so lest the Commission immediately discover that she had fraudulently transferred all of Johnny's assets into her name only.

On Sept. 7, 2005, the Commission sent an invoice to Johnny for expenses of about \$75,000 along with an affidavit financial form and letter requesting that he "propose a payment plan." The record proves that neither Johnny nor Patricia informed the PCC of the Trust and during this timeframe, the **Coffeys received \$10,000 from the sale of stock.**

On Oct. 31, 2005, approximately seven weeks after Johnny received the Commission's demand for payment and claimed he was unable to pay; Patricia sold Johnny's office condominium she had transferred to her Trust for \$240,000. After paying off the mortgage and various fees/costs, **Patricia netted \$176,689.96** from this sale. Again, Patricia neglected to inform the PCC of this sale and the proceeds she and Johnny realized.

On June 10, 2006, Patricia, as trustee of the Trust, obtained a refinance mortgage on the Washington Road property for \$280,000. After paying off the existing mortgage, as well as \$20,502 in credit card debt that the mortgagee required them to pay, **Johnny Baby and Patricia netted \$57,134.** Patricia then used the \$57,134 as follows:

- \$3,155 to settle Johnny's exclusive debt for Yellow Page advertisements
- \$3,300 for housing, auto and student loans for her adult son
- \$2,938 in property taxes + \$9,752 for 4 mortgage payments
- \$38,546 to pay contractors for work on the Washington Road residence

Again, neither Patricia nor Johnny Baby ever informed the PCC of their receipt of this **\$57,134 profit.** From 2004 until the end of 2006, Patricia and Johnny spent approximately \$260,000 on improvements on their Washington Road property as follows: (1) \$2,400 for a replacement faucet, vanity and sink from Ethan Allen, (2) \$5,755 for pressure treated lumber for a deck, and (3) tens of thousands on upgrading the kitchen. As of June 2006, Patricia and Johnny netted **\$243,823** by selling various properties and/or stocks, while at the same time Johnny, with Patricia's knowledge was pleading poverty to the JCC regarding his \$75,000 indebtedness.

### **Patricia's False Statements to Commission**



While giving testimony before the PCC, Patricia falsely testified that her "primary goal" in setting up the Trust in her name only was to spare her son of probate duties. Oh sure it was Patricia! Had nothing to do with defrauding Johnny's creditors, right?

Patricia went on to falsely state that the Trust was not setup because she and Johnny were concerned that some crazy client might sue for malpractice or for wrongs he committed in the past. What about Johnny defrauding Ms. Hopkins Patricia? You and Johnny weren't worried that her heirs might sue Johnny?

And of course it would be frivolous to assert that Ms. Hopkins was Johnny's first victim, right? This clearly was not an aberration on Johnny's part! It is obvious to me that Johnny dedicated his entire legal career to the "avoidance of propriety" and that he was able to do so with the able assistance of Patricia. To suggest that Patricia didn't know she was married for many years to a crooked lawyer is per se not worthy of belief. Patricia obviously had no problem in enjoying the financial fruits of Johnny's fraudulent behavior, right?

### Patricia's Hyperbolic (aka, BS) Defenses

In an inept attempt at levity, Patricia defended her fraudulent conduct by claiming that at the time of Johnny's disbarment proceedings, she was dealing with stressful family issues including a mother with Alzheimer's (another potential target for Johnny Baby, right?) and a father who had suffered an emotional breakdown.

Patricia had the chutzpah to tell the JCC that "When I participated in creating the trust, I was not thinking like a lawyer [bullshit!], and certainly not as a judge [more bullshit!], but rather I acted as a distraught wife and a concerned mother," she said. (*Foster's Daily Democrat*) She also said that she deliberately kept her distance from Johnny's disciplinary problems so that it wouldn't affect her work as a judge. She had the audacity to state that she only spoke to him about it twice.

When Carl Rove and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia were provided with Patricia's hyperbolic defenses, they responded as follows:



### Judicial Committee Recommendations of Punishment

As could be expected the apologists/enablers on the JCC recommended that Patricia be suspended for a **mere three (3) months without pay**. This despite the fact that Patricia had engaged in wonton fraud in an attempt to conceal Johnny's assets from his creditors. These certified enablers/apologists for judicial misfits in New Hampshire are as follows:

- Attorneys William Beaton, Jack Crisp, Donald Manning & Larry Gilpin
- Daniel Botsford, M.D. – Neurologist – Manchester
- John Clark – Ex-Clerk of Hampton Court
- Judges Ed Gordon, George Manias, Christina O'Neill, Brian Tucker & Michael Sullivan
- Jayme Simoes – non-attorney
- Mark Sykas – Former State Rep.

Ever wonder why Judicial Conduct Commissions are mostly made up of attorneys and judges and/or enablers beholdng to the Legal and/or Judicial Industries?

### Chief Enabler/Apologist John R. Clark of Hampton, NH



Judicial Conduct Committee member John Clark, ex-Clerk of the Hampton Court was appointed to the Committee by the New Hampshire Supreme Court. It is painfully clear to this writer that the sole reason for Clark's appointment was due to the fact that the Court well knew he could be relied upon to ignore judicial misconduct regardless of its egregious nature.

Mr. Clark found it acceptable to author a Dissenting Opinion

on Dec. 21, 2007 when his fellow enablers named above determined that Patricia only deserved to be suspended for three months. In his so-called dissent, Johnny made the following comments:

- There is no suggestion that the Patricia's creation of the trust was fraudulent
- At the time the trust was created, Patricia was suffering under a tremendous amount of stress due to publicity surrounding her husband's conduct
- Patricia's parents were in markedly declining health and was actively involved in their care
- The economic stability of her immediate family was impacted by the loss of her husband's income and mounting legal bills he incurred
- Patricia's conduct was merely an act of poor judgment
- Nobody suggested that Patricia's actions had in any way diminished public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary
- Patricia has publicly acknowledged her misconduct
- I disagree with the Panel's conclusion that Patricia's misconduct was of such gravity as to warrant formal disciplinary action
- I recommend that Patricia be admonished or reprimanded and not suspended
- Patricia was not treated fairly and equitably by the Committee

Johnny's claim that there was no suggestion that Patricia was involved in fraudulent conduct is contrary to the findings of the Supreme Court. To claim that Patricia's conduct was "an act of poor judgment" is of course preposterous! The only truthful comment by Johnny was his statement that Patricia's conduct did not "in any way diminish public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary. Praise the Lord; the truth will set you free!

Not only is Johnny an enabler, he's also ethically insolvent and intellectually deprived! In



Johnny's demented world, fraud committed by a judge is no big deal! Since Johnny was the Clerk in the Hampton Court for nearly thirty years, I suspect that he must have been witness to other frauds involving judges, which led him to believe such conduct was inconsequential.

Luckily for me, I discovered a photo of Johnny openly expressing his disdain for the public's opinion in regards to Patricia's egregious misconduct. In reality, Johnny is telling the public "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn!"

### **Patricia "double dipping" while on paid leave**

As preliminary punishment for his egregious misdeeds, Patricia was placed on leave with full pay on Aug. 29, 2007. In March 2008, Patricia applied to the Supreme Court to allow her to work in the private sector during her paid leave, which would have allowed her to earn 15% above her annual judicial salary of \$130,620 or about \$18,000. The Supreme Court denied Patricia's application.

As usual, Patricia didn't much give a damn about ethics in complying with the Supreme Court's denial. She then went out and accepted full time employment with a document retrieval service company located in New York City. When the Supreme Court discovered Patricia's misconduct, she agreed to a public censure for her misconduct in Oct. 2008.

On April 21, 2008, and only after the Supreme Court increased her suspension from three months to three years, Patricia resigned. Unfortunately, from Aug. 29, 2007 through April 21, 2008, the overtaxed citizens of New Hampshire were forced to be this louse \$2,512 a week for a total of \$80,000 in unearned and clearly undeserved income.

### **Patricia – former member of Judicial Conduct Committee**

For several years prior to the filing of formal charges against her, Patricia was a panel member of the Judicial Conduct Committee in New Hampshire. How laughable and lamentable is this? Talk about putting the fox in charge of the henhouse! Is it any wonder that Patricia felt

empathy for cases involving judicial misfits that were brought before the Committee during her tenure? I'm sure that Patricia's mantra was analogous to Sergeant Shultz's infamous comments "I see nothing, I hear nothing, I know nothing."

## **Dissent by Associate Justice Richard E. Galway**

It was quite comforting to read the dissent of Justice Richard Galway in regards to the Supreme Court's three-year suspension of Patricia. In his dissent, Justice Galway said:

- I disagree with the majority's three-year suspension
- It is impermissible for a judge's conduct to threaten the credibility of the court
- I would indefinitely suspend Coffey to protect the public and to maintain the integrity of the judiciary
- It is undeniable that Judge Coffey engaged in a continuous course of misconduct over a period of years
- Deception is antithetical to the role of a Judge who is sworn to uphold the law and seek the truth. [Quoting: *Matter of Collazo*, 691 N.E. 2d)
- By her actions, Coffey has demonstrated a continuing disregard for the integrity of the judicial system
- Without judges who follow the law themselves, the authority of the rule of law is compromised

The most salient and responsible comments by Judge Galway are:

- When one whose job it is to enforce the law, instead interferes with and disregards the law to own benefit, the public rightfully questions whether the judicial system itself is worthy of respect
- The sanction imposed must take into account the concerns of future litigants who appear before Judge Coffey and question why they would need to follow the rule of law that she imposes upon them when she herself has not followed the law.

Kudos to Justice Galway for having the courage and fortitude to say what his fellow justices refused to say and/or recognize.

## **Conclusion**

Unfortunately, Patricia was allowed to retain her law license in New Hampshire. I suppose it was only fair, right? After all, without a law license how would it be possible for Patricia (with the able assistance of her disbarred husband) to earn a dishonest living.

Sadly, the total dollar cost to the taxpayers of New Hampshire to rid themselves of this Ethical Dwarf (my apologies to dwarfs) cannot be fully ascertained. However, the costs of labor incurred by the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee likely exceeded \$100,000. When added to the \$80,000 salary Patricia received while on leave, it is highly likely that the true cost was in excess of \$250,000. A princely sum to say the least!

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