

6 Former Hudson County worker awarded \$406K in whistleblower lawsuit

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By Michaelangelo Conte/The Jersey Journal
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A former **Hudson County Youth House** worker has been awarded \$406,000 after claiming he was wrongfully fired for being a whistleblower about potentially dangerous juveniles being released into the community on home detention.

County officials said today that the jury verdict in Hudson County Superior Court and award are absurd, the judge

should have dismissed the matter, and an appeal will be pursued aggressively.

Joe Perry was a community youth worker from 2001 to 2007 when he was terminated. His job was to visit youths placed on home detention pending adjudication of the charges against them to ensure they were in compliance with the terms of their home detention, said Perry's attorney Brian Curley.

After being fired Perry sued the county and a number of youth house officials saying he was terminated because he sent out letters saying he and the community were being placed in danger because juveniles accused of serious crimes, including homicide, were being released into the community.

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In the suit, he alleged overcrowding at the youth house in 2005 and 2006 was at the root of potentially dangerous defendants being released pending adjudication of their cases. He said he was fired wrongfully because he sent out letters on the issue to the state Juvenile Justice Commission, officials at the youth house and other county officials, Curley said.

The attorney said the verdict shows "the jury accepted our theory of the case."

But Hudson County spokesman Jim Kennelly said it was "a botched trial that led to a terrible verdict which the people of Hudson County should not have to pay for."

Kennelly said overcrowding at the Youth House was not a problem at the time cited by Perry and it is not a problem currently. He stressed that youth house officials do not decide who is released into the community.

"This is not a heroic whistleblower," Kennelly said today. "This is someone who went through multiple warnings and was then terminated for not doing his job. At the end of the process he put a letter out to his superiors about something they had no control over."

Kennelly said Perry did his job for five years and knew his role was to ensure juvenile defendants released by judges were adhering to terms of release set by judges. The spokesman said the termination had nothing to do with retaliation or whistle blowing, as his superiors had no power to release defendants even if there was overcrowding.

Kennelly said the jury should have seen that Perry had not been whistle-blowing against his superiors and he emphasizing that the Feb. 17 verdict will be appealed.

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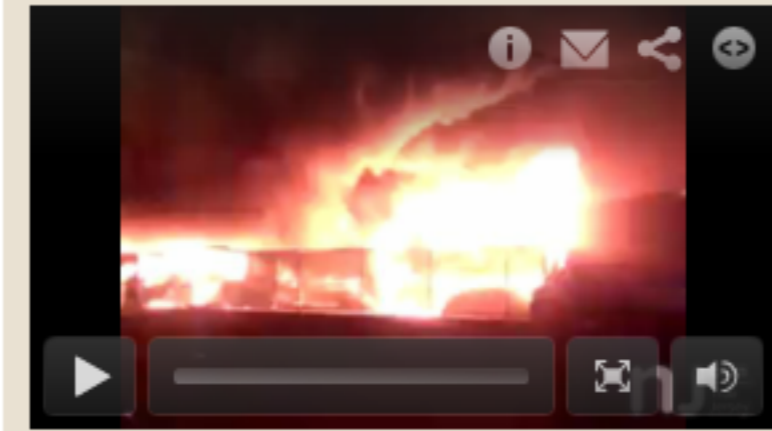
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cynic Mar 3, 2011
 It's a botched trial because of the inept staff of the prosecutor's office, as always. When they can't cut a deal, they fail miserably from lack of experience or ability.

noyousaidyouwerearitespider Mar 3, 2011
 Jim Kennelly said it was "a botched trial that led to a terrible verdict which the people of Hudson County should not have to pay for."
 AS LONG AS WE ALL KNOW JIM KENNELLY IS AN ACTOR READING A SCRIPT! THE BREAK DOWN OF THIS ARTICLE IS THAT (THE TRUTH GOT OUT! HOW COULD THE COUNTY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO KEEP THIS QUIET? HUDSON COUNTY IS THE MOST CORRUPT ORGANIZATION AROUND. THIS IS SIMPLY THE TRUTH FROM THE INSIDE. I REFUSE TO ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS THAN A FAIR AND PROFESSIONAL GOVERNMENT TO REPRESENT US. DEGISE HAS HIS HAND UP KENNELLY'S BUTT BECAUSE HE IS A PUPPET LIKE THE REST OF THEM. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN A MAN WAS NOT AFRAID TO STAND UP FOR WHAT WAS RIGHT? NOT JUST WHAT A BOSS TOLD HIM. I'LL TELL YOU ! HUDSON COUNTY RETALIATED AGAINST ALL OF THEM AND HAD THEM WRONGFULLY TERMINATED! YES THERE ARE SEVERE CONSEQUENCES TO SPEAKING THE TRUTH. GUESS WHAT? SOMEONE HAS TO HAVE THE BALLS TO DO IT, IF YOU COWARDS DONT. DING, NEXT ROUND HUDSON COUNTY IS STAGGERING!
 STAY STRONG JOE P. WE KNOW THE TRUTH

dutchact Mar 2, 2011
 Mike Conte, please follow up by telling us who the attorney for the county was. If the county, through their spokesman, claims the trial was botched, are there repercussions for the county's attorney? The attorney is either an employee of the county legal department, or an outside attorney retained at big cost. Either way, besides appealing the verdict and award, do they fire the attorney (if an employee), or no longer use him/her if its outside counsel? As taxpayers, we should know who was responsible for the botched job, which will cost us \$406,000. If its an outside attorney, what did it cost us in fees?

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