

**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2024 5:03 PM  
**To:** 'joyce.miles@lockportjournal.com'; 'cheryl.phillips@lockportjournal.com';  
'matt.winterhalter@lockportjournal.com'; 'contactus@lockportjournal.com';  
'ngedit@niagara-gazette.com'  
**Cc:** 'mark.scheer@niagara-gazette.com'  
**Subject:** RECTIFYING your NON-EXISTENT investigative reporting & NO REPORTING of  
the D.A., state legislative, and judicial races in the "Western New York"  
counties of your coverage

**Attachments:** [7-18-24-daasny-notice-complaint.pdf](#);  
[7-17-24-complaint-vs-soares-to-albany-ethics.pdf](#);  
[7-17-24-transmittal-to-soares.pdf](#)

**TO:** [Lockport Union-Sun & Journal](#) & [Niagara Gazette](#)  
**Cheryl Phillips, Publisher**  
**Matt Winterhalter, Managing Editor**  
**Joyce Miles, Group News Editor**

The below is self-explanatory – and your response is invited, indeed, urged, as relates to your own reporting, investigative reporting – and editorializing.

As always, I am available to assist you, to the max, in discharging your professional and ethical duties. You can call me, anytime, no matter how early or late.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
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**To:** 'Jim Heaney' <[jheaney@investigativepost.org](mailto:jheaney@investigativepost.org)>; 'sschulman@investigativepost.org' <[sschulman@investigativepost.org](mailto:sschulman@investigativepost.org)>; 'gkelly@investigativepost.org' <[gkelly@investigativepost.org](mailto:gkelly@investigativepost.org)>; 'brushton@investigativepost.org' <[brushton@investigativepost.org](mailto:brushton@investigativepost.org)>; 'ijaciel@investigativepost.org' <[ijaciel@investigativepost.org](mailto:ijaciel@investigativepost.org)>; 'jdshoemaker@investigativepost.org' <[jdshoemaker@investigativepost.org](mailto:jdshoemaker@investigativepost.org)>; 'glooker@investigativepost.org' <[glooker@investigativepost.org](mailto:glooker@investigativepost.org)>; 'slawson@investigativepost.org' <[slawson@investigativepost.org](mailto:slawson@investigativepost.org)>; 'info@investigativepost.org' <[info@investigativepost.org](mailto:info@investigativepost.org)>; 'mark.scheer@niagara-gazette.com' <[mark.scheer@niagara-gazette.com](mailto:mark.scheer@niagara-gazette.com)>  
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**Subject: RECTIFYING your NON-EXISTENT investigative reporting & NO REPORTING of the D.A., state legislative, and judicial races in the "Western New York" counties of your coverage**

**TO: [INVESTIGATIVE POST](#)**

**Jim Heaney, Editor & Executive Director**  
**Sue Schulman, Assistant Editor**  
**Geoff Kelly, Local Government & Politics**  
**Bruce Rushton, Criminal Justice**  
**L'Jaz Ja'ciel, Criminal Justice**

I received no response from you or from Mr. Scheer and editors/management at [Niagara Gazette](#) to my below August 16, 2024 e-mail, with the above-three attachments, pertaining to the corruption, in office, of Assemblyman Michael Norris, covered-up by Niagara County D.A. Brian Seaman, both on the ballot uncontested – Norris now for a Supreme Court judgeship, Seaman for re-election as D.A. – both enriching themselves by salaries they know to be the product of fraud and which, by their corruption, in office, they have enabled.

It was Mr. Scheer's August 14<sup>th</sup> article "[Lockport Assemblyman Norris in line for a judgeship](#)" in the [Niagara Gazette](#), then published, largely unchanged, by [Investigative Post](#) on August 15<sup>th</sup> as "[Four judgeships, four cross-endorsed candidates](#)" that prompted my August 16<sup>th</sup> e-mail.

By then, the [Niagara Gazette](#) had, unbeknownst to me, already published its editorial "[Norris' judicial candidacy is not cause for celebration](#)", scolding Norris for his deceit to the voters that enabled party leaders to hand-pick who would replace him as a candidate for the Assembly. Nevertheless, [Niagara Gazette](#) put its imprimatur to his uncontested candidacy for Supreme Court, in publishing, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Scheer's "[Move to judge means loss of outside income for Assemblyman Mike Norris](#)". So, too, the [Investigative Post](#), by republishing it, three days later, essentially unchanged, as "[This Assemblyman makes a lot of money on the side](#)". Concealed, *in toto*, by these duplicative articles was Norris' corruption as an assemblyman involving his legislative salary and the salaries of judges, of which he is now going to be one. No mention that these salaries are the product of fraud. No mention, either, of D.A. Seaman or that his salary is also the product of fraud. Rather, the only mention of a Seaman was Daniel Seaman, Norris' law partner, without revealing that his son is D.A. Brian Seaman who, were he not conflicted and corrupt, would have immediately opened a criminal investigation into the collusion of the political parties in subverting elections in Niagara County and the seven other counties of the Eighth Judicial District – these being, presumably, within your "Buffalo and Western New York" region of coverage.

Can you explain how your "[Move to judge means loss of outside income for Assemblyman Mike Norris](#)" – whose publication changed NOTHING and was intended to change NOTHING – was anything other than "fake news" or, more accurately, journalistic fraud, in light of your own knowledge and the information I

had furnished you, including by my five e-mails to you, from August 8<sup>th</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>, focused on the D.A. races in the five counties of the Eighth Judicial District and the incumbent state legislators of those counties, most running for re-election, against whom I had filed with the D.A.s the above-[July 18, 2024 public corruption/grand jury complaint](#) pertaining, in the first instance, to their complicity in the most recent round of fraudulent judicial and D.A. pay raises:

- my [August 8, 2024 e-mail](#) entitled ""YOUR 2024 ELECTIONS REPORTING: Erie County D.A. Candidates Keane & Gardner -- & Erie County's 13 re-election-seeking state legislative incumbents, etc."
- my [August 13, 2024 e-mail](#) entitled "INFORMING THE VOTERS: Niagara County's re-election-seeking D.A. Seaman & its 4 re-election-seeking state legislators, etc."
- my [August 14, 2024 email](#) entitled "INFORMING THE VOTERS: Orleans County's D.A. Candidate Howard & its 2 State Legislators Ortt & Hawley, etc."
- my [August 14, 2024 e-mail](#) entitled "INFORMING THE VOTERS: Chautauqua County's Re-election-Seeking Candidates D.A. Schmidt & State Senator Borrello, etc."
- my [August 15, 2024 e-mail](#) entitled "INFORMING THE VOTERS: Wyoming County's Acting D.A. Hemming & State Senator Borrello, etc."

To these five e-mails, I had also received no responses from you. Why is that? And why is it that as of this date – a full month later – a “search” of the [Investigative Post](#)’s website reveals NO reporting, at all, of D.A. Seaman’s uncontested re-election to be Niagara County D.A. – or of his record in office. Nor have I found anything on your website about the uncontested D.A. races in Chautauqua County, in Wyoming County, in Orleans County. Nor even of the sham D.A. contest in Erie County. Likewise, nothing, apparently, about the uncontested and contested state legislative races in these five counties, to which my e-mails had alerted you.

How is this in keeping with what the [Investigative Post](#)’s [website](#) purports:

“Investigative Post is playing an outsized role in providing Buffalo and Western New York with in-depth public interest journalism that makes for an informed citizenry. ...Investigative Post is the only news organization in WNY dedicated exclusively to watchdog journalism. We produce fact-based, nonpartisan investigative stories and analyses on issues that matter to the citizens and taxpayers of Buffalo and WNY.”

Remarkably, in view of this self-promotion, even the [Buffalo News](#)’ superficial and materially-misleading September 1, 2024 article "[Completely undemocratic: Once again, WNY voters lack choice in state judge races](#)" and its September 10, 2024 editorial "[New York's system for choosing judges is, to say the least, problematic](#)" have, apparently, not prompted any follow-up by the [Investigative Post](#), either as to judicial races – which is solely what the [Buffalo News](#) article and editorial are about – let alone as to what prevails in D.A. and state legislative races.

For my part, immediately after concluding my below August 16<sup>th</sup> e-mail with the words, “There is so much more – but I will wait until I speak with you, so as not to further overwhelm you. Call me, I am available, no matter how early or late”, I began assembling that “so much more” for each of the 14 New York

counties having D.A. elections this year, starting with the five counties within the Eighth Judicial District, posting it on [CJA's webpages for this year's 14 D.A. elections](#). As the days passed, without calls from you, Mr. Scheer, or anyone else, I embodied what I had done into separate "Guides for Local Journalism", which I posted on each of the 14 county webpages.

For your convenience, here are the five guides for the five counties of the Eighth Judicial District with D.A. races:

[GUIDE FOR NIAGARA COUNTY "LOCAL JOURNALISM"](#)

[GUIDE FOR ERIE COUNTY "LOCAL JOURNALISM"](#)

[GUIDE FOR WYOMING COUNTY "LOCAL JOURNALISM"](#)

[GUIDE FOR ORLEANS COUNTY "LOCAL JOURNALISM"](#)

[GUIDE FOR CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY "LOCAL JOURNALISM"](#).

Also, in anticipation of your calls that never came, I had created, as part of CJA's 2024 elections webpages, separate pages for [uncontested state legislative races \(74 out of 213\)](#) and [uncontested and contested judicial races](#).

If, based on this e-mail, you are not planning to investigate and report on this fully documented, public corruption story impacting on ALL the 2024 races within "Buffalo and Western New York" for D.A.s, state legislative seats, and for judgeships from supreme court down to city court, please advise why and IMMEDIATELY forward this e-mail to ALL members of your [Board of Directors](#) so that they can be apprised of the situation and direct you, consistent with [Investigative Post's](#) mission and status as a nonprofit news organization, receiving public and philanthropic support and tax exemptions.

In the event you did not previously furnish the Board members with my [June 16, 2023 complaint](#) against the [Investigative Post](#) to the [Institute for Public News \(INN\)](#), as my [transmitting July 17, 2023 e-mail](#) to you had requested, the links are now furnished so that Board members will conveniently have both. I had not record of any response from you or them to the complaint, with its substantiating [four linked "Case Studies"](#) of the [Investigative Post](#)

Meantime, I am cc'ing INN by way of follow-up and supplement to the June 16, 2023 complaint. I will separately forward this e-mail to the editors/management of [Niagara Gazette](#), to which I will cc you.

As always, I am available to assist you, to the max, in discharging your mission and professional and ethical duties. You can call me, anytime, no matter how early or late.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
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**Subject: Your Aug 14-15th articles in Niagara Gazette & Investigative Post MUST be the starting point for an expose of how Niagara County's corrupt public officers, collude with its corrupt political parties, to render Niagara County elections completely sham.**

**TO: Mark Scheer/Niagara Gazette – Investigative Post**

Your August 14<sup>th</sup> article "[Lockport Assemblyman Norris in line for a judgeship](#)" (Niagara Gazette) and August 15<sup>th</sup> article "[Four judgeships, four cross-endorsed candidates](#)" (Investigative Post), must be the starting point for an expose of how corrupt public officers aid and abet each other, including by fraudulent salary raises, and, in collusion with corrupt political parties, disenfranchise voters and render elections completely sham.

I can assist you with a mountain of primary-source, documentary EVIDENCE. To begin with, Assemblyman Norris corrupted his office as a state legislator – and D.A. Seaman has protected him, since 2020, when Seaman was running to be elected D.A. Here's my [August 24, 2020 e-mail to Seaman](#), specifically inquiring about his conflict-of-interest pertaining to Norris – who, with his fellow Niagara County state legislators, was the subject of my [June 18, 2020 grand jury/public corruption complaint to then Niagara County D.A. Wojtaszek](#). Seaman ignored the e-mail and, following his election as Niagara D.A., ignored my [January 19, 2021 e-mail](#) resubmitting to him the grand jury/public corruption complaint and my [July 27, 2020 FOIL request](#), to which I had received a shocking and incriminating [September 18, 2020 response from D.A. Wojtaszek](#).

Likewise, D.A. Seaman ignored my above-attached July 18, 2024 grand jury/public corruption complaint, also against Niagara County state legislators, Norris among them – and this is the subject of my below August 13<sup>th</sup> e-mail to the [Niagara Gazette/Lockport Union-Sun Journal](#) that I sent shortly after speaking with Group News Editor Miles – and which, by an earlier [August 13<sup>th</sup> e-mail](#), I had sent to the [Investigative Post](#).

With respect to the July 18, 2024 grand jury/public corruption complaint, its EVIDENCE includes four e-mails to Norris, in four different legislative capacities, all containing, in their titles, "...ALERT: \$34.6M at

pp. 18-19 of Budget Bill #S.8301/A.8801 must be stricken, as it is the product of statutory violations & fraud by the Commission on Legislative, Judicial & Executive Compensation":

- [my January 19, 2024 e-mail to Norris as a member of the Assembly Judiciary Committee](#)
- [my January 19, 2024 e-mail to Norris as a member of the Assembly Ways & Means Committee](#)
- [my January 24, 2024 e-mail to Norris as member fo the Assembly Rules Committee](#)
- [my January 24, 2024 e-mail to Norris as a member of the Assembly Minority Leadership](#)

There is so much more – but I will wait until I speak with you, so as not to further overwhelm you. Call me, I am available, no matter how early or late.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
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**Cc:** 'brian.seaman@niagaracounty.com' <[brian.seaman@niagaracounty.com](mailto:brian.seaman@niagaracounty.com)>

**Subject: INFORMING THE VOTERS: Niagara County's re-election-seeking D.A. Seaman & its 4 re-election-seeking state legislators, etc.**

**TO:** [Lockport Union-Sun & Journal](#) & [Niagara Gazette](#)

Cheryl Phillips, Publisher  
Matt Winterhalter, Managing Editor  
Joyce Miles, Group News Editor

The duty of the Niagara County D.A. is to enforce New York's penal laws and obey conflict of interest protocols. That is the subject of the Center for Judicial Accountability's above-attached July 18, 2024 grand jury/public corruption complaint to Niagara County D.A. Brian Seaman, sent to him by the below e-mail. It involves his \$221,100 D.A. salary, statutorily-linked to the Niagara county court judge salary, \$101,300 of which is the product of three "false instrument", penal law-violating commission reports that Niagara County's four state legislators, Senate Minority Leader Robert Ortt and Assemblymen William

Conrad, Michael Norris, Esq., and Angelo Morinello, Esq., each running for re-election, are knowledgeable of and complicit in.

D.A. Seaman is himself running for re-election, unopposed, on the Republican and Conservative lines, for which he faced no primary challenge on either line. Likewise, how is it possible that Senate Minority Leader Ortt is running for re-election unopposed, on Republican and Conservative lines for which he faced no primary for either line – and that Assemblyman William Conrad is running for re-election unopposed, on Democratic and Working Families lines for which he faced no primary for either line. As for Assemblymen Norris and Morinello, each running for re-election on both Republican and Conservative lines, they also faced no primary for either line.

I received no response from D.A. Seaman to the July 18, 2024 grand jury/public corruption complaint, which requested his response by August 1, 2024 to two simple questions:

- (1) whether he would be repudiating the \$101,300 salary difference and advising Niagara County to secure a judicial declaration voiding the three “false instrument”, penal law-violating commission reports?;
- (2) whether he would be recusing himself from the July 18, 2024 grand jury/public corruption complaint and securing an independent prosecutor?

As D.A. Seaman will surely be more responsive to inquiries from the Lockport Union Sun & Journal & Niagara Gazette, I am cc'ing him.

Please call me so that we can discuss these two questions and your election reporting and editorializing about Niagara County's D.A. race, state legislative races, and judicial races – all involving “false instrument”, penal law-violating salaries for these offices.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
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Cc: 'morgan.bitton@daasny.org' <[morgan.bitton@daasny.org](mailto:morgan.bitton@daasny.org)>

**Subject: NOTICE & grand jury/public corruption complaint -- Your D.A. salary increases, the judicial salary increases on which they are based, & the violations of NY penal laws by state legislators within your jurisdictions**



**District Attorneys Association of the State of New York (DAASNY)**

**ATT: President/Richmond County D.A. Michael McMahon  
NYS' 61 Other D.A. and Acting D.A. Members**

Above-attached are CJA's July 18, 2024 NOTICE & grand jury/public corruption complaint and underlying July 17, 2024 ethics complaint to the Albany County Ethics Commission against Albany County D.A. Soares and its accompanying transmittal letter to him.

So that I may be guided accordingly, please let me hear from each of you by no later than two weeks from today, August 1, 2024, with respect to both the NOTICE and July 18, 2024 grand jury/public corruption complaint, herewith filed with you.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
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