

# CENTER FOR APPELLATE LITIGATION

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Chief Defender & Colleague

**From:** Bob Dean

**Date:** March 15, 2018

**Subject:** Attached

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Here is a list of significant criminal cases pending in the New York Court of Appeals and the issues presented. Cases that the Court has selected for SSM consideration are generally not included. Leave grants were to the defendant unless otherwise noted.

The Center does this update every two months for its own attorney staff. As a matter of professional courtesy, we also send it to Chief Defenders who do substantial appellate work. Feel free to distribute copies to any members of your staff. This update is also available on our web site ([www.appellate-litigation.org](http://www.appellate-litigation.org)).

Although every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the summaries, no express or implied guarantees are made. If your office is handling one or more of these cases and wishes to share some insight not apparent from the intermediate appellate court decision or the Clerk's summary of issues, please feel free to contact me. Your input will be added to the next edition.

We offer a special feature to our online visitors. Our online "Eye on Eagle" section (NYCA link) includes pdf links to all decided cases, and, for selected cases, a short CAL blog flagging what we think is important or noteworthy about the cases.

Happy reading!

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**CRIMINAL CASES CURRENTLY PENDING IN  
THE NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS**

**I. Cases Awaiting Decision**

People v. Michael Johnson

AD2 order dated May 18, 2016, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 139 AD3d 967, 34 NYS3d 62. Hall, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave August 5, 2016. Argued February 6, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether the defendant's post-arrest statements were voluntary, even though there was a 33-hour delay between arrest and arraignment, where the People produced no evidence that defendant was provided with food, water, or bathroom access during this period. (2) The denial of a missing witness charge as to the complainant's son, an eyewitness. (3) The denial of a mistrial in response to improper testimony. (4) Delayed disclosure of Rosario material. (Assigned counsel: De Nice Powell & Lynn W.L. Fahey, Appellate Advocates, 111 John Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10038.)

People v. Nicolas Brooks

AD1 order dated December 22, 2015, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 134 AD3d 574, 23 NYS3d 26. Pigott, J., granted leave July 1, 2016. Argued February 7, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether the trial court erred in granting the People's motion for a Frye hearing to challenge the defense expert witness, where the proposed testimony did not involve novel science. (2) Whether the trial court erred in restricting the defense expert's opinion as to cause of death. (3) Testimony by friends of the victim as to her hearsay statements about what a bad boyfriend the defendant was.

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People v. Raymond Crespo

AD1 order dated November 10, 2016, reversing judgment of conviction. Decision below: 144 AD3d 461, 40 NYS3d 423. Stein, J., granted leave to People March 6, 2017. Argued February 8, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the trial court erred in summarily denying the defendant's unequivocal requests to go pro se, just because they were made after the start of jury selection. (Assigned counsel for defendant: Ben Schatz and Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Spence Silburn

AD2 order dated December 14, 2016, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 145 AD3d 799, 43 NYS3d 461. Stein, J., granted leave March 20, 2017. Argued February 8, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether the trial court violated defendant's right to self-representation by denying his request to proceed pro se with standby counsel. (2) Whether the trial court properly denied the admission of defendant's psychiatric history into evidence, on the ground that no notice of his intent to present psychiatric evidence had been filed (CPL §250.10), even though defendant sought to introduce such evidence solely to show that defendant's statements to the police were not knowing and voluntary. (Assigned counsel: Alexis A. Ascher & Lynn W.L. Fahey, Appellate Advocates, 111 John St., 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10038.)

People v. Rafael Perez

AD1 order dated August 4, 2016, modifying judgment of conviction by remanding for a YO determination, and otherwise affirming the judgment of conviction. Decision below: 142 AD3d 410, 37 NYS3d 243. Gische, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave November 29, 2016. Argued February 13, 2018.

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**ISSUES PRESENTED:** (1) Whether police officers on a vertical patrol in a NYCHA building were justified in stopping and ultimately frisking a man who merely sought to avoid contact with them. (2) Whether a Rudolph resentencing unsequences a defendant for predicate felony adjudication purposes. (Assigned counsel: Seymour James, Jr., Legal Aid Society Criminal Appeals Bureau, 199 Water Street, NYC 10038.)

People v. Teri W.

AD1 order dated September 29, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 142 AD3d 924, 37 NYS3d 890. DiFiore, Ch. J., granted leave December 30, 2016. Argued February 14, 2018.

**ISSUE PRESENTED:** The defendant was adjudicated a youthful offender for first-degree sexual abuse. Whether the court properly imposed a 10-year term of probation rather than a 5-year term (see People v. Gray, 2 AD3d 275). (Assigned counsel: Seymour James, Jr., Legal Aid Society Criminal Appeals Bureau, 199 Water Street, NYC 10038.)

**II. Cases Scheduled For Argument**

People v. Mark Nonni

AD1 order dated November 5, 2015, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 135 AD3d 52, 20 NYS3d 345. Manzanet-Daniels, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave March 17, 2016. To be argued March 20, 2018.

**ISSUES PRESENTED:** (1) Did the court violate O’Rama when it failed to alert counsel to the contents of the substantive jury notes, either prior to bringing the jury in, or after. (2) Did the police, who were investigating a burglary report which contained no description of the suspect, have a “founded suspicion” that the defendant was involved in the burglary based merely on his presence near the burglary scene? Alternatively, did the police constitutionally search inside the defendant’s pocket after detaining him? (Assigned counsel: Matthew Bova & Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall

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Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.) (Leave also granted to co-defendant, Lawrence Parker.)

People v. William Morrison

AD4 order dated March 24, 2017, reversing judgment of conviction. Decision below: 148 AD3d 1707, 50 NYS3d 673. Peradotto, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave to People March 22, 2017. To be argued March 20, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: O’Rama (78 NY3d 270) - (1) Whether the jury notes were merely “ministerial,” so that the O’Rama protocols did not apply; the notes indicated difficulty in reaching a verdict and the jurors were “not sure what to do.” (2) Whether a reconstruction hearing is appropriate where the record is ambiguous as to whether the court provided counsel with notice of the jury notes.

People v. Kerri Roberts

AD1 order dated April 7, 2016, modifying judgment of conviction by vacating and dismissing identity theft conviction and otherwise affirming. Decision below: 138 AD3d 461, 29 NYS3d 305. Pigott, J., granted leave to People November 1, 2016. To be argued March 22, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: The sufficiency of the evidence of identity theft, where the defendant used the victim’s personal information, but did not assume her identity. (Assigned counsel for defendant: John Vang and Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Terri J. Rush

AD4 order dated March 24, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 148 AD3d 1601, 51 NYS3d 290. Stein, J., granted leave August 7, 2017. To be argued March 22, 2018.

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**ISSUES PRESENTED:** (1) Whether the phrase “assumes the identity of another person” is a discrete element of identity theft. (2) Whether the deprivation of a public trial during the seating of the first 21 prospective jurors for voir dire was too trivial to warrant reversal. (Assigned counsel: Timothy P. Donaher, Monroe County Public Defender, 10 N. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, NY 14614.)

**People v. Donald Odum**

AT1 order dated December 23, 2016, affirming suppression of evidence of refusal to take a breathalyzer test and the subsequent test results. Decision below: 54 Misc. 3d 128(A); 2016 WL 7434671. Fahey, J., granted leave to People June 13, 2017. To be argued March 27, 2018.

**ISSUE PRESENTED:** Whether the defendant’s consent to take the breathalyzer test was involuntary, where the officer inaccurately told the defendant that if he refused to take the test, then his license would be suspended and his refusal would be used against him in court; more than two hours has passed since the defendant’s arrest when this warning was given. (Assigned counsel: V. Marika Meis, The Bronx Defenders, 360 East 161st Street, Bronx, N.Y. 10451).

**People v. Sergey Aleynikov**

AD1 order dated January 24, 2017, reversing order setting aside the guilty verdict for the unlawful use of scientific material (PL §165.07). Decision below: 148 AD3d 77, 48 NYS3d 9. Fahey, J., granted leave April 20, 2017. To be argued March 27, 2018.

**ISSUE PRESENTED:** Sufficiency of the evidence. Defendant created a digital copy of his employer’s secret high frequency source code and saved it to a German server, and shared it with a new employer, a potential competitor. Did he make a “tangible reproduction or representation” of the code, despite the fact that the reproduction remained digital and was not reduced to paper? The Appellate Division said yes. Did he intend to “appropriate” the property by “permanently” exercising control over it, as opposed to merely borrowing it? The Appellate Division said yes.

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People v. Matthew Kuzdzal

AD4 order dated November 18, 2016, reversing judgment of conviction. Decision below: 144 AD3d 1618, 42 NYS3d 507. Peradotto, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave to People February 16, 2017. To be argued March 28, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the trial court erred in summarily refusing to make inquiry of two jurors overheard making disparaging comments about the defendant during a court recess.

People v. Akeem Wallace

AD4 order dated February 10, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 147 AD3d 1494, 47 NYS3d 603. Lindley, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave February 10, 2017. To be argued March 28, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the “place of business” exception of PL §265.03(3) should apply to a McDonald’s restaurant manager who brought an unlicensed handgun to work and accidentally shot himself in the leg, in a situation where employees were prohibited from bringing firearms to work.

People v. Twanek Cummings

AD1 order dated December 8, 2016, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 145 AD3d 490, 43 NYS3d 293. Fahey, J., granted leave March 31, 2017. To be argued March 28, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the substituted trial judge not only lacked the power to overrule his predecessor in admitting a hearsay accusation against appellant, but whether the substituted judge’s ruling that the hearsay qualified as an excited utterance constituted error - which, in the context of this circumstantial case on the perpetrator’s identity, warrants reversal of the judgment. (Assigned counsel: Susan Salomon and Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

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People v. Bryan Henry

AD2 order dated November 16, 2016, modifying judgment of conviction by reversing conviction for murder and related counts, suppressing statements to law enforcement related to the murder, and ordering a new trial on those counts, while affirming on a fifth-degree marijuana possession count. Decision below: 144 AD3d 940, 41 NYS3d 527. Stein, J., granted leave to People April 13, 2017. To be argued April 25, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Where defendant was represented by counsel on a marijuana possession charge, whether the suppression of a subsequent statement to police when he was later arrested on a related matter (robbery) could be reviewed by the Appellate Division. (It said no, citing People v. Concepcion, 17 NY3d 192.) And (2), whether, since the uncounseled interrogation of defendant about the robbery was improper, the interrogation about a murder related to the robbery must be suppressed. (The Appellate Division yes, citing People v. Grant, 91 NY2d 989.) (Assigned counsel for defendant: Judah Maltz, 125-10 Queens Blvd., Suite 12, Kew Gardens, NY 11415.)

People v. Roque Silvagnoli

AD1 order dated June 6, 2017, reversing judgment of conviction. 151 AD3d 443, 57 NYS3d 127. Mazzarelli, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave to People August 29, 2017. To be argued April 25, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: The propriety of a detective questioning a defendant in a homicide investigation (in which he was not represented by counsel) about a drug charge in which he was represented by counsel. The majority reversed and suppressed the statement, since the questioning about the drug case, although “brief and flippant,” was not “discrete and fairly separable” from the homicide investigation. (Assigned counsel for defendant: Seymour W. James, The Legal Aid Society, 199 Water Street, NY, NY 10005.)



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People v. Natascha Tiger

AD2 order dated March 1, 2017, reversing denial of CPL 440.10 motion and remanding for a hearing on the motion. Garcia, J., granted leave to People August 15, 2017. To be argued April 26, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether a freestanding claim of actual innocence is cognizable under CPL 440.10 (1)(h). (2) Whether a defendant who has pleaded guilty may assert a freestanding actual innocence claim.

People v. Gary Thibodeau

AD4 order dated June 9, 2017, affirming denial of CPL 440.10 motion. Decision below: 151 AD3d 1548, 56 NYS3d 669. Centra, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave August 3, 2017. To be argued April 26, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) The denial of the 440 claim alleging a Brady violation. (2) The denial of the claim of newly discovered evidence. (3) The claim of “actual innocence.”

People v. Theodore Wilson

AD2 order dated February 1, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 147 AD3d 793, 45 NYS3d 800. Rivera, J., granted leave June 20, 2017. To be argued May 1, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) The sufficiency of the evidence of depraved indifference. (2) The court’s response to a jury note. (Assigned counsel: Mark W. Vorkink & Lynn W.L. Fahey, Appellate Advocates, 111 John St., 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10038.)

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People v. Princesam Bailey

AD1 order dated March 21, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 148 AD3d 547, 50 NYS3d 53. Fahey, J., granted leave June 29, 2017. To be argued May 1, 2018.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether a juror who yelled at defense counsel for using a racial epithet as a strategy in cross-examination rendered the juror “grossly unqualified,” and whether the court should have made an individual inquiry of the juror. (2) The admission of extensive gang-related testimony. (Assigned counsel: Christina Swarns, Office of the Appellate Defender, 11 Park Place, Suite 1601, NYC 10007.)

**III. Cases Waiting to be Scheduled**

People v. William Harris

AT2 order dated November 28, 2016, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 53 Misc.3d 153 (A), 2016 WL 7164870. Fahey, J., granted leave March 13, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the court’s refusal to allow summations at the conclusion of a bench trial in a local criminal court (CPL §350.10 (3)(c)) violated the defendant’s right to the effective assistance of counsel and the right to present a defense.

People v. Saylor Suazo

AD1 order dated January 3, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 146 AD3d 423, 45 NYS3d 31. DiFiore, Ch.J., granted leave June 15, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether defendant was entitled to jury trial, under the 6th Amendment and the New York State Constitution, even though charged with a Class B misdemeanor, since conviction would result in deportation, making the charge a “serious” one. (Assigned counsel: Mark Zeno and Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

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People v. Brian Hakes

AD3 order dated October 20, 2016, reversing probation revocation, and remanding. Decision below: 143 AD3d 1054, 39 NYS3d 299. DiFiore, Ch.J., granted leave to People April 21, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether County Court had the authority to require defendant to pay for an electronic monitoring program (SCRAM bracelet) as a condition of his probation. (Assigned counsel for defendant: Kathryn Friedman, C/O The Sage Law Firm Group, P.O. Box 200, 465 Grant Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14213).

People v. Frederick Diaz

AD1 order dated April 13, 2017, reversing SORA level-three risk adjudication and annulling the sex-offender adjudication. Decision below: 150 AD3d 60, 50 NYS3d 388. Court of Appeals granted leave to People June 27, 2017.

ISSUES PRESENTED: Defendant had a 1989 Virginia murder conviction for killing his 13 year old sister, a crime for which there was no sexual component. After being paroled, he was required to register in Virginia under its “Sex Crimes & Crimes Against Minors Registry Act.” Upon his move to New York, where only sex offenders have to register, was he required to be adjudicated a sex offender? (Assigned counsel for defendant: Abigail Everett & Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

Matter of Gonzalez v. Annucci

AD3 order dated March 23, 2017, reversing, in part, dismissal of Article 78 petition brought by sex offender kept in prison beyond his CR date, based on SARA restrictions. Decision below: 149 AD3d 256, 50 NYS3d 597. Cross-appeals. Court of Appeals granted leave to petitioner June 22, 2017; appeal taken as of right by respondent Annucci, by virtue of two-judge dissent.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether DOCCS has a responsibility to substantially assist inmate, prior to release to the community, in

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obtaining SARA-compliant RTF housing. (2) Whether the question was mooted out by inmate's ultimate release. (Assigned counsel for Gonzalez: Abigail Everett & Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Ali Cisse

AD1 order dated April 6, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 149 AD3d 435, 53 NYS3d 614. Fahey, J., granted leave August 23, 2017.

ISSUES PRESENTED: Rikers Island phone calls: (1) Did the introduction of wiretapped Rikers calls violate state and federal wiretapping laws [18 USC 2511, PL 250.05] because (a) notice of wiretapping does not equal "consent" to wiretapping, and (b) a person does not "consent" to wiretapping if he is not informed that the calls will be turned over to the prosecutor. (2) Did the Rikers statement constitute "interrogation" since the defendant, isolated on the island, had only one communication option with family and friends - - a "tapped" call, or was it "involuntary" (CPL 60.45[2]) since his ability to make a choice whether to speak was undermined by lack of alternatives (3) Was the trial court allowed to accept a partial verdict absent a "declaration" from the jury that it had reached one (CPL 310.70 [1]). (Assigned counsel: Matthew Bova & Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Emmanuel Diaz

AD2 order dated April 19, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below 149 AD3d 974, 53 NYS3d 94. Hall, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave August 3, 2017.

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Rikers calls- Whether defendant's calls from Rikers Island were improperly admitted into evidence in the absence of his consent to release the recordings to the prosecution. (2) IAC on the grounds that defense counsel failed to request the affirmative defense to first-degree robbery. (Assigned counsel: Dina Zloczower & Lynn W.L. Fahey, Appellate Advocates, 111 John St., 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10038.)

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People v. Steven Myers

AD4 order dated December 23, 2016, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 145 AD3d 1596, 45 NYS3d 745. Rivera, J., granted leave July 28, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the waiver of indictment was valid in the absence of an on-the-record colloquy in open court, since the court's written order approving the waiver stated that defendant had executed it in open court. (Assigned counsel: John A. Cirando, 101 South Salina St., Suite 1010, Syracuse, NY 13202.)

People v. Damian Jones

AD1 order dated April 4, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 149 AD3d 407, 52 NYS3d 83. Garcia, J., granted leave August 14, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether, under New York's enterprise corruption statute, a "criminal enterprise" must have a governing system of authority or leadership structure (Penal Law Article 460). (Assigned counsel: Christina Swarns, Office of the Appellate Defender, 11 Park Place, Suite 1601, NYC 10007.)

People v. Jakin Grimes

AD4 order dated March 24, 2017, denying writ of error coram nobis. Decision below: 148 AD3d 1724, 49 NYS3d 326. Wilson, J., granted leave August 17, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether an attorney's failure to file a criminal leave application to the New York Court of Appeals from an adverse decision of the intermediate appellate court constitutes ineffective assistance of counsel under the State constitution. (Assigned counsel on coram: Joseph C. Perry, C/O Baker Botts LLP, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC 10122.)

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People v. Rohan Manragh Jr.

AD2 order dated May 3, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 150 AD3d 762, 51 NYS3d 431. Fahey, J., granted leave August 23, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether, by pleading guilty, the defendant forfeited his claim on appeal that the prosecutor failed to inform the grand jury of defendant's request to call a witness to testify. (Assigned counsel: Thomas E. Scott, 115 Broadhollow Road, Suite 250, Melville, NY 11747.)

People v. Rodney Watts

AD1 order dated March 23, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 148 AD3d 678, 48 NYS3d 602. Wilson, J., granted leave October 6, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Scope of Penal Law §170.10(1). Whether a ticket to a concert or basketball game constitutes a “deed, will, codicil, contract, assignment, commercial instrument, credit card or other instrument which does or may evidence, create, transfer, terminate, or otherwise affect a legal right, interest, obligation, or status.” The People argued below that such tickets were subsumed by the secondary “or other instrument,” clause, and alternatively, that the tickets represented a contract. The Appellate Division adopted the former position in its decision, holding that event tickets are instruments which purport to “evidence, create, transfer, terminate, or otherwise affect a legal right, interest, obligation, or status.” (Assigned counsel: Arielle Reid & Robert S. Dean Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

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People v. Steven Baisley

AT 9 & 10 order dated May 23, 2017, reversing justice court order dismissing the accusatory instrument. Decision below: 55 Misc. 3d 148(A), 58 NYS3d 875, 2017 WL 2380728. Stein, J., granted leave September 11, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the Family Court Act sections 156 and 411 are jurisdictional bars to the criminal prosecution of the charges of non-support of a child in the second degree (PL 260.05[2]) and criminal contempt in the second degree (PL 215.30[3]), where the lawful mandate of the court allegedly being resisted or disobeyed involves a Family Court order of child support. (Assigned counsel: Richard L. Herzfeld, 112 Madison Avenue, 8th Floor, NYC 10016)

People v. Timothy Martin

AD1 order dated February 21, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 147 AD3d 587, 48 NYS3d 54. Rivera, J., granted leave September 28, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether the defendant's admission to the police that he lived in the apartment that was the subject of a search warrant for drugs was admissible at trial under the pedigree exception to the Miranda requirement, even though it was the product of custodial interrogation that was likely to elicit an incriminating response. (Assigned counsel: Samuel Steinbock-Pratt & Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Domingo Ricart

AD1 order dated August 1, 2017, reversing judgment of conviction and dismissing the indictment. Decision below: 153 AD3d 421, 60 NYS3d 30. Webber, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave to People October 3, 2017. (SSM.)

ISSUE PRESENTED: CPL §30.30. Whether an adjournment was excludable as an "exceptional circumstance," when the People failed to exercise due diligence by not co-ordinating with their witness before he

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went on vacation to the Dominican Republic. (Assigned counsel for the defendant: Jan Hoth & Robert S. Dean Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Steven Berrezueta

AT1 order dated May 12, 2017, affirming judgment of conviction. Decision below: 53 Misc.3d 143(A), 57 NYS3d 676, 2017 WL 2101804. DiFiore, Ch. J., granted leave October 25, 2017. (SSM.)

ISSUES PRESENTED: (1) Whether the evidence was insufficient to convict defendant of attempted fourth-degree weapon possession (PL 110/265.01(1); PL 265.00(4) (defining a switchblade as “any knife which has a blade which opens automatically by hand pressure applied to a button, spring or other device in the handle of the knife”)) where the device used to open the knife was located on the blade, not the handle; (2) whether the accusatory instrument was facially insufficient to charge defendant with switchblade possession where it described the device used to the open the knife as on a “portion of the blade of the knife protruding from the handle of the knife.” (Assigned counsel: Siobhan C. Atkins & Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28th Floor, NYC 10005.)

People v. Doran Allen

AD1 order dated July 6, 2017, reversing judgment of conviction. Decision below: 152 A.D.3d 401, 59 NYS3d 14. Kahn, J. (AD dissenter), granted leave to People December 21, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether defendant was prejudiced by People’s improper submission of the case to a second grand jury without leave of the court, where the effect of the improper re-presentation was the addition of a count for which defendant was later acquitted. The majority determined that the acquitted count nonetheless “loomed” over the trial and influenced the ultimate guilty verdict on a lesser count. (Assigned counsel for defendant: Susan H. Salomon and Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, 120 Wall Street, 28th Floor, NYC 10005.)



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People v. Michael Thomas

AD2 order dated August 23, 2017, affirming grant of CPL 440.20 motion. Decision below: 153 AD3d 860, 60 NYS3d 375. Rivera, J., granted leave to People December 18, 2017.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether a prior felony conviction may be used as a predicate felony conviction if the defendant is re-sentenced on the prior felony after the conviction on the instant felony. (Assigned counsel for defendant: Melissa S. Horlick and Paul Skip Laisure, Appellate Advocates, 111 John St., 9th Floor, NYC 10038.)

**IV. New Leave Grants**

People v. Omar Alvarez

AD1 order dated September 28, 2017, denying writ of error coram nobis. Wilson, J., granted leave February 8, 2018.

ISSUE PRESENTED: Whether appellate defense counsel was ineffective for, inter alia, failure to raise an excessive sentence argument.