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Attorney Resigns Over Forged Judge Signatures

Brendan Pierson

New York Law Journal

11-30-2012

A former attorney for the New York City Department of Probation has resigned after she was found to have forged judges' signatures on multiple subpoenas.

A unanimous Appellate Division, First Department, panel yesterday accepted the resignation of Theresa Lizzio, which she submitted in response to a threat of criminal charges and an investigation launched by the Departmental Disciplinary Committee for the First Department earlier this year.

Though the investigation has not resulted in charges, Lizzio "acknowledges that if the Committee brought charges against her for the misconduct under investigation, she could not successfully defend herself on the merits," according to the panel's decision. Lizzio's attorney, Hugo Ortega of Tanner & Ortega, declined to comment.

According to the decision, two drug treatment program representatives appeared at a probation violation hearing in April challenging the validity of subpoenas served on them by Lizzio, representing the Department of Probation, and purportedly signed by Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Michael Brennan ([See Profile](#)). Justice Vincent Del Giudice ([See Profile](#)), who was filling in for Brennan on that day, took the subpoenas for further investigation.

The city's Department of Investigation conducted a probe and concluded that Lizzio had signed Brennan's name to the subpoenas. It referred the matter to the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office for criminal charges. Lizzio, who admitted that she also signed judges' names to subpoenas in three unrelated cases, agreed to resign to avoid the charges.

Ryan Dodge, a spokesman for the Department of Probation, said an internal audit "determined that this was an isolated case that did not include any other DOP attorneys."

The panel consisted of Justices Peter Tom ([See Profile](#)), Richard Andrias ([See Profile](#)), David Saxe ([See Profile](#)), Leland DeGrasse ([See Profile](#)) and Sallie Manzanet-Daniels ([See Profile](#)). [In the Matter of Theresa Lizzio](#), M-4177, appears on page 7 of the print edition of today's Law Journal.