

Jamestownner heads to New York to have his day in 'People's Court'

By Lee Gaines

Television courtroom shows hold a special place in the television world. They reveal the justice system at work for the average Joe. Anything from the consequences of a sour breakup to a breach of contract is brought before the TV judges.

In the hands of these justices, the plaintiffs, the defendants and a national audience place their trust in the justice system. In these court rooms there is no prosecutor or defense lawyer, just a judge with a sharp tongue, a small studio audience and a video camera to catch it all. Justice is always delivered swiftly and the viewers as well as the victor are able to rejoice in the

vindication.

Jamestown resident Robb Roach and his colleague, John Longo, experienced this TV justice system first-hand on the program "The People's Court" where they successfully defended their case against Alisa Gaudiosi.

Robb Roach is the president of The Chemical Company and is also involved in the television program, "Kettlebottom Outdoor Pursuits," which aired on NESN until February this year.

John Longo, one of the guides on the Kettlebottom program, introduced Alisa Gaudiosi to Roach, his father Nick Roach, the CEO of the company, and his sister Elizabeth Roach, the marketing manager, as

a potential public relations consultant. Gaudiosi was advertised as an "expert" in the field but the Roach family was suspicious and found her "obnoxious" and "not worth the money." However, against his better judgment, Roach was convinced to hire her.

Roach said that it was the potential advertising sales and the absence of an advertising force that ultimately persuaded him to sign the contract with Gaudiosi. The agreement stipulated that Gaudiosi would receive \$2,500 a month for 16 hours of "dedicated relations work" as well as 20 percent of any advertising revenues she generated. However, Roach says that as soon as the contract went into effect on

Sept. 1, Gaudiosi began to "show who she really was."

Instead of delivering on her promise of new advertising contacts for Kettlebottom, Gaudiosi instead tried to collect 20 percent of the revenues from sponsors already contacted by Kettlebottom. A day later, Roach received what he termed "a shabby first attempt" at a press release. Gaudiosi continued to add insult to injury when she billed Roach for \$2,500 on Sept. 2 saying that her work was done for the month. Gaudiosi demanded payment for researching Roach's company and her 150-word press release which never went to print.

Roach decided that he no longer wanted to employ Gaudiosi and

offered her \$500 for her one-day service to the company. Gaudiosi refused and filed in Connecticut small claims court for \$2,500.

Several weeks passed and "The People's Court" contacted Roach about the case. If Roach agreed to appear on the program, Gaudiosi's court action in Connecticut would be dissolved and if he lost to Gaudiosi, the TV program would pay the claim. If Roach won, he would receive \$250. "The People's Court" also agreed to pay all travel expenses to and from New York City. Roach thought it was a good deal and agreed to appear on the show.

"I had to make a decision," he said, "and what I was doing was standing up for what was right." Although Roach was comfortable with his decision, he couldn't help but be a little nervous. "This was certainly outside of my surroundings," he said.

Roach surrendered his control to Judge Milian, justice on "The People's Court," who immediately took control of the case. "I was shocked by how smart she was," he said.

After the proceedings began, it became apparent that Gaudiosi wasn't all that she claimed to be. "Gaudiosi buried herself," Roach said. "She was obnoxious to say the least." Judge Milian ruled in favor of the defendant and Roach left Manhattan with a \$250 check in the mail and an "awesome" experience. "A guy from a little town who is on 'People's Court' is just kind of a funny thing," he said.

Roach was vindicated in his decision and "In the end," he said. "I just had a lot of fun."



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