

Written by Kathy
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Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Judge Nancy Margaret Russo (pictured) failed to get

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Staff article: investigative article

CLEVELANDURANNEWS.COM-CLEVELAND, Ohio-Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Judge Nancy Margaret Russo did not get the endorsement from the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio's largest newspaper, after the county Democratic Party refused her an endorsement for her bid for a common pleas judicial seat this year and instead endorsed her male opponent.

Ohio's closely-watched primary election is March 19 and will also include primaries for the presidential election, some congressional and state legislative seats and the race for U.S. Senate that will likely pit current and senior U.S. Sen, Sherrod Brown against the Republican

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nominee of that highly contested primary that is drawing millions in campaign donations to Republicans candidates in the least.

Community activist Democrats lobbied against an endorsement at the preliminary endorsement meeting of ward and city leaders earlier this month.

Russo, 67, did not show for the Plain Dealer's endorsement interview or for the general endorsement meeting of executive committee members of the party at the Holiday Inn in Independence after activists lobbied for people from different communities to come and speak-out against her candidacy. She faces an assistant county prosecutor under County Prosecutor Mike O'Malley, Democrat Carl Mazzone, for the Democratic primary on March 19. Both the county Democratic Party and the Plain dealer endorsed Mazzone over Russo, Mazzone a 12-year assistant county prosecutor.

O'Malley was also snubbed by the county Democratic Party, although he did win an endorsement from the PD over his opponent, Matthew Ahn, a former federal public defender who teaches law classes at Cleveland State University and raised more monies than O'Malley in the last segment of 2023. Ahn and O'Malley are at odds over the excessive bind-overs of Black juveniles to adult court that have upset the Black community and activists who say racism and corruption are rampant in the county's general division common pleas court.

Technically, Mazzone and Russo are both running for the judicial seat left open by the Ohio Supreme Court's suspension last month of Russo's colleague Daniel Gaul from office for misconduct, and even had Gaul not been suspended, at 70-years old he would have been age

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limited. Nonetheless, Russo still lost the county party endorsement that went to Mazzone. Her current six-year term ends in January of 2027, which means that even if she loses to Mazzone she will still remain on the bench, absent any harsh discipline from the Ohio Supreme Court, if a bar complaint is filed with the court's office of disciplinary grievances. That process is lengthy to say the least and does not provide for immediate relief, if any at all, to victims of judicial malfeasance, most of them Black. Among a host of other misconduct, Gaul was accused by the high court's disciplinary counsel of forcing Black defendants to plead guilty to murder, the height of malfeasance, sources say.

To receive the county Democratic Party endorsement a candidate must get 60 percent of the party vote, the party of which is led by county party chairman David Brock.

Sources say O'Malley has tired of the judge, including her release of grand jury transcripts to defense counsel via motion, and hopes his assistant county prosecutor can beat her in March. No Republicans filed petitions for the race, which is not unusual when seasoned Democratic judges seek reelection or election in general as judicial campaigns in the county are expensive at best and can cost upwards of \$50,000 for a non-incumbent.

Activist Twon Billings, an East Cleveland councilman and former mayoral candidate, spoke against Russo at the party's preliminary endorsement meeting two earlier this month when party affiliates voted against her, Billings warning fellow Democrats that the erratic judge is allegedly unfair, undemocratic, and not good for the party and the Black community. The 29 percent Black county includes Cleveland and is a Democratic stronghold. It is the second largest of Ohio's 88 counties, behind Franklin County, which is also a Democratic stronghold that includes Columbus, the state's largest city in front of Cleveland, a majority Black major

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American city.

Judge Russo has drawn the ire of community activists and others for unfairness against Blacks and others as well as alleged malfeasance on the bench that they say is increasing by the minute. She has been on the 34-member, largely White common pleas bench since 1997 and before she had routinely been endorsed by county Dems. But community activists against her candidacy say a change is needed as to party operatives endorsing judges and others who are racist and no good simply because they are registered Democrats. They want county government reform and an FBI investigation of corrupt judges and prosecutors, among others.

Activists say Judge Nancy Margaret Russo, known for handing out excessive sentences to Blacks and others, including Black juveniles bound over to adult court, is covering-up fixed indictments and perpetuating public corruption as to falsification and tampering with records of criminal felony cases on her docket and does so with the alleged assistance from County Clerk of Courts Nailah Byrd, Byrd's subordinates, prosecutors, and corrupt fellow common pleas judges such as the late Judge Joseph Russo. His cases were sometimes transferred to her docket by the chief judge at the time (John Russo) after he quit them following documented impropriety outlined in affidavits of prejudice filed against him with the Ohio Supreme Court. (Editor's note: As Clerk of Courts, Byrd, by law, is responsible for case docket filings in the Cuyahoga County courts, including common pleas, domestic relations and probate courts, and the 8th District Court of Appeals, and maintaining and preserving such case document filings, among other duties, including collecting bail bond monies. Data show that her office is in complete disarray).

A comprehensive investigation by [Clevelandurbannews.com](https://clevelandurbannews.com) and

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reveals similarities to the motion picture movie "Mississippi Burning" regarding the height of racial discrimination and Civil Rights violations and the attack on the Black community by White supremacists, including judges, police and other law enforcement authorities, and corrupt and racist prosecutors.

A high tech lynching it surely is, activists say, and against the Black community with an undisputed vengeance, due process and statutory and constitutional protections be damned.

Russo is also illegally releasing secret grand jury testimony that is to remain hidden per state law with appointed indigent defense counsel from the office of the county public defender, led by Assist Public Defender Scott Roger Hurley, and using it against Black defendants to try and get plea deals in cases where their poor Black clients are falsely accused of assaulting White police officers accused of harassing them. (Editor's note: Judge Nancy Russo is also refusing to remove indigent counsel such as Hurley who are accused of colluding with the court and the prosecution against Black defendants, even when such indigent counsel, Hurley in particular, violate her own court orders for discovery and to conduct proper pretrial investigations for their indigent clients. Instead, the judge seeks to proceed to trial to ensure illegal and unconstitutional convictions of misrepresented poor, Black defendants via ineffective assistance of counsel. She also handpicks Hurley to defend poor Blacks in cases she seeks to corrupt or manipulate and she has met with him privately or ex parte in backroom meetings to allegedly discuss cases without prosecutors present while his Black clients wait alone in her courtroom).

The illegally released grand jury testimony is that of corrupt White cops who have lied to the grand jury to get innocent Blacks indicted on charges they allegedly assaulted them, including

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from Lt Dale Orians of University Heights, a now former cop who has stalked Black female residents and broken into their homes without authority and stealing their personal property with the support of the city and county prosecutor and former mayor Susan Infeld, whom voters ousted in 2017 for alleged theft in office, assisted theft of homes of Black residents, and racism against Black residents.

The falsified case docket entries, also called journal entries of case proceedings, are crucial and can determine whether cases are dismissed and whether maliciously prosecuted people, mainly Blacks, are falsely convicted and imprisoned with one of the 34 largely White judges of the general division court of common pleas at the helm.

In one instance the clerk's office lies on the case docket and says a Black defendant accused of assaulting White cops was arrested the day of the alleged incident, the judge colluding with the prosecution and cops to deny the Black defendant's motion for correction of the case docket on this matter.

Data also show that Judge Nancy Russo is committing falsification by lying during pretrials and telling Blacks who have passed mental competency exams by Black psychiatrists that in order to represent themselves they must take another exam, an attempt, sources say, to get passing mental competency exams illegally changed by corrupt White psychiatrists for her harassment purposes against Black people.

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Falsification is illegal under state law and so is tampering with records and she knows this, her judicial colleagues on the common pleas bench who whisper and laugh at the judge's crazy behavior say.

The crooked judge is also denying motions or requests by maliciously prosecuted Black defendants to correct corrupted criminal case dockets of her late colleague Judge Joe Russo.

In one case Judge Joe Russo, after doubling a Black defendant's bond after it had been paid just to keep the defendant in jail who was accused of assault of some White cops, actually had Clerk of Courts Nailah Byrd falsify the case docket to say the defendant at issue had escaped. He would also assign himself to cases before indictments come down and then lie about the proceedings via journal entries with the help of his then personal bailiff.

Judge Nancy Russo's corruption comes during a continuing FBI probe over the last 15 years or more that netted some 61 guilty pleas or guilty verdicts, including prison for two former common pleas judges, a 28- year prison sentence for racketeering and other crimes in office to former county commissioner Jimmy Dimora, and a 22-year prison sentence to Dimora's sidekick, former county auditor Frank Russo. Both were released early from prison and Frank Russo has since died.

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Most of the aforementioned are Democrats as Cuyahoga County is a Democratic stronghold.

In a particular case in which a Black female defendant is accused of assaulting but not touching or harming four White University Heights cops who came to her home slinging guns and rifles and calling her a nigger, all without a warrant or a 9-1-1 call to police dispatchers, Judge Nancy Russo denied a motion by the defendant to correct the case docket lie that the defendant was arrested the day of the alleged assault, a lie fed to the grand jury to help get an illegal indictment.

Such an indictment originally charged the defendant with two counts of assault on the two White cops, whom she did not even touch, police say, and two counts of obstructing official business.

But Clerk of Courts Nailah Byrd tampered with records and upped the charges by falsifying the case docket to four counts of assault on a police officer and four counts of obstructing official business, all without a court order or grand jury amendment, and all illegal and unconstitutional activity that mandates dismissal of the case. (Editor's note: Judge Nancy Margaret Russo seeks to cover up fixed indictments that mandate dismissal of the cases by proceeding to trial and ensuring the appointment of indigent counsel, like Assist County Public Defender Scott Roger Hurley, that will not fight for dismissal for poor Black defendants. She has literally handpicked Hurley as defense counsel in cases to carry on her malfeasance Her view, apparently, is to falsely imprison Blacks via ineffective assistance of counsel and illegal convictions, and then to take photographs with them for the media if and when they are later released for false imprisonment or via the early release reentry program she chairs).

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Also at issue is foreclosure theft of county homes by foreclosure magistrates and common pleas judges like Judge John O'Donnell, Chief Magistrate Stephen Bucha, his Lerner, Sampson and Rothfus attorney wife, and the sheriff's office, impropriety, in fact, with JPMorgan Chase Bank and other big banks and mortgage companies guiding the way. Politicians, media-types, Chase Bank and others are then buying the stolen homes for pennies on the dollar, research reveals, and after the home values are illegally deflated by the sheriff's office and county foreclosure appraisers, some of whom earn six figures for cooperating.

Hundreds of thousands of homes owned by county residents have been stolen for Chase Bank and others with help from magistrates, judges and other county politicians. Blacks and others who complain are often prosecuted in neighboring suburban cities and maliciously indicted at the hands of former county prosecutor Tim McGinty. And current county prosecutor Mike O'Malley's office then continues the illegal prosecutions and malfeasance against Blacks targeted by McGinty who did not support him for reelection in 2016 when O'Malley ousted him from office per the primary election.

A former Parma law director and chief deputy under former county prosecutor Bill Mason, O'Malley reneged on a campaign promise he made in 2016 to Black leaders and activists to institute reform measures in the prosecutor's office and to do right by Blacks and others if they helped him defeat McGinty, a fellow Democrat. He too is under fire from community activists as he seeks reelection.

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A retired common pleas judge who clashed with virtually everyone and who protected White Cleveland cops that erroneously gunned down Blacks like Tamir Rice from prosecution, McGinty's ouster in 2016 as county prosecutor was led by Black leaders and activists and his own county Democratic party. It came after he protected cops who gunned down unarmed Blacks from prosecution and indictments and after he accused common pleas judges, mainly Democrats like Judge John Russo, of blatant impropriety in rambling letters to the Ohio Supreme Court. He also fought with the judges saying he wanted more stringent requirements for their assignments of indigent counsel to Blacks and others, and that too upset activists fighting for his ouster who viewed it as racist and grossly unconstitutional.

THIS IS PART OF A MULTI-PART SERIES ON CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC CORRUPTION INITIATED IN 2017

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