

## V.S.M. Starts New Legal Public Relations Agency For Major Cases

Former U.S. Department of Justice and N.J. Division of Criminal Justice spokesman Richard Lavinthal, a V.S.M. who directed communications for the Vidocq Society for many years, recently took his five-year-old legal public and media relations consultancy, PRforLAW, LLC, full-time.



A full-member of the Society for 20 years, Lavinthal received the Vidocq Outstanding Service Medal of Honor in 1997. He is a former daily newspaper and international wire service reporter who used his extensive media contacts around the world to increase the visibility of the Society and its work. Lavinthal also wrote and published the *Vidocq Journal* for more than a decade, lectured at Society "Cold Case Homicide" seminars and, for a year, served as a board member.

A former Director of Criminal Justice Programs for APBnews in New York City, Lavinthal continues to write occasional OpEd and opinion pieces for newspapers including *the Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Daily News*, *Washington, D.C. Examiner*, and *the Times of Trenton*. His most recent Philadelphia News column had a decidedly Vidocqian slant, arguing why Philadelphia's new police commissioner should form an alliance with local universities to develop a cyber-investigative squad that helps clear non-violent crimes.

After Manhattan-based APBnews closed, Lavinthal served as consulting news editor for PoliceOne.com, a San Francisco-based law enforcement Web destination, managing the site's daily news presentation and the reporters who wrote it. As his part-time legal communications consulting was growing he was working

as Director of Communications for a building products manufacturing company in New Jersey. He left that job and took PRforLAW, LLC full-time earlier this year.

Among recent attorney's cases for which he secured national coverage in print, electronic and Internet news publications are the \$400 million Merck whistleblower settlement and the \$37 million CVS settlement in another whistleblower matter. Lavinthal also was the keynote speaker in April for a large regional Pennsylvania law firm at its annual partners' conference in Florida. In August he will present an MCLE one-hour program on Legal Media Relations for the Bucks County Bar Association in Doylestown.

Lavinthal says his most memorable Vidocq moments include the luncheon meeting regarding the JonBenet Ramsey ransom note that was so popular it had to be moved to the ballroom of the Downtown Club, and the exhumation and subsequent re-interment of "The Boy in the Box," now known as "America's Unknown Child."

The Unknown Child case, recently broke into local television headlines when famed forensic artist Frank Bender created a new composite in revisiting the theory that the "boy" in fact was raised as a girl and whose hair had been cut hastily before the dead child was tossed at the side of a then suburban Northeast Philadelphia road.

The Unknown Child's Veterans Day re-interment stands out as the highlight, Lavinthal said. "The weather threatened and then suddenly as the services began it cleared up. So many Vidocqians worked so hard on it. Even the funeral services and the boy's magnificent plot in Ivy Hill Cemetery plot were donated.

"If this case is officially solved one day it will be the Vidocq Society and its investigators who carried the ball all these years and will deserve a lion's share of the credit for just keeping this cold, cold case alive," Lavinthal said.



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