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## Zinna admits to stealing money



**BILL FEIG/The Advocate**

Lawyer Randy Zinna, left, answers questions on Sept. 29, 2008, about pending legislation before the House Retirement Committee. U.S. Attorney Donald J. Cazayoux Jr. said Wednesday that Zinna has admitted he defrauded two public pension funds of more than \$1.5 million. To Zinna's left, but not involved in Wednesday's announcement, are Dana Tully, of Parochial Employees Retirement System, and Bob Rust, director of the Municipal Employees Retirement System.

By **BILL LODGE AND STEVEN WARD**  
*Advocate staff writers*  
Published: Feb 3, 2011 - Page: 1B

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Suspended Baton Rouge lawyer Randy P. Zinna has admitted that he defrauded two public pension funds, an 83-year-old widow and others of more than \$1.5 million total, U.S. Attorney Donald J. Cazayoux Jr. announced Wednesday.

"His efforts to cover up his crime by stealing from another client, an elderly widow, make his actions all the more reprehensible," Cazayoux said.

Court records show that Zinna, 53, was charged with mail fraud in a sealed, or secret, bill of information July 2.

A guilty plea was entered in October before Chief U.S. District Judge Ralph E. Tyson, Cazayoux said.

Tyson has not yet entered a sentencing date in Zinna's court record. The conviction carries a possible penalty of 20 years in prison and fines of more than \$2 million.

Zinna signed an admission in which he said some of the misappropriated funds were "used to pay for his own sports gambling debts."

And Zinna pledged to Assistant U.S. Attorney M. Patricia Jones that he would cooperate with investigators "and at any grand jury proceeding or trial."

Zinna agreed to pay full restitution of \$434,164 to the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana, or MPERS, and \$340,392 to the East Baton Rouge City-Parish Employees' Retirement System or CPERS.

The lawyer had served for years as counsel to both MPERS

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and CPERS.

MPERS placed Zinna on unpaid leave in late 2009. CPERS also jettisoned the lawyer and sued him last year for the \$340,392 mentioned in his federal plea agreement.

Zinna promised in that plea agreement to pay the widow, identified only as "M.M.," \$546,351.

Another \$136,614 is owed by Zinna to Olde Oaks Development LLC in Bossier City, the plea agreement shows. And more than \$116,000 must be split among an equipment company and two electric utility services, the plea agreement shows.

Olde Oaks Development is a real estate development that Zinna once managed, Cazayoux said.

"I have cooperated in this matter to the best of my ability, and I will continue to do so," Zinna said Wednesday.

Zinna's law license was suspended by the Louisiana Supreme Court as a result of the investigation by the FBI, state Office of Inspector General, and state Attorney General's Office.

His charge states that he schemed from November 2004 through October 2009 to defraud MPERS and the other victims.

Louisiana Inspector General Stephen Street said in a written statement that Zinna's scheme resulted in "the brazen theft of more than \$1.5 million."

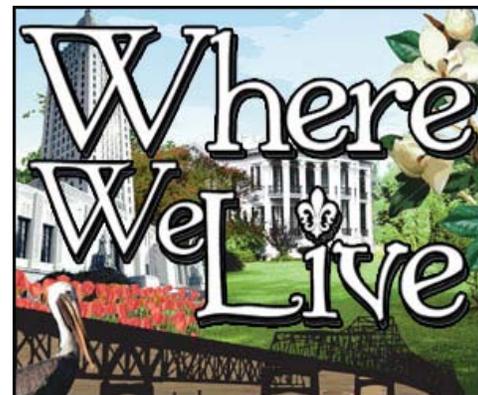


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Dovescorner:

Stress and Pressure makes people do strange things! This is unbelievable and you wonder why the state is broke? Cooperate America is the bulk of Welfare (self imposed in this case) and entitlements (also self imposed in this case). A lawyer? A man acquainted with the law and look at what he has been up to.

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POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 5:22 AM

Radio60:

Most corporate thieves are lawyers. They become lawyers first, just to learn how to steal legally and to legitimize fraud big time. Many become politicians, locally, state and nationally. This case doesn't surprise me at all.

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POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 6:55 AM

CountryBoysCanSurvive:

If this thief has the money to pay back what he stole, why did he steal in the first place? I hope this is not an attempt to keep from going to jail. Cuff him and stuff him your honor.

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POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 7:37 AM

gofigger:

Beware, they travel in packs.

[What's this?](#)

POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 11:47 AM

notagain:

Lawyers are a plague on the America way of life. I agree with Radio60 they have a diploma to steal and extort money from anyone they want without fear. When was the last time you heard unemployment was at 9% for lawyers. Why hasn't this person been disbarred? Oh that right, he is a lawyer and the board is run by lawyers. I wonder who will end up paying back those who lost money? Maybe the rest of the lawyers should pay for it just like real people who work for a living. Where is the lawyer insurance fund to protect those who have been wronged? Every lawyer in the state should be forced to make payments into this fund to help pay for BAD LAWYERS. Where is a over site committee to review lawyers practices and remove those who are leaches on the community. To hell with national health care we need lawyer reform.

[What's this?](#)

POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 2:48 PM

anonymous3:

Not all lawyers are crooks. You don't hear about the ones that give time away pro bono. There are good and bad in every profession. To single handedly brandish the sword at all lawyers is wrong. I work for 2 honorable lawyers. They do not advertise and they give more time away than any two I have ever known. Please be judicious with the swipes you take. There are good lawyers out there. Broad based generalizations are just that. Generalizations.

[What's this?](#)

POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 3:35 PM

MelvilleRoots:

notagain: The ODC will not pull his license until he is convicted. They like to play nice when its one of their own ya know. And you can bet your sweet bippy he's friends with Plattsmire or Walsh on the ODC Board. As for the Malpractice Insurance he is required to have, in matters of fraud where the attorney him/her self has stolen client funds, all monies and assets this guy has in his general operations bank account become the avenue of payment first. The question we all need to ask, and watch for, this guy will ONLY get up to 20yrs? He will most likely get about 10, and that will end up being about 5 served. Now, if some poor down on his luck average Joe were to steel 1.5 Million for a Pension Fund, Employer, etc. You'd find he'd be sentenced and serve at LEAST 20yrs. Watch and see the sentence this guy actually gets! He'll serve it at Niceville Prison, and the DA's and Judges he's donated to elections over the years will be the best pay-back he's got. Watch and see.

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POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 8:24 PM

MelvilleRoots:

Dovercorner: Stress and Pressure did not play into this guy steeling. It was Greed. I assure you, working for attorneys for over 14 yrs now, the Stess and Pressures that arrive are generally felt by their Staff. Not the attorney. I feel sorry for this guys bookkeeper who, I assure you was always in a bad position. For the most part, announcing and claiming he had a Sports gambling problem, is simply an attempt to gain simpathy in advance prior to conviction. He most likely lives in a 1.5 million dollor home, drives top of the line SUV, and all Bank Loans are paid through the Law Firm. Lets not leave out the Credit Cards, Life Insurances, and Vacations these guys generally tag on as part of the Law Firms expense. With that said, its the Life Style that leads to the theft. Not gambling. But hay, he's gotta say its due to some monster of addition that caused him to go down this path.

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POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 8:38 PM

giglee:

We have to many Lawyers..Put him in jail for 20 years, Make him pay restitution, and disbare Him for Life!!! The penalty for some one in a position of trust should be twice as much!!!

[What's this?](#)

POSTED ON FEB 03, 2011 AT 9:41 PM

Ted Michael Morgan:

A man who steals from a pension fund has lost an important aspect of his humanity—his sense of community. Most attorneys I know are honourable, hardworking, and honest. Shaming his profession by undermining the foundations for community, this fellow has ruined his life and brought harm to his fellows. He is a pitiful fellow.

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POSTED ON FEB 04, 2011 AT 2:08 AM

tvstar7:

I am not condoming what he has done!!! Let us all remember we are not perfect PEOPLE !!! we kill the man ON THE CROSS !!!

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POSTED ON FEB 04, 2011 AT 8:06 PM

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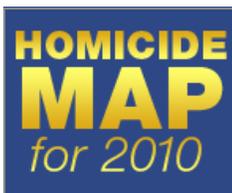
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