Jean Auguste – Case Notes

Jean Auguste | Order of Conditions | Kingsboro State Psychiatric Hospital

Discussion today will center on Jean's efforts to be released from the Order of Conditions. After years of court appearances to that end without Jean present, and only with expert witnesses and the record.

What was different this time at the court hearings for the “Order of Conditions”?

1 – Jean appeared in person for the court case in 2026. Jean worked diligently with his Mental Hygiene Legal Service (MHLS) lawyer, Brunce Harris.

2 – MHLS produced excellent expert witnesses, independent, as well as the hospital record.

3 – Excellent supportive testimony by forensic professional, Dr. Brenton, from KPC, questioned by an excellent lawyer for the hospital, represented by the office of the Attorney General, Leticia James. Dr. Brenton fortunately knew Jean from his work in the hospital, but also had accidentally met, along with his wife and 2-year-old, with friends in BBG, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, – a friendly, informal gathering by the Japanese garden where the 2-year-old of Jean's friends met Dr. B's 2-year-old and enjoyed the fish and turtles in the pond. Jean's group of 5 included Connie Lesold, Iva Webster, a friend from a Crown Heights senior center, and a Long Island Haitian couple with a child. This was a very fortunate encounter that Dr. B used in his court testimony. (Jean had worked for BBG under a grant while he was still in KPC also, he worked with gardening and the sales team at KPC.)

4 –15 community representatives present at each of two full hearings in the Brooklyn Supreme Court. They were not all the same people. They are from:

(a) Former recreational employee at KPC who works with Jean and was requested by Jean to attend the court hearings.

(b) Representative of Baltic Street – one of New York City's prominent "peer" organizations that is helping Jean find other housing.

(c) Members of 2 prominent disability organizations – Disabled in Action of NYC (president and VP present; VP is a lawyer with several disabilities); and Brooklyn Center for the Independence of the Disabled (BCID), represented by its lead organizer.

(d) Representatives of Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture – a spirited and active society meeting Sundays, sometimes attended by Jean. This group included their VP, a lawyer, and a professor at Medgar Evers College.

(e) Members of Jean's family, nervous about ICE but came anyway. These included close family and Jean's foster brother, who lived with him in Brooklyn when both were new arrivals to the US.

(f) Members of the Brooklyn MHC Monitors Project, including adult offspring of deceased members. (These adults were trained in dealing with ICE and found ICE on the same floor, outside a different courtroom.) At the close of the first hearing, the community representatives surrounded the Haitian Family members to make sure they could leave the building safely and not encounter ICE.

(g) Friend from WFP (Working Families Party) who had assisted Jean with an educational program.

(h) Member of prominent Haitian-American family who knew Jean and his foster family for a few years and had used his help with some apartment repairs.

(i) Several Crown Heights seniors who attend the same senior center and knew Jean were present.

(j) Some letters were given to lawyer Bruce Harris to give to Judge Matthew D'Emic.

(k) It should be noted that the community reps came from all boroughs of New York City; they were members of many different religions, they were all ages, and from different ethnic groups.

(l) Court observers from all boroughs of New York City!

(m) At previous hearings, only lawyers and expert witnesses were present, no observers and no sympathetic judges. This time Jean was released from the "Order of Conditions." Now he can travel freely; he is free to choose his doctors and medications, and he is choosing to stay with his treatment program at present.

The Judge in this case, Judge D'Emic, is a very high-level judge on the Brooklyn Supreme Court and the founder of the mental health court; he is known for his sincere interest in the people who come before him. Jean was very lucky to have him as the judge of his "Order of Conditions" case. This "Order of Conditions" case could have closed without hearings if the Brooklyn DA chose to do so. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and the DA's independent witness this time was not impressive in any way, considering Jean still has no criminal conviction or even former charges except the one from 25 years ago. An interesting aspect of this case is that outside of court, representatives of the DA's office and NYPD in Crown Heights, where Connie Lesold formerly lived and still spends most of her time, discussed the case, and then appeared to be in agreement that the DA's office really had no case. Recently, the Crown Heights DA rep. And Connie participated in a small demonstration together regarding another local issue.

Jean's last “Order of Conditions” court hearings were in the presence of his peers, friends, family, and former work colleagues. However, it is important to keep in mind that “Jean Auguste” is a very common name, and he and his lawyer have sometimes had to explain that he is not the Jean Auguste with the criminal record who lives in New York State. That “Jean Auguste” has a middle initial, a different birthday, and a different history.