BY WILLIAM BASTONE

The Fixer


Long before Marty Bergman emerged as New York's premier agent provocateur, a shadowy figure scrounging and hawking information with the verve of a street peddler, he exhibited a deep awareness of self.

Employed as a lowly surveyor with the Department of Public Works in Suffolk County, Bergman knew that his true strength did not lie in the mundane task of tracking sewer lines and mapping municipal minutiae. Chanting one day in December 1980 with a local legislator, the voluble Bergman delivered an unusually succinct assessment of his secret virtue. Unaware that his companion was wearing a concealed recording device and saving his words for posterity, Bergman was blunt but not boastful:

"You know," he told the politician, "I know how to destroy people."

In the insular world inhabited by the city's top politicians, journalists, investigators, and lawyers, Bergman is a singular presence. Equal part private eye, reporter, mole, media manipulator, and snitch, Bergman is the Zelig of New York's power alleys, a six-foot-three-inch ghost in the machine wearing a trench coat and his trademark midnight shades.

Powered by an extensive network of contacts, Bergman makes a living brokering—and sometimes selling—information. For him, it is as much an obsession as a profession: according to one acquaintance, nothing is more satisfying for Bergman than "finding dirt on people." To that end, Bergman operates like a door-to-door salesman, offering documents, rumors, tips, and access to a client list that has included politicians, FBI agents, law firms, newspapers, and TV shows ranging from 60 Minutes to 60 Minutes to A Current Affair. Bergman has even attempted to broker big-bucks TV interviews with scandal stars like Tawana Brawley, "Fatal Attraction" killer Carolyn Warmus, and Mia Farrow. Such flesh peddling has allowed this journalist-without-portfolio to circulate among the nation's media elite, including Mike Wallace and Barbara Walters.

A 52-year-old chameleon, Bergman wears so many hats—often simultaneously—associates are never quite sure which persona he has assumed, or for whom he is working. "What does Marty do for a living?" is the most baffling question that can be posed to a Bergman acquaintance. Now federal prosecutors are trying to unravel that mystery, probing whether Bergman's gray-market activity last year to commit a number of crimes, including witness tampering and obstruction of justice.

The criminal probe is focusing on Bergman's behind-the-scenes role during the 1994 prosecution of man wrestling promoter Vincent McMahon, who was charged with illegal distribution of steroids. McMahon was represented by noted criminal defense attorney Laura Brevetti—Bergman's wife. Based on interviews with law enforcement agents and other sources, it appears that Bergman's actions last year—allegedly trying to compromise a government witness—fit into a broader pattern of deception and misrepresentation that marks his recent career.

In a number of these instances, Bergman's work has dovetailed with the interests of Brevetti, his third wife. The 44-year-old former federal prosecutor is considered one of the country's leading defense lawyers and was reportedly considered in 1993 for the U.S. Attorney General's job. Bergman's role in the McMahon case raises troubling questions about Brevetti's knowledge of, or involvement in, these questionable antics.

Through their attorneys—Gerald Lefcourt is Bergman's counsel, while Joel Cohen is representing Brevetti—the couple turned down an interview request. After receiving a detailed list of questions from the Voice, the lawyers refused to respond to any of the paper's inquiries.

Married last year in a ceremony officiated by

December 19, 1995 VILLAGE VOICE
Mayer Rudolph Giakano, the lawyer, gave his friends a formal party along with the mayor and his wife, to celebrate their daughter's engagement to a public advocate. Guests attending the nuptials—held in the East Side restaurant owned by Anthony Seotto—were Public Advocate Mark Green, actors Lorraine Bracco and Edward James Olmos, and reporters John Zaccaro and Nancy Grace. Among the guests attending was Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the mayor's guest list also included the mayor's ex-wife Barbara. The pair's first team effort, along with the mayor, was a high-profile case, the defense of World Wrestling Federation owner McMahon. Bergman's role in the WWF controversy would eventually become one of the federal investigations focusing on him.

In mid-1993, Bergman and Breveitti turned up in another high-profile case, the federal investigation into the ownership and management of the WWF. In the case of McMahon, Bergman's role was to defend McMahon in the federal investigation. Bergman's role in the WWF controversy would eventually become one of the federal investigations focusing on him.

In 1989, Breveitti entered private practice, joining the firm Morrison, Cohen, Singer & Weisberg. In 1993, Breveitti opened her own practice and began working on a related private investigation agency, Cord Investigative & Security Consultants. Bergman and Breveitti have been together since late 1991, and they recently announced their divorce. The couple's first team effort evolved out of Breveitti's headline-grabbing 1992 defense of a Westchester nanny facing charges that she murdered an infant in her care. Breveitti's successful work on behalf of the Swiss national Olivia Riner was a contentious case, as Riner was accused of murdering an infant in her care. The case was one of Breveitti's most high-profile cases, and it brought national attention to her law firm.

While some of McMahon's wrestlers had been involved in controversies, others were driven by high-profile cases. Riner was a potent combination of her courtroom manner and a sublime bit of media manipulation. Working through a small group of reporters, Bergman spun stories and leaked information in a bid to rehabilitate her reputation. The story of Riner was one of the many cases that Bergman worked on, and it brought national attention to her law firm.

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producer were being investigated for possible "legal or ethical violations." The WWF's charges were later deemed unfounded by the Justice Department. No follow-up report appeared in the Observer.

The Valenti blast was not the first time Bergman used an OPR complaint to target a foe. 13 years earlier, in 1989, Bergman sent a letter inviting him to participate in a OPR investigation when he telephoned an IRS criminal investigator at home one evening and spun a tale of political and judicial corruption involving, among many other public figures, Senator Al D'Amato and a well-known Justice Department official.

Federal agents are required to forward any allegations about Justice Department employees to OPR for review—even if they consider the complaints baseless. One retired official familiar with the episode told the Voice he believed that Bergman proferred the information—which the source described as "downright vicious" and "absurdly vile"—in order to prompt a Justice Department investigation, but that Bergman was also trying "to abuse a whole bunch of people at the same time" and attempting "to take D'Amato out." Bergman repeated his allegations in person at a meeting, with the IRS, promising that "people would come forward at the drop of the hat" to substantiate his story. No one ever did.

The information Bergman provided to the IRS, which subsequent investigation found to be untrue, was "entirely intended to injure" his foes, according to the former agent Bergman approached. That investigator to whom Bergman dropped dimes in the mid '80s had a similar appraisal, noting that Bergman's information was often unfounded, always cast his rivals in a criminal light, and tended to evaporate under scrutiny like a whiff of smoke.

D'Amato has long been a Bergman obsession and was the subject of his most prominent media credit, a 1991 60 Minutes attack. The hidden ire of Bergman's hatch D'Amato cover age, which has included several Observer front page stories, is that while the reporter-cum-investigator has chosen to focus on the Republican's questionable conduct, he has carefully cloaked his own array of ethical transgressions. Bergman worked as a freelance reporter on the 60 Minutes piece, which moved D'Amato to complain that the story was compromised because Bergman had hosted a fundraiser for Giuliani—one of the author's chief political enemies—at his Long Island home in 1989. Had D'Amato been aware that Bergman, in his chats with the IRS two years earlier, had implicated him in a criminal conspiracy, the politician would have had a stronger argument that the CBS story was tainted. The senator was also unaware of the depth of Bergman's relationship with Giuliani and top aides Randy Schoenberg and Daniel Benson. In 1989, the mayor's chief of staff and counsel, Bergman was living in the same apartment as a 25-year-old friend of Giuliani's knowledge. The senator was also unaware of the depth of Bergman's relationship with Giuliani and top aides Randy Schoenberg and Daniel Benson. In 1989, the mayor's chief of staff and counsel, Bergman was living in the same apartment as a 25-year-old friend of Giuliani's.

Mayoral spokesman would only say that Giuliani was "friendly" with Bergman and termed both Macero's and Young's relationship with Bergman as nothing more than an "ac quaintance." While both aides denied, through a spokesperson, that Bergman had any "specific role" in the two election campaigns, a source told the Voice in 1993, Giuliani wrote Bergman a letter inviting him to participate in the upcoming mayoral race.

Surely pleased by the success of his first Observer hit, Bergman launched a second assault, this one on the eve of the OPR McMahon trial, on July 1994 trial. Again approaching Conason, Bergman pitched a story about a federal prosecutor involved in a

stored improprieties. The lawyer was Sean O'Shea, who just happened to be prosecuting McMahon.

At that point, Conason said, he had no reason to doubt Bergman's motives, noting that he had previously worked on stories with him—sometimes opposing Bergman as a source, other times as a bylined collaborator—that were never questioned. Conason added that Bergman's contacts were also impressive, recalling how he had helped arrange an interview with Giuliani over lunch at Sparks—during the 1993 campaign, at a time when the Observer was being frozen out by the candidate.

Conason paired Bergman with reporter Shaun Assael, who had previously worked with Bergman on an Observer series on ticket scalping. The Observer editor said that, while he knew that Breventi and Bergman lived together on the Upper East Side, he was unaware that the represented McMahon. Assael, on the other hand, said he knew that Breventi and Bergman shared a Park Avenue office, but was unaware that the couple lived together or planned to marry.

(Conason is a former Peter Salerno staff writer, and Assael has written for the paper. Both are friends of the author.)

The subsequent "Observer" story, published six days before the McMahon trial opened, had a familiar ring: O'Shea, the paper reported, was the target of an OPR investigation. The Observer stated that the Justice Department was reviewing allegations—made by a convicted felon and his daughter—that O'Shea, who had dated the woman, had acted improperly with regard to a government investigation of the swindler. While the story was raveled, its essence was clear: O'Shea was mired in some kind of sex scandal.

Though Bergman had been the driving force behind the O'Shea slam, his name did not appear on the story. On deadline, Conason yanked Bergman's byline after learning that Breventi was McMahon's lawyer. Despite its tart, however, Conason still allowed the story to run, leaving Assael's name alone on the report. The weekly, though, did not bother to pull the pictures that ran with the piece, those of swindler Joseph Lugo and his daughter, which Bergman had taken. No photo credit appeared.

Another last-minute editing move deleted a paragraph, which had been high in drafts of the story, mentioning that O'Shea was about to begin the prosecution of McMahon. Since O'Shea was not well known, linking him to the pending wrestling trial would have given the story a news hook. Instead, the June 29 front page article appears to have been taken to the cleaners, getting a 24-hour de-Martinez. The final product left Bergman without a byline or photo credit, and carried no mention of the McMahon trial or the WWF.

Though upset that his name was torn off the story, Bergman—who Conason said was not paid for his O'Shea handiwork—had to be happy with the Observer hit, especially since the Fast picked up the story the following day, also without mentioning McMahon. The Daily, with a circulation 10 times that of the Observer, brought the O'Shea story into households across the metropolitan area. As with Valenti's vindication, the Observer failed to mention that the charges against O'Shea were found by OPR three months later, to be "unsubstantiated."

While the Observer story seems to have re duced Bergman's involvement with the Observer, the paper still ran a September 1994 item about his marriage to Breventi in which he was described as "investigative reporter (and sometime Observer contributor) Marty Bergman." He also shared a byline with Conason on a D'Amato story, served as a source on another piece, and, three months ago, brought in a 500-word item that ran in the weekly. Reported by "The Observer's Marty Bergman," the piece was: unusually above a lawsuit being pressed by the WWF. Bergman's attack on O'Shea was not limited to planting stories in the press. Sources have
Bergman has crafted himself an image as a maypole around which much sensitive and important intelligence circulates.

Troubling as Bergman's behavior regarding O'Shea might have been, it is not the only matter that has caught the attention of law enforcement officials. Bergman is under criminal investigation for separate maneuverings around the McMahon trial, particularly for trying to induce a key prosecution witness to turn herself by taking money on the eve of McMahon's trial.

Saying he was a producer for the tabloid TV program A Current Affair, Bergman approached McMahon's former secretary, Emily Feinberg, baring her with $350,000 in return for a tell-all TV interview and work as a consultant on a supposed Fox movie about McMahon. Bergman also was in regular contact with Feinberg's attorney, Steven Hyman, floating various money-making proposals, all of which would require Feinberg to dish dirt on McMahon and the WWF.

Hyman declined to speak with the wire about his dealings with Bergman, saying that Feinberg and her husband, Michael, also a former WWF hand, did not want to speak with a reporter. However, several people familiar with the investigation have provided a detailed account of Bergman's activities. Federal agents, who have been closely following the investigation, launched the probe last year after top officials in the Brooklyn prosecutor's office learned of Bergman's contact with Feinberg, his role in the Observer story, and his relationship with Brewetti. Law enforcement officials are examining whether Bergman, by offering cash to Feinberg, was illegally trying to set up "false impeachment" to be used against Feinberg during cross-examination. In a pretrial motion, Brewetti described Feinberg as the government's "star witness" against McMahon.

In a letter to the wire, attorneys Leftcous and Cohen said they "are confident" that the newspaper "received no information whatsoever" that Bergman offered money to witnesses to alter their testimony. The lawyers added that the wire story was "being prosecuted by certain individuals, including those within the government who have a vendetta against Bergman and Brewetti."

After series of Bergman contacts with Hyman in early 1994, Emily Feinberg agreed to meet Bergman with her lawyer at Sparta Steak House. Over dinner, Bergman offered no details of how Feinberg's payments would be structured, only that "we're talking about the three millions."
a reference to more than $300,000, P. wing more smoke. Bergman also claimed that he wanted Sylvester Stallone to play McMahon in the Fox TV movie, Feinberg was convinced that Bergman's entreaties were an attempt to get her to take money, which would then be used to discredit her testimony against McMahon. Until right before trial, Feinberg, who repeatedly re­ ported Bergman, was unaware that her partner lived and worked with Brevetti. A Current Affair reporter John Johnston said last week that Bergman did some work for him at a paid freelance on two WWF pieces—one aired in late 1993 and the other in April 1994—and that Bergman served as the "liaison" between him and M.D. Wright, one of McMahon's lawyers. Bergman's main contribution, though, was tracking down the whereabouts of Feinberg "...in case she was able to ambush her outside of her home..." Johnston added that Bergman's talk with Feinberg of a big figure deal was not on behalf of the TV tabloid.

Johnson claimed that until the Voice told him, he was unaware of Brevetti's and Bergman's personal relationship. "You're kidding. Oh my God," Johnston said. "I had no idea. No clue whatsoever." Bergman's apparent need-to-know approach to news of his marriage extended to his long-term business contacts interviewed last month. Bergman never told either person—one a lawyer, the other a real estate broker—that he had married Brevetti last September. In fact, neither professional knew he had any relationship with the defense lawyer.

Bergman himself was subpoenaed during the McMahon trial and, if he had been called to testify, would have been queried about his contacts with Hyman and Feinberg. When he met an FBI agent in Brooklyn on full 12 to pick up his subpoena, Bergman engaged the investigator in conversation and, in the process, allegedly lied about his role in the O'Shea story. Denying that he played a part in the weekly's story, Bergman made sure to direct the agent's attention to the Post follow-up, which he said was wider.

The flurry of law enforcement attention directed at Bergman turned an indication, the Voice has learned, that, as recently as last year, the rogue operator was an FBI source. One official said that, at the time of the O'Shea's attack on O'Shea, Bergman had actually contacted the bureau with information on the whereabouts of a federal fugitive. The man Bergman wanted to give up was James Lupo, his chief contact on the O'Shea story. Bergman's use for the swindler, apparently, ended postinterview.

The Voice has also learned that Bergman figured in another intrigue involving Feinberg and his husband, Michael Feinberg, who used to write scripts for the WWF, had drafted a book proposal dealing with his stint with McMahon; the outline did not promise an easy, but rather a comical look at the WWF. Bergman learned about the proposal through conversations with Hyman, sources said. Four days before McMahon's trial opened, Brevetti served the Feinbergs with a subpoena calling for copies of any book proposals, outlines, or treatment prepared by the Feinbergs.

The request for the documents was denied by Judge Jacob Mishler; but the subject came up at the end of Brevetti's cross-examination of Feinberg. Asked if she had any intention of writing a book, Feinberg said no. Brevetti then asked if Feinberg had collaborated with his husband on any book project dealing with the WWF. Again Feinberg said no. Her answers were accurate since Michael Feinberg alone had prepared the book proposal, a project his wife opposed.

Johnston said Bergman promised, but failed, to arrange an interview with McMahon before the WWF trial. With the proliferation of tabloid TV shows, the temptation to line up such exclusive is intense, since these "gets," as they are called in the television industry, drive the ratings. Bergman has tried his hand at arranging a few "gets," but with limited success. While he did arrange a 1993 interview with gangster Gregory Scopp who was then dying of AIDS, for CBS now-defunct Silver Stories, he failed in other bids to arrange bigger scoops. Bergman was a paid--a consultant for Silver Stories, and worked, at points, with executive producer Andrew Lack now the president of NBC News.

Al Sharpton, who represented Tawana Brawley and her family, said last week the Bergman met with him in 1993 and asked him to "name one price" for a Brawley interview, adding that "the story would be positive." The Bergman approach, Sharpton said, came after the Brawley family had decided against doing a 60 Minutes interview with Mike Wallace. Sharpton said he agreed to a meeting after Bergman told him that he had hatched a fundraiser for Jesse Jackson at his Suffolk home. The April 1998 party, which Jackson attended, was one of several fundraisers thrown by Bergman, events that drew politicians like former governor Hugh Carey and attorney general Robert Abrams to press conferences.

Sharpton said that while Bergman said he "could hold 60 Minutes," Bergman's name never came up in talks he had with Wallace. Bergman, who represented a new trial, said attorney William Aronwald, who represented Warmus, Bergman also dealt with reporters on Far-
Bergman is under criminal investigation for trying to induce a key prosecution witness to taint herself by taking money on the eve of trial.

Born in New York City in April 1948, Martin Bergman is the oldest of three brothers. He grew up in Jamaica before moving to New Rochelle when his mother remarried. His father was a fire trader, and Bergman liked to say that his old man was hooked up somehow with Rhode Island's Patriarca mob family. After attending a Westchester community college, Bergman went to Michigan State, only to return to New York after about a year.

Though he is currently a registered Republican, it is unclear whether Bergman had political ties in GOP-dominated Suffolk when first hired by the county. He was 27 years old, married with children, and claimed that he had previously made a fortune operating some Long Island gas stations. The natural-born snoop was detailed to the Department of Public Works.

By 1976, as Nightly reporters began exploring allegations of corruption surrounding a massive county construction project known as the Southwest Sewer District, Bergman was preparing to enter the information age. His county post gave him access to confidential documents that revealed irregularities in the project. Using the alias "Lowell"—his brother's name—Bergman contracted Nightly reporter Fred Tucciello and broached the subject of paying him for his information. When told that the paper did not pay for news, Bergman disappeared, only to contact Tucciello several months later and begin providing information gratis. Simultaneously, Bergman also turned informant in an FBI investigation of the Suffolk County legislative function's for his wife or a friend.

Bergman has sworn in an affidavit to Senate investigators that he was a source for the FBI in providing information about the sewers project. Editor Bob Greene agreed to set up a meeting with John Good, then in charge of the bureau's Hauppauge office, but not without giving Good a warning: "Watch out," said Greene. "He's going to hustle you for a lot of money."

Bergman is the only one who knew the true identity of "Lowell," Bergman's code name. In exchange for information, Feldman would later testify, he repeatedly agreed to pay Bergman personally. Feldman described the unusual arrangement as "sort of a flimflam situation," in which Bergman would extract payments by claiming to need money for such things as birthday presents for his wife or a friend.

With so much interest in the Sewer District, local officials were convinced that original county documents were being stolen and slipped to either reporters or assorted informants. Bergman was believed responsible.

Relegated to a do-nothing work detail that kept him away from county files, Bergman began pressing Noto and Grant to help him arrange a transfer or promotion, offering confidential records in return. Concerned that Bergman was trying to set them up, Noto said he and Grant approached the D.A.'s office, which sent the pair back to Bergman, with Grant wired.

In a series of conversations taped in December 1980, Bergman admitted stealing documents and talked of having the knowledge and the ability to "destroy people." He also presented the pols with a sim-
A primary component of the county's legal as-
suit was a $5.4 billion civil racketeering suit
filed against the power company.

While many Long Island politicians were
anti-Shoreham, two Suffolk legislators led the
fight against LILCO: Democrat Wayne
Prospect and Republican Greg Blass, then the
presiding officer of the county legislature. Blass
and "Bill," both longtime Bergman friends,
arranged for Suffolk County to hire outside
counsel to represent it with regard to a pair of
LILCO-related federal civil lawsuits. In a later
interview, Blass said that Bergman put the coun-
ty legislature "together" with Hill, Bettis &
Nash, the Manhattan law firm hired by Suffolk.
Hill, Blass's work on the two federal suits
earned the firm more than $7 million. Unbe-
knownst to county officials, however, Bergman
was getting a piece of the action. Two sources
familiar with Bergman's dealings with Hill,
Bettis estimated that, beginning in early 1986,
his companies were paid more than $350,000
by the firm largely for what one acquaintance
characterized as "securing the LILCO business
to Hill, Bettis. Gregory O'Neill and Mark Jaffe,
partners at the firm, last week disputed that as-
sertion, saying Bergman was paid for perform-
ing "extremely valuable" investigative work. It
is improper for a nonlawyer to split fees with an
attorney.

While he was earning money from Suf-
folk's LILCO litigation, Bergman was still a
county employee, though he was suspended
without pay in October 1986; his employment
officially terminated in December 1989. In ad-
dition, Bergman was pursuing his civil rights
suit against Suffolk County, an action begun in
1981 and which went to trial in June 1988. Ma-
son, who was county attorney at the time Suf-
folk's racketeering suit was filed, said he
was never informed that Hill, Bettis maintained
a financial relationship with Bergman, an
arrangement he termed "troubling." Asked
about his friend's work on the LILCO litigation,
Blass strongly maintained that Bergman, "didn't
have anything to do with Hill, Bettis"

with McCallion, a former federal prose-
cut who led Hill, Bettis's litigation team, said
that his contact with Bergman came at the out-
set of the LILCO case, when Bergman helped
identify and locate some key witnesses. McCall-
ion said, his dealings with Bergman ended
abruptly some months later, after McCallion re-
tected Bergman's proposal for "jump sum
monthly payments" as "not appropriate." He in-
sisted that Bergman file "detailed documenta-
tion" supporting any claims for payment.
McCallion said shortly after this, the firm—at
the request of Blass and Prospect—removed
him from the responsibility of dealing with
Bergman and his cronies in the Suffolk legisla-
ture. O'Neill and Jaffe said, that, until speaking
with the Fbi last week, they were unaware that
Bergman—when he worked for Hill, Bettis—
had a lawsuit pending against Suffolk or that he
was still a county employee. O'Neill, who dealt
with Bergman after McCallion's reassignment,
termed Bergman a "manipulator.

Hill, Bettis made payments for more than
two years—at least one check was for
$35,000—to one of two Bergman companies,
which operated out of the basement of his Long
Island home. Neither was a licensed investiga-
tive firm. McCallion said that after he was re-
lieved of responsibility for Bergman, he could
not recall seeing any work product—such as
memos or interview reports—reflecting what
Bergman's continuing role was at Hill, Bettis.

While Bergman did do work for the law
firm, two sources said he was primarily paid for
lining up Suffolk County as a client for Hill.
Bettis. One of the sources, a law enforcement
agent, said Bergman worked "steering" clients
to the law firm. The investigator recalls
Bergman "bribing that they weren't paying
him enough money and that they owed him
money," with Bergman at one point mentioning
the figure $100,000. Manhattan court records
show that Bergman opened a 1991 civil
suit against Hill, Bettis to recover money for
"work, labor & services." O'Neill and Jaffe said,
however, that Bergman never pursued the ac-
tion against the firm.

Bergman also helped to line up a Suffolk le-
gal contact for Manhattan attorney Lionel
Saporra, a former Hill, Bettis attorney. While
Saporra acknowledged that Bergman helped
arrange his deal with the county Water Authori-
ty, which netted the now-retired lawyer $421,000,
his attorney suddenly recalled the payments.
Saporra claimed they were for "investigative work for me
and public relations work generally." Asked to
cite any cases or PR work handled by Bergman,
Saporra acknowledged that Bergman helped
him prepare for a time in years that Bergman was flush,
but the deals would all either sour or go bust.

In 1989, with Blasi's backing, Bergman
tried to arrange a $300,000 Suffolk contract for Bruce Grad, but the county legislature decided not to hire John Grad's lawyer to represent it on some Shurelman litigation. The Bid—Bergman pairing was more successful when it turned to lining up county work for another New York criminal defense attorney: Laura Brcvetti. Brevetti has handled two cases in the past few years, racking up more than $500,000 in fees. Blais insisted Bergman had nothing to do with those deals either.

The issue of Bergman's misrepresentation arose earlier this year when he began conducting interviews with figures involved in the antitrust investigation of Ticketmaster. The government probe began after the rock band Pearl Jam filed a formal complaint with the Justice Department.

No longer detailing himself to the downscale A Current Affair, this time Bergman claimed to be producing a segment for 60 Minutes. Hewitt said that when he learned of Bergman's misrepresentation, he confronted him during a telephone call earlier this year: "He denies that he's ever done that. Well I know damn well he's done it. I said, 'Stop telling people you work for us. You don't!'

The Voice spoke with four people who said Bergman told them he was working for 60 Minutes and, in three of the instances, claimed to be doing an exposé on Ticketmaster. Bergman plumed for names of prospective witnesses in the Justice Department inquiry, gathered documents from Ticketmaster rivals, and said he needed people to come forward with information about the firm's involvement in ticket scalping, payoffs, and kickbacks. Bergman even tried to interview the Justice Department's lead attorney on the Ticketmaster investigation, Bob Zastro. Through a spokesperson, Zastro said he declined the request from Bergman—who claimed to be working for 60 Minutes.

Ticketmaster foes said they began to suspect Bergman's motives when they realized that information they had shared with him somehow wound up in the possession of the ticketing giant. One firm embroiled in litigation with Ticketmaster felt so duped by Bergman that it directed its lawyers to research New York law dealing with criminal impersonation.

Ticketmaster's New York law firm is Morrison, Cohen, Singer & Weinstein—the same firm that Laura Brevetti had worked for until 1993. While partner Malcolm Lewin handles most of the ticketing firm's litigation here, federal court records show that Brevetti worked with him on at least one Ticketmaster case, a 1992 civil matter. In addition, Lewin has told The Times that his firm continues to trade work back and forth with Brevetti.

Responding to Pearl Jam's charges, Ticketmaster countered this year that the band was actually a stalking-horse for Sony, which owns the group's record label and, Ticketmaster claimed, is planning a push into the ticketing industry. Bergman helped to float the Sony conspiracy story: there were no advertisements, staff box, or phone number, and the periodical's other stories looked like they were thrown together overnight. Two of those pieces had a certain Bergman-esque feel: one tracked the rise of Al D'Amato and the other was about the World Wrestling Federation. In addition, the Citizens Journal was mass-mailed to Capitol Hill at the time Ticketmaster was engaging in an all-out lobbying campaign to counter charges that it operated as a monopoly. The Sony attack piece was also posted on the Internet, for which Dillon said he was not responsible.

An attorney friendly with Bergman said that he recently boasted that it was "his investigation that saved Ticketmaster from the antitrust investigation" and that the company was "indebted to him." Lewin declined recently to answer questions on the record about whether Bergman has done private investigation work for Ticketmaster or Morrison, Cohen. There is some indication that Bergman's talents have, at some point, been used by Lewin's firm. Eleanor Alter told the Voice that she first met Bergman when Brevetti was at Morrison, Cohen, which Alter described as the "law firm Marty Bergman was doing work for.

Bergman's ties to Ticketmaster seem to go to the top, specifically Fred Rosen, the company's powerful chairman. Bergman, who often travels to Hilton Head, arranged for Ticketmaster to sign up as corporate sponsor for a local youth group, Student Teaching Empowerment Program (STEP), which does peer counseling and offers scholarships.

Don James, a Hilton Head businessman involved with STEP, said the Ticketmaster tie-in emanated from the top of the company: "I do believe the relationship started with Fred Rosen, the CEO, and Marty Bergman." Ticketmaster official Marla Haycovitz confirmed that the STEP program was brought directly to Rosen's attention, but believed that it was James, not Bergman, who was responsible for alerting Ticketmaster to the program.

In January, Bergman helped arrange for a delegation of STEP members to travel to New York—a trip paid for by Ticketmaster—to meet with members of the Suffolk County legislature, including Bergman's good pal Greg Blais. Six 2002 stories in The Island Packet, Hilton Head's newspaper, reported that Bergman was filming a public service announcement for Ticketmaster and STEP. Identified as a CBS producer, Bergman said the commercial was intended to "encourage companies to find new ways to join in during these times of budget difficulties, to make sure the kids aren't deprived.

Bergman's connection to Hilton Head dates back to the late 1980s, when he purchased part of the Four Seasons, a massive condominium complex on the island. Bergman's real estate venture collapsed into bankruptcy, but not before, as two ex-partners claim, Bergman was able to drain the partnership of more than $100,000. The former investors, both New York lawyers, probably should have realized what they were in for when Bergman announced one day in 1990 that he had settled on a name for their corporation. It would be called RICO, Inc., he said, the acronym for Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations.