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## An Open Letter from Ellen Mariani

Published February 15, 2007



Before there was even a “911 truth movement” to speak of, Ellen Mariani sacrificed the opportunity to collect 9/11 hush money and became a beacon of courage and determination.

### **Widow battling for 9/11 truth desperately needs your support!**

An open letter from Ellen Mariani.



Ellen and Louis Neal Mariani

After five years of battling to find the truth of 9/11/2001, the day I lost my husband Louis Neal Mariani on United Airlines Flight 175, I want to give 9-11 activists and 9-11 researchers an idea of what I’ve been through. It includes emotional abuse, harassment, lawyers’ misguidance, and now the prospect of financial ruin. Even more, there’s been a constant pressure to give up the fight to expose the criminals involved in 9/11 and what they did to our loved ones—and to the service men and women presently fighting and dying in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

It took me three months after 9/11 to gather my composure and face the fact that I would never see my husband again. But on December 20th, I put together and filed a wrongful death law suit against United Airlines. I was not suing the government at that time. That idea originated with attorney Phil Berg.

### **Airlines get \$10 billion in assistance**

Unknown to many of us in late September 2001, the presidents of the American Trial Lawyers Association from all over the country had already formed a group to go to Washington DC to meet with our elected government officials to save the airlines. With the help of lobbyists, these people presented a bill called The Air Transportation Safety and Stabilization Act. On September 22, 2001, President Bush signed it into law. The Act established an Air Transportation Stabilization Board that could issue up to \$10 billion in Federal credit. Most officials never read the bill, but were encouraged to sign it.

On December 21, 2001, the same Washington DC officials had also put together a September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to pay us for the terrible losses of the lives of loved ones on that tragic day. No court trials would be needed and there would be no attorney fees, so they said. But to receive “compensation,” the victims’ families must sign off that they would never sue the airlines or the government. This rule did not take into account whatever facts the future might reveal as to what really happened or why their loved ones were not protected from the air disasters. After all, incidents of terror and plane crashes had been going on since the 1970s. To me and many others that “compensation” appeared to be “hush money,” not “help money.”

### **Victim’s families get \$7 billion in assistance**

Kenneth Feinberg was appointed Special Master to run this fund. He was actually angry that I had placed the first lawsuit in the country the day before he began his assignment. I was not aware I was the first widow in the country to do so. Nevertheless, it was up to Feinberg to decide how much each victim’s family would receive, by estimating how much each victim would have earned in a full lifetime.

Once a family accepted the offer, they had the right to appeal. Families unhappy with the offer were permitted to appeal in a non-adversarial, informal hearing and present their case as they wished. After some 1600 hearings, by the end of the process some \$7 billion went to 97% of the families. The average payout was about \$1.8 million. Somehow the airlines managed to get more financial assistance than the victims’ families.

### **I spoke and traveled to speak mostly for free**

The moment my law suit had been filed in the NY court, the media, particularly *Good Morning America* wanted to interview me. I said no. I was still in a lot of pain and grief. And Neil’s birthday was on December 23rd, the Christmas and New Year’s holidays just around the corner. It was not the time to present myself on national television.

Some time after the holidays I began to speak more and more. It was always and still is hurtful to remember those experiences. Nevertheless I was invited to travel and speak to many 9/11 groups from Canada to Florida. Also, I gave many, many interviews for radio, TV and newspapers, telling my personal story. I wasn’t paid for most of my interviews,

yet I felt it was my duty to continue this work. I'd been taught as a youngster to never feel sorry for myself. Brush yourself off and keep helping others along the way.

### **Now I'm left with my Social Security check to live on**

In May 2002, I was appointed to be the administratrix of my husband's estate. Neil's only daughter (my stepdaughter) agreed to it legally. Since he'd left no will, the law in New Hampshire stated that his only heir was to receive half the estate. Unfortunately, Neil left no life insurance either, though he'd been my sole supporter and I was his wife and dependent. Now, at age 63, I was eligible for Social Security checks each month. I had to wait until I was 65, before I can receive Medicare benefits. At that point the government will take out \$80 to \$90 per month to pay for them. This doesn't include coverage for eye exams, glasses or dental care. And my bills are mounting, frighteningly.

I do thank the public for the outpouring of money given to the Red Cross for 9/11 victims' families. I know you all gave from your heart. But I must tell you that the money came to me in drips and drabs. I started to feel like I was a victim on welfare given the attitudes of the people working for Red Cross.

There were questions to go along with everything, including my private life and bills. There was also a visit from the FBI 10 days after 9/11! But the worst was yet to come! Once I filed my lawsuit, United Airlines' attorneys required I give them every piece of personal information concerning myself and immediate family members. Why, other than to harass me?

### **A Bush law firm brought in to manage Massachusetts 9/11 Fund**

A Boston, Massachusetts 9/11 Fund was created by the Greenberg-Traurig Law Firm, which defended President elect George W. Bush in the 2000 election. What's more, they had contributed a lot of money to his election. Yet this law firm held financial seminars for 9/11 families, having several lawyers present. Neil's daughter was among the people in attendance. Dan Baganowski, a Greenberg Traurig lawyer out of their Boston office, somehow became a key part of all these financial seminars. Also, a tight-knit group formed, including people from United Airlines attorneys, the Red Cross, Greenberg-Traurig, Kenneth Feinberg and the heir's lawyers in New Hampshire. And suddenly here were two more attorneys from the Boston area. They tried to stop or block me as a 9/11 widow from any further talking or informing the public, to prevent what unforeseen things could happen in the future regarding my lawsuits.

I bit the bullet and kept a stiff upper lip. I knew my real job was just beginning. The Red Cross was now having Greenberg-Traurig sessions all around the country, eager to give out medication to ease the pain and suffering of loved ones. I never judged those who felt they needed medication. But I knew I had to be clear thinking and in control at all times. I felt like I'd wakened the devil himself and he was now at my heels. In fact, I condemn the way these lawyers went about treating me after I filed the December 20th, 2001 lawsuit. Here are some examples.

### **Neil's heir removes me as administratrix of my husband's estate**

The attorneys of Neil's heir claimed that I wasn't fulfilling my job as administratrix of his

estate duties by going around the country, speaking and telling my personal story. Now I realize lawyers only want other lawyers overseeing civil and legal cases. It seems to me they have a duty to cover the backs of their professions' members. And God help the client who fires their first attorney for not performing legal duties as a client sees fit.

For instance, my first attorney was caught conspiring by email, voice mail and telephone to convince me to legally go to the Victim Compensation Fund. I refused and fired him. I felt, and still do, that it is a "shut up and go away Fund." I would not sign away my right to know what had happened to my husband on September 11th or take taxpayers' money under that premise. Is that wrong? Not moral? Not ethical? I don't think so.

### **Feinberg's formula for a life's worth**

Kenneth Feinberg had put together a financial chart that stated the older a victim was the less the family would get for his or her life lost. I guess that meant the victim had less earning years left. Yet my husband of 13 years, his life carried no less or more value than any other life in my thinking and in my heart because of his age.

It appears to me, and I feel this deeply, that all the legal professionals I came in contact with were cut from the same mold. They had all learned laws to protect their self interest. They proceeded to mislead clients and the courts, and ruin people's reputations and lives. For this, they rack up huge bills, innocently smiled and then walk away. If I sound bitter, it's from bitter experiences. For instance:

### **Neil's heir's second law firm turns into a cross-examiner**

Soon after Neil's heir (my stepdaughter) had hired her second law firm, all hell seemed to break loose. She and her lawyers began making false claims against me. I thought our justice system provided that you are innocent until you're proven guilty. It seemed as if it were working the other way round. It also seemed that whoever made it to the courthouse steps first got what they were after. It was a kind of "What Lola wants, Lola gets" justice. The lawyers do whatever they can get away with to win and bill you later. There is just no mercy if you don't have any money for your defense.

I soon received a set of intimidating questions in the mail from Neil's heir's attorney, ordering me to answer willingly, regarding what had gone on so far in my duties as administratrix. The last page of questions stated that they could add additional questions if they felt they were needed. I felt like it was a cross-examination.

Sure enough, I was ordered to be deposed under oath to answer the very same questions in a different format by the very same attorney. He slowly asked the same type of questions worded differently, over and over again. Was it was apparent he was trying to trip me up to give conflicting answers? Now, what kind of behavior is that towards a bereaved 9-11 widow? And the truth is, I didn't "mess up." I often would finish his line of questioning for him, thinking I was helping him. This made him very angry and he told me to stop. I finally said to him "I have had enough," but the harassment didn't stop.

### **Sand-bagged in a New Hampshire courtroom**

On 12/1/04, I returned to the New Hampshire courthouse, brought there again by the

heir's attorney for more questioning. I was informed by my New Hampshire attorney to go to the second floor of the courthouse along with a writer and my soon to be hired personal attorney. We waited in a small room while my New Hampshire attorney went downstairs to speak with the heir's attorney. My attorney came back to the room and informed us that all the insults made against me had to stop, immediately. I should have never been put through this mental abuse.

My lawyer informed us that the heir's attorney was writing up a contract to that effect, and I was expected to sign it. Soon my attorney was handed that contract. He read it out loud to all of us in the room. One of the things it stated was that I would not talk to any media reporters about the NY lawsuit. I thought afterwards that statement was strange because nothing much was happening with that suit because I was excluded from information at the time. And all New York litigation was posted on a website, [www.sept11tortlitigation.com](http://www.sept11tortlitigation.com). (Click on "court papers" then click on "hearing transcripts.")

### **Promised one contract**

The contract also stated I would willingly agree to be removed as administratrix. The reason given was that there were grave errors made in the New York lawsuit by the attorney Phil Berg. Because I hired him, I had to be removed (punished) as the administratrix. Strangely, these attorneys would not or could not identify any of these "errors" on my request. Blame it on my own naiveté or just being battered, somehow I agreed to withdraw.

I also must tell you I was never asked to initial any of the pages of the contract before my New Hampshire attorney left the room with the document. We were told to wait until his return at which time he ushered us down to the formal and legal signing.

### **Given another contract**

After I received my copy of the signed contract I had many questions due to the document being very poorly hand printed and extremely difficult to read. The wording was completely different than what was read out loud to us in the small courtroom, by the New Hampshire attorney. Also, new language had been added in the heir's attorney's favor. I never imagined that with my attorneys present at the execution of the documents, that the heir's attorneys would be brazen enough to change the contract without my knowledge. No copy was given to me at that time. I received a copy many days later, after it was legally court-registered. I'd been illegally misled, which was what really happened.

In addition, the heir's lawyers had removed my name off of the *Mariani vs. UAL et al* lawsuit and off of two other of my lawsuits that were pending. A New York Federal Court UAL lawsuit had been cleverly waiting in the wings to be put in place of my ground breaking 12/20/2001 lawsuit. The first in the country to be filed now had the heir's name on it, *Lauren E. Peters vs. UAL et al*. I thought to myself, "How low can people sink?" You'll see.

### **Still more court proceedings and harassment**

Four months after I signed the contract I was ordered to meet with the heir's new Boston attorney and relive the past traumatic events of 9/11 all over again. I didn't comply with these demands. At this point I had had enough. Nevertheless, that Boston lawyer threatened he would get the New Hampshire court to issue a contempt of court charge against me. Due to my limited Social Security income, I was staying with my family out of state. I wasn't able to fly out to comply with his unnecessary legal demands. So he continued to threaten me. My personal attorney had to intervene and talk him into having a three way conference call to appease him. Is this beginning to sound like a bad dream? Well, it was. And there's more.

On 5/10/2006, they tried again to gain financially by putting a petition in the New Hampshire probate court to ask the judge to order me to a mental evaluation. They felt that even without proof they could declare me traumatized to the point where I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. If one of their doctors could prove this, it would bring in more money from the NY lawsuit to them and the Mariani estate! I refused to comply. It would definitely discredit me and destroy my credibility. I wouldn't do anything further to let these people gain financially through sheer dishonesty.

### **My final battle**

Several doctors were recommended to me as an alternative, to their complaint. It was like a war. Luckily I was given the name of a psychological evaluator who specializes in trauma testing. He is a behavioral health expert in state, federal and military courts, with international jurisdiction. I paid for the three to four hours of testing from my own pocket. The results revealed that I am perfectly normal—sane. Technically, I suffered from a “mild elevation consistent with a perception of persecutory ideation and exposure to actual persecutory experience. Based on the examinee's recent history, it is reasonable.”

The test also showed that I am bluntly honest and have no difficulty expressing myself assertively. I am confident in my choices, belief system, and mental/emotional foundation. These findings are all within normal range. I am a leader and I won't change my actions to those that are not proper. My approach is well-grounded. And the tester saw no reason for me to change my approach and be redirected to the heir's lawyers' thinking. I also had none of the mental disorders on the long list on the evaluation form. No evidence of any disorder of any kind, period.

Somehow I gathered enough money from my Social Security check to buy an airline ticket and secretly flew out to New Hampshire for the 5/10/2006 hearing. As I said, I had been staying with my family out West.

I never mentioned to anyone that I was going to the proceedings. I felt if they knew that, they may have prepared a different plan of action. Once I arrived at the courthouse, I made it very clear I did not appreciate what these lawyers were doing. I was asked by my New Hampshire attorney, “What is it you really want, Mrs. Mariani?” My reply was, “I want a trial by jury.” He was taken aback.

I also said I wanted to speak to the judge that morning and then I handed each lawyer a copy of the psychological evaluation report. I spoke personally to the newly appointed administrator and the Boston attorneys and reprimanded them for believing the false statements made against me by the heir and her attorneys.



## **The heirs' attorneys get even meaner**

It seems that after I reprimanded them, they became even more cocky and arrogant in the court room. They continued to make all kinds of accusations against me. Yet they never did inform the judge that they had been given a copy of my psychological evaluation.

My attorney informed the judge that I requested to speak. To defend myself against their insulting and cruel accusations, I told the judge how far they'd gone to harass me and discredit me. I also pointed out with whom they were all associating and why. I felt I was no longer being taken seriously, given the judge's facial expressions. I then turned and said directly, "YOUR HONOR, what would you do if your husband was murdered and you had been harassed from day one, without a moment to grieve? I want you to order them to stop doing this to me now!"

The judge listened to all sides and then recessed. On our way out of the courtroom, I noticed a man sitting there. I didn't understand what he was doing there, because no one had been in the seating areas of the courtroom during any of my previous proceedings. The man introduced himself as a 9/11 activist who lived in New Hampshire. He was told I'd be in court that day and he wanted to meet me for an interview.

He later informed me that there had been a note posted on the courtroom door that read, DO NOT ENTER, PRIVATE SESSION IN ORDER. My God, that would explain the lack of people attending any of my 9/11 proceedings. They were literally shut out with that sign. I informed my personal attorney and he was shocked. He said, "This note is supposed to be posted when there is a juvenile or mentally handicapped case in progress." So, there was this endless series of dirty tricks to deal with.

Afterwards, the new administrator and heir's attorneys tried a second time to have my psychological evaluation challenged and removed, to be replaced with one of the heir's attorney's appointed psychiatrists' evaluators. The judge finally decided that my evaluation was sufficient. That was it for now.

## **And so my dear friends, I sincerely need your help.**

As you've read, I've been abused, harassed, financially ruined in the process of trying to get justice for 9/11 and my dear husband. At this point, any and all gift donations to help me with legal bills and living expenses would be greatly appreciated. Believe me, it's not easy to ask, but your gift would be very gratefully accepted. And know that your gift will help me to never give up the fight to expose these criminals and what they have done to our loved ones, on 9/11 or in its bloody aftermath. Keep the faith.

With Love,

Ellen Mariani

[emariani911@yahoo.com](mailto:emariani911@yahoo.com).

Please send gift donations to:

P.O. Box 2792

Parker, Co 80134

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**Widow battling for 9/11 truth  
desperately needs your support!**  
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After  
five  
years  
of

*Ellen and Louis Neal Mariani*

battling to find the truth of 9/11/2001, the day I lost my husband Louis Neal Mariani on United Airlines Flight 175, I want to give 9-11 activists and 9-11 researchers an idea of what I've been through. It includes emotional abuse, harassment, lawyers' misguidance, and now the prospect of financial ruin. Even more, there's been a constant pressure to give up the fight to