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Rice: 4 Lawyers

Stole from Clients in Real Estate Deals

By [Timothy Bolger](#) on September 7th, 2010



From top left: Yvonne DeBenedetto, Richard Gluszak, Eric Finger and Robert Oziel

Three lawyers allegedly stole a combined total of more than \$1 million from their clients in separate real estate deals and a fourth attorney stole a part of a life insurance payout to a grieving widow, Nassau County prosecutors said. All four are facing charges of grand larceny in Nassau County court.

In July, 65-year-old Robert Oziel of Oyster Bay was arrested for allegedly refusing to turn over more than \$18,000 being held in an escrow account on behalf of a couple he represented in a housing dispute in 2008, prosecutors said. He also was accused of withholding \$50,000 from a man who hired Oziel in a \$500,000 Muttontown property deal that later fell through.

“We’re taking the position that he’s not guilty,” said his Garden City based attorney, Kevin Keating.

Eric Finger, 45, of Copiague, was arrested last month after Finger allegedly kept \$36,000 worth of funds he held in an

escrow account on behalf of a couple that hired him while they bought a new home in 2009, prosecutors said. Earlier this year in a separate real estate deal, Finger allegedly stole a broker's \$7,000 commission check, prosecutors said.

"Mr. Finger is working with the district attorney's office to alleviate any and all discrepancies," said his Manhattan-based attorney, Jonathan Davidoff. He added: "He is working to make sure that all his clients are made whole."

Richard Gluszak was arrested Monday after the 59-year-old Hicksville man allegedly stole \$204,000 that was left over from a couple who had a new home built for them last year, prosecutors said. Soon after, Gluszak used \$400,000 life insurance beneficiary funds entrusted to him to pay the taxes on

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a woman's late husband's estate, but the lawyer kept the money for himself, prosecutors said.

"I think it's more of a commercial dispute rather than an intentional grand larceny," said Garden City-based attorney Martin Geduldig, who represents Gluszak.

Yvonne DeBenedetto was arrested Tuesday for issuing bad checks—one for \$30,000 and two for \$260,000—to two separate couples she represented in real estate deals last year, prosecutors said. Attorney information for the 43-year-old Bay Shore woman was not immediately available.

All were released without bail except for DeBenedetto, whose bail was set at \$10,000.

"The victims in these cases thought that they had attorneys they could trust with their hard-earned money and their dreams for a more secure future," Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice said. "But what they got were four criminals whose only intention was to rob them blind."

Their licenses to practice law will be subject to disciplinary action after the conclusion of their cases.

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