



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 16, 2017

## Hung Jury for New Jersey Democrat Senator Menendez in Corruption Trial

After eight weeks of listening to more than 50 witnesses in the corruption trial of New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez (D), shown in center, and his friend, Florida eye surgeon Salomon Melgen, [the jury couldn't reach a verdict](#). This forced the judge in the trial — who has been involved in it since 2015 when the Justice Department first brought charges — to declare a mistrial: “I find that you [the jury] are unable to reach a verdict and that further deliberations would be futile and that there is no alternative but to declare a mistrial.”



When the prosecution asked Judge William Walls to have the jury consider each of the dozen charges separately (called a partial-verdict instruction), Walls declined, holding that such a request would be futile: “Based upon what is so clearly and definitively written [by the jury], that would be a futile exercise,” he explained. And then he told the prosecuting attorney Peter Koski, “I can appreciate how disappointed you are.”

The charges brought by the DOJ looked persuasive: that Menendez intervened with Medicare in order to keep his friend from returning some \$9 million in excessive reimbursements; that he pressured federal officials to protect a port security contract held by a company in the Dominican Republic [Melgen is a citizen there and a major investor in the company] from going out to bid; that he was paid off by Melgen with various favors including trips on Melgen’s private jet (which he failed to report as required by the Senate), and that he made substantial high-six-figure contributions to his reelection campaigns; that he bribed federal officials, committing fraud and making false statements in the process; and more. Prosecutors also charged that Menendez acted as Melgen’s “personal senator,” helping him obtain visas for several of Melgen’s “girlfriends” [read: prostitutes] from the Dominican Republic to entertain them at Melgen’s private estate in Florida.

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So corrupt is Menendez that his Freedom Index rating (measuring adherence to the Constitution) of just 17 out of 100 only begins to tell the story. Much of the rest of the story lies in the five single-spaced pages of footnotes and source material gathered at [DiscoverTheNetworks.com](#) on him. Just one example from that corruption aggregator will suffice:

With a public corruption trial of both Menendez and Melgen scheduled to begin on September 6, 2017, the DOJ on August 30 filed a court brief stating that Menendez’s claim that he had traveled on Melgen’s plane only three times “was a lie.” “The truth,” said DOJ, “is that Menendez and his personal guests had enjoyed more than a dozen flights on Melgen’s private jet, dating back at least as far as 2006 — not a single one of which Menendez had paid for or reported on his annual financial disclosure forms....”



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But the lies of Menendez and Melgen to the public were aimed at covering up more than just flights. They were aimed at hiding a corrupt pact spanning seven years, in which Melgen showered many more things of value on the New Jersey senator than just flights on a private jet, and Menendez reciprocated with official action advancing the South Florida eye doctor's personal whims and business interests.

Those disappointed in the outcome included not only prosecutor Peter Koski, but Bob Salera, spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, who declared, upon hearing the news, "New Jerseyans are disgusted.... If Bob Menendez chooses to run for re-election [in 2018], New Jerseyans will reject him."

Those looking to see if the judge has connections to the swamp are also likely to be disappointed. Despite holding degrees from establishment schools Dartmouth and Yale and being appointed to the federal bench by President Bill Clinton in 1994, Walls, now 85, has earned a reputation for severe sentencing in political corruption cases like these. In 2015, Walls imposed a 70-month sentence on a Union County (N.J.) official who admitted stealing \$120,000 from the county, writing at the time: "We the people of the United States are sick and tired of political and public officials being on the take." When pressed by the defendant's attorneys to be lenient, Walls rejected that request saying that he was tired of requests like that for "people who were corrupt in their public duty."

Walls won't have the opportunity to show just how hard he would be in this case. Although both Menendez and his friend Dr. Melgen are free to go, Melgen is about to be sentenced in Florida after being convicted of 67 counts of healthcare fraud.

The jury in the present case simply decided that the tit-for-tat giving and receiving of gifts were just the result of a long-standing and genuine friendship between two good friends. Who could argue with that?

Photo of Bob Menendez: [senate.gov](#)

*An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at [badelman@thenewamerican.com](mailto:badelman@thenewamerican.com).*

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