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Release of Tape Puts Focus on Man Behind It

By Errol A. Cockfield Jr.
STAFF WRITER

The release of a tape of a phone call in which a public works supervisor allegedly made racist comments about a fellow employee has put the spotlight back on the man who secretly made the tape.

Andrew J. Petti Jr. set off a scandal in Nassau in 1991 using the same practice.

William Biamonte, then an aide to North Hempstead Supervisor Ben Zwirn, was forced to resign after being taped by Petti as he allegedly plotted to threaten then-Hempstead Presiding Supervisor Joseph Mondello to in-



Andrew J. Petti Jr.

fluence his vote on a piece of legislation.

Petti and Biamonte, who is the legislative Democrats' chief of staff, had been close friends until the tape's release. The two are now enemies. Biamonte calls Petti "The Linda Tripp of Nassau County."

Petti said he recently caught public works department supervisor Linda Alberti making racist remarks about a fellow employee during a telephone call with her. Petti says his phone is wired to record calls, though he declined to say why. Tele-

phone taping is legal in New York as long as one party to the conversation knows it is being done.

In the phone conversation with Petti, Alberti began discussing the internal politics of the department without his prompting, Petti said.

Petti said he felt obliged to turn the tape over to Willie Warren, a black equipment operator who works in the garage where Petti is a supervisor. Warren was the subject of Alberti's taped comments.

"Maybe it's unethical that I record people, but this sheds light on the hypocrisy of Nassau County," he said. Petti said he learned the art of surreptitious taping from Biamonte, who once acknowledged he had taped then Long Beach Supervisor Bruce Nyman hoping to use that tape to threaten Mondello as part of the alleged plot.