

by themselves.

The father, who wore an off-white cable-knit sweater draped over his shoulders, said nothing during the proceeding.

Judge Matthew D'Emic sentenced him as part of a plea bargain in exchange for a guilty plea to first-degree manslaughter.

The victim's mother approved the deal to guarantee jail time and closure, Assistant DA Cynthia Lynch noted.

Still, Johns got an earful from many of his wife's friends and family members.

"You're not a real man. You're nothing but a punk," the victim's mother, Lileith Armstrong, who's rearing the couple's two boys, told Johns. "You not only put a bullet in Angela's heart, you put one in mine — and every day there's a hole."

Pataki driving levy hidden in Javits plan

By KENNETH LOVETT
Post Correspondent

ALBANY — A hidden provision in Gov. Pataki's newly unveiled plan for a Jacob K. Javits Convention Center expansion would impose a new tax on some car rentals to help pay for the project. The Post has learned.

The 5 percent tax on cars rented at the city's airports would be in addition to an already disclosed \$1.50 hotel tax that is also earmarked to help fund the massive expansion project.

Pataki aides say the car tax was pushed by the

hotel industry, which didn't want to shoulder the burden alone, and supported by the Bloomberg administration.

The airport car rental tax — included in a 62-page bill unveiled last week — would raise between \$2 million and \$3 million a year.

Pataki's bill has also raised eyebrows by seeking to change bidding standards, include language that critics said could allow for the construction of a West Side stadium and cut the power of the state comptroller to audit the project.

"It's bizarre beyond be-

lief," said Assemblyman Richard Brodsky (D-Westchester). "This takes the worst of the state authority abuses we've seen and writes them into statute."

Brodsky wouldn't speculate on the fate of the legislation, but said "it looks like they're trying to hide what they're doing and that's why we have a Legislature to make sure there is a public debate."

Pataki's plan would remove provisions in existing law that require the authority spearheading the expansion project to award the job to the lowest "responsible bidder."

Critics say the changes would gut many of the labor protections while allowing the Pataki administration to choose whomever it wants for the project.

Pataki aides say the intention is to ensure the project is done right.

Meanwhile, Brodsky notes Pataki's legislation includes reference to the land earmarked for the Jets stadium and contains a provision allowing for the construction of "adjacent facilities containing a plenary hall."

Pataki aides insist the bill is only meant to deal with the expansion of the Javits center, and not

the West Side stadium proposal.

"If you wanted to read it that way, you could, but that's not the intention," said a Pataki aide.

"This legislation is about creating a world-class convention center that New York City has long deserved," said Pataki spokeswoman Lynn Rasic.

"The Javits expansion rightfully has broad-based support of labor as well as hotel and convention-industry leaders because they know that this expansion will generate thousands of jobs for New York."

For sale: Best li'l brothel

LAS VEGAS — The Chicken Ranch, one of the best-known brothels in the business, is for sale for just under \$7 million.

"I'm going to be 63 this summer," said Ken Green, who has run the business for 22 years. "I'm just working a little more at it than I want to."

Green said he bought the brothel in 1982 for \$1.25 million from Walter Plankinton, who named it after the Texas establishment that closed in the 1970s and was made famous on stage and screen

as "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."

Green said he developed the property from two double-wide trailers into a 40-acre spread with a bar, parlor, swimming pool and three bungalows with Wild West, jungle and Victorian themes. The brothel is about 60 miles west of Las Vegas.

"You mention the name 'Chicken Ranch,' everyone gets a little smile on their face and knows what you're talking about," Green said yesterday. "We're not raising poultry out there."

AP

'Family' ties prevented rat's whacking

By KATI CORNELL SMITH

Accused mob chieftain Joseph Massino held off whacking his crime family's uppity underboss only because the man was his brother-in-law, a gangster turncoat testified yesterday.

Massino's decision not to kill Salvatore Vitale several years ago could have fateful consequences at the godfather's ongoing trial, where Vitale is expected to spill the beans about the Bonanno crime family boss' role in seven gangland slayings.

"If he wasn't his brother-in-law, he [Massino] would

have gotten rid of him ... killed him," Frank Coppa, 62, said in Brooklyn federal court, where he implicated Massino in five mob hits.

When Coppa, a stout Bonanno capo who served with Vitale on the Mafia family's two-man administrative panel, walked into the courtroom, he and the hulking Massino stared at each other for a tense moment.

"Maybe he'll drop dead," said Massino's daughter, Joanne Massino.

Coppa said Massino, 61, was displeased with Vitale in the late 1990s for several

reasons. Massino didn't like the way Vitale "was carrying himself, like a big shot," and how he was handling his own family, Coppa said.

And, Massino "said he was worried about Sal Vitale because they did seven pieces of work together," Coppa testified, adding that the mob boss was concerned that would lead Vitale to cooperate with federal authorities — as he did last year.

Asked by prosecutor Robert Henoch what "pieces of work" meant, Coppa said, "Moiders."

Although Massino's familial loyalty precluded assassinating Vitale, Coppa said he believed Massino eventually was going to remove Vitale from the position of underboss.

Coppa's testimony also implicated Massino in the May 1981 murders of mob captains Alphonse "Sonny Red" Indelicato, Philip "Philly Lucky" Giaccone and Dominick "Big Trin" Trinchera, and the August 1981 hit on mobster Dominick "Sonny Black" Napolitano.