

NEW YORK POST

Banner day for inmate Planely upset

By DAVID K. LI

Posted: 1:08 AM, August 24, 2011

He's taken his case to a higher authority.

A frustrated jailbird, languishing in a lower Manhattan jail cell since 2007, paid a pilot to soar over the Big Apple yesterday, pulling a banner message demanding his day in court.

"V. VASSILENKO JAILED 5+ YRS -- NO TRIAL -- IS THIS LEGAL?" read the 100-foot-long banner, spelled out in 5-foot-tall letters, that Vadim Vassilenko paid for from the Tombs.

The Cessna 172 Skyhawk, at a two-hour rental of \$1,250, flew 500 to 1,000 feet over lower Manhattan and Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, Vassilenko's home before his extended jail stay.



NY POST: CHAD RACHMAN

'SOAR' LOSER'S MESSAGE: Vadim Vassilenko, jailed since 2007 without a trial, paid \$1,250 for a banner over the Manhattan Detention Complex yesterday.

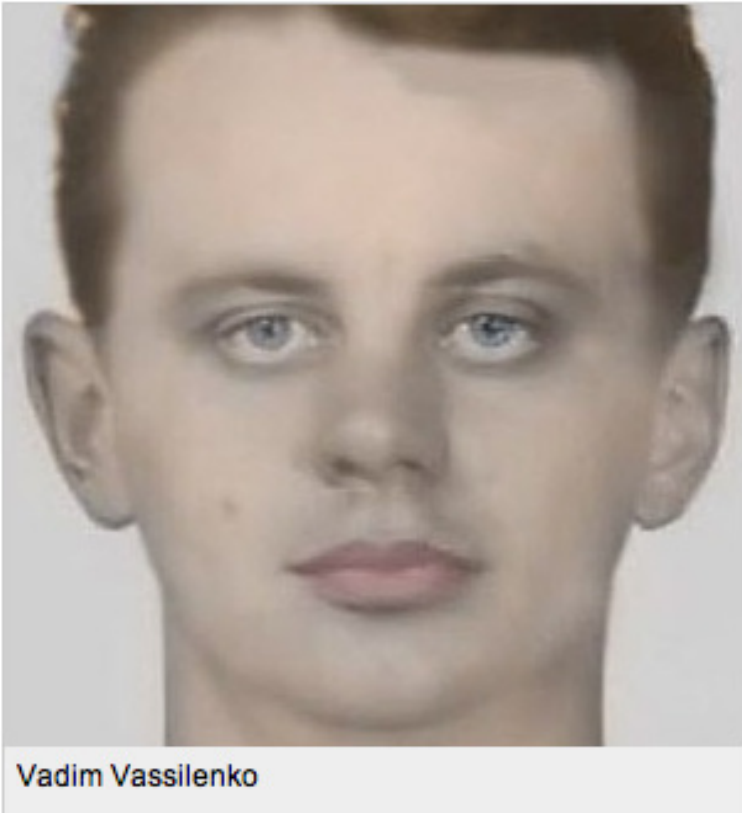
Vassilenko, indicted in 2007 for his alleged role in an ID-theft crime ring that stole 95,000 credit-card numbers, has been a guest at the Manhattan Detention Complex since Oct. 23, 2007, jail records show.

His lawyer, Rick Pasacreta, said he understands his client's anger -- but believes there are reasonable factors behind the delay.

"At first blush and in a vacuum, hearing that someone has been incarcerated this long [without trial], it's outrageous," Pasacreta said. "But this case has gotten a lot more complex in the four years since he was thrown in jail."

Vassilenko, 44, has changed lawyers at least four times and those advocates managed to get some charges tossed -- only to be reinstated on appeal, slowing the wheels of justice, Pasacreta said.

The scenery behind bars is nothing new for Vassilenko, who previously did time for



Vadim Vassilenko

running an unlicensed check-cashing and money-transfer store.

He entered Bare Hill Correctional Facility upstate on Oct. 4, 2006, and was supposed to do 2 to 6 years there. With good behavior and previous jail-time credits, Vassilenko was discharged to the custody of immigration agents on Oct. 10, 2007, records show. He faces deportation after the ID theft case is adjudicated.

“He’s OK with that, he’s not fighting deportation,” said Vassilenko’s immigration lawyer, Merrill Cohen.

“He just wants to get out of jail to be with his wife and family [in Ukraine].”

This isn’t the first time pilot Michael Arnold -- president of Arnold Aerial Advertising -- has done a job for a jailed client.

He’s done airborne missions for porn stars, men trying to win back ex-wives, and a woman mocking the size of her ex’s manhood.

“Is this guy a scam artist? I don’t know,” Arnold said. “Did I get paid? Yeah, he had some guy on the outside wire me the money . . . so I’m OK with it. I really do try to lead my life not judging people.”

david.li@nypost.com