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Did two city inspectors take bribes from a local builder or just improperly accept gifts?

Is the city attorney, in concert with the Cheyenne police department and Laramie County district attorney's office, trying to sweep what could be far reaching illegal behavior under the rug?

Are they in the midst of attempting to stone the messenger instead of taking seriously well-documented disclosures of illegal acts by a Colorado builder and at least two city building inspectors?

And, did they learn nothing from the experience of a former city council secretary committing criminal acts? The fact that a city employee (or multiple city employees) has been a trusted and valued employee does not necessarily mean they will never commit an illegal act against the city. Trust but verify.

Over two months ago, allegations about improper acts, probably illegal, were brought to the attention of Bruce Wilson, the City's Chief Building Official, for whom the two city inspectors being accused of that misbehavior, worked.

Allegations were that the two inspectors had on somewhere between two and two dozen occasions over the past year or more, accepted liquor from a local major homebuilder's job superintendent. The woman who reported the incidents provided written records that indicated the superintendent had purchased 12 packs of beer, including imported Tecate, on more than one occasion and marked on his expense reimbursement claim, "beer for inspectors," and faxed it to the owner of the homebuilder business in Colorado.

After the notation "beer for inspectors," on the expense reimbursement forms, two City inspectors names were written. I have those names but will not use them in this story. I will wait to provide their full names and more. Those two inspectors have been suspended, with pay, from their jobs "while a police investigation" is ongoing, according to my sources. Suspended, WITH PAY.

The person who reported the questionable action related telephone conversations the superintendent had with his boss in Colorado in her presence, when he repeated words to the effect that he had provided the two inspectors with "their beer for this month."

Because it has been the City's modus operandi to circle the wagons and protect the insiders against even the most solid and substantiated claims of blatant and repeated acts of illegal behavior, the citizen who reported these actions is now being subjected to harassment, threats, physical assault and has been accused by a local real estate agent of costing "my guys" their jobs.

In addition to the business owner, his local superintendent and the two inspectors, the web will get much larger. It is likely that others knew of the acts. They may have considered them normal here in Cheyenne and perhaps they are. But, whether such delivery of gifts to a city employee whose job involves sitting in judgment in some way on the work you do is common, it is a violation of Cheyenne Personnel Rules to accept such gifts.

Page 46 of the City of Cheyenne Personnel Policies, in part:

"Section 7. Acceptance of Gifts. It is the policy of the City of Cheyenne that employees and members of their families shall not accept personal gifts offered because of the employee's duties, functions or responsibilities as an employee of the City."

"Section 9. Conflicts of Interest. Employees shall not enter into any financial or other relationship with a City agency, private business or other organization which would constitute a conflict of interest or create the appearance of impropriety. ... If an employee has questions about what constitutes a conflict of interest, they should ask their supervisor.

Wyoming State Statutes, Chapter 13, Government Ethics, Article 1 - Public Officials, Members and Employees Ethics, also spells out what cannot be accepted in a role as a public employee. Unless the city attorney tries to find loopholes in the statutes, because this area, like so many others, has conflicts and contradictions, the two inspectors who accepted the gifts and the superintendent who made the gifts and the business owner who knowingly paid for the gifts, all violated state law. Basically, the guys accepted "something in value" that was given them as the result of their public employment. The tragedy of this is that

the amount of money is so small. One purchase, made two months ago, was for \$36.78. For Tecate and Silver Bullet beer.

The records that document the purchases and reimbursement claims are now in the hands of the Laramie County DA's office. This is an office with a record of prosecuting women for nonviolent crimes and going easy on men - particularly on domestic abuse charges. They were also provided credit card receipts for purchases on the dates the accuser stated.

When the person who reported these transgressions spoke with a Cheyenne police officer, it was suggested she may not be telling the truth, that she was an embittered person wanting to extract revenge for some imagined reason. She asked to take a polygraph test. Which was administered. The polygrapher (the Herald cannot vouch for his competence or incompetence) returned to her and said there was just one response that troubled him. He had asked her if she had told any lies in her past. What made the needle jump (or whatever it does) was that she had told her father, when she was under 21, that she had not drank alcohol when she had. Other than that, the polygrapher told her, she had, in his opinion, answered all questions truthfully.

She was later told that the superintendent had refused to submit to a polygraph. He had quickly "lawyered up" and that is undoubtedly the reason. The two inspectors, who are "under investigation" were likely not asked to take such an inadmissible test. But, the accuser did.

That was not the only time she has been treated like she was the one in the wrong. When she recently went to where the superintendent now stays to get a small amount of money from him for gasoline, the real estate agent (a female) who sells houses built by the Colorado builder and with whom the superintendent is now living, pulled the accusers hair and hit her with the side of her closed fist, in which she held keys. There are photos to document the assault. The accuser did not enter the woman's house and only entered the property when beckoned onto it by the man from whom she was to get some cash. Sheriff's deputies were called and when she pressed the issue about issuing a citation to the aggressor, the

deputy finally said he would issue a "ticket" to her because she was on the other's property. He then wrote her a citation for being in violation of **W.S. 6-2-501 (g)**, which reads: "Simple assault; battery; penalties. A person is guilty of unlawful contact if he; (i) touches another person in a rude, insolent or angry manner without intentionally using sufficient physical force to cause bodily injury to another." That's crazy. To issue a citation for an instance like the woman described should result in a suspension for the deputy who wrote it and an investigation to determine whether he has a personal relationship (conflict of interest) with the aggressor. By the way, the accuser insisted on taking a Breathalyzer at the scene. She blew 0.00. The other woman was drinking but was not asked to take a similar test.

The accuser is now being accused of "bringing down the homebuilder," "costing two men their jobs," and "costing the superintendent his job," and worse.

She also told me about a meeting that was held out of her hearing and sight, when the superintendent returned to the vehicle they shared, he told her, and then three times told his boss in Colorado in a cell phone call, that the person with whom he had just met inside a house (who she believes also works for the City but is not one of the two inspectors) had said, "don't bring us down with you." He evidently was referring to the City looking into licenses being used by the Colorado homebuilder which may have been issued to a Wyoming business.

In a lengthy interview with the Cheyenne Herald earlier this afternoon (Saturday, December 26, 2009), the woman who made the allegations and presented evidence to the CBO and CPD, told the Herald of further instances of proof for her allegations. Some I will leave unstated to see if the "investigation" gets to the bottom of the accusations. She also made further allegations against the superintendent but I cannot access Circuit and District Court offices before press time to confirm them so I will leave them out of this story also. She is of the opinion that the improper, if not illegal, behavior goes far beyond the two inspectors. The underlying danger here is that the "gifts" were actually bribes and inspections signed off on were not made and those houses may be unsafe.

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