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Home invasions in Cheyenne

The recent home invasions have not all been about drugs or drug transactions, in spite of what the Cheyenne Police Department want residents to believe.

I don't want to alarm anybody but I do want to caution everybody - do not let down your guards. If the PD wants residents to get falsely comfortable because they don't have drugs in their homes and don't owe anybody money for prior drug transactions, that is a mistake. And it could bring tragic consequences.

Residents should always take normal precautions before opening the door to a stranger. If more than one stranger is standing on your porch or at your front door, think twice before opening the door to them. Or, tell them to step back several feet so you can talk to them. It is never wise to open the door without having a good idea who is on the other side.

Let's deal with a specific home invasion.

The other media in town, with only a police report to rely upon, dutifully echoed what they were told or what they read. It was reported that three men pushed themselves into the home of a woman and held a knife to her throat - but the media didn't know why. And when they don't know what really happened but it was on the southside, they will assume it involved drugs. Often, law enforcement agencies will generate or perpetuate that story.

In this particular case, the victim wasn't sure why the invasion occurred. She believes it had to do with a girl. She told the Herald that the invader who held the knife to her throat did not make any demands - instead he asked her, basically, if she wanted to die. The intervention of one of the three saved her life, she maintains.

The purpose of her e-mail to the Cheyenne Herald and our subsequent telephone conversations weren't to relive the terror of that night. She was upset because, while there was no dispute about her story of being threatened with a knife to her throat, she felt she was victimized all over again by the police's handling of the follow-up to her home invasion.

Some background: A year earlier, the victim was foolishly involved in illegal conduct that resulted in her being placed on probation. Not a violent crime, though.

She had tried to scam "foreign" scammers by accepting fraudulent American Express Traveler's Checks received from an internet crook in Ghana but, instead of cashing them and returning most of the money overseas, she tried to use one of the \$500.00 traveler's checks. On her second attempt at the local Walmart, she was successful and got \$350.00+ of merchandise and change for the \$500.00.

She pled guilty and was given five years probation. **FIVE YEARS PROBATION!** The axle swinger got less for killing his brother. And another violent criminal got less for breaking the jaw and putting out an eye of his uncle - **BECAUSE HE WAS AN INFORMANT!** Neither of those criminals paid anything for their violations, this woman made full restitution to Walmart.

The home invasion victim's probation required her to avoid alcohol and drugs - although her crime did not involve alcohol or drugs. Her Judgment Order ended with: **"IT IS FINALLY ORDERED by the Court that at ... any time after the expiration of one (1) year from the date of the original probation, the Court may discharge ... and dismiss the proceedings ..."** Though more than a year had passed by the time of the home invasion, no attorney had made such a motion.

The CPD has publicly stated all of the recent home invasions involved drugs (they didn't) and three days after the deadly threat against her, a CPD officer and the woman's probation officer went back to search her place for proof to confirm that erroneous claim. They did not find the evidence they hoped for but found enough to charge her with possession of a controlled substance - a (hydrocodone) prescription not in her name was in her house - and for misdemeanor possession of a trace amount of methamphetamine.

She was held in jail for several days. Will her punishment now be more severe than the three guys who broke into her house? She should never have been sentenced to five years probation (a \$500.00 fine and restitution for a first time offender like her would have been more appropriate) and, even though she was, she should have been dismissed from probation before this incident. Then the second wave of invaders (law enforcement) would have had no legal basis to search her house and find the incidental evidence of drugs there.

CRMC woes mount!

Even Gov Dave went to Colorado for surgery

Problems for the local hospital seem to have risen since their name change.

Not that there weren't locals who had issues with United Medical Center - West, when the local health care facility went by that name, but the problems have escalated at an alarming pace recently.

Whenever a new hire climbs down the steps of a Trailways bringing them to town wanting to change the name of the operation he/she will oversee, there invariably will be complications. Or worse.

When a new fire chief who desperately needed health insurance for back surgery arrived in Cheyenne in 2002 and thought it necessary to change the perfectly appropriate name of "Cheyenne Fire Department" to satisfy his unwarranted ego and then a new CEO of the hospital wanted to imagine our hospital was the regional force the one he came from was not, batten down the hatches. Problems are almost certain to follow. And they did here.

In addition to new letterhead and signage, the newly named Cheyenne Regional Medical Center had to overcome public skepticism that it was a "regional" center. There are several equal or superior hospitals in every direction (except east) within 75 miles - not to mention Casper.

No sooner had the ink dried on the new letterhead than the new CEO and hospital board set their unrealistic sights on a new hospital. Locals wondered why a new hospital would be necessary when they and their neighbors were more apt to choose medical care elsewhere, particularly in Denver or Fort Collins.

To initiate their "dream" of a new hospital, they first convinced the lazy board of county commissioners to allow them to use the county's authority (the hospital does not have the legal right to condemn property on their own) of condemnation and the county's use of the right of eminent domain to begin to confiscate private property west of the city limits.

Given that authority by the headnodders who once were county representatives but now are an extension of the city council and mayor, the local hospital retained a real estate agent who began each "negotiation" with the threat to use eminent domain to take the property if the owner did not agree to sell to the hospital.

The taking consumed little time and, but for one property, the hospital confiscated all of the properties - even if at a premium price to hospital donors.

After acquiring the houses and businesses and destroying what once was the Nob Hill subdivision, physicians who practice at CRMC took a stand against the CEO (who had effected the hospital's name change) and demanded the resignation of both that CEO and the board chairman. They went one step further. They named the new CEO's. He was, not surprisingly, from their own ranks.

Locals recently learned that their own Governor, Dave Freudenthal, had shoulder surgery. It was natural to think he would have had the surgery done here in Cheyenne. Where better for the follow-up visits that would be necessary? If not Cheyenne, perhaps Casper, which really is a "regional" center. More likely even, he would have had this basic surgery done at Gem City Bone and Joint, competent enough to operate on athletes the University has invested heavily in. But, no.

Instead, your popular Wyoming governor chose to go to Fort Collins for this routine surgery. Not since newly elected state superintendent of public instruction Trent Blankenship enrolled his children in a private school when he arrived in Cheyenne has an elected official made a more questionable decision.

So, the name was changed unnecessarily. The private houses at Nob Hill were confiscated for no good reason. Physicians demanded the CEO's ouster and named his replacement. The governor didn't have routine surgery done at CRMC. And, neighbors can't sell houses to buyers who would relocate them.

Not much else could go wrong. Right? Not quite. In a decision not shared with local media or residents, CRMC has put the Wellington, Colorado clinic they opened just a couple years ago up for sale. They thought they could expand into the northern Colorado market (and were told here they couldn't). They could not. A new building was home to the Colorado "outreach" clinic and it, too, is for sale. Odds are that the clinic will close, not be sold as a going business. Had Poudre Valley or Greeley wanted a Wellington clinic, they would have opened one already. (Next, who is the star of the CRMC ads?)

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