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An apology

I did a very brief story in the last issue of the Cheyenne Herald that had to do with the sentencing of a woman accused of stealing over \$100,000 from a local business.

The thrust of the story was that Laramie County District Court Judge Ed Grant rejected a plea agreement and sent the woman to prison.

I did not take a position as to whether the woman had stolen the money or not. I have pointed out in previous stories that one accused of a crime locally may take a guilty "plea" even while professing innocence and even be innocent at times, rather than chance a bench or jury verdict of "guilty" which could impose a tougher sentence. Even prison.

In fact, in this brief story, I accepted that the accused was guilty because of her willingness to enter a plea agreement.

But I didn't intend the story to be about this crime. At the time I wrote the story, I had not reviewed the case file nor spoken with any of the principals in the matter. I relied on the WT-E to have the sentencing part of the story right and, unlike them, I attributed the story to them.

My irritation about the story was all about the plea. And it wasn't just about the sentencing meted out to this particular woman. It tied to another story.

I pointed out once again the irregularities and uneven justice in local courtrooms.

Judge Ed Grant has evolved from once sending a young man to Rawlins - even though the judge praised the accused for his efforts to keep the guy he had punched alive and how he had owned up to the blow. In that case, Grant said he had to send the guy to prison to, basically, "send a message." In other words, manslaughter would not be tolerated in his courtroom. At least not always.

Recently, the same judge sentenced a man to probation only - this guy had struck his drunk brother repeatedly with an axle gear on a shaft and then went to his bedroom to talk to a girlfriend in California and to sleep while his grievously injured brother died on the driveway. A plea surrender was offered by the DA's office in this case, too. Judge E bought it. *By the way, the same ADA handled both of the referenced manslaughter cases.*

My beef is with Judge Ed Grant and the Assistant District Attorney - not the victims in the embezzlement case. To make my point about uneven justice, I made a comment about a "prominent family." That was unnecessary to the story and had no bearing, that I knew of or suspect, in the sentencing. For that line, I apologize. I have apologized personally to a family member and I repeat it here. It was a reference that should not have been made.

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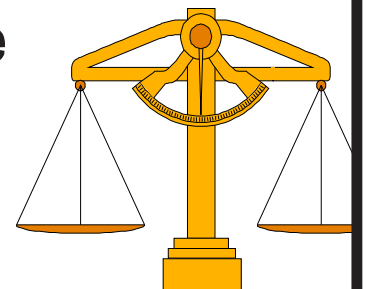
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