

Subject: [Fwd: RE: Character assassination]

Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2005 14:31:46 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: RE: Character assassination

Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2005 20:41:44 +0100 (BST)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: charles steele <cas43@telus.net>, Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

CC: James Ridge <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Superintendent Tomlinson & Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>, fonvca@fonvca.org, mmillerchip@nsnews.com

27 July 2005

Dear Mr. Steele:

Thank you for your thoughtful email. However, a more in-depth analysis of the history of my peripheral involvement in this issue, might have persuaded you to alter its tone.

Clr. Crist himself is in the very best position to explain to you - or not - the extent of the support I have offered to him over the past few months in his quest to achieve full disclosure. Furthermore, a search of newspaper archives would reveal my immediate and very public letter to the editor, in which I suggested that both Clr. Crist and the owner of Capilano Volkswagen were having their reputations trashed in a manner that constituted defamation.

As with other events that have occurred in the District over many years, my power to influence is limited. Other than making my opinions known - which I clearly have done in person and in writing for many years before ever learning of your existence this morning - I, like you, am constrained by democratic process.

It is for good reason, that District Council and Staff - including CAO Ridge - are required by legislation to discuss the details of personnel and legal matters *in camera* without reporting back to me, and I am in no position whatsoever to force Supt. Tomlinson, the Burnaby RCMP or the courts to make statements they do not wish to make. It is patently ridiculous, therefore, for you to suggest that all I have to do is "make a simple decision to clear Mr. Crist's" reputation. Had I that much power taxpayers would not be paying for 3 Pacificats, or the Millennium and RAV lines, and British Columbians would still own BC Rail - but I digress.

Please be assured that I am not happy that Clr. Crist, and even more so his wife, must endure anonymous accusations; it goes against everything I believe in. Once the Burnaby RCMP investigation decided there was nothing to prosecute, I do believe his accusers should have been made known to Clr. Crist - even if that identification was constrained within an agreement not to publicly disclose the name[s].

If you don't care for that last comment, then put yourself in this position: You work for Enron-Worldcom and value your job. You come across something that you sincerely believe to be a serious wrongdoing, yet you know you don't have all of the facts, and that, if you 'go public' that's likely the end of your job, or at least any hope of promotion. For sure you'll know that you and likely your family will end up in the media. So what do you do then? Stay silent? Or do you try the anonymous route via the authorities, asking that they unearth the facts?

You might also ask yourself this question: *How would I have felt had a citizen suspected, only suspected, that a certain golf-course bookkeeper was shuffling the deck with District credit cards but, for fear of being wrong, or ridiculed, or of losing a job, kept quiet while \$300,000 or so was siphoned away?* Anonymity looks a little different through that mirror, doesn't it?

Now to tackle some of your other egregious points:

- "Was Supt. Tomlinson taking advantage of his professional position to express a private opinion - reflective of the mayor and management - that anyone who advocates so forcefully for the public interest shouldn't?" I am not clairvoyant, so perhaps you would do better to address the questions to the gentleman himself.
- "The onus and responsibility is definitively on you, and the RCMP, to show otherwise." Again - Would that I had the degree of influence and power that you have bestowed upon me, such are the great works that I could perform.
- "Councillor Crist is offering you a way to resolve this without wasting tax dollars on a needless court case." My sincere thanks to Clr. Crist for his generosity. However, while, in the final analysis, it is my responsibility to watch my own behavior and to protect my own character and reputation, it is not my responsibility to "resolve" matters for Clr. Crist.

- "You should do the right thing, and allow Mr. Crist to clear his name and reputation." Once more - it is not within my power to "allow" - or even to "disallow" whatever it is Clr. Crist wishes to do. It is in my power to support him in his efforts, to the extent I feel I am able to do so - and that, I and many others, have done and continue to do. I find it regrettable that the favour is not always returned.
- As for my suggestion re the courts - Yes, there is an expense and, as Clr. Crist is fully aware, I offered, not just words of support, but a modest donation. I also offered to undertake fund-raising the rest. I had good reason for reaching the conclusion that initiation of a court case would be the most effective route to go; to my knowledge, that would be the only way to subpoena witnesses under oath. Furthermore, it is my opinion that, as is often the case, if Clr. Crist showed that he was prepared to stand up against his accuser[s], there was every chance that a name or names would be revealed in court. I also felt that, because the dealership had been swept up in what I believed to be defamation, Capilano VW would be in a better position to share in the costs.

As events have unfolded, it appears that you and Clr. Crist feel he has a better chance of satisfaction, if he lays off the responsibility for restoring his good name onto my shoulders and the shoulders of other 'council watchers' in the community. Since you feel so very strongly about the issue, quite why it is *my* responsibility, rather than yours, to "restore" Clr. Crist's reputation, I have not yet figured out.

Mr. Steele, the colour of the law - and of politics - is not black and white and it is unfortunate that, sometimes, even the truth has many shades of grey. I understand your frustration; I, too, would like to be 'on the inside' so that I could know all of the facts for myself but, as with many another case, that is not likely to happen.

It certainly will not happen if you, and others like you, take and repeat as gospel all that you are told, or that you read in the newspapers without first checking the completeness of the facts and/or their veracity. Over the years, I've learned that lesson the hard way.

Once again, thank you for your email; I always find it useful to be challenged to review and to amend or confirm the positions I take.

Sincerely,
Liz James

Ms. James:

Interesting that you feel so strongly about your good name and reputation, but are unwilling to make a simple decision to clear Mr. Crist's.

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