

# What Lies Behind the Lies?

## Why do politicians lie?

Is there a science behind our politicians' complicated relationship with the truth. Is it just standard Political Science that provides the rationale for lying? One day I went out to our streets, feeling there was trouble brewing. I was met quickly by the Humboldt County Sheriffs Dept. and what turned out to be the local Vigilante. It was like walking up to a car accident that they wanted to hurry you away from, except I wasn't budging. I could see the Sheriffs going camp to camp with the Vigilante and his team of hired henchmen, bagging and robbing and trashing what were live, active camps. (You know, peoples' homes.)

I remember asking "is this legal?" The sheriff quickly responded, yes. I remember thinking that this has to be a lie? They have no right to be doing so much damage under the color of "Law"! I actually believe I have the whole episode on video in my archives. They were doing their job. "Cops lie." Does the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department have the right to come to your home (camp) and scare you away - you who they have sworn, falsely, to protect. In the last wave of vigilante activity, when a deputy was asked if our SoHum vigilante forces the right to post Warning notices, he said Yes, *they do*. That's on video, too. Yet the Sheriff himself, when asked, said that No, *such people do not have that right*. Tell that to our substation Sergeant, who sat side by side with Supervisor Estelle Fennell, while attending local vigilante meetings to offer them encouragement.

It is too late to tell it to ex-Sheriff Downey. He saw the writing on the wall but quit before he was forced to read it aloud. Why, only a couple of weeks ago we had the Lieutenant (who is the Sergeant's boss) radically reinterpret the often violated law, admitting that taking property from a "homeless camp" is theft. The question then becomes - what happens to these old lies now that the new truth is out? Will the County just lay back and watch civil war and violence flourish? What are the odds that Yes, *they will*? Stay tuned for the August Human Rights Commission meeting in SoHum.

But come on, common sense knows that in standard politics you can't tell a bribe from a salary- *Just Follow the Money*. The Arkley influence overwhelms people into eager obedience - like Supervisors Bohn, Bass and Fennell, and the mob of speculators lining up for the coming Barbecue. Particularly ripe for profitable harvesting- land presently monopolized by the poorest.

Gentrification hand in hand with government has proved financially rewarding and social approved by the gentry itself.

Big Money and Big Owners can never be openly admitted as the real source of law and its enforcement - even after Citizens United told us that Money is Free Speech and if we are poor, we should, to quote John Burton from elsewhere in this issue, "**Shut the Fuck Up.**" And now we have heard Trump tell his supporters that of course it is reasonable that his cabinet and his appointments are of rich people only. Poverty means you are stupid and Money earns not just interest, but puts points on your IQ. Yes, it is an open secret that Humboldt, like just about anyplace else in the U.S., is a place where the Golden Rule means - yes, you got it:

Whoever has the Gold makes the Rules.

SoHum's previous *One Man Vigilante* was the local Chamber of Commerce's regular Volunteer of the Year. This year the local Rotary stepped in as the Chamber falters to give that award to the current crop of Vigilantes.

## The Illuminating Tale of the Vet's Hall

A couple of years ago we were trying to do extreme weather sheltering during one of the coldest winters. We were experiencing temps into the 20's for days at a time. The County Vets Hall was a reliable fallback, despite the ongoing opposition by the county of its use as a shelter. As the building's owner, the County was (*ir*)responsible for the upkeep on the Hall and everything. Vets used it at the County's discretion.

Most of the time, we had a service oriented Vets Community and people were sheltered there often in the past. In recent times the task fell upon Vets for Peace in cooperation with the CHILL group and for many years we had the cooperation of the VFW. However, the VFW operates on a stringent Commander model, and in the odd years with another commander in the driver's seat, the little group he led just flat refused to allow us to use the Hall. How different from years past when it was the County that routinely threatened the Vets with expulsion if they tried to do anything socially significant aside from Holiday Dinners. This time around, the County's threatening role was well played by the current Supervisor, Estelle Fennell, but now she had the backing of the "*Patriotic*", vets against the "*Peace Vets*."

The upshot was that Fennell conspired with the VFW to keep out the Vets for Peace by changing the locks.

If you don't know the history, let's get up to speed on the Veterans hall: Gold Star Mother Esther Underwood lost her son, John Haynes, the first American soldier from the Garberville area to die in World War II. But from her grief - and her generosity - the John Haynes Memorial Veterans Hall grew and, over the years, the Garberville Vets Hall, as it is more commonly known.

Back in the 50's Underwood deeded the land to the vets, who formed The John Haynes Memorial Building Association. In turn, under a provision of state law that allows the property to be managed publicly, in perpetuity, as a memorial veterans hall, the vets deeded the property to the county. One of the Vets for Peace remembers that the older Vets wanted to make sure that returning Vietnam vets could not control the hall and that was why it was put under County Control. This led to a somewhat contentious relationship between the Garberville vets and the county of Humboldt right from the beginning, and the John Haynes Memorial Veterans Hall appears to have been something of a thorn in the county's side ever since. In a County where

Public Works means Eureka and its *Humbaybeltway*, this insured total neglect of leaks and repairs - with threats when complaints were made. The Hall situation needed airing and a meeting was set up between Supervisor Fennell and a blue ribbon group of active community members on the topic of *who owns it and why can't we rent it?* Everyone gathered in her exclusive, hardly used but securely gated, SoHum office building. We had mental health, public health, nurse, head clinician for mental health, business people, counselors, community board members - close to twenty people all crammed in. So we started out asking for the current lease on the building and our supervisor got busy in her iPad to find it and she looked and looked and gee - she couldn't find it. She *knew* she was coming to meeting about the Garberville veteran hall - finally we just said that's ok, let's chat about it. She stopped looking for that lease. *Whooo, thank god* she must have been thinking? I'm sure she didn't want us to see it. Knowing the real owners of the building might mess up her plans.

That day she was about to tell us the biggest Whopper! To the question "who owned the veterans hall?" Fennell replied "The vets (Veterans of Foreign Wars) do and that is why I can't allow you to use it without their o.k." I clarified that we were experiencing a natural Extreme weather situation. We have people outside that could die!? That wasn't, and never has been, her concern. What concerned her was this fabricated alliance she had created with half dozen vets.

We had made a protocol for opening the Hall as a shelter that we all agreed upon from the year before. It took the National Weather Service as its "objective" guide. There was a different Commander then and Fennell wasn't the Chair of the Supes. We had rental funds and insurance, basically everything they said we would need to rent the hall, but was refused. Instead the Protocol was violated and the Hall sat empty in freezing weather while humans tried to endure. We lost a life that year in Humboldt County winter. Well, we allowed our supervisor to talk on and on and on, knowing she was lying to our faces. Basically she told us again *NO we can't use it because it belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It was they who refused to allow us to use the empty building for emergency shelter*. We said things like wow! if the Hall belonged to the vets we surely could find an old lease somewhere. **THE COUNTY GIFTS THE VETERANS THE VETS HALL** headline would be front page news you would think, right? (It is a Headline we hope to see on behalf of the brand new Hall, *gifted* by the way, not to half dozen unrepresentative vets, but to ALL the Vets of SoHum.) Guess what? When a trip was made to the Eureka Courthouse, it was discovered, first, that even the flimsy Vets Hall lease was expired! (Yes there actually was NO lease at all.) It showed what all parties actually knew, the County owned the Hall.

## Profitable Lying vs. the Poor Truth

My head keeps going back to this Estelle Fennell lying straight to our faces that day in her seldom used office. Right in front of so many pillars of our community without a shred of shame. I think about these types of bold face lies and ask why Estelle chose to fabricate her story? Estelle is a skillful story-teller as her KMUD years exhibit and here the facts must correspond to her bias - so deep is her admiration for the rich and maybe even deeper her disgust for the poor. So Estelle and her whoppers serve well the Money Establishment which shares her disgust and salutes her efforts to rid the community of the poor. Republicans and Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals - she smartly represents them all in their merciless pursuit of profit. Why, too, did the Humboldt County Sheriffs' Department lie repeatedly about the legality of their activities prior to 2008 and about the legality of the activities of Vigilantes after 2008? Isn't money the obvious motive? Why else would our city and county cops resort to such whoppers if there was no profit in it? **Measure Z** points us to the answer: everything for law enforcement nothing to alleviate the poverty that requires it?

Check out the Humboldt salary tables, showing that a random deputy can collect \$175,000 a year. That's almost as much as the person who heads a County bureaucracy like the Department of Health and Human Services (just over \$200,000). No wonder the Sheriffs lie - they well paid to serve the wealthy - including themselves it turns out. And now we see the that Sheriff's Department has created its own informal **Measure \$**. Apparently some Deputies (not to mention officials like Eureka's Mayor) have been filling their pockets with dead peoples' money and filling their garages with dead peoples' belongings. Now we have the FBI called in by the D.A. But when a couple street people stole some camping gear from Betty Chinn, the Eureka police barricaded the sidewalks.

Everyday the President tweets one thing, says another, and then does something totally different. That is what is going on with our Humboldt County Government. They just Lie Endlessly because they the truth is out of the question. It can't be admitted that the Political Power serves the Economic Power, surrendering anything that money wants: whether it is old land rich money or new weed rich money or transient business development money - with nothing much for funny looking poor people.

Honesty doesn't work here in Humboldt County Ca. because the money, power and hate agenda has no room for poor people. You can leave on your own or in a body bag because you froze to death, because your survival gear was taken or you couldn't get inside away from the elements in 20' degree weather. The point is there is nothing here for poor people except a growing Official Eureka/County master plan that continue to criminalize poverty. Even now the Eureka Cops are trolling for suckers to run their police operated day camp. The battle cry : Class Warfare not Welfare.

Face it: **Caring wastes Money. Just ask Arkley. Or Estelle Fennell**

**-As told to the Peoples Whistle**