

Last week I was riding on the highway, a call came in from my brother in Jacksonville, NC. He wanted me to know about a story that had been posted on Face Book about “Corruption in Chester.” The story stated that while I was the Chairman of Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL), I was caught embezzling \$5,500.

As the story was read to me, I could not believe the outright lies that were printed, in an attempt to deceive the readers into thinking what they were reading was true. I know this false article was written in retaliation for a letter sent to Delaware County Solid Waste Authority, questioning the statements of Mike Ewal and Zulene Mayfield, as to their representing the interest of the City of Chester.

I spoke about how Mike Ewal was a former member of Chester Environmental Partnership (CEP), which I chair, and he left after using tactics against a company who came asking us to consider supporting their application to build a tire burning facility with new technology that would not release very much carbon into the air. This technology was being used in Israel, and we asked Mike to investigate it for us, so that he could give the company our decision. Mike Ewal, instead of coming back to the group with his report, organized a protest in front of the owner’s home, and went to a Democratic meeting and made it a political issue, which prompted then Mayor Wendell Butler, to send CEP a letter saying he was against supporting the Company.

Zulene Mayfield, while leading CRCQL, was noted in a lawsuit against Delcora, CRCQL was awarded \$200,000 in penalty money to be used for a Lead Abatement Program in Chester. A trustee was appointed to oversee the funds. CRCQL would present invoices each month, and the trustee would release the monies. Zulene Mayfield was

in charge, and the invoices were not always properly written, and questions arose about the accounting and receipts. When asked by the trustee to see the records, Zulene refused to turn them over. The trustee sent the Federal Marshal to forcibly take the records. Right after the Federal Marshals came to Chester and took the records, Zulene shut down Chester residences, and skipped town for more than ten years.

After speaking with the Trustee, Frank Cervone, he stated that Jerry Balter interceded on Zulene's behalf, because he loved her, and did not want her to get hurt. So, there were no legal actions taken against her, but thousands of dollars meant to be used to help children in Chester, went back to the Federal Government because Zulene improperly handled the monies. Jerry is dead, but the Trustee is still alive, and has no problem telling us the truth, and still has records.

The terrible lies said about me is only an attempt to divert attention from herself. There are many questions that those who publish the false article about me will have to answer, but first I would like to know if CRCQL has been out of existence for more than ten years, when did they hold a public meeting and re-appoint Zulene as the Chairman? Is she the life-time owner of eager leaders? The need of Chester requires leaders that do not run and hide after they mess up.

Now let us look at the Smear Campaign they ran against me. Any intelligent reader would ask certain questions since they went to no end to publish what they will say is evidence. The first question is: (1) Who was the couple from Swarthmore that wrote the \$5,500 check? Why was their name omitted from the so-call evidence? (2) Who was the check written out to, and what date was the check written? (3) If

CRCQL was an organized group and a treasurer was elected, what was his name? And what bank was the CRCQL account opened in at the time the check was supposedly written? Also, if there was a treasurer why did Mrs. Morris ask me to stay on and be the treasurer at a meeting to settle the issues with Jerry Balter present, who told Mrs. Morris, that Dr. Strand is not staying with CRCQL, and does not want to be the treasurer. Why ask the person who stole money to stay on and be the treasurer. Now, you heard the false twisted version designed to make me look bad, but now here is the true version.

While working to help the community, I put my life and church business on the line to help my community which had been invaded by solid waste. I brought in Jerry Balter of the Public Law Center to help me help my community. My church funded the entire operation without one dime from the community. We did it as a service. Jerry Balter who controlled some funds from a settlement he had settled with a company outside of Chester, sent a check for \$5,000 and \$500 to be used to help the Church carry some of the expenses of running CRCQL. Both checks came from Jerry Balter. I told him that my church was given a building on 2nd and Ward Street, and I would use the money to open an office for CRCQL. The building did not belong to me. Public records will show I never owned it, and we were doing so to settle CRCQL to operate in an orderly manner, with its own facilities and telephone. Right on 291 where they could monitor the constant traffic on a daily basis.

Zulene was my Asst. Chair and was told about my plans for the office. At that time CRCQL was ran by the church, and me as the Pastor. It was not a legal organization, no corporation, no 501(c)(3), not even registered with the State as a non-profit. We would have

eventually done all that, but we were very young in the struggle. Unknown to me, Jerry was copying Zulene on everything he was sending me because Zulene requested him to do that. Zulene lied and said she did not know about the money until she was told about it at a meeting in Swarthmore by a couple who donated it.

Zulene was copied by Jerry Balter, and because she wanted the office to be opened on 3rd Street, next to Highland Ave., where there is no truck traffic to watch, she took the letter from Jerry Balter about the money, and showed the letter to many members of the community, and said I was stealing the money. At the meeting with Jerry Balter present, who verified I told him what I was going to do with the money, receipts were presented to prove what the money was used for, and accounted for. After all that, they asked could they use the office I prepared for them; and pay us rent.

I had made up my mind after being falsely accused by the people I put my life on the line for, the answer was “No.” The church would repay the portion used for the office, and I would go back to preaching and running our church and private Christian School. Our church was not wealthy, and we paid them as we could, but we paid it off.

For many years, I stayed away from the struggle. I was heart-broken over how quick people you help, all turn against you. Later, after Zulene skipped town, and CRCQL was disbanded, Alice Wright who was a Community Advocate working for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), came looking for me because there was no organized group representing the City from the community. I reluctantly agreed to help.

After getting a call from Jerry Balter, who was the Attorney of Record for CRCQL, he had worked out a community benefit agreement with American Refuge, then operator of the Trash to Steam Plant. This agreement was made with the approval of the State DEP. The problem was that Zulene had left Chester, and CRCQL was no longer in existence, they needed a community group to manage the agreement. So, CEP was established, but experience taught me it was not wise to work with residences only, but to bring everybody together in one room. Community Government, industry, regulators, academia, and other environmental organized groups. This way we solve problems in the room. Decision-makers were present. It was a bold endeavor, but I got the idea being the former Chairman of the Solid Waste Advisory Council (SWAC). This was a tool used by the PA DEP.

Through SWAC, we got Delaware County to agree to buy the houses out between Front and Second and Booth, Thurlow, and Highland Avenue. A Planning Committee was hired the night he was making his report on how it would be done. Zulene came to the meeting demanding everybody in the area up to Third Street be brought out, and the whole idea went South. The State was already planning to buy a portion of the houses on 291. It was the perfect time to get the people away from all that mess. Thanks to radical Zulene and all her unwillingness to compromise, the people are still trapped here.

Reverend Dr. Horace W. Strand