

## Catch 'em if you can.

Sometimes a distasteful disclosure can lead to much needed information. The exposure of Barry Allen's past by John Drayman's ardent campaign volunteers has allowed us to see even more clearly into the workings of Glendale's political life like never before.

Last Tuesday, two of John Drayman's most unshakable supporters introduced to the new city manager and the Glendale public their detail research into the past life of Barry Allen that is reminiscent of the research that John Drayman himself exposed regarding his nemesis, Mike Mohill, during the last campaign, an election that Drayman lost.

Lest someone may forget the political storm during that city council session, Drayman disclosed two police arrests of Mike Mohill for indecent exposure that occurred twenty-five years ago just outside a gay bar. Drayman, purportedly gay himself, outed Mohill, a fellow gay and Jewish political competitor, as a way to discredit Mohill's continual claims of Drayman's political corruption.

Drayman's relationship with a corrupt low-income housing developer, Advanced Development and Investments (ADI) now under Federal investigation, was doubly exposed by Barry Allen who investigated Drayman's nearly total condo make-over performed by ADI subcontractors without permits and without any evidence of payments for work performed.

The disclosure of Barry Allen's past history came as a shock to many of us who have contributed articles to Vanguard, or those who have contributed money in support of this investigative periodical. In the past, we had heard claims that Allen's name is an adaptation of his real name – Allen Barry Silvarman. According to the investigation submitted by Sharon Wiseman and her husband Bill Wiseman, Silvarman was arrested, charged, and convicted of counterfeiting money in the mid 1980's.

According to a couple of people who attend Vanguard's weekly meetings on city issues, Silvarman's explanation last Thursday of his criminal record was a laborious mix of intrigue reminiscent of a **John le Carré** spy novel. It apparently left many of them incredulous and doubtful that Silvarman would come clean about his past.

What is doubly astonishing to many of us who have contributed essays to Vanguard is the choice of career by someone whose own past would be a prime target for exposure. To those who have followed Vanguard's continual exposé of apparent malfeasance by some Glendale Council members, highly questionable city contracts and overly generous bonuses to select city managers, the news came as the epitome of irony. It's like the exposure of Newt Gingrich's extra-marital affair while he was condemning Bill Clinton for the Monica Lewinsky affair. But in some respects the analogy is not so applicable.

While Barry Allen's misdeeds and criminal activity occurred 27 years ago, Gingrich's conduct and his charges were concurrent. Though a past criminal conduct gives us a glimpse of the character of the man, ours is a system of laws that allows someone convicted of crime to pay his penalty to society and eventually rebuild ties to his community. We've come a long way from the justice of eighteenth century France depicted in the novel by Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, whose main character Jean Valjean is released from prison, but is continually hounded by his past and rejected by society. Like Valjean, Silvarman, adopted an alias by which we know him - "Barry Allen" and like Valjean, Silvarman adopted a progeny – Vanguard – his online periodical. It is not the adorable child "Cosette" of Victor Hugo's novel, but rather a political news outlet discounted as a "rag" by councilman Ara Najarian and David Weaver.

Popular history gives us many parallels. The one that is more nearly like Allen's is the story based on an actual event depicted wonderfully by the movie "Catch me if you can." In the movie, the main character is also a counterfeiter who is followed, caught, apprehended, by the American secret service. In the movie, Frank Abagnale, the leading character, is a forger that eventually found redemption by assisting the FBI in catching other crooks.

It seems to me that the hubris evident in the act of counterfeiting - that the perpetrator would never get caught - is still evident in someone who takes on the outing of political corruption when his own past could be exposed to discredit his work.

This may be overly optimistic, but if it should turn out, as in the case of Frank Abagnale, that Barry Allen is seeking redemption, then we could find a way to forgive the man and accept the results of his work in using his exceptional talents in exposing the

misconduct of others. As such politicians and insiders who've been so exposed would relish the thought of getting back at the man who has been relentless in his dogged pursuit of political outlaws. They would be smiling broadly today, maybe even with a sigh of relief. But a careful observation of the theatrics during the city council last Tuesday, from the careful arrangement of the speakers such that they could be video-taped for future rebroadcast in video-stream, to the dramatic clarification given by Najarian, not possibly inferred by the contents of the presentation, show that this was an orchestrated arrangement contrived as a precursor to city elections.

To me, this experience is a setback in our efforts to bring a level of decency and accountability to local government. Yet, I could not have asked for better material for a novel. Like the Wiseman's, I too put my money, effort and reputation to get John Drayman elected. Unlike the Wiseman's, I experience Drayman's betrayal as an affront to all the values of good government I uphold. So, as an aspiring writer, I may have found in this experience a choice title for a book on local political intrigue. It would be either "Catch 'em if you can", or "Revenge of the psychopaths."

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