

Nov. 28, 1961

Having been employed by the City of Palm Springs from April 1960-61 as a Golf Starter and assisting in the Pro-Shop on March 31, I was abruptly fired by Pro-Manager, Zell Eaton. He said that he was authorized to do so by City Mgr. Daniel Wagner. I called on the City Mgr. and he gave me 4 different answers; (1) Eaton had received a 'couple' of letters; (2) Eaton had received some complaints; (3) Eaton was the Boss; (4) Eaton should make sure that he is right in firing me. On the same day, Friday A. M., I had told Wagner's assistant, Charles Kasmer to turn in his Electric Golf Cart. All the Carts had been rented and players were waiting to play. Kasmer had been playing free for over a year and I was instructed by Councilman George Beebe that he should be made to pay a fee the same as other City employees.

A few months ago it was reported that Golf Course lost \$76,942 in fiscal year 1960. For 3 months during that time I was responsible for the cash deposits and bookkeeper. It is therefore my duty as a former City employee to report the figure published was false. I had reported to a City Official that the Book was being padded at the Golf Course and was told that the Financial Director, Shelby Langford had called on the City Mgr. and demanded an investigation. Apparently Wagner did nothing about it. About this time, Wagner fought Mr. Langford for control of the Finance Dept.)

At the time I was fired, I requested a Personnel Board hearing. I was notified that it would be held on April 19, under oath and tape recorded. In his opening statement Zell Eaton testified that for 11 months I was the best employee he ever had but the last month "he went all to pieces". As evidence against me he submitted 4 letters written 2 weeks before my discharge and dated within 5 days (March 17-22) of each other. (Until then I had Started about 20,000 players without a written complaint.)

One letter was written by a friend of the City Mgr. who was on the City payroll and whom Eaton said "I didn't need or sign for". Two of the other 3 had publicly stated that they would like my job. One offered to work for nothing just to play free. The conduct of the Personnel Board members was unbelievable. At one time I saw them passing signals. If I had known what I was getting into I would have taken an attorney with me. I asked Eaton what he meant by saying at the time he fired me, "I had you figured the day you came to work, you didn't have me fooled a minute." He denied that he said it. I told the Board that the Book had been padded. Eaton admitted to the charge. After 3 hours of cross examination I was accused by a Board member of being a "stool pigeon" for having reported the book padding charge. At the time the members roared with laughter. Wagner laughed loudest. He then asked the Board to approve my dismissal. The following day the Chairman of the Personnel Board told a Councilman that Eaton had told "2 or 3 little lies" and then resigned from the Board. The following day Eaton resigned.

The stool pigeon accusation made against me by a Personnel Board member was mentioned in a news article in the Riverside Enterprise on April 29, headlined "COUNCILWOMAN FIGHTS BOARD".

At the Council meeting on April 24, Councilwoman Mary Carlin asked to hear the recording made at the hearing so the Council could review the findings of the Personnel Board. (The Board had voted to uphold Wagner's recommendation for my dismissal). George Ripley, a member of the Board announced that the recording had been destroyed. Mrs. Carlin then suggested that the entire Personnel Board should resign for having destroyed the recording without giving the Council a chance to review the facts. She then requested a special hearing which was set for April 27. Councilman George Beebe asked the City Mgr. why he refused to give me my vacation pay and Wagner said "Because I don't have to". Councilman Beebe then questioned Wagner as to what right he had to violate his public trust by hiring an Asst. Mgr. who could not be bonded as Asst. Mgr. of the Golf Course without the knowledge of the Council. The City Mgr. lost his temper and shot back, "I will hire whoever I want." In his arrogant answer the Ex-Rear Admiral removed his neck. Here is another example of the type of employee he wants: In April, Wagner hired a William Grosson as Public Works Director of Palm Springs. On May 2, Grosson was arrested by U.S. Postal Inspectors. He was released on \$1,000 Bond. On May 15, he officially took over his duties as Public Works Director at City Hall in

charge of 101 employees on a budget of \$1,500,000. Grossson's salary, \$11,400.00. On July 19, Grossson was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury on 8, at present 26 counts of sending and inducing others to send obscene matter through the mails. Grossson admitted having a mail order smut business going under the name of "Billie Grossson". IN A NEWS ARTICLE THE RIVERSIDE ENTERPRIZE REPORTED THAT THE MATTER INVOLVED WAS "TOOVILE, FILTHY" TO RECORD. THE ARTICLE ALSO QUOTED CITY MGR. WAGNER AS SAYING THAT HE WILL STAND BEHIND GROSSON. HE SAID, "THERE WILL BE NO MOVE TO FIRE OR SUSPEND GROSSON AT THIS TIME". The following day Grossson left his desk at City Hall with a message that Wagner could reach his at his home if he was needed. He said that he was not feeling well.

An article in the Riverside Enterprize paper on Nov. 15 headlined "trial set on obscenity charge" states Grossson must stand trial on 26 counts of mailing obscene matter and refers to him as the former Palm Springs public works Chief.

On April 27, four Council members attended the special hearing requested by Mrs. Carlin. Councilman McKinney volunteered to be Chairman. It was previously agreed to be held under oath but no attempt was made to do so. I asked McKinney if Eaton had sold him merchandise at cost and he said that he could not remember. I then asked Eaton and he too could not remember. Later, when McKinney admitted that he did buy a golf set at discount I suggested that he disqualify himself from the hearing. He refused. Councilman Strebe made it clear in his opening statement that he was all for Eaton, "And Amenhouser, you better be careful what you say, DAMN CAREFUL". Mrs. Carlin asked what I thought were the reasons I was fired. I said there were 2 specific reasons; First in what Eaton said at the time he fired me, "I had you figured the first day you came to work. You didn't have me fooled for a minute". The second reason was in telling Asst. City Mgr., Charles Kamser to turn in his free golf cart. He had been free loading at the tax payer's expense for over a year and on several occasions I saw players drive away because there were no carts available. In her closing statement Mrs. Carlin said that she had talked with me several times since I was fired and she was convinced that I had told the truth. She said that the Council should take steps to clear my name. Councilman McKinney said that he was opposed because I had cited him for purchasing merchandise at discount.

The following day I addressed a letter to the City Clerk requesting that the tape recording made at the hearing should not be destroyed. I suggest all those interested in City Government should request to hear it.

The following morning The Riverside Enterprize headlined an article on the meeting, "FIRED GOLF EMPLOYEE DENIES ACCUSATIONS".

Not having heard from the Council regarding the outcome of the hearing, on May 1, I appeared before the City Council and requested a public hearing. It was denied. I also suggested that the City Mgr. and his Asst. resign. Earlier as Mrs. Barbara Coffman took the floor to say that my firing was no loss because, "he was no asset to the City", a friend of Eatons, Sam Kert yelled "stool pigeon" from the rear of the audience. Kert approached me at work one day and asked to trade a dozen defective (Yellow) golf balls for a dozen new ones. I refused. The following day Mrs. Coffman's degrading remark about me was quoted on KCMJ Radio.

Three days later I was told by a news reporter that my income tax debt was deadline news on KCMJ. I immediately called KCMJ's news reporter, Miss Stone and asked to have a copy of the newscast. She pretended to be surprised that I had not been informed of the news by the tax agent, Mr. Langford. The newscast read as follows:

**IN DESERT HEADLINES NEWS.....
FEDERAL INCOME TAX CLAIM AGAINST DISCHARGED GOLF COURSE STARTER.**

Well, even though Walter Amenhouser gets the severance and vacation pay he says the City owes him for his abrupt dismissal, it doesn't look like he will get to use any of the money..." The newscast then went on to give a false figure as to the amount of my debt.

The debt was made in 1955 at the time I lost my clothing business. I had paid off about 50% of it since and several months after I was employed by the City I signed to have a certain amount taken out of my monthly salary, therefore, it was hard to

secret. She then handed me a slip of paper on which she had taken notes on the claim. The heading "I found this on financial director's desk."

Not having received a copy of the claim I called on Mr. Langford and was shown a Levy, (KCMJ reported a Lien) signed by John Kaiser, 2 weeks AFTER Wagner refused to pay my vacation allowance. (4 days BEFORE the claim was filed I borrowed money to pay my apartment rent) I had written Mr. Kaiser on March 11 to report a change of address and tried to reach him again during the summer. When he finally called he apologized for not having answered my letter. He said there had been a death in his family. I asked why he filed the tax claim without my knowledge and he replied that he found nothing in writing to show that I was making payments.

IN FEB. 1961, I ADDRESSED A LETTER TO MR. KAISER IN WHICH I INFORMED HIM THAT I HAD SIGNED, THROUGH AN AGENT IN SAN BERNARDINO, TO HAVE A MONTHLY SUM TAKEN FROM MY SALARY. THE RECORD AT CITY HALL WILL CONFIRM A MONTHLY SUM WAS BEING TAKEN OUT OF MY SALARY AT THE TIME I WAS DISCHARGED.

After the City Council denied my request for a public hearing I turned to legal aid. About a week after I had contacted an Attorney I was called to his office and was told that he could not take my case because I had a stealing charge on my record. I told him that I had never been tried for stealing in my life. The Attorney said that he was told of the stealing charge through a conversation with the City Mgr. and that he (Wagner) warned that if I made any attempt to get my job back, the charge would be made public and he would refuse to rehire me on grounds that I did not list it on my application. He said that it would be blown up and smeared over the radio and newspapers. The City Mgr. said there were other charges on my record, "Nothing serious, but they will be made public if he tries to get back to work." The Attorney said Wagner repeated "nothing serious" several times.

After leaving the Attorney's office I drove straight to the Police Station. When I asked to see my file I was told that it could not be located. Having had police training in the service, I knew that the City Mgr. could not afford to have the truth of my firing brought out in Court, so in desperation he stooped to Blackmail. He had completely controlled the Personnel and Council (except for Mrs. Carlin) hearings and he knew that he could count on his publicity gang to smear the petty charges of my past on the radio and newspapers but he overlooked one thing - THIS LETTER.

When I returned to the police station several days later I found that 26 years ago, I was with a boy who was caught taking a 50¢ blanket. I will swear that I had completely forgotten about it. It was listed as attempted theft. I did not know that the charge had been recorded. The "other" charges that the City Mgr. threatened to expose are: Hitch-hiking 1935; Fist fight, 1939 and Traffic violation, 1940. The record show that I have never been sentenced to serve a day in jail or have I been fined to pay a nickel in my life. (I thought I paid a small fine for the traffic violation in 1940)

When the City Mgr. Wagner heard that I was trying to get my case in court he became so anxious to build up the Blackmail threat that they sent a rush telegram (at the taxpayers expense) out of state to check the details of the 1935 petty theft charge.

When Wagners Gestapo threats failed to scare me off and he began to feel public opinion breathing down his neck he made a final run for cover by rehiring Eaton (with the help of McKinney) at \$10,000 a year with a 2 months vacation and Golf Shop business thrown in to boot. (A councilman told me that he had not been informed that Eaton had been rehired) NOW THE CITY MANAGER TELLS PEOPLE THAT MY QUARREL IS NOT WITH HIM, IT IS WITH EATON.

There is one very serious charge on my record but you may be assured that the City Mgr. would not have made it public because he would not want to remind the Citizens of what would happen to him if I got my case in court.

At the time I lost my business in 1955. I had managed my own clothing shop for 5 years in a city (25,000 Pop.) near Carmel, Calif. In closing out the City Officials had me arrested twice within 3 days and charged with 2 counts of violating the City Ordinance. I was forced to be fingerprinted 3 times, photographed and to post bond.

and last day. The District Attorney, City Attorney and Police Chief were sitting opposite me at the prosecuting table. I did not testify nor did my Attorney call a witness in my behalf. After having received the verdict the Jury rendered the Verdict - NOT GUILTY. The following day the local news reported, "Deliberating only 10 minutes a municipal court jury acquitted Walter Amenhauser, etc."

At the time I made out my application for the Starters Job I did not list any of the 20 year old charges because they are considered misdemeanors and I thought it was only necessary to register a serious felony charge. I would have been a fool to mention the City Hall case in 1955, however Wagner must have known about it because he tried to keep from hiring me at the time the Golf Course opened. I had been recommended by a City Official and when I called on him for an interview he threw up his hands and said, "Maybe Eaton doesn't want to talk to you." I was hired 5 months later through the official who had recommended me to Wagner. Three months after I was hired Eaton highly praised my work and I was given a raise in pay and 3 months before I was fired, I received my second raise.

After City Mgr. Wagner's blackmail threats began to make the rounds, I found it difficult to find an Attorney to accept my case. Several months later I induced an Attorney to file claim for my vacation pay. It was my last hope for a legal foothold. I could not take legal means to recover my job because the City Government rules state that Wagner can fire anyone he chooses without cause. However, he must show cause to withhold my vacation pay. **AT THIS WRITING I HAVE NOT RECEIVED A WORD IN WRITING FROM EITHER THE PERSONNEL BOARD OR THE CITY COUNCIL AS TO WHY I WAS FIRED.**

My vacation claim was dated Aug. 24 and addressed to the City Council. On Aug. 28 I attended the Council meeting and Wagner did not mention my claim. The following day I called Mrs. Carlin and told her that I had filed a claim and that I would very much appreciate if she would ask the City Mgr. to read it at the next Council meeting. She said that she would be glad to do so. When Mrs. Carlin first asked Wagner to read the letter he became furious and refused. After she insisted that it was addressed to the Council and should be read into the record he mentioned that a claim had been received and turned over to the City Attorney and then added, "Even if we should decide to pay Amenhauser his vacation allowance he will not get the money because there is a tax claim against it." The minutes of the meeting read as follows:

City Council Meeting -- Sept. 11; Letter from Attorney of Walter Amenhauser, former employee of the City was READ BY THE CITY MANAGER. Later Mrs. Carlin told me that the City Mgr. was completely out of line in bringing my tax debt out in a public meeting. She said, "I do not know legally, but morally speaking, they owe you your vacation pay."

On Sept. I received a copy of the full page letter written by City Attorney, Jerome Bunker in answer to my vacation pay claim. After reading it several times I found what I assumed was his reason for denying the claim. He wrote: "Mr. Amenhauser testified that his relations with the patrons of the Golf Course were always amicable and of value to the City. There was, of course, testimony by the Golf Course Pro quite to the contrary." Mr. Bunker then goes on to say, "Since Mr. Eaton found that the services of Mr. Amenhauser were not desirable, the City, after thorough inspection of the record felt it necessary to discharge Mr. Amenhauser.)

In answer to what I said at the Hearing, Councilwoman Mary Carlin is witness to my factual testimony and it can be confirmed on the tape recording being held at City Hall. As to the complete inspection of the record; Mr. Bunker knew at the time he answered my claim that the sworn testimony recorded at the Personnel Board hearing was destroyed before the Council could inspect the findings therein.

The City Attorney advised Eaton during the Council hearing. Eaton had what appeared to be a prepared statement, (Later I was told that he had intended to read a statement. When I made the book padding charge, City Attorney Bunker was so shaken that he reached over and picked it up before Eaton had a chance to read it. Apparently they wanted to save him for the firing line in case the padding charge was made public.

In an article on the Council hearing the Riverside Enterprise, April, 29 reported that his (my) work at the Course was not only satisfactory, but EFFICIENT.

...making funds to take my claim to court, I appealed to the Labor Commissioner and
was informed (Oct 1960) the Labor Commission does not have Jurisdiction over
Incorporated C

After 7 months, I was faced with 1 of 2 choices - To quit and admit defeat to the City
Mgr.'s "Stool Pigeon" gang or take the advice of Lincoln: "If you have a just cause
take it to the people. Without their help you can do nothing." With this in mind I
decided to write this letter to give you some of the facts of my case and ask your
support. As a former employee of the City and War Veteran I would appreciate your
request for a public hearing so that I may be given a fair chance to defend my name.

If the City Mgr. had checked the details of my service record, he could have saved
his phony threats. (Army - 4 Yrs. - Sgt. - Fought with Marines on Guadalcanal
9 months. After 32 months in the So. Pacific I served in a hospital for blind veterans
and I also was in charge of a Los Angeles police station.)

I WILL TESTIFY UNDER OATH THAT I WAS TOLD BY AN ELECTED PUBLIC
OFFICIAL THAT I SHOULD KEEP MY EYE ON THE BOOKS AT THE TIME MR.
LANGFORD DEMANDED AN INVESTIGATION. AND ABOUT A MONTH BEFORE I
WAS FIRED EATON SAW ME SITTING IN A CAR WITH THE SAME OFFICIAL AND
SEVERAL DAYS LATER HE (EATON) TOLD HIM THAT HE COULD NOT WORK WITH
STOOL PIGEONS. I WILL ALSO TESTIFY THAT ABOUT THIS TIME I TOLD AN
AN EMPLOYEE IN THE PRO SHOP THAT THE BOOK WAS OUT OF BALANCE. (I
was told last week that the employee has recently been forced to resign.)

After I was discharged I was forced to comply with procedures by attending the City
Mgr.'s farce hearing but his puppets could not put words in my mouth after they put
me under oath. (I would suggest a professional member of the Board to change his
vocation) In their frustration to get enough evidence to justify the "planned" verdict
after 3 hours of cross examination, I was accused by a member of being a stool
pigeon for having reported the book padding.

I was told later by a Board member they decided, "I was not fit to hold that particular
job at that particular time".

Now that they have destroyed the tape recording, the City Mgr. has the gall to say that
he knows nothing of a book padding charge made at the Personnel Board hearing. He
knows that I have him up a tree and I hope and pray that the Citizens of Palm Springs
will help me bring him down. I can prove the padding charge and he knows it. I am
convinced that there is absolutely nothing he will not say or do to cover the Graft and
Corruption that he is sitting on at City Hall. The City Mgr. should be questioned as
to whether he had an active interest in Grosson's "Filth" business and let him
explain who paid for "Billies" sick leave at the time he was indicted.

Daniel Wagner is not only unfit to be a City Official he is not worthy to be called an
American.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to answer a charge made by Mayor
Frank Bogert at the City Council meeting on May 1, at which time he denied my
appeal for a public hearing.

I refer to Miss Stone from a newscast on KCMJ Radio on May 2, 1961. Quote: "In
reply (Mayor Frank Bogert called Amenhouser's charged against the City Mgr. and
the City Personnel Board in these words, 'Ridiculous and not worth listening to'.
Let's have a look at the Mayor's record. I have known Frank Bogert since 1938, and
worked for him during the summer seasons of 1948-49.

At the time Wagner refused to give me an interview I called on Mayor Bogert and he
said, "They could use an honest man out there.

In Eaton's opening statement at the Board hearing, he said that the only reason that
he hired me was that I had been highly recommended by a (Councilman) and MAYOR
BOGERT.

I was a complete stranger when I first called on Mrs. Carlin to ask her support and
later she told me she had called Mayor Bogert and he had spoken highly of me. I
have before me the notes which I referred to at the Board hearing: In my closing
statement I read the following word for word in the Sworn Testimony:

approached me at work and in shaking hands Mayor Bogert said, "wally, I want to congratulate you. Of all Starters in Palm Springs you are the only one that I have not heard a complaint about." "I will take my hat off to you". The day after I was fired I called on him at his office and reminded him of his compliment and he said, "Its the truth, and to this day I still haven't heard a complaint about you." The day after the Board hearing, I called the Mayor and asked if he had heard the Board's decision. He said, "not a word". He then told me, "I had a couple Board members primed" 5 DAYS LATER MAYOR BOGERT VOTED IN FAVOR OF MY DISMISSAL. At the time the City Mgr. threatened Blackmail, the Attorney told me he had also talked with Mayor Bogert and informed him that I planned to take my case to court. The Mayor said that, "he'd better not try because we've got something on him."

During the year I was employed the Golf Course grossed approximately \$150,000 and I was responsible for over \$25,000 of that amount. Due to this fact I challenge Mayor Frank Bogert and his Coherents to present their "SOMETHING" charge at an open hearing and let the people decide whether or not I am qualified to serve the public. And if the Mayor and his EX'Kansas City' Boss fail to make their "something" charge stick the proper authorities should step in and make them answer for their Vicious, Ugly, Un-American Blackmail threats and false accusations they have made against me.

Article 146 of City Government Rules state: THE COUNCIL SHALL REVIEW THE FINDINGS OF THE PERSONNEL BOARD AND AFFIRM, REVOKE, OR MODIFY the action taken as in its judgement seems warranted and the action taken shall be FINAL. On Saturday, April 22, I was notified the Board upheld the City Mgr.'s recommendation for my dismissal. On Monday April 24, I called Wagner and asked permission to appeal my case to the Council. The City Mgr. bluntly told me that I was wasting my time and that I should not disturb him further.

That same evening I was present at the Council meeting and Mayor Bogert refused to let me speak. After George Ripley announced that the findings in the tape recording had been destroyed, the City Mgr. rammed through his vote 5-1 for my dismissal. (Mr. Kirk absent) Mrs. Carlin voted in my favor and demanded a public hearing. Councilman Strebe opposed to an open hearing. He said, "The city's dirty linen should not be aired in public." Wagner gave the nod and it was held in private.

At this point a citizen in the audience questioned the Council's action in voting for my dismissal without having heard the findings which the Board had destroyed. Then added, "where is this meeting taking place in AMERICA or RUSSIA?"

There is a City Official who knows my dismissal was a complete fraud and I hope the Citizens will give him the opportunity to testify to the fact. When they failed to buy me off they reached for their last straw - Silence through Blackmail.

IT'S TIME TO TEAR DOWN THEIR WORN OUT "PINK" SIGN 'YOU CAN'T BEAT CITY HALL' AND PUT UP THE ORIGINAL, "YOU CAN'T BEAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE."

I need your moral support to see justice done. If you think my cause just please attend a council meeting or write the City Council and demand that I be granted an open hearing so the facts of the political corruption which cause my discharge can be made public. As a Citizen and tax payer it will pay you to do so.

If you want to talk in private please drop a note to 243 Ortega and I will be glad to get in touch with you. Please pass this letter on to a relative or friend.

Sincerely,



Following is a copy of the letter Pro Manager Zell Eaton submitted to the Personnel Board and Council hearings giving the reasons for my discharge.

After the letter was read into the sworn testimony I denied his first main complaint and he admitted the second was hearsay. In his opening statement he testified that I

was the best employee he ever had and that he had been thinking of resigning and had planned to recommend me for his job.

On the basis of the reasons given in the letter Mayor Bogert, Councilmen McKinney, Strebe, Paisly, Beebe and Personnel Board Members George Ripley, M. Dragicevich, Dr. Charles Baldwin, Warren Slaughter and Thomas Kicly voted for my discharge. (City Mgr. Daniel Wagner was present at both hearings.)

" Dear [REDACTED]

April 10, 1961

This letter is in reply to your request dated April 5, 1961, for a written statement explaining the reasons for your dismissal on March 31, 1961.

The complaints against you include your work attitude, you often complain, are indifferent toward your job and the golfing public, and generally go about your work halfheartedly. As far as initiative is concerned, you are a routine worker and need frequent direction or prodding. Your attitude towards other employees is surly, touchy, and quarrelsome, and often you do not cooperate. Of late, your quality of work has been poor, you are frequently in error and your general performance is unsatisfactory.

The main complaint against you was your inability and/or unwillingness to obey specific instructions. Specifically, on Saturday, March 4, 1961, a public-address system was installed in the starter's booth at the Palm Springs Golf Course; you were specifically instructed to operate from this booth. The purpose of this arrangement was to allow the starter, who on this particular day was you, to effectively and efficiently supervise and control the first and tenth tees. After a short time, you abandoned your post without first securing permission or even requesting permission to do so.

Again, on Thursday, March 23, 1961, you intentionally countermanded one of my orders to an employee over whom you had no jurisdiction. I requested the Greens Superintendent to install an underground conduit from the refreshment trailer to the starter's booth to house the cable for the P. A. System. A workman, Don Higo, was dispatched to accomplish this task. During the course of placing the conduit underground, you ordered the workman to stop working and return to the maintenance headquarters. The loss of time to the workman was over two hours, plus, the entire incident had a demoralizing effect on all golf course employees.

For the above stated reasons, you are definitely unsuited to this organization and were dismissed on March 31, 1961.

Yours truly,

s/ Zell Eaton
ZELL EATON
Pro-Manager "

I DO NOT BELIEVE EATON DICTATED THIS LETTER)