

The Phantom Menace:

Addressing E-Hostility In Your Community



Terrence R. Moore, ICMA-CM
ICMA Conference Presenter



What is a Blog?

- Noun – a regularly updated website or web page, typically run by an individual or small group; written in conversational style.
- Verb – to add new material or to update a blog based on predetermined calendar dates, or as new developments warrant.

Usefulness?

- “Unofficial” information source – blogger does not have to disclose sources. No attribution required.
- Serves primarily as an *opinion* page
- Able to use assumptions, able to inflame and insinuate. All for the expressed need to gain eyeballs and/or followers. (visitors to website)

Mistakes Bloggers Make

- “Don’t fall into the trap where you feel like you’ve got to create content for the sake of creating content.”

- Richard Spiegel (@crowdtogether)

- “Bloggers often write solely to inflame readers, whereas their intentions should be to motivate readers.”

- Gerald Walker, Dir. of Communications, City of College Park, Georgia

Case Study - Las Cruces, NM

- City Manager from 2005 – 2010
- Received excellent performance evaluations in 2007, 2008 to include salary adjustment, accolades, etc.
- Implementation of various projects, programs that had been contemplated for years, have now been realized via my leadership.

Case Study - Las Cruces, NM

- 2008, fourth year as Las Cruces City Manager. My partner at the time sustained an injury in the home, due to pre-existing medical condition.
- Over a year later, rumors circulated that the injury was result of a domestic violence encounter.
- Local Blogger (Heath Haussamen) created a bogus story and ran with it on NMPolitics.net, fabricating a “case” to be investigated.
- Local DA/police/sheriff’s offices were compelled to conduct probes fueled by blog.
- There was a significant amount of television news coverage generated.
- Therefore, after NO wrongdoing, NEVER any police encounters in LIFE to this effect, and NEVER venturing on the wrong side of the law, I found myself in a very UNFAIR and UNJUST predicament.

Case Study - Las Cruces, NM

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NMPolitics.net the real story


Sheriff takes over case involving Las Cruces city manager

By Heath Haussamen | March 1, 2010

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DA says Las Cruces police had a conflict because Terrence Moore is the police chief's boss; LCPD disputes that but hands over case 'to remove this potential of perceived cloud of impropriety'

The Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department is taking over a Las Cruces Police Department investigation into two incidents involving City Manager **Terrence Moore** and his ex-wife.



*The Las Cruces Police Department building
(Photo by Heath Haussamen)*

The case transfer took place Friday afternoon after Doña Ana County District Attorney **Susana Martinez** raised concerns about the way LCPD handled the case and urged the transfer to the sheriff's department. It also followed weeks of inquiries

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Susana Martinez



- Served as District Attorney of Doña Ana County at the time of the inquiry
- Pressured to become involved in the matter, but realized there was absolutely no merit; rejected any further pursuit of the matter.
- Was later elected Governor of New Mexico

Case Study - Las Cruces, NM

- Friday, June 25, 2010 the Las Cruces Sun News offered the following headline:



Weather: ☀ Las Cruces, NM | No

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No charges for Moore

By Amanda L. Bradford abradford@lcsun-news.com

POSTED: 06/24/2010 11:54:25 PM MDT

A red arrow points to the headline "No charges for Moore".

Local Las Cruces Newspaper

Weather: ☀ Las Cruces, NM | Ne

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No charges for Moore

By Amanda L. Bradford abradford@lcsun-news.com

POSTED: 08/24/2010 11:54:25 PM MDT

LAS CRUCES -- After a lengthy domestic violence investigation that he characterized as a "witch hunt," City Manager Terrence Moore won't be charged with a crime, the district attorney's office confirmed Thursday.

According to a report released Wednesday by the Do-a Ana County Sheriff's Office, there was not enough evidence to support allegations that surfaced last fall about a disturbance at the home of Moore and his then-wife, several threatening phone messages and two injuries she received -- a black eye and a cut to her head that required stitches, according to police reports and recordings obtained through a records request.

The Las Cruces Police Department and the sheriff's department each conducted independent investigations into the allegations, the latter at the request of District Attorney Susana Martinez, who is also running for governor in November's general election.

Nelson Goodin, a deputy district attorney, reviewed the sheriff's department report.

"There was insufficient evidence to proceed," he said. "What our case would be based on is

Las Cruces Sun News Article (continued)

"There was insufficient evidence to proceed," he said. "What our case would be based on is hearsay." Sheriff's investigator Robyn Gojkovich said that's because Moore's ex-wife, through her attorney, declined to cooperate with the investigation.

"If you don't have a victim, you don't have a crime," she said Thursday. No formal charges were ever levied against Moore, who has been city manager since February 2005.

But suspicions were raised by a school resource officer at the same school where Moore 's ex-wife was a teacher, who noticed injuries to the woman's face. School resource officers are certified city police officers.

Moore has vehemently denied he caused any of those injuries and his ex-wife has declined to publicly talk about the circumstances.

"There was absolutely nothing there," Moore said Thursday. "There was nothing to what was insinuated at all. It was a witch hunt -- an attempt to discredit me."

Moore said he was relieved to put the investigation behind him, saying it took longer than it should have.

"If this were anybody else, it would have taken half the time," he said. "Because of the nature of it -- a high-level public official -- it got a lot of scrutiny. They had no choice but to be thorough, and I'm glad they were."

Las Cruces Sun News Article (continued)

Goodin defended the timeline of the investigation, saying that obtaining the needed medical and pharmacy records took time, as did carefully reviewing all aspects of the case and the investigation.

"There've been so many people involved in the investigation," Goodin said. "Everyone wanted to make sure everything was done correctly. A lot of domestic violence cases might not ever come to us for our opinion, but because of who's involved, (the investigators) wanted to make sure they didn't miss something.

"In this case, there were a couple extra levels of review."

Martinez asked for the sheriff's department probe, saying that an independent investigation should have been conducted because Moore's position gives him oversight of the police department, with the chief of police answering to the city manager.

Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima said he's glad to hear that the investigation has come to a conclusion. "I know it's been hanging over him," Miyagishima said.

Moore said Thursday that the investigation was not the reason behind his decision to resign from his post, which he announced Friday. It's just time to move on, he said.

"The work in Las Cruces is wrapping up," he said. "That's the sole basis for that decision. I'm looking forward to continuing a successful city management career."

Amanda L. Bradford can be reached at (575) 541-5460

Case Study - Las Cruces, NM

- District Attorney, Sheriff's Office confirmed there's was no evidence or probable cause to support any claims of wrongdoing as noted, and therefore, no ability to pursue criminal charges whatsoever.
- However, some short-term collateral damage was done.
- Many have opined that it was unfair and unjust...suggesting either a series of political witch hunts and/or racial profiling events.
- Highly-educated, accomplished, law-abiding professional in leadership position.
- Impact to Las Cruces as a community; numerous parties have since defined the City to be far less than progressive as a result of this treatment. *“What type of community is this place to allow such to happen in this day and age?”*

Summary

Blogging can serve a purpose - can be positive, or negative

In this case, appears to have no redeeming value

Fine professional potentially has reputation tarnished

Characteristic of strong leadership - weather the storm

Possessing the faith to overcome adversity, controversy builds character





Thank You!





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