

## Technical and Timeline

### Part III

If one works in a County Assessor Office in this state, especially in the appraisal aspect of the job, ones primary responsibility and focus is not their own comfort and convenience, is not their political careers, is not the office, is not even the county government but peripherally, it is to the county's property owners, and through them to the taxing entities. It is to fair and equitable property valuation for taxation purposes. That order seems to be reversed, seems always to have been so, with the individual now in charge of that valuation. A chance to get an updated description to a property is always to be taken, always, especially as so many residences haven't been looked at/updated in fifteen or twenty years and especially in smaller counties such as this, where sales and their statistics are fewer. Martinez, basically because he was not being supervised, was allowed to get away with ignoring that responsibility and where he was given an inch he took miles. The evidence all indicates that for years he knowingly and deliberately did a fraction of his job but had no problem with taking one hundred percent of its pay and benefits. In my book that is thievery.

Let me be absolutely clear on a thing or two more here – this problem with Martinez was not even close to being new. From what I am told, I was at least the fourth employee of that office, going back years, who reported to their boss, Assessor Tritz, regarding Martinez not doing his job. That's dozens, hundreds even, of individual complaints. Mr. Tritz had been told/warned by his responsible employees going back years, none of whom is still employed there, that he was being taken, (and the taxpayers were being taken) by Martinez' indolence and sloth. I told him over and over that the revaluation in 2015 was going to be garbage. Frankly, he didn't have the guts to deal with the situation. One commissioner used the term 'chicken shit' to describe him, to me personally, and I was told that a second one had used the same label. (It must be noted however, that was a case of two pots calling the kettle black.) He continually feigned ignorance of what was going on when it had been related to him over and over and over.

On several occasions, when, entirely exasperated, I said to him things like, "Howard, he has not been doing his job!" his response one time, as though he was first hearing that, was a chuckle and, "Geez, I knew I should have gotten a GPS tracker for the jeep. They're only \$150.", as though that somehow or other relieved him of all responsibility. Real funny, eh? That comment showed three things: 1) He viewed his sworn oath of office as a joke. 2) He knew, or at least strongly suspected, Martinez was taking the department vehicle, driving directly to his house, hanging out there for most of the day, and then returning claiming to have been doing inspections. 3) His knowledge or suspicion were enough that he had looked into purchasing a GPS tracker and installing it on the department vehicle. He didn't because he would then have been confronted with the truth, a truth he didn't have the courage to deal with.

Well, I didn't need a GPS tracker; I needed only a few minutes browsing the system for the first feelings of unease to set in. The barest minimum of basic administrative supervision would have found the same thing.

In Lake County government, making a joke of oaths of office is normal. The public good has a low priority in their scheme of values. There are so many people who know and knew that everything about Martinez in that job stunk and stinks to high heaven, yet none of them can or could rise above their self-interest and narrow-minded partisanship to do more than to try and cover their ass. It seems to have never occurred to any of them that if they just did the right thing in the first place there'd have been no ass needing covering (civic beautification aside), no lies needing remembering, no self-respect needing trashing. In my defensible appraisal they all share a modicum of blame for the situation the county is in now, Assessor Tritz most of all as his was the ultimate responsibility.

In addition I was told that the commissioners, the two longest-serving ones at the time in particular, were also aware of rumors and anecdotes indicating a problem for some time. What they thought in regards to someone who was mostly not around but always got a full weeks pay you will have to ask them. Further, I outlined the situation in some detail to all of them. They could have,

probably should have, looked into it and forced it to be dealt with years ago, and certainly should have done so after I presented to them what I had found. That would have been all it took for the county to have escaped this mess. They didn't and so the mess persists, for four more years and counting. I think that their over-arching responsibility for the county government encompasses delving into reports of misconduct, malfeasance, fraud and etc. regarding any county employee no matter what department or whose toes get stepped on. They disagree. If they wished only to weasel-word themselves out of any responsibility, that would be one thing, **but when they went further and also agreed to maintain a conspiracy of silence so no one else would know, that moved them into the business of becoming a protection racket for a scamming fraud.** Why? Why don't you ask them. If shirking their own responsibilities was the course of action which best suited them they might at least have given warning to everyone else that there was credible (and yes, it is very credible!) reason to suspect problems in the Lake County Assessor Office. Their refusal to do so says all that needs saying about what "public" service means to them.

It is inaccurate to say that I hate everything. I am strongly in favor of common sense, common honesty, and common decency. This makes me forever ineligible for public office.

H. L. Mencken

Now they continue to sign off on mil levies and the taxes which follow which they know, one of them most particularly, are the garbage output of garbage input. Some public servants, eh? They not-acted here as though they understood nothing about what Martinez' job was, and cared to learn the same. Under Mr. Tritz he was not checking out library books; he was supposed to be accurately valuing most of the real property in Lake County. Well, there are statewide rules and standards and procedures which govern how that valuing is to be done, and he was not following them!! He was, in fact, making a complete mockery of them. The massive preponderance of the evidence says that he was doing little more than sitting at his desk, on the odd day when he showed up, and manipulating codes and numbers, when he did anything at all, to suit his indolent comfort and habitual laziness.

And where was his boss, the previous Assessor all this time? Playing the jellyfish, except from noon to one, was where. Now his adored legacy directs the fraudulent output of their thoroughly disreputable office. While there were major issues in the Treasurer's Office several decades ago, it is very likely that never before in the history of Lake County government has there been an entire department of that government so thoroughly in need of sunshine and complete disinfection. Instead, if the Lake County Democrat Party and the BOCC have their way, the darkness and infection of deep and long-running corruption will continue as the order of the days, months and years.