

August 18, 2007

Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich
and Chief of Police Anne Kirkpatrick
Spokane County Sheriff's Office and Spokane Police Department
1100 W. Mallon Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99260

Regarding: Citizen complaint request for felony investigation, Manslaughter in the first degree.

Dear Sheriff Knezovich and Chief Kirkpatrick:

As the result of a comprehensive Spokane history book project my wife and I are working on, we have had occasion to discover and investigate a number of alleged clandestine frauds and/or criminal actions committed by various members of the Cowles family and Spokane city officials. One of these criminal actions involves what appears to be a willful and reckless omission of an official duty that resulted in a death. I recently learned this incident was never criminally investigated but was settled monetarily behind the scenes by the Cowles family's insurance carrier, Safeco Insurance.

We concern ourselves with accurate investigations, documentations and authenticity in our writings. We strongly believe history is a science and should be approached as such. Consequently, we are avid truth and justice seekers. In our research, we have discovered the commission of a Class A felony, wherein a death occurred as the result of a reckless and deliberately orchestrated violation of a city safety inspection policy, followed with a subsequent cover-up by specific people in positions of power and public trust. It appears, because of the status and positions of the perpetrators involved, this horrific and preventable death has never been officially reported as a crime or brought to justice.

The death of Jo Ellen Savage on April 8, 2006, came about as the direct result of certain city officials who, with deliberate intent and disregard for the public's safety, appeared to have colluded to bypass mandated city safety-inspection rules in favor of the financial interests of Spokane's most powerful family – a family who controls 80% of Spokane's media and, indirectly, the political careers of Spokane's elected and appointed officials. As a result of what strongly appears to be reckless collusion with total disregard for the public's safety and the violation of RCW 9A.32.060, a terrifying death occurred.

As a former three-term elected sheriff of a Washington State county, and a 25-year veteran law enforcement officer, I easily recognize the elements of felony crimes contained in the Revised Code of Washington. I strongly feel there is exceptional probable cause and strong evidence to charge one or more persons with manslaughter in the first degree for the death of Jo Ellen Savage. The elements of that statute are quite clear and concise and appear to easily fit the probable cause and available evidence requirements applicable to charge that crime.

The statute (RCW 9A.32.060) reads:

“Manslaughter in the first degree.

(1) A person is guilty of manslaughter in the first degree when:

(a) He recklessly causes the death of another person; or

(b) He intentionally and unlawfully kills an unborn quick child by inflicting any injury upon the

mother of such child.

(2) Manslaughter in the first degree is a Class A felony."

At this time, I respectfully request that either one or both of you, as Spokane's chief law enforcement officers, initiate a criminal investigation into this death. I am enclosing, among other evidence, a copy of information containing probable cause developed by one of Washington State's foremost and highly respected, award-winning, investigative journalists, Larry Shook, who was also at one time a correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine. I have also studied and corroborated the majority of Shook's research and find it to be highly credible. Based on what I have uncovered and discovered to date, I believe extensive and incriminating evidence will be found through an investigation. I ask that you both carefully study this information and please contact me if you have any questions.

Conveniently, a majority of the investigative work involving this case is probably already documented. Typically, in these types of deaths, insurance carriers conduct extensive investigations prior to settling. Based on the nature and circumstances of this accident, and the fact that it was quickly and quietly settled for an undisclosed amount, there is certain to be an extensive file generated by Safeco's investigators. These types of insurance investigative and settlement files are excellent resources for criminal investigators and usually packed with substantial amounts of evidence. In the case of a criminal investigation, and through the process of discovery, Safeco Insurance Company officials would be required to share this information per a subpoena.

I am enclosing six memorandums and documents. These documents corroborate the facts that the Cowles parking garage had serious structural problems that specific city officials and Cowles family members were made aware of, yet took no action. Most alarming is a statement issued on August 21, 1998 by Spokane City council members Barnes, Holmes, Green, Colliton, and Higgins, voicing their strong support for the city's purchase of the Parking garage. This was less than two years from the time they received the Walker report, which stated the parking garage needed immediate repairs. This letter also corroborates an Internal Revenue Services report and finding stating they (the IRS) recognized that "developer (Cowles) maintained a relationship with city officials wherein the developers were in a "position to control or influence its activities." Most importantly, evidence proves both city and Cowles family members knew of these dangerous conditions, yet recklessly ignored them. The motive was to relieve the Cowles family from the expense for these costly repairs and pass those costs to the city once the deal was closed. These reports are listed as follows:

1) The Walker Condition Assessment Report issued in 1996. This report documents the deteriorated condition of the garage and the dangerous lack of safety repairs. It specifically addressed the concern that the pre-cast panels were in need of replacement or repair, stating some have deteriorated "so far as to threaten the immediate stability of the panels." In fact, it was a failure of one of these panels that caused the death of Jo Ellen Savage. Ten years later, when Jo Ellen Savage's car bumped a precast panel and was pulled by the lip of that panel over the side of the garage to her gruesome death four stories below, the recommended repairs from this report had still not been completed. Even more reckless was the fact that following her death and months after, throughout the summer, other than securing a piece of plywood in place of the panel that had pulled Savage to her death, repairs were still not made. Cars were allowed to still park directly below the exact location of the failed pre-cast panel.

2) The Jacobson & Associates, Inc. Report. This was an engineering report completed in 2003 for the purpose of assisting with the appraisal work required to sell this garage to the city. This reports scathingly

condemns the condition of the garage and strongly accentuates that the recommendations in the Walker report were not followed. (It should be noted that the RPS garage was not a new garage, it was built in 1973-74.) It again greatly emphasizes the dangerous condition of the parking garage and blatant disregard of the known and immediate recommended repairs – repairs that were recommended, but ignored, as needing immediate attention in 1996. Page three of this report specifically brings to the attention of all concerned that the recommendations concerning the dangerous conditions outlined in the 1996 Walker report had not been performed stating: “These finding are serious and indicate an imperative for actions to repair, restore and protect it as a safe low life-cycle cost facility.”

3) Internal Revenue Report, June 29, 2004. This report recognizes that the developer (Cowles) maintained a relationship with city officials wherein the developers were in a “position to control or influence its activities. (This is an extremely important and damning piece of evidence.)

4) An August 21, 1998 written and signed statement by Spokane City council members Barnes, Holmes, Green, Colliton, and Higgins, voicing their strong support for the city’s purchase of the Parking garage. This was done in opposition and contempt of Mayor Talbot, who voiced his opinion that the city was being taken advantage of.

5) Operations Memorandum, December 9, 1998. This memorandum was generated by Nick Dragisich, Assistant City Manager of Operations, and identifies 16 committee members who attended a meeting wherein a consensus of the Public Works Committee was to not do any inspection of the parking garage.

6) An investigative news story written by Spokane journalist Larry Shook, titled *Death by Parking*. This investigative piece of journalism lays out the entire scenario concerning the cover-up, proceeding and following Jo Savage’s death. Of great significance in this report is the statement of Rex Franklin, a Cowles bookkeeper, who was also identified as the garage manager. On May 18, 2006, the *Spokesman-Review* published a picture of Rex Franklin. The picture was dated 1991. It showed him trying to pull back a cracked precast panel, just like the one that failed when Jo Savage died. Franklin will be an important witness to contact. He has made statements that he was ordered to falsify the parking garage’s books. This investigative story is must read as it identifies numerous witnesses and criminal actions.

As both a student and researcher of Spokane history I have discovered that various members of the Cowles family, through their news monopoly and wealth, have established a 92-year-pattern of controlling the majority of our elected and appointed officials for the benefit of their family’s own financial interests. Often, their financial gain is against the public’s best interest and kept secret, as they control a large segment of the news media. In this specific complaint, they (with the help of certain public officials) have been allowed to avoid a Class A felony manslaughter investigation – an immunity not afforded lesser citizens.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. I also ask that you advise me of whatever actions you decide to take regarding my official complaint.

Sincerely,

Tony Bamonte
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