



Pappas Law Group
A Professional Corporation

March 7, 2014

HAND-DELIVERED AND VIA FACSIMILE

Mr. Patrick O’Crowley
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Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office
275 Magnolia Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90802

Sarah Riggs
Manager,
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Attorneys

Matthew Pappas
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Of Counsel

Jason Thompson

Re: *People v. Christopher Woodard*
Case #: NA098171RM

Dear Mr. O’Crowley:

I understand that you were in court telling several judges that Pappas Law Group is under investigation. I understand that Detective David Strohman has been with you in court during the hearings. When asked by one of the judges what evidence you had of wrongdoing by my law firm, you said you did not have any but that an investigation was proceeding. You have no evidence, Mr O’Crowley, because my firm has done nothing wrong. For the last almost five (5) years, approximately 60-70% of the legal work I’ve done has been done on a *pro bono* basis. Despite your inability to understand that people do, in fact, work on behalf of other people without pecuniary gain as primary motivation, we struggle every single month to pay the bills and to continue operating. Moreover, we have been assisting Christopher Woodard on a *pro bono* basis. I have had to scale back our help because we are, as usual, having financial problems.

I am a candidate for Long Beach City Attorney. Recently, your boss, Jackie Lacey, endorsed Charles Parkin, the current appointed City Attorney, as her candidate of choice in the upcoming election. The Long Beach Police Officers Association (POA) has also endorsed Mr. Parkin. Mr. Parkin was appointed Long Beach City Attorney when his predecessor, Mr. Robert Shannon, retired early. Prior to his retirement, Mr. Shannon was interviewed by the Long Beach Press Telegram in June, 2013. During the interview, Mr. Shannon admitted he was suggesting the appointment of Mr. Parkin to give him a “leg up” in the election. Indeed, the City Attorney’s office in Long Beach has been controlled by the same group of people for nearly 50 years, as Mr. Shannon expressed in a

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memorandum prepared for and submitted to the Long Beach City Council as he resigned in July, 2013. Mr. Parkin’s uncle, Robert, served as City Attorney a number of years ago. The people who have been in power do not want to lose power and appear willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure they remain in office, including using the power of the Los Angeles District Attorney’s office.

Detective Strohman has been dispatched by the POA as well as by his City friends to attack at full-force during the election in an effort to ensure Mr. Parkin is re-elected. To wit, several weeks ago the POA sent out a political advertisement for Mr. Parkin. I have included a copy of the ad for your reference. In it, Mr. Parkin claims to have 19-years criminally prosecuting drug dealers and prostitutes. Mr. Parkin has never worked as a criminal prosecutor. More importantly, the Long Beach City Charter prohibits the City Attorney from criminal prosecutions leaving such actions solely to the City Prosecutor (and county District Attorney). He further asks the voters to “re-elect” him when Mr. Parkin has never been elected before. He is not an incumbent – he was appointed by the previous city attorney to ensure power over that office is maintained by the same group that has held onto it for 50 years. In a note signed by Steve James, the president of the POA, voters are told there are two (2) candidates for City Attorney when, in fact, there are three (3). The ad is deceptive and was sent out to thousands of Long Beach residents.

In April, 2012, I met with the F.B.I. when a client of mine was asked to answer questions about corruption in Long Beach city government. We met with agents for approximately four (4) hours. Detective Strohman was discussed during that meeting along with other city officials. Detective Strohman is a defendant in multiple lawsuits being handled by my law firm. The case identification numbers for those lawsuits are included in an attachment with this letter. I have also included a number of documents showing a clear pattern of constitutional violations by the Long Beach Police Department and Detective Strohman.

As I mentioned previously, over the last almost five (5) years, around 60-70% of the work my firm has done has been *gratis*. As of today, PLG is delinquent three (3) months on its office rent for its only office in Lake Forest, California. The rent for that office is \$850.00 per month. Prior to that office, which was rented last year, I was unable to afford office rent and so used space donated by a land owner in Santa Ana and prior to that space donated for my use in Long Beach. You’ll note a series of letters included with this showing the City refused to give me a business license – a license for an attorney – for

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the Long Beach office on Atlantic that had been donated for my use. That was in early-2012.

Sergio Sandoval works for me. He is not paid regularly. Often, he is weeks behind in paying the rent for the apartment he lives in. Like mine, his utilities have previously been cut-off because we are often without revenue or money to pay even basic bills. Yet we continue to fight for people who are being abused by Detective Strohman, the City of Long Beach, and other cities throughout Southern California. The month I won the *Pack v. Long Beach* case in October, 2011, my car was repossessed. It took me weeks and loans from people to get it back. We are not engaged in any criminal activity, Mr. O’Crowley and you are intentionally saying that we are at the urging of people who are acting to thwart the political process or harm cases pending against them.

The Los Angeles District Attorney’s office should not be a part of the scheme concocted by Detective Strohman – a defendant in multiple federal civil rights lawsuits and in lawsuits pending against him in state court – and folks in the City of Long Beach government who want to retain power. You need to remember that Mr. Woodard is a plaintiff in one of the lawsuits against Detective Strohman that is pending in federal court. That case is pending for trial on March 11, although the City has stipulated to a continuance. That continuance may or may not be granted tomorrow morning by the judge. It is obvious that Detective Strohman would like Mr. Woodard in jail for that trial – that he’ll do whatever is necessary to “get” Mr. Woodard because he knows he repeatedly violated the Fourth Amendment. Detective Strohman is an officer who has said previously that Chief Jim McDonnell of the Long Beach Police Department is “not my chief.” He has led multiple raids of collectives, including the raid that resulted in the termination of the officer who violated the civil rights of Dorian Brooks, a young African-American man I also represent who is suing Long Beach and Detective Strohman.

I represent people in civil rights cases, Mr. O’Crowley. The vast majority of work I have done - including the huge amounts of work in the *Pack*, *James*, and *Anaheim* cases - has been done for free. Sergio Sandoval is one of the most compassionate, giving people I know. He has worked tirelessly to help people who have been abused by Detective Strohman, other Long Beach officers, and the City of Long Beach. For you to say what you’ve said in open court has resulted in potential clients deciding against retaining our firm and is having a devastating impact on my ability to continue as a candidate in the Long Beach City Attorney election. I have not been able to pay the rent this month for the house my daughter lives in with my estranged wife. And it is not just me -- Mr. Sandoval has not yet paid his rent or his utility bills and clients who have now heard about the

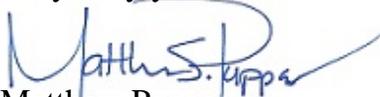
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so-called investigation by the District Attorney of my firm are being scared away. This is exactly what Mr. Parkin, Detective Strohmman, and Mr. James want. That’s why you’re made to say it in open court – it is meant to cause me and my staff distress. It is wrong.

I am going to file a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action in federal court for violation of my First Amendment rights – for retaliation by your office, Detective Strohmman, Mr. Parkin, the POA and the City of Long Beach unless the claims are rescinded. I know you cannot have anything showing wrongdoing on the part of my law firm because I know we do the majority of our work *pro bono* with good intentions and to protect people – not primarily for money – so there can be nothing to support your allegations. To do work on a *pro bono* basis for so many people and then to be attacked by folks – here Strohmman and the City, who/that are defendants in lawsuits in civil rights cases shows the utter depth of corruption and power-grabbing efforts at work here.

I have included various documents I hope you’ll take the time to review. If you have the time to attack me in court with false statements and accusations, you should have time to review the information I’ve included. Your statements are wholly inappropriate because we have done absolutely nothing wrong. We represent people who have no voice – people like Mr. Woodard who was improperly attacked and raided by Detective Strohmman – a person who has no money – no ability to hire an attorney regardless of the false statements made by Detective Strohmman. We represent people like Marla James who has been relentlessly discriminated against and attacked by government – she is on disability and has no ability to hire and pay for lawyers. We represent individuals like Dorian Brooks who was discriminated against by officers because he is black. What you are doing is wrong and it is a clear effort to chill speech as well as my right to seek political office.

Very truly yours,


Matthew Pappas

MP:jm

cc: Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles District Attorney
Kamala Harris, California Attorney General
André Birotte, Jr., U.S. Attorney, Central District of California
Jim McDonnell, Chief, Long Beach Police Department
Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court

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