

Debbie's Summary

First of all, let me say that this website was not the way we wanted the truth, our side, and the facts of Bob's case to come out. For the last 17 months of our lives we have been in disbelief, shock; I'm not really sure because there are so many adjectives I could use. We believed in the system; we believed if you told the truth it would be ok. We tried to get the people involved that were part of this investigation at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office to listen to the truth, but it wasn't happening. From the beginning, to now, I was in the movie I would never watch. The plot was so twisted and no one would listen. I can truly say as a wife and parent I now know how the Coach, parents and the boys from Duke University felt. Was the truth ever going to be able to be told? I know there are much more serious things in life but for us the last 17 months took the wind out of our sails but we kept our heads high because we knew; we knew no matter what, we could look everyone we loved and cared about or those we didn't even know, straight in the eye and were telling them the truth. No one was going to be able to take that away from us; No one, not Darnell, not Huckstep, not Vemillion, not Secretary Gallagher, not Jeff Cloutier, not Karen Keith, not Walt Withey, not Kittel and not Cheryl Stinson. We have had to wait since February of 2007 to be able to talk because of the way this sheriff decided to handle this case. We have had to put out fires in our hometown of Elmira, New York because of the way news travels and of course the only thing that was seen up there was what was in the Gainesville Sun. There was never a problem in New York when Bob was working there but again it was the words in those newspaper articles.

All of this was tying his/our hands so he could not even try to get a job because he was "under investigation." (As of right now, July 22, 2008, Bob is looking for a job.) From the sheriff's office of internal affairs, to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, to the State Attorney's Office (where it was concluded that it was not criminal), back to the sheriff's office internal affairs, back to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice and Training Commission to decide whether or not Bob would be able to retain his Certifications in Law Enforcement and in Corrections. And let me say that at the time, Bob was also on this Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission for the past five years, by appointment from Governor Jeb Bush. Yes, I know how the Coach, mothers, fathers and boys from Duke felt.

WHAT I WILL TALK ABOUT ARE ONLY THE THINGS THAT I WAS A PART OF DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. IT WILL BE THE THINGS THAT WOULD HAVE INVOLVED ME OR MY DAUGHTERS AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER. ANYTHING ELSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE WORKINGS OF THE JAIL BOB WILL HAVE TO ANSWER.

On the morning of February 26, 2007 my phone rang and it was Bob. I knew as soon as he said "Debbie" something was wrong. He said "I don't know what is going on. FDLE just left my office and the sheriff is out in the hall. I think they are here to take my badge." That was the beginning of our first day in hell. When he was brought home at noon by the new, second in command Huckstep, he had been stripped of everything including his 32 years of an impeccable record as a law enforcement officer. All I kept asking was, "why?" "what had happened?"

We had never done anything in our lives to create such a situation. I knew that not all the people at the Jail would like Bob as their boss all of the time. Who likes their boss all of the time? That's a part of the job, a part of life, though. You have to make decisions that some will never like, but this; accusations that never in our lives would we have expected. (Having been together for 30 of those 32 years, I always say we, us or our. We're a team.)

When I learned that it was Bob's secretary, Joyce Gallagher and what we thought was at least a friend, and what she had accused him of; I can say with all my heart that I was shocked and saddened. Joyce, after 9 years of talking to her and being with her, introducing her to every friend that ever visited from our home town, giving her my father's lawn tractor, inviting her to join me in Las Vegas with the girls, my daughter's having practically told her everything involving their lives and her telling me Bob was the best boss she had in her career was really unbelievable. Captain Jeff Cloutier, Bob's work friend; the guy who called my house all the time, fixed all our computers, the guy that took my daughter out to lunch when he was in Tallahassee while she was in college, the guy whose home we went to for his son's Baptismal and the guy whose sons' my youngest daughter played with, babysat (she never took any money), and loved with all her heart, now was accusing Bob, too, and denying he was even a friend.

Please read Gallagher's and Cloutier's statements. Gallagher says it started with a 39 cent stamp and that Bob had been making her do that for years. Then how come for years I was buying stamps and he was taking them to work so they would have them to use? He would have me get them or tell me he paid Joyce because she had stamps under her blotter at work for personal use. I knew from the moment I started to read this report it was going in the wrong direction and how they made Bob out to be a horrible man. I read adjectives they used to describe Bob as an angry, hokey, insane, bellyaching, unhappy, prejudice, crazed, that he treated Gallagher terrible, that he would not speak or grunt when he came to work in the mornings (but he left the Jail happy according to Gallagher). She said the staff was afraid of him. I am going on record to say.... Yes, there are times Bob raised his voice in the last 30 years of our lives but there has never been a more even tempered man than him. He has, since we met, never been any of these things they are saying. How would he have gotten through a Law Enforcement career if that truly was his temperament? We all have our moments, but it is not in Bob's personality to be the kind of person they describe. Actually there are times I wish he would get mad and not rationalize. Again please read the statements of these people. They twisted and turned stories to make him look so bad.

I received a phone call from a friend of Gallagher's from Keystone Heights. After a conversation with her in which she wanted to tell Bob she was thinking of him; she told me she knew all about Joyce particularly when she did not like someone. This woman told me, Gallagher said to her, "I helped take down the last Director; this one should not be any problem." Those were just the words I wanted to hear....I felt pain and disgust. I also find it very offensive for Secretary Gallagher and Inv. Walt Withey to make innuendos that Bob was cheating on his wife.

If there was blame for the mistake, and I do mean mistake when it comes to the sales tax on the car, I was very much a part of it. Not once, when Bob told all the detectives (he could not remember exactly what had happened because it was two years before during a five minute transaction, and how I took care of all of our bills for the last 30 years), did anyone ask me what happened? No, instead, they went after Bob completely and never interviewed me to see what part I had played in this and the chronology of it. Yes, we made a mistake.

We never looked at the title, and yes, Bob ran in the License Bureau, signed where they said sign, paid what they said to pay and left. But, as they say; there was more to the story. Everywhere in this skewed report, it was interpreted that: we purchased, had title and took possession of the car in December, 2004. It made Bob look worse than it already was, indicating he had a title for three months and never looked at it?

During and after his interview with FDLE and his statement to the Alachua County Sheriff's Internal Affairs, he kept trying to tell people these people there was more. He tried to explain, but again no one wanted to hear the truth. I kept asking Bob, "Do you think they will interview me, since I was the one that received the title?" I would have, at the very least, explained that Bob was not even home and the fact the title was only in our home for one evening. But that fell on deaf ears and blind eyes, and never happened.

ACSO Detective Walt Withey never came to me and neither did the FDLE detectives. FDLE decided to close the case the day after Bob's interview, so he never had a chance to make things right with them. The next chance was going to be with ACSO Detective Walt Withey. Again, that went for naught. We've heard comments such as, "How could it happen; Bob ran a multi-million dollar facility?" In our case, very easily; he did not worry about what went on with our own business because it was in good hands with me and he concentrated on his work, just like always.

So, right now I am going to swear on a Bible and tell the people of this community the truth when it came to the car. The title was signed by Bob at the license bureau and we did not pay sales tax and did not realize it, but we did pay \$175.85 then and not \$65.00 like the detectives said. He did what the person at the license bureau told him to. When we found out after the FDLE interview, we immediately paid, and even offered to pay any interest at the License Bureau but, Bob was told not to worry, as it was no big deal. Bob paid the \$342.50.

This too, is important to me because the report against Bob said he purchased and took possession of a 1998 Mustang on December 20, 2004. Again, as we read more of these reports, more of the information was getting twisted. That is not the way it happened. Again he tried to give them the right information especially after we checked all our records the afternoon of that dreaded February 26th. So, again, here is my truthful testimony:

In late December, 2004 Della Nagel Davis called and said she had decided to sell her 1998 Mustang. She wanted to give us first refusal since she remembered Bob had told her he liked her car in 1997 when she had bought it new. Me, being the banker that I was all those years, did, had done and still do all of our finances and bills. I have, since our marriage in 1978. Bob never had to worry about anything at home; only worry about his work. His mind was always on and about work and mine was taking care of the home.

Della and her family lived across the street from us and had lost her husband in early 1997. She then moved in 1999. She has a son, Brian who was a troubled boy, especially after the death of his father. Our entire neighborhood tried to help him.

In December 2004, after Della called about the car, we said we would like it however, I told her that we did not have the cash to pay yet (so close to the holidays), and if she would wait until I saved the money and it would get us closer to Kimmy's 16th birthday, March 18th? If that didn't work out then we would have to pass on the car. She agreed it was ok but could she park the car at our house because she was getting a new car and needed the room in her driveway. The car was dropped off just before Christmas. She took the license plates, and the car sat in our driveway or garage for the next two plus months.

On March 4, 2005, around 4:45 p.m., I had just come home from picking our daughter up from softball practice at Buchholz. (Note here, the reason why I know we never received the title until March was my daughter did not play softball in December but she did in March. Also, because of insurance purposes, we wanted to wait until closer to Kimmy's birthday.) My sister, Linda (Cirulli-Burton) stopped by as I was making dinner. My doorbell rang and when I answered the door, there was a boy, who, the last time I had seen him, was five feet something and now was six feet something! Brian Nagel was that boy and he said, "My mom wanted me to drop this off." It was the title to the car.

I invited him in and we talked about his life and how I was hoping he was going to have a better future. The title was put on the counter in the kitchen. Then Brian saw my daughter whom he had not seen in four years. He was shocked as she was 11 the last time he saw her. They talked for awhile as I continued to visit with my sister and make dinner. (Remember, my sister can back up this whole story) Shortly thereafter, Brian left and so did Linda. When Bob came home from work, I told him Brian dropped off the title. He said, "Ok." Again, he was his usual self; just listening. But again, not big deal; I had it covered. He didn't think anything of it. I took the envelope (I never looked at the title) and moved it where I would be doing bills so I could figure out the money for Della, etc., including paying our bills. That night I wrote the checks for our bills, including, a \$2,000.00 check to Della, and pulled a check out to go to the License Bureau to register the car. (I have proof of this because of the numerical order of our checks) I put the check in the envelope where the title was and asked Bob if he would go, since it was closer to his work. He said he would go at the beginning of the week. He took the envelope out to his police car so he would not forget it. Actually, that was his second office. Our check for \$175.85 is dated March 7, 2004.

I had \$2,000.00 in our checking account and had to go to another bank for the rest of the \$5,500.00. Since it was a savings account I had them give me \$3,500.00 in cash. That transaction was dated March 22, 2005. (I had been sick and did not get to the bank until then) I gave everything to Bob and he gave Della Nagel Davis what we owed her. Other than needing a new top, four new tires, brakes and shocks, we were good to go. Bob was going to put the new top on himself along with the brakes and shocks. We had four new tires put on it at a tire store.

That's the entire story about the car. We did not "pay restitution for an inmate in order to get a car "gifted" to us. That was what Bob was charged with from the beginning by Secretary Gallagher. We bought a car from a former neighbor, who had a troubled son, and there was a title with "gift" written on it and on that day our mistake was that neither of us looked at the title.

32 YEARS OF AN EXEMPLARY RECORD WAS GOING TO BE CHALLENGED BECAUSE WE MADE AN ERROR. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME WE BOUGHT A CAR FROM AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. IN NEW YORK STATE, AS SOON AS THEY SEE "GIFT" WRITTEN ON THE TITLE, THE LICENSE BUREAU GIVES YOU A SEPARATE FORM TO FILL OUT AND THEY COMPUTE THE TAX DUE BASED UPON A GENERAL VALUE OF THE CAR AND THAT'S WHAT YOU PAY, GIFT OR NO GIFT. I'VE SAID MANY TIMES IN THE LAST 17 MONTHS, "IF ONLY I HAD LOOKED AT THE TITLE; IF ONLY BOB HAD LOOKED AT THE TITLE; IF ONLY THE LICENSE BUREAU WOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT THE WORD "GIFT", BOB WOULD HAVE SAID THAT WE PAID \$5,500.00; IF ONLY FLORIDA HAD THAT PAPER NEW YORK DOES. IF ONLY....."

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT Gallagher, Withey, Keith, Cloutier, Darnell and the rest of them decided Nagel was given. I want to tell you more about our lives when it came to parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles or whoever was a relative of an inmate. Remember, these are the people that had loved ones in the jail. These are the people Bob was hired to keep and protect. The day Sheriff (now Senator) Oelrich hired Bob; he knew he had someone who could talk to anyone from all walks of life. He wanted someone who would be caring but always within the law and he selected Bob. After he called our hometown of Elmira, New York and talked to more than 50 people who knew Bob from all walks of life, and every boss he ever had from the time he was 16 years old, whether in radio, his village streets department, a legislative aid for our senator, or on to the Sheriffs Office for the next 22 years until 1994, he knew Bob was the right person to right the jail.

The reason I can talk about the subject of treatment of the inmates and families is because we have never, in all of our 30 years had an unlisted phone number. I have answered telephone calls at my home from all these people for years. The first question was always, "is this Investigator Chapman's house or now, is this Major Chapman's house?" Of course I would say, "Yes" and then they would talk, be it the mother, father, brother, sister, whatever relative or friend. They wanted to know if their inmate was alright and they wanted that information from Bob. I would listen to him time after time tell them, don't worry your son or daughter, etc. is being taken care of. We have a great staff but if you need to talk to me again it is ok. Our phone rang like this at all hours. We all learned this was also part of the job.

Brian Nagel was not the only person Bob cared about. There were hundreds over the years. Like I have said before, not all inmates are murderers, and all do not come from bad families. What Sheriff Oelrich wanted was a well run facility. He wanted someone who could handle the people behind the bars and people out in the lobby. Bob was that person, until four or five people decided they didn't like him anymore. It has been a long, sad 17 months.

Bob was exonerated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commission this past May but what we as a family; Bob, me, our daughters, my parents, sisters and brothers (that includes brothers and sisters-in-law because they are considered brothers and sisters, too) our aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews all felt the pain we did. But, the one thing we as a family can do is hold our heads high. We know we/Bob never broke the law and we will always be able to look at each other, our daughters, our family and friends because we know the truth.

DEBBIE CIRULLI-CHAPMAN

"WHEN YOU WALK THRU A STORM"