

Opinion: DA is committing crimes of his own in DiMatteo case

By Ted Long

Once again El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson is using his office to discredit someone.

First, let us not forget that he dismissed all charges against Mr. [Gino] DiMatteo, and he has never offered any proof of any of the charges throughout this miscarriage of justice. He is using the federal arrest to try and make it look like he might have had something. Remember, the feds are allegedly now prosecuting for what is legal under California law.

They have “sealed” the charges; in other words kept them secret.

He also says the bribery investigation is on going. Sure, until you, the public forgets.



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In the mean time, Angela Swanson is left destroyed and Mr. DiMatteo's 30 employees will no doubt be out of work as his very legitimate business is being destroyed. That's not to mention the thousands of dollars of damage to his home. All of which could have been avoided by a phone call. Mr. DiMatteo always was offering to cooperate, to sit down and talk, yet

Mr. Pierson refuses.

They arrested him on Labor Day weekend knowing he can not get bailed for at least four to five days. They take him to Placerville – 90 miles away – instead of South Lake Tahoe, just blocks away to make it hard and more expensive for his attorneys to see him.

They then arrest his wife, keep her for the same weekend, releasing her with no charges. They destroy his business and his home. They actually threw a bomb in to an empty house. Now they dismiss all the charges. Oops! I guess they got even for the years he legally operate the dispensary and they could not stop him. Boy, they showed him.

Yes, I have been critical. I have tried for weeks to communicate with the DA and he has not had the courtesy to return a phone call.

Mr. DiMatteo was always ready, willing and able to cooperate with any investigation, yet the DA chose to ignore that and steamrolled his way through the county, trampling everyone's rights, leaving destruction all around him, costing the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars, for nothing. Now he attacks me for standing up to this violent abuse.

Vern Pierson was a friend of mine. When he first ran for DA he came to my house and asked for my support, which I gave him. He promised me he stood for justice to all. I have served three terms on the grand jury; once as its foremen. In that capacity I worked closely with him and Jim Clinchard on many cases. Vern and I enjoyed lunching together on several occasions.

When I was first told of the alleged bribery investigation, I urged Mr. DiMatteo to cooperate fully and called the DA at least six times to set up a meeting so that we could understand the situation. No call was every returned or acknowledged, no meeting held. Some have said I was entitled

to at least a call saying he did not want to talk.

When I arrived at the gym [Mr. DiMatteo owns] on the day of the arrest I renewed our request to cooperate. I made it clear to all that if there were a corrupt politician, we want it exposed just as much as they did. They refused to even talk about it. It was at that point that I saw they had Mr. DiMatteo restrained and clearly in custody. I asked to talk to him as his attorney. They not only refused, but threatened to arrest me if I continued to attempt to protect his rights.

It was at this point that they told Mr. DiMatteo that they were going to arrest me also. That brings us to the tape that the DA is spreading all over the county, that of the statement of Mr. DiMatteo and my political future. If they played the entire tape for you, you would clearly hear that he was protecting me. Yes, protecting me. He did not want my involvement to be construed as any way involved with his situation. By saying what he said, he made it clear that I had no involvement, which I did not. He did not want to see me arrested also. I did not even know who he was until the dispensary issue was already over. I met him through the purchase of the gym, after which he asked me to be a business advisor and consultant.

The district attorney knows full well that I was right all along. They had no case and they used excessive force throughout this case, when no force was necessary. He is now using the resources of the county to cover his mistake at my expense, his friend, the person he broke bread with, the person he came to for his own election, the person he trusted and confided in as a dedicated citizen serving his county.

In conclusion, he would like you to think my assistance of Mr. DiMatteo was to forward my political future. I will be 80 years old at the next election. I have just recovered from my second heart attack and my wife has promised to leave me if I get involved again. Draw your own conclusions on my so called

political future. The statement by Mr. DiMatteo was made to protect me as the DA was threatening to arrest me for standing up to their force that day. I find the distinct attorneys' behavior despicable and not what is expected from our county's highest law enforcement officer.

Perhaps I will get involved in the next election.

Ted Long is one of Gino DiMatteo's attorneys.