

“The Double-Plaque Cover-Up of the Santa Cruz County D.A.”

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By Bob Lamonica

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Petty Power Over Principle

Cowardice does not require a formal conspiracy to be effective. Occasionally, the power of truth overcomes the inertia to suppress.

The VICTIM of the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S bodily injury car wreck is BLOOD TESTED and HE IS NOT! (See [Santa Cruz Sentinel “DA cited in accident”](#) and [San Jose Mercury News “Victim cries foul in crash probe”](#))^{1, 2}

WHAT WAS the motive? Overlapping his election the DISTRICT ATTORNEY directs timecards to be FALSIFIED! (See [“Resolution 114-95”](#) and [“Danner’s List”](#))^{3, 4}

Ask yourself, is not local application of values recognition and response to abuse of power our top political priority, a shared responsibility which cannot be evaded by any other issue, usurping all else?

There are two Arthur Danner III memorial plaques on the Santa Cruz County Building, in prominent display of dedicated praise for the deceased (1943-2006) former D.A. and Judge, one outside to the left on the way up adjacent to the Courthouse steps, and one on the wall to the left of the main entry for the District Attorney's offices on the second floor of the Santa Cruz County Building.

Petty power over principle is the #1 reason to look the other way, and go along to get along, in Santa Cruz as elsewhere. Is the premise “That cops are never wrong, is wrong.”... wrong? Is lying opportunism exclusive to law enforcement, or is it a component of the human condition's biological propensity towards expressions of deception and treachery?

Fred Keeley's and many others political careers benefitted directly by their cowardly denial of Santa Cruz District Attorney Art Danner's blatant 1994 election fraud. Include John Laird among those ultimately choosing gestures of political support for their roles of active cowardly denial of D.A. Danner '94 election fraud. Prominent as well are Mike Rotkin, joined by Bruce Van Allen, Don Lane, Katherine Beiers, Neal Coonerty, Scott Kennedy, Cynthia Mathews, Bruce McPherson and many, many others, running for, then in, or recently out of office, fearing the outcome effect of local application of values on their political careers.

Even Gary Patton goes silently into cowardly denial, consciously choosing petty power over principle in the mid-90s. It was a dramatic test of principle, and a failure of leadership. It is POLITICAL HISTORY and they are ACCOUNTABLE.

Chair Gary Patton's "1994 Year End Report to Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors." (See ["Chair Gary Patton's 1994 Year End Report to Board of Supervisors"](#))⁵ District Attorney Art Danner material begins on page 5-1. Patton's dissenting 4-1 vote is on page 5-13, his comments on page 5-14.

Though laudable as at least something, the document is internal and obscure. Patton states in an August 26, 2017 email to me "I went out of my way to criticize Art Danner in the 1994 Annual Report that I presented to the Board, prepared by me as Chair in what was my last year on the Board of Supervisors." His boast of action was so obscure and internal as to be meaningless politically.

Gary Patton DID NOT stand up publicly in 1995 when the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Resolution 114-95 is passed 4-1, procedurally exonerating the D.A. for directing timecard to be falsified, on April 4, 1995, barely three months after he is out of office, after five terms and twenty years as a Supervisor!

He mentions NO ELECTION CONTEXT in his "1994 Year End Report to Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors" nor did he EVER AGAIN address the issue. His "Year End Report" comments are a weak attempt to cover for his inability to stand up and be a leader that would have made a difference.

It is a FACT that the victim of District Attorney Art Danner's at-fault car wreck's blood was tested and his was not, and he had just been drinking! It is a FACT that an assistant D.A.'s timecards were falsified, as directed by Art Danner himself, overlapping his fifth term re-election! THAT is what makes them *abuses of power*. To deny these facts is to deny the fundamental priority of political accountability, which is *the recognition and response to abuse of power*, as citizens and, in particular, as leaders, whose authority we depend on to stand up when the courage of principled accountability is necessary.

Between the December 1994 "tabling" postponement of action on District Attorney Art Danner's election overlapping timecards falsification by the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors on a 4-1 vote, when outgoing sheriff Al Noren said publicly that the Board "*fell on their asses*," a direct quote carried by no less than the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, and the Board of Supervisors procedural exoneration in the form of Resolution #114-95 of April 1995, when the D.A. Danner Recall was initiated, there was, I was to learn later, "well-placed" talk that the Board might "censure" the D.A., which would have unraveled his position, likely leading to resignation rather than the double-plaque cover-up we have now.

What the Santa Cruz local political establishment, especially the "Progressives," KNEW about District Attorney Art Danner in the mid-90s Recall days was, no matter how well documented the facts, they were not standing up, but were going to look the other way, and still do, out of fear of being exposed for the cowardly opportunist hypocrites they are, onto this day.

2

Local Application of Values

"Local application of values" presents the actual politics that in practice we truly stand for, stand against and stand aside from.

"No jurisdiction!" What a crock! How many times was that said, *publicly*, by innumerable electeds, on high duck-and-cover alert, like Santa Cruz City Council members past and present (See ["City of Santa Cruz Councils and Mayors, 1970—1999"](#)), ⁶ even a local STATE SENATOR, in their hour of need at the time of the Santa Cruz D.A. Art Danner Recall? How many, do you suppose, "politically correct" resolutions and proclamations has the Santa Cruz City Council enacted on issues beyond the local application of values firewall, for which they have NO JURISDICTION?

So it's total nonsense, a *lie*, a hoodwinking inaction of predetermined and cowardly choice. Public officials take stands and proclaim *outside their jurisdiction* when it suits their interests, but this was too close, and too hot.

For his failure to stand up when truly needed to act as a real leader against undeniable high profile corruption, the aforementioned MIKE ROTKIN is given a cover-up Santa Cruz ACLU "Lifetime Achievement Award" January 24, 2016. Hail petty power over principle! (See ["Call for Rotkin ACLU Resignation"](#)) ⁷

Professing itself trusted champion, the Santa Cruz Chapter ACLU has repeatedly performed as a front to discount truth and deceive the public. Without reconciling its past, the Santa Cruz Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is an institutional fraud, a front and a farce. No amount of lipstick on the Santa Cruz ACLU pig will remediate the situation. Their gross history of omissions must be held accountable.

Five months requesting, I first addressed the Santa Cruz Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union Board of Directors on March 22, 2011. Raising two items related to former D.A. Art Danner's tenure, the victim's blood tested not his drunken car wreck and the election-overlapping timecards falsification incident, a dismissive "HE'S DEAD" was boldly interjected by an extremely well-known, many times elected, as well as activist, to this day, Santa Cruz political presence.

Living cowardice was being challenged, and is. Why bother with culpability for the Holocaust? Key players are dead. Why seek accountability among the dead? Because that's what *history* is. And only a fraud resorts to "But those were major national or international incidents." Moreover, why Danner double-plaque the County Building when "HE'S DEAD" if not to attempt to affect HISTORY?

Law Enforcement, and that includes the D.A.'s office, is composed of human beings, and they are fallible. The Santa Cruz "Progressives" were more interested in staying in power, and the visible trappings of power, than they were standing up for the truth, especially when that truth meant standing up to local Law Enforcement. All the environmental activism *of a lifetime* does not mitigate this fact, this fundamental, inability to stand up, petty power over principle cowardice.

Arguably, the fear factor was the decisive determinant of the failed 1995 Santa Cruz D.A. Recall effort, which was born out of a loss of leadership by every refusing leadership voice in the community

denying accountability to stand up out of fear of personal political outcome. Had establishment political authority support manifest, there would have been no need the fringed on birth, grassroots effort.

Even now, decades later, a high-ranking source has opened up to me with new first-hand information of Danner's scheming chicanery over the '95 D.A. Recall! "I can tell you this now," began the retired, high-ranking source about an actual Santa Cruz District Attorney Art Danner direct experience. This then conspicuously-placed Santa Cruz county government elected official called it "AN ABUSE OF POWER."

A treacherous bit of scheming chicanery was sought to be imposed by this person upon the 1995 D.A. Recall Initiative. And this, by Danner's direct, accompanied by an associate, in-person "request." I was provided this new, rather startling piece of real Santa Cruz history, low even for the Danner set, nearly 22 years later, at a memorial service I attended December 29, 2016. I won't expose the source more than by interpolation of what's here attested. But, that will come eventually. I've told a few the details, and this particular ABUSE OF POWER is not so easily dismissed. Danner was a scoundrel surrounded by scoundrels.

Now, I'm not saying that Arthur Danner III was just a mono-dimensional scoundrel! No! He was a human being, resplendent with virtues and foibles, like any other. All the same, dear FELLOW CITIZENS, this was a powerful, intimidating, ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIAL, with influence and authority!

If recognition and response to abuse of power is not important, nothing is. "Danner's List" will always be a good read, with recognition and response to abuse of power, plus local application of values, clearly documented. ⁴

The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* waited 15 days to report on District Attorney Art Danner's June 9, 1987 at-fault car wreck while knowingly omitting that he'd been drinking just prior, and that the victim's blood was tested and his was not. ¹ Thanks to Marv Cohn's three years persistence, the *San Jose Mercury News* reports that the victim's blood was tested as she lay on a hospital gurney and "Danner's sobriety was never tested." ²

Bruce McPherson, former Editor and former Publisher of the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* was campaigning for the State Senate in 1996, and at a public gathering I asked him directly "Why didn't the *Sentinel* report that the District Attorney had been drinking prior to his at-fault bodily injury car wreck of 1987?" He said "It wasn't in the Police Report." A picture was taken of us, and he walked away. Why wasn't it in the Police Report, and what about it anyway? Don't we have a right to know? There's a story there, apparently unfit for *Sentinel* coverage, then or now.

3 In Flagrate Delicto

It doesn't matter what the truth is, it's who discredits whom.

What is "abuse of power?" Was the D.A. out of the loop in his own drunken car wreck? How could that be? Why does this incident and its aftermath continue to this day to be an untouchable issue by all the posturing "Progressive" hot shots in Santa Cruz? Answer: *fear of outcome*.

So, you don't like Ed Frey and that justifies corruption of objective truth, honor, principle and courage? Ed Frey is a local attorney who ran opposing incumbent District Attorney Art Danner's June 7, 1994 fifth term re-election.

Just a coincidence? Overlapping his fifth term re-election of 1994, D.A. Danner directed timecards to be falsified March 18, 1994 through July 20, 1994. What for? Because he's a misunderstood swell guy, or was it in fact to postpone the potential revelation that could have been exposed *pre-election*, that an assistant D.A. in his office had been caught snorting cocaine, news of which would likely have affected his re-election campaign?

Let's at least attempt honesty here. Does anyone honestly believe there was no election context, that it was a *coincidence*? To exonerate Danner, and whitewash the situation with a cover-up that may well be considered worse than the crime, or at least complicit with it, Resolution #114-95, WITH NO ELECTION CONTEXT, is passed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on April 4, 1995.

What triggered political action was indeed the aforementioned Resolution #114-95. I lost count of the times I heard "They're all like that," followed by the usual fear-laugh during the heyday of the mid-90's Santa Cruz District Attorney Art Danner Recall.

Some things we don't want to be reminded of, like when we were political opportunist hypocrites.

There are times in life we are called upon to stand up, for justice, for truth, for honor. There are times we are called upon to stand aside. Does loyalty take precedence over truth? Sometimes. "To Kill A Mockingbird" and "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" posit this predicament.

But this is not at all the condition when, overlapping his 1994 election, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney directed timecards to be falsified.

Thanks to Nicholas Whitehead, Coalition To Recall Danner presentations to SCAN and the PDC are both accomplished facts in early 1995, historical events of true purport. The then extremely powerful, well-funded and with a paid coordinator Steering Committee of the Santa Cruz Action Network (SCAN) responds to the 1995 D.A. Danner Recall formal support request with "unable to join your efforts." (See ["Santa Cruz Action Network 1995"](#))⁸

The People's Democratic Club (PDC) of Santa Cruz County offered no support at all after an early 1995 General Meeting presentation formal request, and other direct requests, by Coalition To Recall Danner proponents. The haughty, platitudinal-laden group made certain it stayed clear from any involvement, and by its aloof, offstandish, "my plate is full" duck-and-cover, any admission of knowledge of facts in its regard.

I got bored with obfuscation excuses and ignorance claims many, many years ago. Pretty much now those excuses make me laugh, contemptuously indeed, because they are utterly void of credibility, and they stink of blatant opportunism, and contemptible cowardice. It is important to remember we are talking about the DISTRICT ATTORNEY here, a very powerful, elected position.

I look back at those mid-90s D.A. Danner Recall days as pivotal in local history, not to be covered up, but examined openly, critically. This was a high-ranking PUBLIC OFFICIAL that had clearly abused power. And where was local "leadership?" Acting out of fear of outcome, with many given gestures of political support to NOT STAND UP, choosing *despicable cowardly inaction over leadership, petty power over principle, to look the other way and go along to get along*. These are well-known Santa Cruz political limelighters, and nothing will ever excuse away what they did not do, when leadership was needed, and they cowered.

We'll see what's "irrelevant." It is better to stand up for truth and "go down in flames," as was once put to me, than succeed by cowardice.

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Look You in the Eye and Lie

["Westside Safeway Story"](#)⁹ narrates Bob Lamonica's August 10, 1995 encounter with Santa Cruz District Attorney Art Danner. It is not the outcome the shine artist, convinced POWER would determine truth, and his supporting loyal goon witnesses, waiting out of immediate view, expected.

["Jonnie-Boy's Punk Stunt"](#)¹⁰ narrates Bob Lamonica's October 15, 1996 encounter with local attorney Dana Scruggs, Administrative Deputy D.A. Dave Genochio and Santa Cruz Chief Deputy District Attorney Jon Hopkins and its aftermath. Why be fair and above board when you're a treacherous, no consequences punk scoundrel? It is also not the outcome expected by Jonnie-Boy Hopkins or his remorseless associates.

Footnote Reference Links

1. <https://www.boblamonica.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Santa-Cruz-Sentinel-DA-cited-in-accident.pdf>
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