

On the subject of...

Leaks

by Viki Eggers Mason



THE TRUTH IN BLACK AND WHITE

The Aberdeen Advocate

To a person who feels, life is a tragedy. To someone who thinks, the business of life is high comedy. I must be a thinker. The antics of our aldermen continually amuse me. It tickles me no end to see most of them walk around all puffed up as if they were big wheels. It amuses me even more to see some of the good citizens of Aberdeen treating these men like royalty.

I confess, these days a good bit of the comedy has worn off. These days, our City government has the plastic feel of professional wrestling and if it were only possible, I'd change channels rather than watch Aberdeen's own version of kabuki theatre. Sadly, I cannot flip the switch or pull the plug. The work product of my life is in the hands of these actors and I dare not turn away. Still, the play can strike an interesting chord from time to time.

Take the matter of our most recent foray into the world of

economic development.

I must first tell you that when one Belinda Pedrosa came to an alderman meeting way back in the fall of last year, I was very excited. Pedrosa represented Ascension Financial, a company which stood ready to assist Aberdeen in the long overdue process of creating a comprehensive plan, including the appetizing prospect of bringing new jobs to our community. I was especially pleased to see that Ascension had cleverly baited the contractual hook with a very attractive young black woman. I expected the usually reluctant aldermen to be instantly mesmerized. I expected they would find themselves actually planning before they knew what hit them. (Ok. That's pretty Machiavellian of me, but all is fair in love and war and the business of salvaging our community has been a war in my eyes for

some time.) I was happy at the prospect of launching a full-fledged economic development plan and wasn't shy about saying so.

It was at that point that a couple of people who frequent my website blog began researching Pedrosa and her company. In time they learned that Ascension Financial's principals included one Bruce H. Dobbs who seems to be affiliated with some underworldish *gentlemen's clubs*.

The bloggers' research developed a sufficient number of questionable links to Ascension's corporate framework that, at a recent meeting of Aberdeen's aldermen where the matter of the Ascension contract was to be discussed, one concerned citizen made it her business to beg an audience with the alderguys to discuss her concerns.

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Immigration fight far from over...

By Contributing Editor Don Rowe

On June 28th, El Presidente Jorge Booooooosh's plan to fast-track citizenship for 10-13 million illegal aliens came to a crashing halt when the Senate fell 14 votes short of the 60 needed to limit debate and clear the way for final passage of Senate Bill 1369 – also known as the Bush-McCain-Kennedy comprehensive immigration reform bill.

Booooooosh, along with lapdog Republican Senator Trent Lott and several other RINOs (Republican In Name Only) such as South Carolina's Lindsey Graham and Arizona Republicans Jon Kyl and John McCain (whose presidential aspirations are

quickly disappearing), worked diligently to convince 38 GOP Senators that they were wrong when they opposed Senate Bill 1348 (1369's predecessor) in mid-June. Thankfully, these cowards who planned to betray America's future took one on the chin when the American people rose up and put enough pressure on their Senators to kill this horrendous piece of legislation.

The bill's rejection was credited to a rare phenomenon on the modern American political scene, a grassroots effort spearheaded by talk radio which attracted

the support of Americans with differing political ideologies which cut across all party lines. Instead of becoming a black-white issue, a liberal-conservative ideological issue or a political party issue, Americans of all racial and political persuasions joined together in a common bond to make it an "American" issue.

Thankfully, a majority of Republican Senators and a handful of Blue Dog Democrats listened to their constituencies (unlike Senator Lott) and joined forces in a bipartisan effort to stop the bill

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The doors of the executive session were barely closed behind her when the woman was bombarded with demands that she “out” the person who had leaked this information to her. Huh? For men who seem to spend much time keeping up with the posts on my blog, I was surprised they did not already know that I *leaked* the news of their little meeting and its purpose fully 24 hours before the event.

For my part, this was an enlightening turn of events. I had not realized we had such momentous security matters with which to contend here in Aberdeen. Silly me! I have been blundering about for years without the first concern for the “top secret information” which regularly comes my way. I didn’t know we had anything to hide here.

What’s most interesting about the possibility of contracting with Ascension Financial is the fact that we have come this far in the general direction of a deal with the company and know so little about its history, its management and its owners. In fairness, I must tell you here that alderman Jim Buffington had, indeed, done some research and was not completely surprised by what the citizen gumshoe had to tell the board that evening.

Still, the question remains, whose job is it to research these matters, anyway? Who has the responsibility for ensuring that we contract only with legitimate business concerns? (Hint: One way to decide if we want to deal with a company might be to check to see if the company is registered to do business in our state. At last count, Ascension was not.) Thankfully, my astute readers did their homework and, we shall hope, closed the door on that deal once and for all.

The matter of secrecy, however, remains dreadfully disturbing to me. When my handsome husband and I married six years ago in West Yellowstone, Montana, the Mayor and

City Councilmen were invited to the wedding. They could not all attend at the same time because Montana law strictly prohibits a quorum from forming anywhere other than at a called meeting of the council. My friends attended my wedding in shifts. Mississippi law, on the other hand, is fairly lenient where “chance meetings” of the board are concerned. Mississippi law allows that several people might accidentally end up in the same place at the same time and does not seek to make such a chance meeting criminal.

Interesting, three of our aldermen meet fairly regularly behind closed doors. They occasionally meet in public restaurants, sit at the same table and openly discuss city business. One woman described such a “chance meeting” when one of the three amigos showed up late and apologized profusely to the others for being delayed. So much for “chance meetings.”

I don’t like dark-side dealings. As you know by now, I believe that the business of the people ought to be conducted in the sunshine and wide open spaces as required by law. Recently, Chief Walter Sykes complained to the board and the citizens gathered that the board has refused to allow him to implement a ranking structure for the police force. He was told that such discussions must be held in executive session.

The powers that be want desperately to keep the public from hearing the dirty laundry and will, I’m sure, find a way to conduct that meeting on the hush-hush leaving the public as completely ignorant as possible. Rest assured, I’m waiting for the day when the aldermen attempt to close a public meeting or go into executive session without one of the eleven legitimate reasons to do so. When that day comes, they will be forced to drag me out of the building in handcuffs.

Won’t that make a fine story for Fox News? I can see the headlines now! “Grandmother booked for seeking to uphold State’s sunshine laws.” (Film at 10:00.)

I’ve run organizations before and know that life under the microscope can be tedious. Nevertheless, that’s the nature of the beast we call public service and it is what it is for a very important reason. It’s called democracy and our leaders are sworn to uphold its principles.

Perhaps Aberdeen’s leaders had their fingers crossed when they took that oath?

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My personal best wishes to my friend and former co-worker Miss Victoria Williams (Daughter of Farrell “Slim” and Judy Williams) on the occasion of her engagement to Mr. Christopher Benson (Eldest son of Randy and Jackie Benson.)

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Immigration fight far from over....

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dead in its tracks. As former college football star Heath Schuler (D-N.C.) told the *Congressional Quarterly*, "I am here to represent the people of my district, not the Democratic leaders."

Because Americans of all political stripes made their collective voices heard, that's not to say Americans are opposed to immigration by any means. To be sure, most of us currently living in the United States can trace our existence to our ancestors who immigrated to our shores from any number of countries throughout the world.

However, Rep. Nancy Boyda, a Democrat from Kansas, summed the issue up as well as anyone when she wrote, "Most see America as a nation of immigrants, and they welcome new immigrants into our country – as long as they enter legally, understand our culture and our language, and become productive members of our society." (Key words being "legally" and "our," as in our culture, our language and our society.)

So, what made the Bush-McCain-Kennedy Shamnesty legislation such a bad bill?

First of all, in a general sense, always be wary of any bill which its backers claim is a "comprehensive" piece of legislation for it is doomed to failure. In politicians' lingo, "comprehensive" means any number of different ideas (many of which are practical in theory) all rolled into one complex, hard to enforce regulation. Too, always beware of a bill which is touted as a "compromise," for more times than not it usually waters down the intent of the original piece of legislation.

Specifically, one of the main reasons this bill was defeated was that it would

have granted "amnesty" to millions of illegals currently living and working in the United States – despite the mealy-mouthed politicians' claim this piece of legislation was not an amnesty bill. In fact it was and, if my definition of "amnesty" is correct (an act of forgiveness for past offenses especially to a class of persons as a whole often granted before a trial or conviction), there was no other way to view this bill.

El Presidente Booooooosh screamed long and loud that amnesty did not come into play in this bill, but the day before it was to be voted on he told supporters at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building: "Amnesty means that you've got to pay a price for having been here illegally, and this bill does that."

Almost immediately, his aides went about feverishly trying to undo the damage and, according to Michael A. Fletcher, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, even went so far as to issue a rare retraction of the president's words. "Earlier today, in speaking about comprehensive immigration reform, President Bush misspoke," said press secretary Tony Snow in an e-mail to reporters. "This has been construed as an assertion that the comprehensive immigration legislation before the Senate offers amnesty to immigrants who came here illegally. That is the exact opposite of the president's long-held and often-stated position."

Misspoke? Yea, right.

El Presidente Booooooosh and his cronies on both sides of the aisle also claimed illegal immigrants would have to meet certain requirements to become citizens, but be rest assured, enforcement of those provisions would have never been implemented.

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Financial Impact on Mississippi by illegal immigrants according to the Office of the State Auditor, Phil Bryant (Feb. 21, 2006):

- 49,000 – Illegal Immigrant Population
- \$40,866,000 – Estimated Contribution to Sales Tax/Year
- \$3,381,000 – Estimated Contribution to Income Tax/Year
- **\$44,247,000 – Total Illegal Immigrant Contributions**
- \$23,700,000 – Education Costs/Year
- \$35,011,580 – Healthcare Costs/Year
- \$237,360 – Public Safety Costs/Year
- \$10,328,111 – Remittance Losses/Year
- **\$69,277,051 – Total Illegal Immigrant Costs/Year**
- **(\$25,030,051) – Estimated Net Financial Impact on Mississippi**

NOTE: Most of the costs listed above are estimates. Perhaps the most significant finding of this report is Mississippi's inability to accurately quantify the costs of illegal immigrants because most state agencies, schools and other government entities do not currently document the actual numbers of illegal immigrants or their use of services.

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Immigration fight far from over.

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Remember, the 1986 Simpson-Mazzoli "Shamnesty" Law passed during the Reagan Administration promised the same things and three million illegal immigrants turned into no less than 10-13 million aliens. Too, had this bill passed, illegal immigration would not have curtailed or reduced by any appreciable measure.

The bill also included provisions that would have made it ridiculously easy for a potential terrorist to obtain a "probationary" visa, thus creating a fraudulent new identity for himself thanks to the United States government. It also encouraged future illegal immigration by allowing the existence of "sanctuary cities" where the "don't ask, don't tell" policy would take on a completely new meaning.

Other fatal flaws in the bill, according to the Grassfire website, included:

- Allowed current illegals to stay legally in our country indefinitely.
- Gave illegals healthcare/education benefits and back credit for Social Security wages.
- Created a new Temporary Worker "Y-Visa" program with unlimited totals.
- Granted legal status to illegals before so-called "triggers" (border security thresholds which were to be met) kicked into place.

Proponents of the bill who wanted to legalize the illegal immigrants also claimed it would have been impossible to round up and depart 10-13 million aliens. So what are we to do with the illegals currently living in the "shadows," as some of our spineless politicians are wont to describe the aliens' plight? Here's one simple solution:

- Build the fence.
- Send more and better trained officers to secure the border with the power to enforce the existing immigration laws currently on the books.
- Establish a strict, tamper-proof verification system to assist businesses seeking to identify who is and who isn't in the country legally.
- Fine, then jail, company presidents and/or CEOs who violate immigration employment laws by hiring illegals without proper documentation.
- Assure illegal aliens are no longer guests of U.S. taxpayers by cutting off all welfare and stop other federal, state and local programs which make it attractive for foreign nationals to sneak into the country.
- Make English the nation's official language.

Once these measures are firmly in place, deportation would not be necessary and the invasion of our country would cease because



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there would be no reason for illegals to be here.

If, however, spineless politicians refuse to do what is right, then we should impeach and/or vote out of office any politician who refuses to enforce the law, cowards who are willing to destroy America's future because they are beholden to the nation's cheap-labor lobby.

I can't speak for everyone, but I think it's truly a sad day when we, as American citizens have to battle our own so-called political "leaders" in order to preserve the American way of life. It's also unfortunate when illegal aliens who are not citizens of this country and who have broken our laws just by being here have more "rights" than those of us who were born and raised here.

El Presidente Jorge Booooooosh said people like me "do not want what is best for America." But au contraire, I do want what is best for America and that is for El Presidente and his cowardly political minions to stand up for America by securing our borders and enforcing our laws.

A Sad Parallel...

I bought a bird feeder. I hung it on my back porch and filled it with seed. Within a week we had hundreds of birds taking advantage of the continuous flow of free and easily accessible food. But then the birds started building nests in the boards of the patio, above the table and next to the barbecue. Then came the poop. It was everywhere — on the patio tile, the chairs, the table....everywhere.

Then some of the birds turned mean. They would dive bomb me and try to peck me even though I had fed them out of my own pocket. And others birds were boisterous and loud. They sat on the

feeder and squawked and screamed at all hours of the day and night and demanded that I fill it when it got low on food. After a while, I couldn't even sit on my own back porch anymore.

I took down the bird feeder and in three days the birds were gone. I cleaned up their mess and took down the many nests they had built all over the patio. Soon, the back yard was like it used to be....quiet and serene with no one demanding their rights to a free meal.

Now let's see....our government gives out free food, subsidized housing, free medical care, free education and allows anyone born here to be a automatic citizen. Then the illegal aliens came by the tens of thousands.

Suddenly our taxes went up to pay for free services. Small apartments began housing five families. It became commonplace to wait up to six hours to be seen by an emergency room doctor. Your child's second-grade class fell behind other schools because over half the class doesn't speak English. Corn Flakes were being sold in a bilingual box. We had to press "one" to hear my bank talk to me in English and people waving flags other than "Old Glory" started squawking and screaming in the streets, demanding more rights and free liberties.

Maybe it's time for the government to take down the bird feeder.



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"The government is merely a servant—a temporary servant. Its function is to obey orders, not to originate them."

...Mark Twain

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