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Is Eric Holder Being Punked by Two County Sheriffs?

Point Blank

By Chris Stevenson

BC Columnist

Sheriff Tim Howard and Sheriff Joe Arpaio, two men who thus far have held back Attorney General Eric Holder... I never knew county Sheriffs were that tough, at least not tough enough to make the federal government's powerful Department of Justice (DOJ) look weak. But for now, they are apparently able to say 'boo' and send Obama's DOJ scurrying. One wonders what is so special about Maricopa County (Phoenix, AZ) [Sheriff Arpaio](#), and Erie County (Buffalo, NY) Sheriff Howard. The way it looks, it's got nothing to do with a lack of evidence.

Howard, about whom I've [written](#) several times, was [just audited by the Erie County Comptrollers Office](#) and the results were published by the *Buffalo News*. It's a detailed confirmation of many of the suspicions people have had of him for years. Howard claims he is being put in a "bad light." We need to get away from this trend of suspicious parties' only response to numerous accusations of improprieties as being just an issue of they not wanting to deal with it because they are being put in a bad light. The "bad light" is a large part of the purpose, not allowing them any room whatsoever to think that they are Ok.

As of last August 31st, according to a report by *Huffington Post Crime*, federal authorities said they were closing in on an abuse-of-power investigation without filing any of the weighty charges against him: "They did their investigations, they didn't find enough probable cause and they didn't bring an indictment. We didn't go around framing anybody. My people are not crooks," said Arpaio in a press conference

he called after returning from - where else - the Republican National Convention (RNC).

To me that's just the time to send a message. A perp-walk of a corrupt Sheriff just after his return from his beloved RNC, especially on the Friday before the Democratic National Convention (DNC) would have taken some hot air out of their balloons. But don't ask me. If I saw God sitting in a box seat, I may be the guy to ask him 'what the hell are you doing here?' As you may have guessed, Arpaio is another one of those tin-horn Sheriffs re-elected forever (5 terms). At 80, he's almost as old as God. You simply can't get a guy like this to retire if his job is actually a vacation. Especially if he lives in a profiling-heaven like Arizona. He and his staff have been accused of just that, as well as a wide range of civil rights violations, misuse of County credit cards, and, like Howard, blocking funds earmarked to improve his jails.

Critics of Arpaio claim the timing of the dismissal of charges is conspicuous. Oh really? The weekend before the DNC? I say whatever the excuse, it's weak, no way around it. Arpaio also faces two separate cases of civil rights abuses by the DOJ, and a racial profiling charge by a Latino group.

Arpaio claims he's the toughest Sheriff in America. He's dead wrong on that one, [the one in Buffalo](#) gets away with murder, literally. The County lockup in Buffalo during the time Howard was Sheriff and Undersheriff has outpaced even most Federal Penitentiaries, starting from the last death of an inmate just this past August 31st, the number is 30. Part of the reason for his and his predecessor Tim Gallivan's low regard for their inmates is they both are former state troopers. There have been rumors of beatings, torture, and psychological warfare designed to make the inmates fight each other.

Howard is said to have spent funding on general operations instead of the care of the inmates, for whom the money was earmarked. He spoke before the County Legislature Safety Committee where Erie County Comptroller, David J. Shenk, said the funds should have been spent for inmate betterment programs. The local media reported an audit released on 10/25 which says he spent \$780,000 from "premium inmates pay to place phone calls on new automobiles, a computer system, furniture, and police dogs."

Until 2010 the phone and commissary funds were all put into the same pot until County Executive, Mark Poloncarz, then the County Comptroller, separated them (supposedly to "improve accounting

transparency”) to clear the way for Howard. With the phone fund there are no restrictions on the newly-made funds as there were for commissary funds. The latest on Poloncarz is he is now trying to cut funding from the County Comptroller’s office by one third, in particular the staffs having to do with (you guessed it) auditing and tax receiving. There have always been penalties for doing your job too well in Buffalo government. Aside from Poloncarz, Sheriff Howard’s defenders on the legislature are Kevin “Hardline” Hardwick and Joseph Loringo.

In the meantime, the death of Patrick Yale actually is the result of a beating he took from a fellow inmate, Tyshawn Ball, on August 5th. Here’s hoping Howard’s latest investigation results won’t go the way of his previous one with the DOJ that resulted in nothing a few years ago, or [along the line of Arpaio’s](#). Now that the Obama Administration doesn’t have to worry about re-election, maybe they can travel to Buffalo, Phoenix and other trouble spots around the country and start justifying the fear so many of these old crackers have of him and his liberal programs, and start forcing some corruption and abuse indictments and implement jail and prison reform.

BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Chris Stevenson, is a syndicated columnist, his articles also appear on his blog; the [Buffalo Bullet](#). Follow him on Twitter ([@pointblank009](#)) and Facebook ([pointblank009](#)). Support his petition to permanently Abolish the Death Penalty in the US the [Troy Davis Bill, HR92111](#). Click [here](#) to contact Mr. Stevenson.



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