

Accusations against councilman Paul Beane & what a police officer says actually happened

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I'm sometimes called mean and irresponsible by some of the self-appointed elites in Lubbock. Why, because I dare comment upon what they say, and do, publicly with our tax money. How dare Pratt comment upon, and worse disagree with, any pronouncement of certain people who believe themselves to be better, or more deserving of respect, than the rest of us.

Yes my friends, I get harassing lawyer letters simply for pointing out the ignorance or illogic of some local buffoons (and if they want to waste their time and money in this way fine.) But, often it is these same people, who object to my offering opinion, who engage in regular back-stabbing and character assassination on a regular basis - without the honesty and courage of attaching their names to their actions and opinions. They are cowards.

And this brings us to the unsigned email, now posted on blog after blog as if it were fact, which was a vicious attack upon the personal character of city councilman Paul R. Beane.

I understand that envy and hate is a driving force in many a poor sap's life, and may lead them to choose to believe every rumor spread. Their pathetically empty lives may even lead them to pass unfounded, and unchecked, rumors along by email and by posting, without a truly identifying name, on various online forums and blogs. All of that I understand and generally ignore.

However, when a local television news anchor and an employee of a public institution use the airwaves to pass such rumor along, not in a speculative manner but as if it had a basis in fact, it becomes time for those of us who *do not* teach journalism courses at universities, to address this issue.

In an email sent around Lubbock, unsigned I add, it was alleged that councilman Paul Beane engaged in behavior that would certainly be deemed out of line and inappropriate as described by the person, or persons, making the allegations.

I will not engage in repeating what was said to have happened other than to tell you that it was described, as fact by the rumor monger, that Paul Beane, was uncontrolled and shouting obscenities at otherwise helpless and women, who just happened to be mere bystanders at a performance at the taxpayer built amphitheater in Mackenzie Park. An entire situation was described in which Mr. Beane was a renegade, out of control, person verbally assaulting anyone within sight and fully engaging in what could be termed a criminal disturbance of the peace.

Unlike others, before mentioning the matter or posting anything at PrattonTexas.com, I sought to obtain testimony of what transpired at the Moonlight Musical performance from other witnesses - persons who actually had names. Even then, I told involved parties that I would not cover the issue until I had statements in writing as up until then it was still just rumor.

I now read to you the official report filed by a Lubbock police officer who was present and witnessed the entire incident.

For those who have not read the defaming email and postings, along with stupid online, generally anonymous comments from those who always think themselves to be in the know, you will not be able to grasp *just how great* the disparity is between *what was claimed to happen* versus *what the police officer said happened*.

From the police report:

“An incident was observed between Paul Beane, moonlight musicals producer Gerald Dolter, and musicals manager Jill Kerns.

“Mr. Beane has a granddaughter in the production and was concerned about an approaching storm with visible lightening in the area and his granddaughter remaining on the stage during this approaching storm.

“Mr. Dolter had stopped the show before the intermission at about 9pm. Some of the cast and crew remained on the stage to clear the stage of equipment that could be damaged due to the storm. I observed Beane approach Dolter and express his concern about his granddaughter’s safety and then he walked away to the south side of the stage, waiting for his granddaughter.

“Mr. Dolter then made a decision to leave any equipment on stage and ordered the crew to get off the stage at that time. Dolter then approached Mr. Beane and apologized. Beane told Dolter his actions were irresponsible and again walked away from Dolter. Jill Kerns, from the top of the stage told Beane that she wanted him to leave the area.

Now let’s take a quick break from the report as written. What had happened was that Mr. Beane came to the amphitheater to pick up his granddaughter, the show already having been stopped at the time he arrived. Beane observed that cast members were still on stage handling the very equipment that would be most likely to attract lightening had such hit. Beane points this out to Dolter and walks away.

Mr. Dolter essentially agrees with Beane’s point and calls all hands to leave the stage. Dolter then approaches Beane and apologizes for, I would assume, putting the crew at risk. Beane, being understandably agitated, but otherwise acceptable in his demeanor, says to Dolter that Dolter had been irresponsible having them onstage. This is opinion and any free American is free to express such. Beane did not linger, he did not get in the face of Mr. Dolter and attempt to escalate the situation, the report says he walked away.

At this point, Jill Kerns, *who had not been involved in the situation* between Mr. Dolter and Mr. Beane, from a point away and above on the stage, inserted herself into the situation. And, in what must have been a bit of a raised voice in order to be heard, my opinion only, told councilman Beane to leave the area.

Back to the report:

“Mr. Beane replied “shut up, I’m not going anywhere without my granddaughter.”
Another unknown female, who was standing next to Jill Kerns, also asked Beane to leave

and again he told her to “shut up”. I [the police officer speaking] told all involved to calm down at that point and instructed Mr. Dolter to get Mr. Beane’s granddaughter who was backstage. Immediately, Beane’s granddaughter came down the stairs of the stage and walked out with Mr. Beane through the south gate.”

Again leaving the report, we see that previously uninvolved people had interjected themselves into a situation which was already being handled satisfactorily. These two women took it upon themselves to order someone off the premises who was not doing anything other than waiting for a cast member. Mr. Beane, and rightfully in my book, told them to shut-up.

What was alleged by the writer of the email sent out all over town was very different than what was observed by the police officer. That person’s unsigned account went into detail about filthy and abusive language being used by Beane toward the women as if they were innocent bystanders who were just trying to relieve Beane’s tension over the risk to his granddaughter.

Now the last part of the official report filed by the police officer:

“On this date, I received an e-mail from Detective Calderon. The e-mail was forwarded from an unknown person to Detective Calderon. The e-mail was not signed but referred to this incident. The letter alleges that Paul Beane used profanity during this incident. **Mr. Beane did not use profanity during this incident.** [That line is in bold type in the police report.] I [again the officer speaking] was within 15 feet of Beane and Dolter during this entire incident. I did not observe any [again appearing in bold] **criminal violations** during this incident that required police intervention.”

And there you have it. To those who have read the original email describing the incident, you will learn that it appears to be a gross misrepresentation of what happened in almost each and every written line.

What we have seems to be a case of wanting to take a situation, in which someone interjected themselves and was then offended at being told to shut up, or stay out of it, being trumped up into a personal attack upon Mr. Beane. No doubt such effort was at least partly motivated by political motives, in my opinion.

Why other members of local media have said what they have said is not my place to speculate upon. But, let this be a lesson to all of those who regularly believe the often baseless accusations often posted online or sent around in emails: Much of the garbage you believe, because you want to believe it is true, is often just that, garbage.

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