

The Jeff Adler-Brad Sebastian Connection

Jeff Adler appeared to show up in the strangest places – often, on the opposite side of his paid assignment as a prosecuting attorney, both in Hubbard and as an assistant Trumbull County prosecutor.

Elsewhere in these chronicles, we've described how Adler—while employed as the city's law director – represented several defendants, and had to withdraw from defending at least one more, who were cited into court on charges of violating Hubbard's anti-horn blowing ordinance. All were widely known as his friends, Rick Krlich says.

Horn-blowing offenses are one thing, however – out-and-out top-level criminal activity is another. Once again, Jeff Adler was seen lining himself up with the most unlikely of clients – Brad Sebastian, adjacent Liberty Township's maverick police officer.

Sebastian was an example of a cop with too much power ... and a gun. He made headlines as far back as June 1995 when, tired of waiting for his food order at a local restaurant, he stormed into the kitchen, held his gun to the cook's head, and told her he would kill her if she didn't hurry up.

And that was only one example of Sebastian's behavior. In another case, he became embroiled in a fight with his girlfriend and shouted "veiled threats" while pounding on her car window, while she was seated inside, with his firearm. Strangely enough, the charges against him – possession of a firearm in a liquor establishment (a felony), using weapons while intoxicated, aggravated menacing, dereliction of duty, disorderly conduct, and criminal trespass – were never brought to trial. Adler claimed his friendship with Sebastian as his excuse for stepping aside in the case, which was pursued by Girard's then-prosecutor, Ron Marks. Sebastian's case ended with a plea bargain arrangement: a suspended jail sentence, one year's probation, 80 hours of community service, a \$500 fine and his agreement to resign from the police force and not work in law enforcement for one year.

In an editorial, the Tribune-Chronicle said:

"Mark down Bradley Sebastian as the latest beneficiary of the buddy system in which cops get a different, less strict brand of justice than the rest of us."

Also questionable is Adler's participation in the mysterious events surrounding the suspension – which then became a paid medical leave and eventually resulted in the retirement – of Police Chief Martin Kanetsky.

On January 6, 2011, Mayor Richard Keenan advised Kanetsky he was placed on administrative leave effective that day, and cited "various charges including but not limited to insubordination, misuse of city facilities and/or property of the city of Hubbard and jeopardizing the health of the entire police department and facilities."

On February 5th, noting that Kanetsky had agreed to tender his resignation effective June 15, Keenan and Kanetsky entered into an agreement that placed Kanetsky instead on medical leave of absence in the interim period. That agreement stipulated that both parties would not issue comments to the press about the agreement or the issues underlying the agreement. The mayor later said the document "did not come out of my office." Adler, as law director, signed his approval to the form of the agreement.

Shortly afterward, commenting on Adler's candidacy for Judge of the Girard Municipal Court, the Vindicator wrote in an editorial:

"Adler has adequate experience to justify his candidacy, but we have been unimpressed with his performance as Hubbard law director at a time when the city could have benefitted from a more aggressive response to what has been going on there.

"His failure or refusal to assert himself as law director in recent months during the dispute between the mayor and police chief is of particular concern. The mayor has essentially taken the position that it is none of the public's business as to why the mayor suspended the chief and then reached a deal that allows the chief to take months of sick leave before retiring.

"When thousands of dollars worth of sick leave are being paid to a chief and the only people who know the nature of his illness are the mayor and the chief, the law director has a responsibility to show more curiosity than has Adler."