

WCA President Admits to Violating Arizona Campaign Contribution Laws

DRS. RONDBERG AND IMMERMAN CAUGHT IN AZSCAM "STING"

Editorial Staff

In August of 1989, the Phoenix police and the Maricopa county attorney's office organized a "sting" operation (AzScam) designed to catch legislators and individuals involved in violations of Arizona's campaign contribution laws and money laundering (please see "Arizona Legislators Indicted in Sting Operation" in the March 15, 1991 issue). As reported by the Arizona Republic, the investigation uncovered the involvement of WCA President Terry Rondberg, D.C. and former WCA member Alan Immerman, D.C., as well as Dr. Rondberg's long-time friend Richard Scheffel, who was acting at that time as the lobbyist for the now defunct Arizona Chiropractic Alliance.

The sting operation produced over 16,000 pages of police transcripts. "According to those transcripts, Richard Scheffel said he arranged with Immerman and Terry Rondberg ... to use their names on contributions to legislators. Under state law, that is illegal if the money does not come from the person whose name is on the contribution. Rondberg and Immerman deny involvement ... But, they are the only ones identified by Scheffel as consenting to have their names used for such contributions." (from the Arizona Republic February 10, 1991).

At the time the Arizona newspapers were presenting articles on the involvement of Drs. Rondberg and Immerman, Dr. Rondberg was asked to be interviewed regarding his involvement. Unfortunately, Dr. Rondberg refused to be interviewed. Later in the June 1991 issue of the WCA's Chiropractic Journal, Dr. Rondberg stated that: "More recently, articles have appeared in Dynamic Chiropractic saying I was implicated in the Arizona "AzScam" scandal. That story is completely ludicrous and unsubstantiated by any documentation ..."

In the November 1991 issue of Dr. Rondberg's publication, the Chiropractic Journal, an article revealed that Dr. Rondberg had indeed complied with Richard Scheffel's request to launder campaign contribution money when: "According to Dr. Rondberg, in October 1990 Scheffel said he needed authorization from the doctors to use their names and the names of their wives on contributions he had received on behalf of another client."

Police transcripts from October 24, 1990 revealed Scheffel's phone conversation with Dr. Rondberg. Mr. Scheffel's side of the phone conversation was being recorded as part of the sting operation: "Hey, Terry how you doing? Well I'm doin' great. Hey you remember what a great American you were when we needed some extra help with Burton Barr? And we had to make some extra contributions? I gotta make some extra contributions now to the state Democratic Party and to about five or six legislators, would you and Cindy be kind enough to allow me to use your names on those contributions?"

When asked if money laundering was also involved in the case of the Burton Barr contributions, inside sources stated that they believed it was.

Drs. Immerman and Rondberg are both in the process of admitting to civil charges of illegal contributions. In agreements that will be signed by each, they've agreed to pay fines to the

Maricopa County Anti-Racketeering Revolving Fund for "three times the amount of the illegal contributions" made in their names and their wives' names. For Dr. Immerman, the fine will be \$11,160. Dr. Rondberg's fine is set at \$6,840.

The agreement also states that there is a criminal investigation taking place by the Phoenix police department and the Maricopa county attorney's office. Drs. Rondberg and Immerman agree to provide "truthful information and testimony, if required, in any interviews, depositions, grand jury proceedings ..." In each agreement, Drs. Immerman and Rondberg stipulate that they "authorized Richard Scheffel to make political campaign contributions under (their) names and that of (their) wives, using funds not supplied by (Alan Immerman/Terry Rondberg) or (their) wife(s)."

Alan Immerman, D.C., who has been involved in chiropractic political issues both nationally and locally did make a statement. His statement included information pertaining to his relationship to Richard Scheffel and the fact that he had committed an "unknowing violation." In addition, Dr. Immerman stated:

"When I was contacted by the county attorney's office I was shocked to learn that what had been recommended by Mr. Scheffel was inappropriate. I immediately agreed to cooperate fully and have followed through on that commitment.

"I believe it is important to stress that even though this case is AzScam related, it did not arise out of any criminal claim against me. The county attorney's office never took my case to the grand jury, never presented it to a judge at a preliminary hearing, never arrested me and never made any claim against me that I had done anything with criminal intent. As soon as I found out there was some problem, I contacted the county attorney's office to get to the bottom of this and I have now settled this matter."

Not unexpectedly, Dr. Rondberg refused our offer to comment regarding his now admitted involvement in the illegal campaign contribution.

NOVEMBER 1991