

What's In It For Me? -- Drs. Rondberg and Immerman Respond

Editorial Staff

In the recently released book *What's In It For Me?* (published by HarperCollins), author Joseph Stedino recounts his undercover activity as "Tony Vincent" and the surreptitious recordings that "expose the greed, jealousy and lust that drive Arizona politics." Unfortunately, the activities recounted in this book are not some fabrication from a steamy novel. On the contrary, they come from actual police transcripts of secretly recorded conversations.

Among the many individuals caught in what was dubbed "AzScam," were Dr. Terry Rondberg and Dr. Alan Immerman. In the initial article (please see "What's In It For Me?" in the October 9, 1992 issue), a number of statements recorded and revealed in the book were made by Rich Scheffel, the lobbyist of the Arizona Chiropractic Alliance (which has since merged with the Chiropractic Association of Arizona to create the Arizona Association of Chiropractic). Some of those statements were made about the chiropractic profession in general, and some were made specifically regarding Drs. Rondberg and Immerman.

Ultimately, both Drs. Rondberg and Dr. Immerman signed agreements with the Maricopa County Attorney's office. Both admitted to civil charges of illegal contributions. Dr. Immerman was required to pay a fine of \$11,160 and Dr. Rondberg was required to pay a fine of \$9,840.

At a time when the reputation of the chiropractic profession is so important, it is very disheartening to read about such events from a book quoting police transcripts. If this were presented on a fictional basis, the entire profession would be screaming, demanding retractions and threatening lawsuits.

Both Drs. Rondberg and Immerman were invited to present their positions on the issues raised by Mr. Stedino's book in the Oct. 9 issue of "DC." Dr. Immerman granted us an interview, but Dr. Rondberg declined the offer.

In order to provide some statements by Dr. Rondberg regarding the incidents named in the book, a copy of the affidavit he signed was requested from the Maricopa County Attorney's office. It is presented in its entirety:

Photo here:

Terry Rondberg, D.C., publisher of the WCA's Chiropractic Journal: "Scheffel told me he had some extra money to contribute to some legislators, and he asked me if he could use my name and my wife's name for the contributions. I told him that he could."

Affidavit

State of Arizona)
) ss.
County of Maricopa)

Terry Alan Rondberg, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I am providing this affidavit pursuant to an agreement with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, as part of the settlement of an investigation into illegal campaign contributions made in my name. I understand that this affidavit is given under oath and penalty of perjury, and I have handwritten and initialed any changes necessary to make this a completely truthful and accurate statement.
2. I am a licensed chiropractor, and I began practice as a chiropractor in 1975. In approximately 1983 or 1984, I incorporated a chiropractors' group named the Federation of Straight Chiropractic Organizations of Arizona (FSCOA). Shortly after FSCOA was formed, it hired Richard Scheffel, at a fee of approximately \$17,000 per year, to represent the organization as a lobbyist with the Arizona legislature. The purpose of FSCOA was to obtain legislative representation for chiropractors.
3. Around 1988 or 1989, a new chiropractors' association named the Arizona Chiropractic Alliance (AzCA) was incorporated by Dr. Alan Immerman and myself. AzCA was formed by members of FSCOA and former members, including Alan Immerman of the Chiropractic Association of Arizona (CAA). AzCA hired Richard Scheffel at an annual fee of approximately \$34,000 as its lobbyist. Scheffel's primary responsibility during the period between the formation of AzCA and approximately 1990 was working to get legislation passed which would give chiropractors equal status with medical doctors for the purposes of payment by medical insurance policies.
4. AzCA was run from Alan Immerman's office. The fund-raising effort by AzCA to support its legislative efforts were also run by Alan Immerman from his office. I was not a signer on any AzCA bank accounts, and was not very involved with the organization's legislative or fund-raising efforts.
5. I have been advised that during October 1990 in the AzScam investigation, Richard Scheffel was secretly tape recorded saying that Dr. Immerman and I had raised a lot of money for the chiropractors, but that we had "saved a little back for themselves this year." I do not know what Scheffel meant by that statement. Neither Alan Immerman nor I received any salary from AzCA. I did not keep any of the money raised from AzCa members. I am aware that Alan Immerman wrote expenses of his office off to AzCA, but other than that I am not aware of him keeping any AzCA money for himself.
6. Concerning AzCA's legislative fund-raising efforts from its members, Alan Immerman told me that he collected contribution checks from AzCA members with the payee portion of the check left blank. Immerman said he would fill in the payee as donations were identified as being needed for particular candidates.

7. I recall an occasion in the fall of 1990 when I received a telephone call from Richard Scheffel. I was at my office when I received the call. Scheffel told me he had some extra money to contribute to some legislators, and he asked me if he could use my name and my wife's name for the contributions. I told him that he could.
8. During the conversation with Scheffel he made a reference to "when we needed some help with Burton Barr, and we had to make some extra contributions." Scheffel was referring to a fund-raiser I put on for Burton Barr during his gubernatorial campaign in 1986. The fund-raiser was held before the primary at the Hilton Hotel in Mesa. Richard Scheffel bought a large block of tickets for that fund-raiser. I do not recall who from the Barr campaign received the contributions raised by the fund-raiser, I do not know the source of the money Scheffel used to buy the tickets, and I do not know how the fund-raiser tickets which Scheffel bought would have been listed as contributions.
9. I am not aware of any instance, other than the fall 1990 call from Scheffel just discussed, when Richard Scheffel asked to use my name and my wife's name for actual money contributions made to political campaigns. However, on a number of occasions -- I estimate between one and two dozen times -- Scheffel asked me to use fund-raiser tickets which I did not pay for. He would call me and ask me to attend political fund-raisers as a "warm body" for tickets he had bought. Normally, I would pick the tickets up at the door to the event, and they would already be paid for. I don't recall Scheffel ever saying whose money had paid for the tickets, and with one exception I cannot identify specific fund-raisers where this occurred, because I cannot distinguish them in my memory from fund-raisers where I actually bought the tickets. However, I am certain that I attended political fund-raisers, using tickets Scheffel had bought and asked me to use, both before the Burton Barr, 1986 fund-raiser I spoke of above, and in years since 1986.
10. The one fund-raiser I specifically remember attending using tickets supplied by Scheffel -- or possibly by Alan Immerman -- was a 1990 fund-raiser at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel for Fife Symington. I remember that the fund-raiser was expensive, but I did not pay for the ticket. I also remember that at the fund-raiser Scheffel pointed a man out to me -- I think now it was Tony Vincent -- and told me he was with an Italian family, and big time.

Terry Alan Rondberg

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 10 day of March, 1992

Linda C. Bevel

Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

June 1995

insert photo:

Alan Immerman, D.C., vice chairman of the Arizona Association of Chiropractic: "It is true that some doctors gave me checks for political contributions and asked me to fill in the name of the legislator who I believe most deserved and needed the contribution. ...It would have been impossible for me to divert these funds for my own personal use as implied by Dr. Ronberg's affidavit."

Dr. Alan Immerman has responded with not only an interview printed in "DC" October 9, 1992 concerning What's In It For Me, but has also submitted a written statement for this issue, here presented in its entirety:

Dear Mr. Petersen:

Dynamic Chiropractic's recent article on the AzScam book, What's In It For Me? contains multiple distortions of the truth. The purpose of this letter is to correct these distortions, and to comment on certain statements made in the Terry Rondberg AzScam affidavit which is being published in the current issue of "DC."

First: The new book by the AzScam undercover police agent does not, as claimed by "DC," reveal further information about my involvement in AzScam. The government authority in this case, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, has stated in writing from the beginning that my involvement was limited to what is legally described as an "unknowing civil violation of campaign law." I mistakenly relied upon a legal interpretation of campaign law given by lobbyist Richard Scheffel who at the time was under contract to the Arizona Chiropractic Alliance (AzCA) to provide legal advice regarding campaign law. Scheffel was widely considered to be one of the most respected lobbyists in Arizona.

Second: The involvement of Drs. Rondberg and me in AzScam has not, as stated by "DC," been translated to mean the chiropractic profession's involvement, as the now defunct Arizona Chiropractic Alliance was their organization during the time of the 'sting.'" At the time of the sting, AzCA was not "our organization." In fact, Dr. Rondberg was not a member of the Alliance's Board of Directors, I was only one director out of twelve, and the Alliance had more than 250 members. Shortly after the AzScam story hit the local newspapers, our insurance equality law passed the state Senate by a vote of 25-5. This would never have happened if the legislature had believed that the chiropractic profession had a significant involvement in AzScam.

Third: The Arizona Chiropractic Alliance is not "defunct." The three-year-old alliance and the 14-year-old Chiropractic Association of Arizona merged on an equal footing to form the Arizona Association of Chiropractic (AAC). Neither organization is "defunct" but rather the strength and energy of each have been channeled into a new vehicle.

Fourth: The Arizona Chiropractic Alliance was extremely successful in raising money for political campaigns utilizing legal methods. Of the large amount raised for the 1990 elections, no authority has ever alleged that any money was "bundled" or raised in any other illegal manner. Legal problems arose over approximately \$5,000 that our lobbyist, Richard Scheffel, was given by the police undercover agent and which was represented as having been donated by Dr. Rondberg and me. The implication that much of the money contributed by Alliance members was raised in an illegal manner is totally false.

Fifth: I totally and completely deny the statement by the Alliance lobbyist that with some political

contributions raised for U.S. Senator Paul Simon, "they (Drs. Rondberg and Immerman) saved a little back for themselves." Each doctor who contributed money to Senator Simon has a canceled check made out to the senator and endorsed on the back showing that the money was deposited in the senator's bank account. This is solid proof that all of the money raised for the senator went exclusively to him. Apparently, our former lobbyist, now a convicted felon, hypothesized in a moment of "hypergreed" as to what he would have done with large sums of money collected for a U.S. Senator.

Sixth: For almost two years I have not been a member of the WCA and I have not supported this organization. I supported the WCA at an earlier time because I saw it as the best vehicle to change federal ERISA law. When it became clear that WCA was not going to work to change ERISA, I left the organization for this and other reasons. Regarding the concept of a non-elected board of directors in Arizona, I supported such a structure for a temporary period of time to deal with what I perceived to be an emergency situation.

"DC" has supplied to me a copy of Dr. Rondberg's AzScam affidavit and I have the following comments.

First: It is true, as Dr. Rondberg stated, that the Alliance (AzCA) was first run from my chiropractic office. In the beginning we were a very small organization, and I donated office space so that we could begin operations.

Second: Dr. Rondberg stated that he "was not very involved with the organization's legislative or fund-raising efforts." This is not true. The fact is that Dr. Rondberg was significantly involved in both areas.

Third: In paragraph five of the affidavit, Dr. Rondberg seems to imply that there was something unethical or dishonest about the fact that some of my office expenses were paid by AzCA. This is completely false. Dr. Rondberg and the other AzCA board members voted in open session to approve reimbursements made to me for the use of my office. I was never a signer on the checking account and all checks written to cover my office expenses were cosigned by two of the 12 board members. Such reimbursements were minimal and never covered the actual costs of running the association from my office. For that reason, I was delighted when the AzCA Board voted to move our office to an independent location.

Fourth: It is true that some doctors gave me checks for political contributions and asked me to fill in the name of the legislator who I believed most deserved and needed the contribution. In each case, the doctor received a canceled check from the bank showing to whom the check was made payable, and stamped on the back proving that the check was deposited in a legislator's account. It would have been impossible for me to divert these funds for my own personal use as implied by Dr. Rondberg's affidavit.

Fifth: I did raise money to purchase two tickets for a political dinner for Governor Fife Symington, and these tickets were given to Dr. Rondberg to attend the dinner. I have never been told by any authority that there was anything wrong with this.

AzScam was an unfortunate event in the history of Arizona politics. When our lobbyist Richard Scheffel became involved by agreeing to bribe legislators on behalf of what he thought to be a legalized gambling effort in Arizona, there was some negative fallout for all of his other 11 clients, including the chiropractic profession. The legislature and public, however, quickly realized that Scheffel's clients were not responsible for his criminal misdeeds, even though many of us unknowingly committed civil campaign law violations based on his distorted legal advice. The chiropractic profession in Arizona

continues to move forward in the political arena, and I am proud to be part of that effort as vice chairman of the legislative committee.

I appreciate the opportunity given to me by "DC" to clarify the record. In the future I will gladly respond to any further questions.

Alan M. Immerman, D.C.
Sedona, Arizona

Editor's Note: In light of the statements made by Dr. Immerman pertaining to Dr. Rondberg, Dr. Rondberg was again given the opportunity to be interviewed to present his side. Unfortunately, Dr. Rondberg's office notified us that he was out of the country.

"DC" wishes to thank Dr. Immerman for providing the chiropractic profession with his comments and perspective on AzScam.

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