

WHO'S NOT TELLING THE TRUTH?

Chief, Candidate for Chief, or Both?

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Wow! Chief Carter has been doing all this deep-sea fishing, yet somehow, I seem to have opened a can of worms! Guess it's time for me to do a little fishing too.

As my readers know, I interviewed the three candidates for Chief of Police, asking each of them the same question, with one exception and that exception being a unique question for each of them. I pushed it out and posted a link on Facebook before heading out of town for work. The initial feedback I was seeing was all positive and appreciative. People liked the side-by-side comparison and ability to listen to each of the interviews unedited. A few days later, I discovered one of the threads had really heated up because of a post/question someone had added.

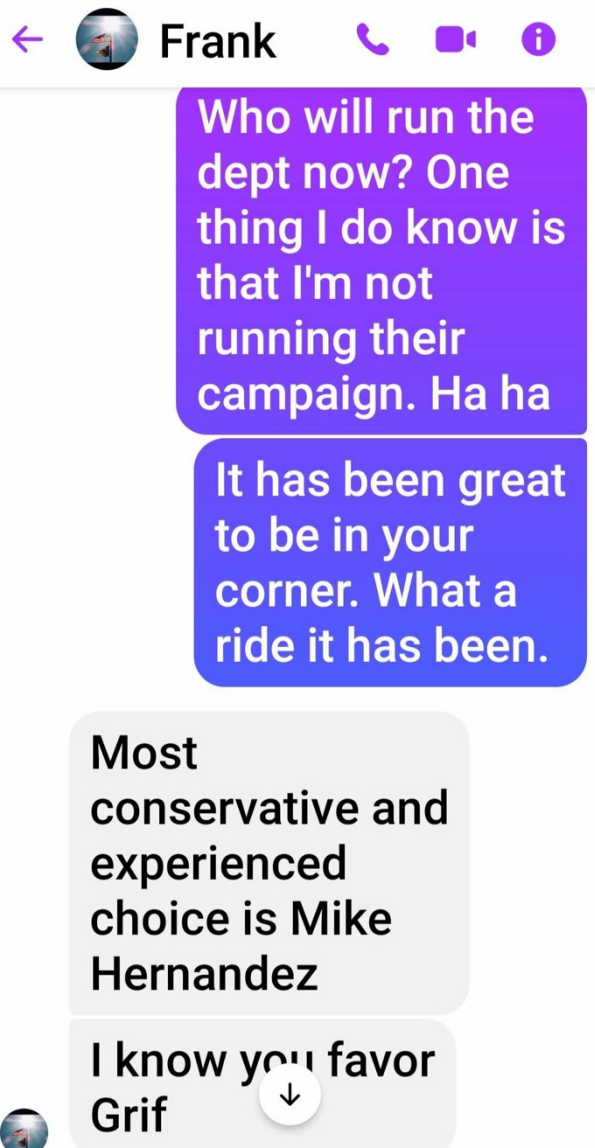
A woman posted she was confused by something she had heard one of the candidates stated in the interview. I asked each of them if they planned on keeping any of the current Assistant Chiefs or start out with a clean slate. They all stated they had made no commitments to keep anyone and Cimino flatly stated he wanted a clean slate. The lady who posted on my thread about being confused was apparently caused by a text she had received directly from her friend, Chief Carter, stating, "Mike will do the best and leave one of my asst chiefs in position."

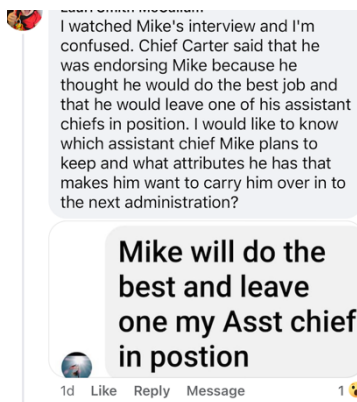
She stated she was confused because the two men are not saying the same thing. She put out there on Facebook that she 'wanted to know which assistant chief Mike plans to keep and what attributes he has that makes him want to carry him over into the next administration.' That is virtually the question I posed to each of them.

I reached out to the person who had posted on my thread to inquire when she had received that text from Chief Carter to verify it had occurred prior to my interview with Hernandez, or was it post interview and things had changed. She reported her time stamp on it was January 6, 2024, at 8:05 p.m. That is at least three months before I asked Lt. Mike Hernandez in the interview. Hmm... So, either Chief Carter was misleading the person he was texting with, or Lt. Hernandez was not being truthful with me in his interview. They cannot both be correct.

One of the other questions I posed in the interview was about the “good ole boy” system. As Hernandez and I discussed in the interview, most Assistant Chiefs retire instead of taking a cut in pay by staying on the force. So, this text from Chief Carter creates an interesting situation. Does one of the Assistant Chiefs fall short of retirement or desired retirement pay?

Plus, remember when I asked Lt. Hernandez the very first question of the interview, about what was his motivation for throwing his hat into the ring, he stated he had run previously AND Chief Carter had called him about six months ago. I think everyone already knew Chief could not run again, so why was it important for Chief to personally call Lt. Hernandez and tell him?





When I conducted the three interviews, overall, I was very pleased with how they went. I was delighted to learn more about Lt. Cimino, who I had never met. I think he has some great ideas. Sgt. Griffith presented great ideas too, along with reminding me of how our former chiefs used to do press conferences and personally keep the public informed about what was happening in the community. They were the face of the department, not the PIO (public information officer). This is so important for the

Chief of Police to do on a regular basis and when something critical has occurred.

My last interview of the day was Lt. Hernandez. I probably know him the best, as I supported him in his last race and spent time with him shooting video clips for his race. There was something that really bothered me after the interview, but I wasn't exactly sure what. Was it the negative comments he made about one of the other candidates after the camera stopped rolling? He kept hounding me about how unethical and illegal putting campaign signs up early was, which apparently one of the candidates did. That made no sense to me. I had never heard of a start date for signage. So, in doing a little research on this, there is nothing unethical or illegal about that at all according to the Supreme Court of the United States of America. There is no set date when a candidate for office can begin displaying signs. Hernandez was wrong. Why is he pounding this non-issue?

As I continued to give thought as to what was bothering me after the interviews, I went back to the special question I had asked Hernandez. *"In one of the forums you commented that you have been shot at eleven times, is what I was told. That rattled me a bit that our officers are taking on fire that often. Can you give me more details on when or what prompted those situations?"*

Hernandez did not even begin to answer that question for me but told me of one incident. Maybe the uneasiness I was feeling was concern for our local officers. Are others being shot at as often as Mike has reported? If our little local community has become this dangerous, I want to know. What is the cause? Is it drugs like Cimino had

mentioned that seems to be the root of the crime in our city? Was it just because Mike was on SWAT or what? I was sensing the need for an additional article about the dangers our officers are facing protecting our streets.

I have been a strong advocate for our police force for years. Years ago, I served as the President of the Citizens Police Academy here in San Angelo. I care about our guys and gals, wanting them to stay safe as they work to keep us safe so we can enjoy our city. If our officers are being fired upon on a somewhat regular basis, I want to find out and figure out what the cause is and what, if anything, can be done to assist them in this battle.

I submitted a FOIA request to the Police Department, requesting information on each of the incidents Hernandez had referenced, including if the shooters were apprehended and charges were filed on them. Four days into my wait for the requested information, I discovered my request had been sent over to legal when I checked online for the current status on my FOIA. Hmmm....

I asked for the dates of each incident, the capacity Hernandez was acting in (SWAT, patrol, etc.) and if the shooter was apprehended and charges filed. Why would that be sent to legal? I am not asking for any confidential information of the incident. I continue to await my request. I am simply trying to find out what type of calls are putting our officers in life-threatening danger.

Something seems amiss, and sadly, either Hernandez or Carter aren't being forthright. And...maybe there is more to some of this too.

If Hernandez has been shot at eleven times, wouldn't he quickly be able to recount the bulk of them? In relistening to the interview, he even states his wife was surprised to learn he had been shot at that many times. Really? How could she not have known each and every time, especially when he needed to go home and change clothes afterwards, as he stated.

I will stop for now and await the response on my FOIA request. I may need to submit a few more.

I penned this article on Sunday, April 14th, while I was on road working. Today, Friday, April 19th, I returned to town and had a few minutes to double check a few things before loading it to go out. Interestingly, I discovered that Chief Carter has now publicly endorsed Lt. Mike Hernandez as per San Angelo LIVE. By the way, Chief's text with the citizen back in January reads like there is a deal for Mike to keep one of Frank's current Assistant Chiefs. That must have been brokered a while back, maybe even when Chief called Hernandez to discuss he wasn't running again - which he couldn't anyway.

I went to Chief Carter's Facebook page to read anything further he might have posted about this endorsement only to discover his Facebook page is totally removed. Really? All those wonderful deep sea fishing pictures of his great catches are gone. Why? The timing is very interesting. Hmmm??? I wonder what will be discovered next?

Looks like the San Angelo Police Department has decided to delay or possibly completely withhold the information I have requested via the FOIA. My guess, it just might have something to do with early voting starting on Monday, April 22nd.