

Ambitious people strive to get politically elected so that they can achieve power. With that power they immediately seek ways to gain wealth, i.e. big money. Political parties who win elections find ways to manipulate any procurement responsibilities that they have in order to financially strengthen their campaigns and be in position to further their political careers. Such is our democratic system and it has become a dirty secret. Little did I know that when I was appointed Deputy Commissioner for Minority Business Development for the State of Indiana I was entering this corruption zone. Procurements at the governmental level are many times steered to political comrades and those who “donate” funds to particular elected officials.

Business owners would come to my office and offer kickbacks to me for any contracts they received. 2%, 5%, 10% etc. would be the levels. They would be shocked when I declined to play that illegal game. One female owner offered her body in exchange for a particular contract. One guy in Gary, IN actually offered his wife to me. I was appalled. Yes, Gary was the worse place in Indiana

when it came to corruption. Much of it was coming out of the Mayor's office. One of my vendors had a problem in that the City would not honor his invoice for completed work. He was told to first bring a \$5,000 cashiers check to the office so that they could approve the invoice. The city official stated, “We just don't give these contracts away!” He filed a claim in court and they did not pay him until the court date (as he was entering the courthouse). Sick of this activity, I gave a public address to city officials and admonished them. It hit the fan then. One county councilmen told me, “Alford, don't get in our way”. That was a death threat.

One of my Black architects was catching pure hell. He won a contract to build a new rest area on one of our freeways. Politicals from the Democratic Party told him that he needed to make a \$5,000 contribution before his contract would be processed. He didn't get the contract until he relented and paid the money. Also, the Republican Party was shaking him down at the City of Indianapolis

. The city owed him \$35,000 for past work and would not release it to him until he made a sizeable donation to them. All this brother wanted to do was compete for work and perform contracts he won “fair and square”. It didn't matter which party was in power, they were both equally corrupt.

As Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Administration, I sat in on weekly staff meetings moderated by the Commissioner of Administration who was in charge of all state procurements. Some of the strangest conversations would occur during these meetings. They would start talking about successful minority owned businesses with contempt. They were upset that people like Pilipino Rudy Reyes and Hispanic Gabe Aguirre had growing businesses

and were not political funders. These entrepreneurs didn't even do business with the State. I soon saw dirty tricks happening to these guys (behind the scenes assaults on their companies and bad press).

I really upset the Commissioner when I stated that a company owned by basketball great Oscar Robinson was being victimized by a particular person from the Democratic Party. I stated, "Oscar Robinson says he doesn't have to pay the typical kickback of \$5,000 and demands his contract, which he won, immediately. I concur with him and I am thinking about going public with it." The Commissioner pounded the table, played dumb and said he would take care of it. From that point on, our relationship went "south".

The corruption went to a new level when Indiana got the Powerball Lottery. The upstart spending would be enormous. Jack Crawford, from Lake County

, was appointed Lottery Director. My wife, Kay, was appointed Director of Marketing and was the second highest Black in the new lottery. Jack was just a figure head. All of the procurement was being manipulated by my boss, the Commissioner of Administration. He was ridiculous with it. It came to a head when one of my Black car dealers won the contract for the new auto fleet. He won it but didn't get it. The Commissioner blatantly came in and steered the contract to one of his boys. I approached Jack about this and he promised to correct it. All hell broke loose!

Jack was fired and scandalized in the media over an extra marital affair he was having with the highest ranking Black working in the lottery. The Commissioner took over his job as Lottery Director and the corruption grew. I received more death threats but continued with the fight. TO BE CONTINUED.

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