

TELL TALES (Continued from Page 4)

of inventory last year, according to Bob Laverty, who recently inherited the business from his dad, the founder. Laverty decided to recall four employees, long established in Nevada, back to California. The stores' slot machine licenses had been acquired from a long past gambling commission, in the names of two employees, Pete Tassios and Marion Hann. They had been listed erroneously as owners, via a subsidiary corporation on the licenses. The two are currently bringing legal action in Reno against Thriftmart.

It is only fair to call attention at this point, that inventory shortages for super-market are commonplace, according to other managers of grocery chain stores. Therefore, no reflection is intended against Tassios and Hann. Be that as it may, it has been our philosophy, bosses and owners have every right to determine the status of employees in supervisory positions.

When the false ownership was disclosed in court, the state, county and city gambling commissions unanimously revoked the licenses. Another subsidiary corporation was formed, and after the state gaming commission, waived an investigation, it reinstated the gambling permit. The county gaming commission followed suit.

Thriftmart, with three stores in the city of Las Vegas, involving 45 machines and a gross of some \$700,000 last year, is being denied city slot licenses by a split decision.

Mayor Oran Gragson and Commissioner Hal Morelli have been voting in favor of the grant. Commissioners George Franklin and Hank Thornley have opposed the licensing and Commissioner, Dr. Alex Coblenz, abstained.

The Israelite investigated to determine why Thriftmart was being denied what other super-market chains were enjoying, just as Hank Greenspun, apparently attempted to do. Our interest was to report the facts and establish justification, if any, for the actions of our public servants. Greenspun's interest was solely and wholly to get the licenses approved. His method was the only way he knows, with power, and threats and crude and unsavory tactics. Hank finally came up against an honest governmental agency he could not control. His determination turned to fury and he commenced the sly maneuver of innuendo in his column, which was picked up by Price. It probably would go on and on, were it not for the Israelite, which will continue to expose this journalistic prostitution.

Thornley was approached by Greenspun and at least a half dozen leading citizens, of unimpeachable reputations, mainly to ask for a review of the circumstances. They were acting in good faith, just as we were in a subsequent meeting. Greenspun, on the other hand threw up the support he had given to Thornley and Coblenz for them to be elected. In return he demanded they vote as he directed.

In addition another character, in the guise of befriending Thornley "advised" the commissioner that if he did not vote to grant the license, a story would be released to the newspapers of a \$25,000 bribe which Thornley was supposed to have received, but was reneging on the deal. Thornley was so incensed he is about to go to the district attorney and demand an investigation. We cautioned Thornley that the threat of planting this type of story, except in the Sun, was just a hoax, unless they named names and where the alleged \$25,000 came from. Any other editor would fully investigate before running an obvious plant, like that. But its done in the Sun regularly, with malice and motive.

Fully thwarted, Greenspun showed up personally at the City Commission hearing, to make his demands in person. It was that appearance, that compelled Coblenz to abstain. The good doctor, like Thornley, simply refused

to be intimidated.

It was also that appearance, that good soul Ruthe Deskin referred to her boss as appearing at the budget hearing. The meeting was originally listed for the budget, but the Thriftmart matter was an added starter on the agenda. If naive Ruthe can show us any other appearance, of Greenspun attending any commission hearing for the benefit of the public, without anything personal to gain, we'd publish that startling fact.

We do recall, about 10 years ago, Greenspun at a County Commission session to change the name of San Francisco to Sahara Ave. With Greenspun was solid citizen Herb McDonald, an executive at the Sahara Hotel.

On another occasion, the Israelite exposed Greenspun's appearance in a private session of the State Gambling Commission that approved Robert Maheu's gambling license as chief of Nevada operations for Howard Hughes. That licensing, without the personal appearance of owner Hughes, was unprecedented. We didn't know why Greenspun was so determined, then, back in 1967, but we now know of \$10,000,000 that filtered from Hughes to Greenspun during Maheu's tenure. What a score!

Getting back to Thriftmart, it was on Laverty's suggestion, we arranged a lunch meeting for Bob to meet Thornley. After we introduced the two and asked to be excused from the session, both insisted we remain. Fortunately we accepted, because at times there appeared to be an impasse in the involved conversation. We were the arbitrator.

The reader will recall, it has been established in our previous column, that after diligent research, Bob Laverty is a man of unimpeachable reputation. Nothing happened at lunch to alter this opinion.

Laverty stated he knew of none and wanted no part of bribery or threat to have his licenses granted. He asked Thornley, fairly and sincerely, exactly what he personally had to do, to conform with all requirements. We had established, in the previous column, that the law for a public corporation required the licensing of owners of more than five percent of the stock, and an officer of the company.

Thornley agreed to accept this, but insisted, that before he would reconsider the matter, it must first be determined who was behind Greenspun and the chap who made the \$25,000 threat. We are attempting to arrive at those answers right now.

At the luncheon Laverty had become so incensed at what he heard he said he would cancel his advertising in the Sun. We immediately cautioned him against that move, with the reasoning that all advertising was not merely an indication of support for a particular medium, but was a necessary function for the proper operation of his business.

Both Laverty and Thornley thanked us for our interest in bringing about a meeting of the minds. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the public, because the money realized in taxes from the operation of the slots in question, is no small matter.

Subsequent to the luncheon, we have been informed that Greenspun made another attempt with Dr. Coblenz to set up a meeting with Laverty. Coblenz refused, but instead, referred Greenspun to the Tell Tale column that appeared in the Israelite.

We were curious as to why Commissioner Franklin opposed the reinstatement of the licenses. When we reasoned with George, a former district attorney and a staunch believer in law and order, how he could oppose a law, that, after all, was on the books, he explained: "I have never been and am not now in favor of granting the privilege of gambling licenses to public corporations." George went on, "I opposed the law when it was proposed, (fairly recently) and I will vote against it whenever

it comes before me." Franklin added: "The law, as stated, calls for the discrimination of the commissioners, in determining what public corporations may be licensed."

We thanked Franklin and told him how proud we are of him and all the other members of the City Commission, who had the courage to stand by their convictions, especially those who refused to be intimidated.

We still are of the opinion that Thriftmart is entitled to operate slot machines, just as every other food chain and independent store in our legalized gambling state. And for whatever consolation it may be to Bob Laverty, we believe, now that all this is out in the open, the licenses will be granted in the not-too-distant future.

But we are still puzzled by Greenspun's motive.

In conclusion there's always the big "IF". We have absolutely no reason for this thought, but on the mere possibility that we are mistaken in our judgement of Mr. Laverty as a man of high calibre, or perhaps he innocently has been mis-guided into "engaging" Greenspun's aid in this matter, we caution the chain store executive to be careful. The Sun publisher is a precarious ally, who will commit any irrational act to serve his own purpose.

Witness the case of former Gov. Paul Laxalt, in who's office Greenspun had full sway during the first three years of his term. Now they are mortal enemies.

Witness Howard Hughes, who Greenspun served, at a very high cash price, during the tenure of Robert Maheu. Now Greenspun is the biggest thorn in the Hughes Nevada Operations of \$300,000,000 in property investments. Maheu could very well have been dismissed from his \$10,000-a-week job, and many extras because of irregular and suspicious dealings with Greenspun.

Witness the case of Greenspun's best friend, Nev. Supreme Court Chief Justice Dave Zenoff, a man of unimpeachable character and background. In order to discredit a district Court Judge, also a man of highest character and background, Greenspun distorted the meaning and intent of a Zenoff ruling. It may jeopardize Zenoff's heretofore excellent chances for reelection.

Witness the domination by Greenspun of our present Gov. Mike O'Callaghan, a man with character, integrity and background of presidential calibre. Mike has a misguided sense of loyalty for Greenspun's campaign support. The time will come when a Greenspun demand will not or cannot be fulfilled. Then watch the turn-table in action.

Need we cite any more? So Mr. Laverty, if, and we repeat IF, you have an "understanding" with Greenspun, cancel it, revoke it, abolish it immediately. It could lead to no good for a man with your excellent reputation.

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