

OUR VIEW

No Justice

Lynette Boggs was the definition of a political high-flyer. A former Las Vegas City Councilwoman and Clark County Commissioner, Boggs was a unique rare figure: a Black, female Republican who was respected (on both sides of the aisle) for her intelligence, savvy and ability to build coalitions. As politicians go, she generally seemed above reproach. When issues did arise—for instance, accepting a plane ride from Station Casinos, whose board she sat on, to attend a football game at her alma mater Notre Dame—she ably explained the conflict away. So to look at how far Boggs McDonald has fallen in the past few years is eye-opening.

Last week, Boggs was indicted on two counts each of perjury and filing of false documents. According to the *Review-Journal*, Boggs, if convicted, could get probation or be sentenced to one to four years in prison and fined \$5,000 for each perjury charge; each charge of filing a false document carries a one-to-five year prison term and fines up to \$10,000. Boggs' troubles stem from allegations she lived outside of District F when she served on the County Commission. A private detective hired by Culinary Local 226 and the Las Vegas Police Protective Association captured hours of surveillance allegedly showing that Boggs maintained a large residence outside the district. Her political enemies claim Boggs tried to establish a paper trail by paying a babysitter with campaign funds to watch her children while she attended campaign events.

This is a sad case all the way around; a stupendous fall from grace for a once-bright star in local political circles. But did it have to be this way? Does the punishment fit the crimes Boggs has been indicted for? Published reports show that she was one of several politicians caught up in residency scandals. University regent Mark DeStefano. Assemblyman David Parks. County commission candidate Michael Williams. Each claimed to live in the jurisdiction where they were running for office; each maintained a residence outside the municipal boundaries. (In Williams' case, he lived in an apartment while his fiancée and cat stayed in a Henderson home.) Yet Boggs was the only politician pursued by county District Attorney David Roger's office.

Roger told the *R-J*: "This is one of the first cases that was actually investigated by police and sent over to us," Roger said. "They're difficult cases to prosecute in general. But the public is very in tune with the issue of public corruption, and they're not afraid to go to law enforcement to blow the whistle, and if police put together a compelling case for us to prosecute, we'll file charges."

Something about Roger's statements doesn't pass the smell test. For starters, no Nevada politician has ever faced criminal charges for lying about his or her residency. Boggs was the first. Secondly, Rogers is obfuscating when he claims pursuit of Boggs' case resulted from the public being fed up with political corruptions. Thanks to G-Sting (four county commissioners indicted), former City Councilman Michael McDonald's questionable relationships, Mayor Oscar Goodman's run-ins, ethics rules and the buy-a-judge system exposed in a series of *LA Times* articles, locals have come to expect that Southern Nevada politicians are inherently crooked. Boggs' case smacks of gamesmanship and political retribution. She'd made a mortal enemy in the Las Vegas Police Protective Association after raising a stink on pay raises for cops. So the PPA and the Culinary Union hired private investigator Dave Groover to collect dirt on her. He found it.

But why the charges? Wasn't self-sabotage enough? Boggs would surely lose her commission seat (and she did), as well as any chance to ascend into the hierarchy of national Republican politics. The party was salivating over her prospects and her potential to appeal to Black woman, a demographic the GOP has traditionally glossed over. It seems Boggs' indictment wasn't so much a warning shot to other politicians thinking about residency rules trickery. Rather, it appears to have been motivated by a desire to teach her a lesson; to show her that certain rules are inviolable and certain groups are invincible and that you diss them at your own risk. Which, if true, is the biggest injustice in this whole sordid case.



Where's surge on homefront?

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Democrats don't get it. George Bush is determined to stay in Iraq up until the last hour of his presidency and pass on this hot potato to the next President to deal with.

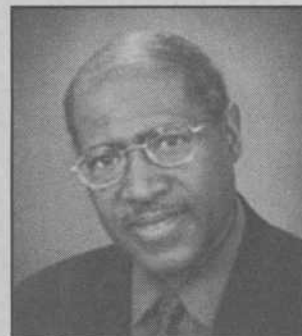
He has set them up with a "fund the troops" strategy, that recently secured the requisite funding for a troop "surge" on the promise that General Petraeus will report to him in September whether it working or not.

Meanwhile, Bush has worked hard to create the aura that it is working by browbeating the media into adopting a "progress" focus on areas of Iraq other than Baghdad and to agree with the generals that "progress" has been made in places like Anbar province west of Bagdad.

Not only have they gone along with him, but they physically have gone along, since Katie Couric, the "CBS Evening News" anchorwoman, finds herself in Iraq reporting on the war — and perhaps saving her job in the process.

Couric's talks with General Petraeus have convinced her that he will report to Bush the surge is working.

How could he not, since he is reporting to a president that has clearly only wanted to hear what has served his purpose in pursuing the war



RON WALTERS

all along?

Nevertheless, even she admits that Petraeus believes that both in Baghdad and the southern region, there is still considerable resistance to the U.S. presence and strong patterns of violence based on the civil war that is occurring.

But I am betting that he won't have an answer to the questions, how long will the troops have to stay there to pacify the other areas, what it will take in U.S. lives and resources, and how this severely limited notion of "success" contributes to the political settlement that must be the basis of U.S. withdrawal.

With regard to a political settlement, in the past few weeks, Pres. Nouri al-Maliki has, in effect, told his critics in Washington to go to the devil, that they may drive him to seek "other allies."

This was in response to the view, also widely held among many Iraqi leaders that he is running, essentially, a Shiite sectarian government.

Those who want change

seem to be turning to the 2004 transitional President Ayad Allawi as a nationalist, not a sectarian leader.

Al-Maliki's response was that to force a change now would "paralyze the government."

However, since a political settlement depends upon knitting the Shiite and Sunni together, political leadership is at the heart of the matter.

The problem, however, is that the Shiites have not only the political power — which they don't want to give up — but the guns to enforce their position of supremacy.

In this context, the build-up of U.S. troops is only aiding and abetting a one-sided government — and stoking the opposition in the process.

So, George Bush sneaks into Iraq on Labor Day, both to shore up al-Maliki and build a stronger image for his position that the surge is

working. But his visit also provides diversion from the Labor Day view of his domestic leadership of the economy. In late August, he characterized the economy using optimistic words, like "working," "robust," "thriving," "booming" and "the envy of the world."

But Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont recently noted that since Bush has been in office: 3 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, 3 million American workers have lost their pensions, 5 million more have slipped into poverty, and nearly 9 million Americans have lost their health insurance; entry level wages for male and female high school grads have fallen by 3.3 percent and 4.9 percent respectively, and wages and salaries are now at the lowest share of GDP since 1929.

(See Walters, Page 9)



Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100
Email: lvsentinelvoice@yahoo.com

Contributing Writers:
Frank Albano
Debbie Hall
Lés Pierres Streater
Kanika Vann

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief
Parker Philpot, Copy Editor
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association