



BY ANONYMOUS

Is it time to call in Dr. Drew for a DC government intervention?

A brief rundown: The chief of staff to DC Councilmember Jim Graham (D-Ward1) is arrested by FBI agents for allegedly taking a bribe and other favors to push taxicab legislation. Mayor/Councilmember-For-Life Marion S. Barry Jr. (D-Ward 8) is arrested by the US Park Police for allegedly stalking a former girlfriend, whom he hired with city money. And our current Mayor BlackBerry acts like DC government is his own mob territory, getting chauffeured by diamond-studded pals in the city-owned Navigator, installing a heating system in his favorite city pool, and naming a new city schoolyard Fenty Field.

Whoa. Add in a few no-show mafia jobs and call us New Jersey.

For those Dear Readers who are sheltered from the voyeuristic lure of reality television (or *The Sopranos*), The Nose will explain. Dr. Drew is a celebrity physician who specializes in treating self-important, egomaniacal people with addictions. Perhaps Mayor BlackBerry, DC councilmembers and staff need to spend a week or two out at Dr. Drew's Pasadena Recovery Center, with guest lectures by recently indicted Hoboken, NJ, Mayor Peter Cammarano, former Detroit Hip-Hop Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and ex-felon former Providence Mayor Vincent "Buddy" Cianci.

The Price of Doing Business in Ward 1

A quick rehash for you Dear Readers who spent September laser-focused on the Baucus health-care bill: Teddy Loza, right-hand man to Graham, was arrested in his Columbia Heights home in late September, and FBI agents later swarmed his City Hall office. Loza is accused of taking two bribes totaling \$1,500,

accepting trips and other gifts in exchange for ushering a bill through the DC Council involving the city's taxicab industry, which Graham introduced and supported.

Graham has denied any wrongdoing. He has put Loza on administrative leave.

The Nose will quickly dispense with the obvious: Only \$1,500, Teddy?

At first The Nose pitied Loza for getting caught for such a paltry amount. But then The Nose thought about it some more. Perhaps Loza lowballed the value of a piece of legislation because DC councilmembers shill all the time in exchange for a mere \$500 donation to their re-election campaign or constituent services fund.

Then again, Loza's boss knows how to deal.

Take the baseball stadium, for example. Graham publicly sat on the fence for months, expressing concern about the cost of the ballpark. But apparently he wasn't too much of a fiscal conservative, because Graham also said he'd like to see some money go to city libraries. About \$45 million sounded good. So then-Mayor Bowtie promised \$45 million to libraries.

All of a sudden, indications were that Graham was leaning toward yes.

Then something happened. Graham said he wasn't convinced libraries were going to get the money.

So he voted no.

Smart politics or legislative extortion?

Graham's reputation for putting his vote up to the highest bidder certainly has benefitted Ward 1 at times, but overall it has created a lot of resentment from his colleagues. And it just might have fostered a feeling that each bill comes with a price tag.

Or take the controversy over the council's distribution of earmarks in this last budget. Mayor/Council-

member-For-Life Barry got much of the attention for helping to funnel city money to questionable groups. In the end, the council decided to remove almost all earmarks from the fiscal year 2010 budget.

And which ward will be most impacted by this?

Ward 1.

Among his colleagues, Graham has been the most effective in targeting money to groups in his ward. A few of those groups, according to council records, lack the legal documents to claim nonprofit status. So it wasn't exactly a surprise to The Nose to read that Loza was involved with the group Fiesta DC, and that Fiesta DC had been earmarked money.

Some of you Dear Readers, especially those who work on Capitol Hill, might say The Nose is naïve. This kind of bargaining and legislative give-and-take happens all the time, right?

Call The Nose what you want, but public policy shouldn't be up for sale. Period.

The Struggle for Mayor BlackBerry's Soul

At almost every community gathering, civic meeting and even a few dinner parties, The Nose has heard the same question posed about our city's chief executive: "Is this the same man I voted for three years ago?"

The Nose certainly thinks Mayor BlackBerry is in the midst of an identity crisis.

Just three short years ago, Fenty ran as the young populist, wearing a hole into his shoe by knocking on almost every door in the District. He was the accessible, constituent-service king. He eagerly answered press questions. He promised transparency and openness in government. He'd attend—as Buddy Cianci would say—

even the opening of an envelope.

Fast forward to now. Fenty seems more Machiavelli than man of the people. He makes decisions without input or consultation. He shields himself from the press, deflecting all tough questions to the city's attorney general and mayoral consigliere, Peter Nickels. He vacations on the dime of the United Arab Emirates. He appears arrogant and above reproach.

So who is the true Fenty?

The Nose will approach this question with great assistance from the Serenity Prayer. What cannot change: Mayor BlackBerry has always been a control freak. And unlike our current president, Mayor BlackBerry is not an intensely curious man who solicits advice from all his advisers. He relies on a few trusted people and goes with his gut, à la George W. Bush.

That's what greatly concerns The Nose. In the past two years, and especially in the last six months, key members of the Fenty administration whom The Nose considered stewards of good government have exited: City Administrator Dan Tangherlini, Chief of Budget Execution Will Singer, DC Housing Authority Director Michael Kelly, and several others whom The Nose did not have the pleasure to meet.

The crowd surrounding Fenty right now won't make *Governing Magazine's* top mayoral advisers anytime soon.

Many owe their careers to Fenty and act as Yes Men and Women. But The Nose spies a few reformers in the organizational charts, a few who had careers before Mayor BlackBerry and have led their agencies well despite their boss's Mafioso management style.

It's time for these folks to speak up.

The Nose is listening. ★

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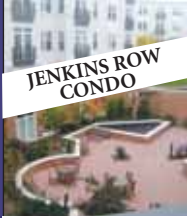
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