

The Story about SHT report Elizabeth Johnson

A few months before the SHT article titled “ Murray Cohen case will not be reinvestigated”, Johnson contacted Murray Cohen’s son and asked if she can interview him for her new article about his father’s case. Mr. Esdale hesitated at first because he was reminded of SHT reporter Matthew Doig’s treatment that he received years earlier.

Doig wrote a series of articles about his father’s case which were riddled with false information. Johnson was respectful and polite and Mr. Esdale agreed to speak with her.

He asked one thing of Johnson which was to please tell the truth and print accurate facts. Johnson convinced Mr. Esdale that she would. Mr. Esdale provided Johnson with a 48 page report authored by the former head of the Jacksonville FBI, James Casey. Mr. Casey spent seven months investigating the case of Murray Cohen and concluded there was probable cause that Murray Cohen was murdered by his wife of three weeks. Mr. Casey has impeccable credentials. He spent thirty years in the FBI and at the time of his retirement was the head of the Jacksonville headquarters. Mr. Casey was in charge of 250 agents and all FBI investigations in north Florida.

Johnson’s story was published on August 3, 2013. In her article she reported James Casey is just being an retired FBI agent. Johnson left out Mr. Casey’s impeccable credentials that he accumulated during his 30 years of service with the FBI.

Johnson also failed to report in her article the conflict of interest and unclean hands of Sarasota prosecutor Karen Fravillig. Fravillig was assigned to evaluate Casey’s report and decide if the case of Murray Cohen should be reopened. Fravillig was friends and a co-worker of Murray Cohen’s wife, Maria Amurrio. Amurrio was a juvenile probation officer for Sarasota County and Fravillig was a juvenile prosecutor at the same time.

Shortly after Johnson’s story was published, Mr. Esdale was contacted by a whistle blower who claimed to be a former SSO employee with information about a romantic affair between the detective assigned to the Cohen case and Murray’s killer. This whistle blower also claimed to have knowledge where to find evidence of the affair. Johnson was given this information and never followed up with it. Johnson also never returned Mr. Esdale’s calls after providing this information.

Weeks later, Mr. Esdale received more new information regarding a meeting which took place at a Friars club get together in New York. At this meeting, an acquaintance of Mr. Esdale was seated at the table of the top audio expert, Paul Ginsberg. Ginsberg was hired by SHT years earlier to listen to the recording of the 911 call made by Murray Cohen’s wife of three weeks the day she claimed she discover her newly wed husband deceased during a peaceful afternoon nap. This acquaintance of Mr. Esdale was a twenty year friend of Ginsberg and was not aware of his examination of the 911 recording years earlier. During their conversation at the table, the acquaintance said to Ginsberg, “Paul, you need to help my friend in Florida. He has a recording of his father being murdered in the

background and has been denied justice". When Ginsberg heard the name of her friend, he stated, " I know this case because I examined the recording years ago". Ginsberg further stated in front of everyone at the table, "In my opinion, Murray Cohen was murdered". He further stated, "That family has been denied justice because it is political".

Once again, Mr. Esdale reached out to Johnson and told her about the Friar club incident. Mr. Esdale believed Johnson would follow through since the SHT hired Ginsberg during their series of articles covering the death of Murray Cohen. A few days after sharing this information with Johnson, Mr. Esdale called Johnson back to see if she made contact with Ginsberg. Her tone of being polite and respectful was gone and in an arrogant tone she said to Mr. Esdale, " No I did not call Ginsberg and further stated "I spoke with my editor and I was told that the SHT will not be doing anymore coverage of your father's story" and terminated their conversation.