

— Start

MAYOR

(He takes a seat) I had an interesting talk with my brother today.

HOVSTAD

Oh.

MAYOR

Yes, about his findings.

HOVSTAD

His findings?

MAYOR

Yes. He didn't tell you?

AL

We have his report.

HOVSTAD

So, that's why you're here?

MAYOR

Yes, so what do you think about it?

HOVSTAD

Well, I'm no scientist, but your brother has a PhD.

MAYOR

So, you're going to publish it?

AL

We plan to.

MAYOR

Yes, of course, but I just wanted to share some of my concerns.

HOVSTAD

You are welcome to share your concerns with a written response.

MAYOR

No, actually I think it's best I share them now.

HOVSTAD

Sure.

The People's Pinecone is well regarded. It's been around a long time and it's free. It's in the library, on the rack in stores and delivered to everyone's doorstep. And now, you have paid subscriptions online. It's amazing how it has survived when so many newspapers have died. Your coverage of community events, the schools, the churches, and local sports makes readers eager to read your paper. It's good for local business and realtors. It's an easy place to list Public Notices and sales too. You do a very good job. *The People's Pinecone* is an integral part of our community.

AL

Thank you. We try to do our best.

MAYOR

Would you say that the majority of our community is made up of God fearing, middle to upper class taxpayers?

AL

Yes, of course.

MAYOR

And they're always so happy to pitch in and make financial sacrifices placed upon them by unforeseen incidents caused by blunders people made ages ago.

AL

Sacrifices?

MAYOR

Indeed. But, it's wonderful to know that our community is so forgiving and generous. We'll be hit hard.

HOVSTAD

How hard?

MAYOR

Like wildfire.

AL

It will be a setback. But this town has cleaned up other hazardous areas.

MAYOR

Not on school property and never with so much at stake. We invested so much in the future prosperity of the entire

Ponderosa area and not just the Academy. We just approved planning for a community center to be built adjacent to the property and we have library renovations going on and solar panels all set to be installed in the parking lot. The legal expenses will be overwhelming.

HOVSTAD

There are ways to get assistance.

MAYOR

Really, what are you talking about? Philanthropy for toxic and legal clean up?

AL

(He shakes his head no) Mayor Stockman, thank you. I think it's in the best interest of our readers not to publish the findings as presented by your brother.

HOVSTAD

No!

AL

Yes!

HOVSTAD

Shit, *(Sighs)* oh okay, just not yet. Okay, I agree, we'll give it more careful consideration.

MAYOR

I'm sorry, but the vitality of our community is at stake. Tom can be a bit histrionic. He may have a PhD, and be a science expert, but he's lacks a sort of ... understanding about ... people problems.

~~_____~~ End

HOVSTAD

But there's still a huge problem.

MAYOR

Yes, of course, I have prepared an announcement that we need to do some unexpected repairs and renovations at the school site that will be accomplished during the summer. *(He pauses for a moment and takes out his phone and starts to look and scroll as he continues to talk)* The Academy will still open in the fall but some of the work will have to be done while school is in session. We will close the field and lose the garden. So, the children will have to play mainly on the blacktop, like many schools.