

# INJUSTICE OF MALICIOUS GOSSIP

A Few False Stories About  
the Fred Huffman Case  
Corrected

BY C. R. BARROW

Some of my friends at Myrtle Point, Bandon, and here at Coquille have called my attention frequently and lately to some false stories that have been circulated by some of my enemies, about me in connection with the above mentioned case. Ordinarily I pay no attention to such things. And if this was the first time since I came to Coquille that my clients had been meddled with, and I had been lied about, I would most likely ignore it now. But there has been meddling in several of my cases. Notably the Reddick case, and two or three other cases which I will comment upon later. And when false stories are circulated to injure a man's character and reputation, and to ruin his business, it is time for him to contradict them. This I propose to do. A few persons have made it their business seemingly, to say mean things about me, and to stick a knife into me at every opportunity ever since I first came to Coquille. But I am happy to say there are only a few persons so constituted. And I know that the great majority of the people of Coquille, and of Coos county are honorable and fair minded and believe in an "open field" and a "square deal" for every one. And this is all I ask of any man, or of any community.

Some of these false stories which my friends have called to my attention are as follows: First—Because I did not conduct Huffman's case in court, some evil disposed persons have told it around. "That I took a fee of Huffman and then refused to defend him, and would not do anything for him." Now I can prove by Sheriff Gage, Clyde Gage, T. J. Thrift, George Moulton, J. J. Stanley and others, that this is a lie. And I do not want any better witnesses to any fact than the above named gentlemen, who are all honorable, upright, well known citizens of Coos County. And these gentlemen with others were present and know that the reason I did not conduct Huffman's cases in court, was because he took both of his cases out of my hands. He would not have any of the witnesses I had hunted up, because certain parties had told him that I wanted him to go to the penitentiary, and that I was going to throw him down on his defense of insanity. All of which were lies. But Huffman, having known me for only a few weeks, and therefore believing these false stories about me, would not permit me to have anything further to do with his case, except that he wanted me to make the final plea to the jury. And I can prove by the above named honorable citizens of Coos county that I did just what Huffman himself ordered done. And I did so from the same motive that any honorable attorney would have acted under the same circumstances. And that was, to avoid a clash in open court, which would have been an insult to the dignity of the court, and an injury to any defense that Huffman might have.

And right here I desire to say without any egotism, but solely on a basis of my examination and knowledge of the whole case, that if meddling outside parties had kept their hands off, and had not induced Huffman to employ another attorney in my place, I feel perfectly confident that I would have cleared him, for never, in my life, was I better prepared to try a case than I was to try Huffman's case. Stanley and I cleared Reddick without a single witness of his own to support him. While I had almost thirty witnesses to testify for Huffman, but he positively refused to allow me to use

them. And Huffman was influenced and induced to do this by as infamous and as disreputable a process as ever disgraced the infernal annals of the records of hell. The facts are, that certain persons went to Huffman, after he had employed me, and told him a number of lies about me. Among other things, they told him, First—"That when it came to his trial, I would throw him down on his defense of insanity, and that I did not know how to try a case of that kind anyhow." In answer to this I say without hesitation, that it is a lie out of the whole cloth. The man who says, or who insinuates, or even intimates, that I ever even thought of throwing Huffman down on his defense of insanity, or any other defense that he might have had, is as great a liar as old Lucifer himself. I never threw down a client in my life, nor have I ever even thought of doing such a thing. And no man dare to face me and say I have, for he would know that he was not telling the truth.

Second—They told Huffman, "That I wanted him to go to the penitentiary." In reply to this I say that it is a lie pure and simple. There is not a particle of truth or even the semblance of truth in it.

Third—They told Huffman, "That I was not trying to look up any evidence for him, and that I was making no preparations for his defense." Now I can prove this is a lie, by Dr. Richmond, T. A. Walker, C. W. Dye, J. E. Perrot, Henry Miller, and at least twenty others, all as good, as reputable, and as honorable citizens as ever lived in Coos county.

I never worked harder in my life on a man's defense than I did on Huffman's defense of insanity. As soon as he employed me I started men to look up evidence. I had four men in the field from six to eight weeks and paid them for their services. I had twenty-seven good witnesses, and I would have had at least two, and possibly three good physicians to testify. I had Huffman examined three or four times as to his epileptic condition, and as to his periods of epileptic insanity. I had traced his history from boyhood. His epileptic attacks, and the effect of the same upon his mental and moral faculties, and to what extent these faculties had become clouded, abnormal, and irrational. Also his family history for hereditary influences. I had obtained a minute history of Huffman's every action during the day and night of the fire, the people he talked with and the condition of his mind at that time. Also of the various threats that had been made against him at divers times, and the effect these threats made on his mind and his epileptic condition. I also know that some of the state's witnesses had a disagreement on certain points of their testimony, and a certain attorney told them that it would not make any difference, as their statements had not been taken down, and no one knew the difference between their several statements, but he was mistaken, we had found it out.

In preparing Huffman's defense of insanity I used the best authorities that are published, and besides the eight works of insanity which I had in my office, I borrowed one from Chas. McKnight and bought a new work on epileptic insanity especially to use in Huffman's case. And spent a good many days and nights preparing his case for trial.

And any man who says, who intimates, or even insinuates that I did not look up the evidence and make a thorough preparation to defend Huffman, is a liar.

And any man who says, who intimates, or even insinuates that I accepted a fee of Huffman and then voluntarily quit his case or refused to defend him, is a liar.

Fourth—They told Huffman, "That I was no good as a lawyer, and that I could not examine witnesses, nor select a jury." As to these statements, I have no personal reply to make. The record speaks for itself. When a man has practiced law from 1890 to the present, and has won over ninety per

cent of the civil suits he has tried, he is no need for him to make reply to such statements. The record speaks for itself. And when he has defended men in Ohio, Missouri, Kansas and Oregon, for almost every crime, including murder, manslaughter, assault with intent to kill, rape, incest, burglary, grand larceny and false pretenses, and fortunately has never had a client convicted and sent to the penitentiary, it is not necessary for him to answer such attacks. The records answer them.

And this Huffman case is only one of several cases in which persons have meddled with my clients and vilified me personally.

I have never before said anything about the treatment I received from certain parties in the Reddick case, but now I will expose that also. Soon after Mr. Reddick employed me to defend him and while he was in the county jail here, he told me what influence certain persons were using on him in order to get him to discharge me and employ certain other attorneys. He said, "Why you would hardly believe the pressure they have brought to bear to get me to discharge you." Then he went ahead and told me all about it, and the mean things they said about me. Now I was meeting some of these parties on the streets almost daily and they spoke to me as pleasantly and treated me as friendly as my real true friends did. And after passing, I have often thought, "you hypocrite, you whited sepulchre, you evidently don't know that I am fully aware of your perfidy and double dealing." And not one of these persons had any reason or occasion for doing such low, mean, underhanded work against me, much less any justification. In fact at that time I was almost a stranger to them and they to me. Afterwards when Mr. Stanley became associated in the same case with me, I asked Mr. Reddick if he said anything against him, and he said no, that they poured out all their venom on me alone. And he said this very fact showed the meanness and the animus of their actions so plainly, that he could see they were doing it more to injure me, than to assist him, so he paid no attention to their vilifying statements, and stuck all the closer to me. I passed the matter up, and said nothing about it except to my wife. I did not as much as tell Mr. Stanley until lately. And I would not mention the fact now, but some of these sneaky, cowardly assassins of human character, still keep secretly stabbing me in the back. They did so in the Reddick case, in this Huffman case, and in at least three other cases.

Just previous to the last September term of court, a prominent man of Coquille, I repeat it, a prominent man of Coquille tried to get certain of my clients to discharge me and employ another attorney, and he said and insinuated all the mean things about me that he could in order to induce them to do so. Fortunately for me my clients stuck to me, as all the others have done except Huffman. And fortunately for them, I won their case for them. I have no comments to make on the above case of outrageous intermeddling with my business. I am perfectly willing to leave it to each and every honest man and woman in Coquille and in Coos county, to make their own comments. Whenever I become so low and vile, and so lost to all sense of honor, as to go to people and tell them not to trade at this or that store, or not to employ this or that physician or lawyer, or any other line of business. I hope the "good people" of Coquille and Coos county will promptly drum me out. To do such a thing publicly and openly is mean enough, but to do it sneakily and secretly by innuendos and insinuations against a man's character, his reputation, his ability, and his integrity, is meaner than the scum of the brew of the slime in the cauldrons of hell.

The poet has well said,—"He who steals my purse steals trash; 'twas something, nothing; 'twas mine, 'tis his; But he who filches from me

my good name, robs me of that which enricheth him not, and makes me poor indeed."

It is hard to understand just what the mental and moral make-up really is of a man who seems to enjoy reveling and wallowing in the slime of his own malicious and unwarranted gossip, and his lying statements about others and about their business, which is plainly and unquestionably none of his business. Feeding his rapacious, maw vampiric, hyenalike upon humanity. His mental and moral make up must be of ghouls, ghoulish. As Beecher has well said, "The livelong day he will coolly sit with sneering lip, transfixing every character that is presented." If there is any one man who is meaner and more vile than another, it is the man who sneaks around and stabs you in the back. The man who sits around watching like a sylvan demon, for an opportunity to make mean, disparaging remarks about you, or worse yet, to throw out vile slurs and insinuations about you where he thinks it will injure you most and where he feels that his precious hide is safe among his friends, or your enemies. Where he thinks you won't hear of what he has said and cannot get back at him, like the poor, miserably cringing moral coward that he is. A being so vile that he disgraces the Almighty, his Creator; and shames the Devil, his king.

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