

Employee Problems at the District Attorney's Office

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by Frost McGahey, Investigative Journalist

When Michael Renteria was elected as District Attorney for the 6th Judicial District, he inherited a DA's office of 34 people that were doing 27 criminal and 5 civil trials a year. Of those 34 people, 27 have left and that office, now staffed with 40 people, is doing only 6 trials a year.

On top of that, three Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) lawsuits were filed by women in the office who have subsequently left.

One of the complainants is Anjolie Vega who started in the DA's office in 2014 and whose last position was senior legal secretary to Cynthia Clark. "I heard Renteria screaming at Cynthia over the phone. He made her life so miserable she quit under duress. Quitting was the last thing she wanted to do." (Clark later filed an EEOC complaint.)

Vega continues, "After Cynthia quit, I felt that I had a target on my back from Renteria. My former boss, Francesca Estevez, had been great to work with. If you had to come in at 8:07 because you had to drop off your kid at school, she said that's ok as long as you made up the time at

lunch. There's a time clock at the office. Under Renteria if I needed a few more minutes, he would say It's not my problem that you chose to bring children into the world. Figure it out. I have a business to run."

According to Vega, Renteria had an agenda when he took over the office. He hated Estevez so much that he wanted to get rid of anyone that was loyal to her. He told the staff that they were not allowed to speak to her. Vega had to take a lower-paying job to get away from him.

The Silver City Police Department has also had a problem with Renteria's treatment of female officers. A letter from their union reads:

"Since Renteria has taken office, the relationship between the DA's office and the Silver City Police Officers Association (SCPOA) members has been non-existent. The SCPOA has admonished Renteria on more than one occasion about his disrespect of female members of law enforcement, and his inability to maintain a fully staffed office of prosecutors.

SCPOA members have been forced to endure Renteria's revolving door of prosecutors, and at times have only had one of two prosecutors* to work with at the Silver City Office, therefore creating an inefficient system that only hurts the local communities.

"Our membership has taken a strong stance against Renteria's character and behavior and handed down a vote of No Confidence with 100% of the membership voting," according to SCPOA's letter. "Renteria has failed law enforcement and has certainly failed the community.....Consider why Renteria enjoys the strong support of defense attorneys, but draws the ire of police."



Sixth Judicial Court District
Attorney Michael Renteria