



*The Arizona Correctional Peace
Officers Association*

Check and Mate Newsletter No. 24



*A bi-weekly newsletter to
inform Union members on
important grievance results,
trends, procedures and
important information
relevant to a better quality of
work life.*

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**-The Power of the Ethical
Whistleblower**



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The Power of the Ethical Whistleblower

When one hears about a whistleblower coming forth from the world of law enforcement, the first name that often comes to mind is the case of “Frank Serpico”.

Francesco Vincent Serpico is a former New York City Police Department officer who holds both American and Italian citizenship. He is known for whistleblowing on police corruption in the late 1960s and early 1970s, an act that prompted Mayor John V. Lindsay to appoint the landmark Knapp Commission to investigate the NYPD.

As this is not intended to be an in-depth analysis of that case, I invite you to either read his own account of the case, or to simply rent the movie “Serpico” starring Al Pacino, an excellent film in itself.

What then, is an Ethical Whistleblower, and why is that the topic of this week’s newsletter?

Well, as all of you are already aware, we had a whistleblower step forth this past week revealing corruption within the department of corrections in the form of “deliberate indifference” after video was leaked from said whistleblower to AZ. C.P.O.A. staff who in turn provided the video to a media liaison. Other factors led the whistleblower to come forth and

expose the case fully by going on ABC 15.

Many are now asking if whistleblowing is ethical and most importantly, is it a safe decision being that the whistleblower is returning to work within the same environment that they basically exposed to outside agencies for doing a bad thing.

Let's clear up that misconception here and now. For those familiar with Serpico, one huge difference is immediately obvious: Serpico exposed corruption that went from the top administrators down to the line officers in the N.Y.P.D.

In our own most recent case, our line staff were not involved in the transgression but were in fact, affected negatively, and drastically, by that transgression that belonged to the upper echelon of ADOC alone, Period!

That transgression, of course, are the broken locks affecting various institutions, but more predominantly, Lewis Complex that has been the subject of an ABC 15 investigation that revealed that the upper

administration, from the Director on down, were aware of the horrendous situation yet chose to do nothing about it.

In fact, when the transgression was first revealed, upper management simply either denied the allegation, or sugarcoated the allegation by downplaying the terrible situation and redirecting blame towards the line staff.

Then in stepped the whistleblower. The cat came out of the bag and without having to become redundant here and repeat the whole sequence of events, administration was forced to acknowledge that the locks were indeed broken and had to relocate every inmate from Morey Unit to other units throughout Arizona.

The whistleblower returned to work. Why? Because what she did was based on an ethical decision to do the right thing. What was she going to do, stand idle by while her staff continued to get assaulted and were at risk of getting killed?

Of course not! And most importantly, her decision saved lives and benefitted

all staff, from administration on down to the line staff, down to the inmates themselves.

And there's the difference that this administration has to learn to accept, because our staff are not going to tolerate this behavior any longer!

The days of the three monkeys dominating the field of law enforcement with their message of speak, see or hear no evil are being replaced with the new motto of "I saw it, I heard it and I'm telling" because our staff and inmate safety is more important to us than turning the blind eye to behaviors that are costing us our lives.

Yours in Solidarity,

Carlos Garcia

*Executive Grievance
Coordinator*

Deeds not words!

