

I wanted to respond to something in Alison Boggs' story today and bring some new information to light. This morning, I received the Feb. 9, 2010 emergency phone call audio and the report from the arrest incident she references in her story. She didn't have access to that information at the time she wrote her story.

She wrote: The call came in Tuesday at 12:36 p.m. Some men had been yelling and screaming for about an hour across from the Tensed post office.

Four Coeur d'Alene Tribe police officers responded and detained a 57-year-old man for marijuana possession. The man was not a tribal member, so the officers had no authority to book him into the Benewah County Jail. They held him until 1:15 p.m., when a county deputy arrived from St. Maries.

That is the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's account of the incident.

This is Benewah County Prosecutor Doug Payne's version:

A member of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe called tribal police regarding three tribal members who were harassing an elderly man. Four tribal police cars responded, but the people creating the disturbance were gone. The tribal police officers rightfully detained the man who was the victim of the suspected harassment for possession of marijuana but "never followed up with the people who were the cause of the call."

There are several misstatements of fact in Doug Payne's version.

1. The caller contacts Kootenai County Central Dispatch through a landline. This can be confirmed by the dispatch log and the audio.
2. The caller doesn't identify herself as a member of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe or any race for that matter.
3. She describes a disturbance. She describes a bunch of drunks are screaming, cussing and hollering and yelling across the street for the last hour. There is no mention of tribal members harassing an elderly man.
4. The dispatcher even asks the caller if the people causing the trouble are tribal members. She says she doesn't know.

I am deeply concerned by the Prosecuting Attorney's account of the way the call was handled by tribal officers and how it was received by central dispatch. His description paints a picture of tribal members bothering an old man. The reader is left with the impression that tribal police officers turn a blind eye to justice based on race.

Doug Payne also makes an assumption that the tribal police didn't follow up. The Police Chief said the Tribal officers interviewed witnesses to determine what had happened. None of the witnesses knew who the other men were or could say where they went.

The 57-year old individual who was arrested never mentioned he was being harassed by anyone to tribal police. If there is new information obtained by the Benewah County Sheriff's Department, it would be nice if they would share that with the tribal officers.

It is ridiculous to have to prove that Idaho POST certified peace officers didn't do their job when a prosecuting attorney, the designated spokesman for the sheriff said, "never followed up with the people who were the cause of the call."

The tribe deals with facts and the audio on this file proves it