

## Booger County Mafia debunked

Dennis Phillips  
Robertson County News

It's a term coined by Attorney Ty Clevenger, Booger County Mafia. Sounds scary, dark and corrupt.

To date, I have not met a single member of any so-called mafia, in Robertson County or anywhere for that matter. I guess I live a sheltered life, not having the chance to meet real mafia people after more than 20 years in this business. I would love to interview one because that would be amazing.

In a skillfully written blog post, Clevenger, who's name seems to draws laughter when talking with anyone holding elected office in Robertson County, attacks the City of Hearne, local attorney's, a district Judge, three Hearne council persons and the Mayor. Did I mention he also decided to attack yours truly?

Normally, as you my dear reader know, I would not give this type of hyped misinformation the time of day, but Clevenger has been very persistent in his attacks against our city and county. When he does not get his way, or the reaction he is seeking, he attacks people and I along with a whole handful of your elected officials have had enough.

His latest post entitled, "The Booger County Mafia upped the ante, and it's time for Hearne residents to respond" has encourage me to do just that, respond. So, Mr. Clevenger since you have asked for it, here is the response.

Yes, the city of Hearne is under investigation by the County Attorney's office.

Yes, Judge Stem denied CA / DA Siegert to listen to the tape of the executive session.

Yes, Siegert did obtain the tape with a search warrant.

Yes, there is more to the story that was not included in the blog post which ultimately mislead the reader.

Siegert and Russ reached an agreement that would allow Siegert to listen to the tape. The agreement was reached an hour after the ruling, after KBTX had left the courthouse and you were not even there. What you are "reporting" is what you hear, you did not obtain this information for yourself.

If you have made it this far, perhaps you are willing to go the rest of the way.

Let's continue, shall we...

Why did the City of Hearne rehire Bryan "Rusty" Russ? Clevenger claimed that Stem and Russ are kingpins in the Booger County Mafia. But Clevenger gives no real facts, just some thought up speculation and opinion.

So here is what I know about the rehire of Bryan Russ. According to councilwoman Hazel Embra, they felt Russ was best suited for the job. Well, that is nice and fluffy but it does not really fly. Truth is, know one has a legitimate reason. There is a lot of speculation, but nothing factual. I do not report speculation. We use confirmed sources, on the record; you know information you can back up as truth.

The vote to rehire Russ was 3-2. The coined phrased "Three Blind Mice," again a Clevenger term, is applied to councilpersons White, Ratter and Embra. These are the three that voted to rehire Russ as reported in my last council meeting report.

Let's get a chronological order to relevant events and I apologize, this is going to be long:

- Feb. 2015 - 10th Court of Appeals in Waco orders special recall election of Maxine Vaughn (d). Embra, White and Rattler, represented by Atty. Ty Clevenger, brought the suit.

- Clevenger is quoted as saying, "“If Ms. Vaughn is recalled, my clients will have a 3-2 majority on the city council, and they have repeatedly said the first order of business will be to fire Mr. Russ.” (Councilpersons Embra denied having said they wanted to fire Russ during a visit to my office after this story was printed. I was accused of misquoting the councilperson, however after re-reading the story the conclusion was made that I did in fact quote the Attorney of record and not the councilperson(s).
- Hearne Council met and ordered the special recall election of Vaughn, place 3 for March 3, 2015. The regular election was set for May 9. The place 3 seat was on the ballot, recall or not.
- Again, printed in the Robertson County News... “If Vaughn is recalled, according to the attorney represented the council of three, the goal is to have the leverage and votes to release from duty the now city attorney, Bryan Russ. Ty Clevenger, attorney for the council of three posted on his website. However the RCN printed an Editor's Note: "Ed. Note: The Robertson County News, in fact quoted Mr. Ty Clevenger, attorney of record for Milton Johnson, Hazel Embra, Joyce Rattler and Lashaunda White and in no way suggested or printed attribution of that statement to anyone other than Clevenger. Clevenger posted this statement on his website blog. Though shortened for the February 5 edition of the Robertson County News, here is the quote in full, “If Ms. Vaughn is recalled, my clients will have a 3-2 majority on the city council, and they have repeatedly said the first order of business will be to fire Mr. Russ, who makes more than \$4,700 per month for a part-time job even though (1) he does not prosecute traffic offenses, and (2) he charges extra for any litigation that he works on. Based on my review, that’s more than three times what an average city attorney makes in a town the size of Hearne.”
- On Feb. 26, I reported in my column that an employee was in fact in jail and still on city payroll. I openly encourage City Manager Pee Wee Drake to terminate that employee. He did not terminate him at that time.
- The council, at this time, was locked in a three-three tie. A recall would theoretically swing the vote in favor of a two-three, Embra, What and Rattler on one side, Mayor Gomez and then councilperson Michael Werlinger.
- I made it clear I was no fan of this recall election, therefore siding against Clevenger. This recall election cost taxpayers in excess of \$10,000.00 and accomplished nothing but negative headlines and a boost to Clevenger's ego, which would not last long. Since this point in time I have been dubbed a wannabe to the Booger County Mafia.
- In March 2015, Vaughn was recalled, however Werlinger and Gomez were absent from council meetings. No quorum, which meant that there were no meetings. This lasted for three meetings. The recall votes could not be canvases.
- Under advisement of City Attorney Bryan Russ to canvas the vote and the council did. However, to those that attend the council meetings regularly, Gomez and Werlinger had no intention of showing up for any meeting until after the election.
- On the agenda however appeared two items, which called for the termination of Russ as well as City Manager Pee-Wee Drake.
- Reported April 9 Clevenger issued an emergency city agenda on behalf of his clients. This created an agenda fiasco with allegations of items removed. Clevenger charged that Drake intentionally removed these items. Drake admitted to removing the items but claimed that he did so in hopes a quorum would form and city bills could be paid.
- In a letter submitted by Clevenger to Robertson County CA/DA Coty Siegert, “As you know, I represent Hazel Embra, Joyce Rattler, and Lashaunda White, all of whom are members of the Hearne City Council. On behalf of my clients, I request a criminal investigation of Hearne City Manager Pee Wee Drake and City Attorney Bryan F. “Rusty” Russ, Jr.” Clevenger cites tampering with an official document as cause.
- Siegert replied that he would investigate however no indictment or charges would be filled if reason were found for an indictment before the upcoming May 9 election. Siegert has in the past stated that his

office would not affect the outcome of an election with an investigation.

- In April the RCN reported on the passing of Maxine Vaughn.
- Bryan F. Russ resigns along with Hearne Municipal Judge. Pee-Wee Drake announces his retirement.
- Shirley Harris and Emmett Aguirre take seats as new members of the Hearne City Council.
- Anna Florida is appointed and then removed as City Municipal Judge. The council decides to go out application hunting for the three open positions. Embra submits application for Municipal Judge.
- Reported June 25, Hearne Council selects Embra as Interim Municipal Judge. Drake retires but is retained as consultant and all other resignations including Russ' were accepted.
- Though retired the council agrees to keep Drake on as a consultant. All three positions are listed with TML (Texas Municipal League.)
- On September 10 we reported the rehire of Russ and the investigation into the employment of Natividad Rodriguez Jr. Re-read the sixth bullet point in this list.  
(Ed. Note: All of this was previously reported in the Robertson County News.)

I hope this list has caught you up to speed. Council meets this Tuesday just in case you want to attend. The Meeting is at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Building 2.

So here are a few other bullet points, fun facts and things to make you go huh?

- If Clevenger represented the "three blind mice" as he puts it, why is he attacking them now in his two most recent blog posts?
  - One of the councilpersons have told me off the record that they had promised Clevenger the City Attorney position. Clevenger represented the three women free of charge. It was also not reported that Clevenger attended the council meeting where the council did not hire him and he verbally assaulted Hazel Embra, in front of the audience and at least two other council members.
  - Why was this not reported in the Robertson County News? I use two sources, on the record, for my reports. While many-witnessed Clevenger's outbursts at Embra, only one councilperson confirmed the job promise.
  - Why if the three councilpersons were so determined to fire Russ, now flip their vote in a 3-2 to rehire him? Well, that is the \$60,000.00 question and no one knows the answer. It seems funny, but I have no proof of wrongdoing and I write what I can prove, not what I think.
  - While speculation runs rampant over the investigation of Rodriguez, Jr. the truth is it is still under investigation. Sure, I'm privilege to be kept in the loop, I know what is going on and where it all stands, but it is not ready for print.

So here are the facts that can be printed:

- The City is under investigation for contract bids on projects as well as the employment of Rodriguez.
- Stem refused to let Siegert hear the tapes, but a deal between the two attorneys has been made and Siegert will hear the tapes.
- It is Siegert's responsibility to fully investigate before taking any charges to the Grand Jury.
- Siegert has informed the Grand Jury of the investigation.
- It is a well-known fact that Clevenger shows nothing but animosity towards Robertson County and the City of Hearne. His anger is often pointed to our elected officials as well as Rusty Russ.
- While I'm often a fixture at council meetings, I have only seen Clevenger at one.
- Clevenger suggests you read "The Eagle" and watch KBTX for your news, I have seen The Eagle at three meetings and KBTX at one.
- The only stories I have ever seen reported by "The Eagle" or on KBTX are negative, never anything positive about our city or county. I do not watch KBTX for this reason nor read The Eagle. I do however watch KAGS-HD, which is a media partner with RCN and reports good stuff as well as the unfortunate bad story.
- Siegert did not tell Clevenger to call the FBI on the City of Hearne as stated in Clevenger's blog post.

Clevenger informed Siegert he was going to send the FBI a letter. Siegert simply told him he could do whatever he wanted to with that letter.

Clevenger charges in his post that RCN and myself in particular never report about the Hearne City Council. In truth he says I never report about the corruption. As you can see from the extensive bullet lists above, we at RCN take the council very seriously.

When there is proof and not speculation about corruption in Hearne I will print it. Mr. Clevenger do you have any proof you would like to share because everything I have read that you have printed reads more like speculation and opinion than fact. Call me when you get some facts that can be backed up by a source other than yourself. I do not consider you a credible source, don't feel bad, not many make the list of credible sources in my book.

He further suggests we fail to report properly because we were granted monies from the 4A-4B boards to move to our new location in downtown Hearne.

The Robertson County News (formerly Hearne Democrat) is the oldest business in Hearne. This newspaper has been located in downtown Hearne from its inception in 1892. My goal was to keep this newspaper where it belongs, in downtown Hearne and that goal was accomplished. We paid for this building and accepted help to renovate a historic iconic building in downtown Hearne. We did it on budget and kept Hearne's newspaper in Hearne where it belongs. While other businesses have chosen to leave downtown, and Hearne altogether, as long as I'm publisher of this newspaper, it will remain right where it is.

The Robertson County News is three blocks from Hearne City Hall. According to Google Maps Ty Clevenger is 1,638 miles away in Manhattan, New York.

See you at the council meetings; we will be there, as always.

P.S. This is the last time I will address anything posted by Ty Clevenger. Thanks for reading, you are my friends, neighbors and business associates and I treasure my relationship with all of you.

-Dennis

- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Feel free to share this, as I have been asked in PM if it is OK to do so. It is, share with whomever you like.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [16 hrs](#)

- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Be sure to read the paper this week, I will be addressing "Walking Quorum" one of my favorite catch phrases when discussing local government.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [16 hrs](#)

- [Robbie Massie Morrow](#) Are you kidding? The term Booger County Mafia has been around a lot longer than Ty Clevenger has probably been alive.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [14 hrs](#)

- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Do you know its origin, just curious.

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- [Richard Johnson](#) Ty Clevenger is a great American hero. Unlike the "mafia" type lowlife that

has plagued Robertson County for decades. Doesn't take a genius to see this newspaper has been bought and paid for by the "booger County Mafia" . A newspaper that only prints stories that will line his pockets and do favors for the other boogers.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [12 hrs](#)

- [▣](#)

- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Robert if you think 8m lining my pockets you are in for a serious awaking. I live in a double wide trailer, gig with my band to make extra money and live paycheck to paycheck. My truck has 208k mile and has not been fixed since the deer hit it last fall. The window fell, so now I have plastic to keep cool. If you think I'm making a killing, your nuts too.

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- [▣](#)

- [Richard Johnson Robertson County Newspapers](#) , Here is a straight forward challenge. Why would an attorney that has absolutely no financial and or personal interests is "your" county work for several years for no salary and absolutely no personal reward whatsoever to help a non profit organization that has no way to pay him fight a case against your corrupt ex district attorney who stole hundreds of thousands of dollars from the estate of a deceased Calvert ,Texas woman who had willed her fortune to help the town? And please, before you reply with "everyone is crazy or nuts that disagrees with you" I will let you know that I can prove this beyond the shadow of doubt because I was there and witnessed, first hand as a "booger" was exposed. Go for it.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1 hr](#)

- [▣](#)

- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) See [Richard Johnson](#) I totally agree with you when it comes to John, and the investigation from th AGs office is close to completion. However wasn't Clevenger fired from the Calvert case? He also request fees for his "pro bono" services. I was in court that day and wrote the story.

Now John is a seperate issue. Truth is I don't know why Ty continues, and I bet neither do you.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1 hr](#)

- [▣](#)

- [Richard Johnson](#) He did not ask for "fees" for himself. I was there too. He asked for some of my personal costs that I had volunteered to pay to expedite justice. Rusty Russ "attempted" to re define that to the court as Ty requesting fees. That was not accepted by the court as such and was being considered. Also Mr. Clevenger is certainly within his legal rights to ask for sanctions against Rusty Russ when Rusty continually defied the Court's orders to provide discovery necessary to be able to continue with the case. Sanctions sometimes do give money back to the Court to be awarded to the opposite attorney ([Ty Clevenger](#)) when his "booger" opponent tries to cheat the system to gain advantages. Yes "fees" should be paid or rather reimbursements given for wasting time in a court supported by taxation and too would certainly punish unethical attorneys such as Rusty Russ for attempting to control the outcome of the case by with holding evidence that would allow justice. (after he had already been ordered by the court to do so). Flushing out the "boogers" one at a time.

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- [▣](#)

- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) And if I remember correctly the judge denied those fees. Shortly after Clevenger was terminated as Atty of record for the Calvert historical society. Now

understand that I agree with you on this particular case, the Calvert case that is, and that is the basis of the AGs case. I consider John a separate issue. As for you not liking the courtroom antics of the opposing attorney, well, what can I say, I don't much like my ex wife.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [13 mins](#) · [Edited](#)

- [Richard Johnson](#) The Judge did not deny those fees, they were still being considered. So, if an attorney named Rusty Russ breaks the rules of civil procedure, it is merely "antics" ?  
[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [12 mins](#)
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- Write a reply...

- [Karan Russ Elliott](#) Thank you, Mr. Phillips, on your forthright reporting of the truth and facts. Clevenger has a long and sordid history of falsehoods about our county, city, and it's people. I just want to suggest to the citizens to google Ty Clevenger and especially th...[See More](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [14](#) · [12 hrs](#)

- [View 1 more reply](#)
- 
- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Karen, first thank you. Second very good suggestion, a Google search is fun and educational.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [58 mins](#)
- 
- [Amy Ellison Bridges](#) I can honestly say when I googled "Booger County Mafia", the only thing that derived from the search was Mr. Clevenger's blog. I've definitely heard the term "Booger County" but never with the word mafia added!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [6 hrs](#)

- 
- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) I have heard the term without mafia as well, but I may name my next band Booger County Mafia cause it sounds cool.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [56 mins](#)
- 
- [Traci Woodall Smith](#) Dennis, your newspaper is the ONLY one that prints FACTS and not OPINIONS. All the others are just doing the devils work. Keep up the good work! I'm so tired of these idiots spreading lies and making stuff up. Keep printing the facts.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [9 hrs](#)

- 
- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Thank you Traci.  
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- 
- [Michael Werlinger](#) It sure would be nice for clevenger to leave the da's office alone so they can focus on actual crimes going on in our county. [#stayinnytyboy](#)

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- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Like the hash tag Mike, nice one.  
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- [Debbie Paschall-Wall](#) Very well written!!

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- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Thank you Debbie.  
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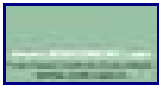
- [Catherine Reagan Toups](#) The people that reside in Robertson County and perpetuate and repeat all this crap that is being thrown at elected officials and leaders in our county are much bigger problems to our county than outsiders could ever be. Each time you buy into this "Bo...[See More](#)

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- [2 Replies](#) · [11 hrs](#)

- [Laura Woods](#) Everybody knows what goes on in Hearne & if you don't, you are just plain stupid!!It will never change!!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [9 hrs](#)



- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) What do you know that I dont? Seriuosly, I'm asking because if you have any proof of corruption I would love to see it.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [9 hrs](#)



- [Laura Woods](#) Some of us do not need proof.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [9 hrs](#)



- [Karan Russ Elliott](#) Yes, you need proof.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [8 hrs](#)



- [Laura Woods](#) It's just a piece of paper

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8 hrs](#)



- [Karan Russ Elliott](#) It's a piece of paper that tells a story of truth or lies.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [8 hrs](#)



- [Laura Woods](#) If your crooked,your crooked & you would be smart enough not to leave a paper trail.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5 hrs](#)



- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Laura Woods there is always proof. When I read this reply you have made the point as to what is truly wrong. You don't know and you are just passing along what you have heard. Everything in my original post can be backed up with proof. Every last word. Google Clevenger, look at the state bar of Texas site. Trust me when I say it's very educational.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1 hr](#) · [Edited](#)

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- 
- [Laura Moffitt Russ](#) Thank you Dennis Phillips, it is refreshing to read something factual. Also, it is nice to hear from the good people of Robertson County.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [7](#) · [11 hrs](#)

- 
- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) I agree and thank you.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [57 mins](#)

- 
- [Laura Moffitt Russ](#) "How you like them apples???"

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- 
- [Scott Wood](#) Thought you didn't have time for this. Glad you found someone who lives in a double wide to pretty much say that all of what Clevenger says might be true, but he hasn't seen the proof. That's pretty much what the 6th grade level diatribe above says.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [10 hrs](#)

- 
- [Robertson County Newspapers](#) Oh [Scott Wood](#) I guess because I live in a double wide I'm beneath you. 6th grade? Funny, is that the best you have? Try US Navy veteran, I like that one better. But perhaps us servicemen that raised 6 kids and came up the hard way are beneath you as well. BTW I don't know Laura Russ and you can read my post anyway you want.

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- 

- 
- [Diane Russell](#) I have had people who use to live here ask me what's going on .. I will pass this along.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [10 hrs](#)



- [Mary Jane Ramirez](#) Excellent choice.
- [Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [15 hrs](#)