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Skeletons In The "Bocas Unidos" Closet

Wednesday, November 25 2009 @ 09:04 AM EST

Contributed by: [Don Winner](#)

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By DON WINNER for [Panama-Guide.com](#) - There is a small group of people in Bocas del Toro, primarily centered around Isla Colon, who insist on

continuing their information war against Frank DeLape, Six Diamonds, and anyone associated with them. Back in the latter part of 2007 and early 2008, I was contacted by Scott Harris of Red Frog and they wanted me to investigate what they portrayed as abuses by Six Diamonds. I also covered the story of Karan and Willy Schreiber, who claimed Six Diamonds was trying to steal their land. Over the course of the next six months or so I covered these stories and wrote about them extensively. But as it often happens I learned that in fact the guys from Six Diamonds were not necessarily the bad guys. As I learned over time Six Diamonds turned out to be victims of bad lawyers in Bocas del Toro who steered them towards contentious and questionable property purchases, with the lawyers knowing they would eventually make even more money on lawsuits and court actions.



Slow Boil: It took about six to eight months to figure it out because at first Six Diamonds refused to talk to me. They thought I was nothing more than a hired gun for the "other side." As a matter of fact they first tried to sue me, and when I told both them and the prosecutor to "pound sand" (literally) and they realized legal intimidation wouldn't work, they eventually relaxed a little and opened up, giving me access to the whole story. As a result I eventually pulled down all or most of the stuff I had written - not because of legal action, threats, or intimidation - but rather I learned over time what had actually happened to Six Diamonds. Almost every article I had written about (against) them was either flat out wrong on the basic facts or "wrong headed" given the truth of the various scenarios on the ground.

The "Miller Syndrome" And what's more, many of the people who were supposedly the "good guys" now turn out to be the "bad guys." Karan and Willy Schreiber for example now know they were actually ripped off by a guy named Wally Hastings many years earlier when they originally purchased their land. They do in fact own a piece of property, however it happens to actually be a few kilometers down the road towards the dump and it's not situated right in front of that very nice beach where they built their house. Wally Hastings transposed some numbers on some documents, paid a few people off, and "presto chango" - he scammed the Schreibers into thinking they actually owned that parcel of land. The Schreibers now know they do not, in fact, actually own the land that sits under the house they built in front of the beach. However they still have it on the market and are looking for some dumb gringo to lay down \$1 million dollars for it (and in effect inherit their litigation and to "pass down" the Wally Hastings scam of many years ago.) The Schreibers are part of the original "Bocas Unidos" foundation, along with the guys from Red Frog and others. I was there when they were putting it all together. In addition, recently the Supreme Court of Panama has decided in favor of Six Diamonds and against Red Frog with regards to their purchase of the Polo Beach property on Isla Bastimentos. In fact Red Frog has collected millions of dollars from investors with promises to build houses, and they have not followed through. In short, none of the people who were fighting tooth and nail against Six Diamonds are as clean as the driven snow in any of this stuff. Therefore, the worm has turned - it just took longer than normal. I guess

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MEDIA GALLERY Last 7 Days

No new media items

nothing in Bocas moves quickly.

Permission Withdrawn: The "Bocas Unidos" foundation, started back when these people first initiated their guerrilla tactics against Six Diamonds. They would hand out anti-Six Diamonds tee-shirts, hold up signs, harass potential investors, and do anything and everything they could think of to cause problems. Today, the "Bocas Unidos Foundation" continues to publish on several of their websites the old articles I wrote in 2007 and early 2008, which I have since removed from my website. Over the past few days I have contacted, both directly and indirectly, the people responsible for these websites and I notified them that I have simply withdrawn my permission to "go ahead and use whatever you want as long as you credit the source." I suggested that with the dry season coming up, the last thing Bocas del Toro needs is me writing more crap about all of this old real estate conflict stuff. I asked them to quietly pull down those sites or remove my articles (the sites are actually nothing more than 99% regurgitation of my old stuff) or else I would have no recourse than to reopen this can of worms. They ignored my requests. Therefore, here we go.

Don't "Use" Me: I have matured to the point where I would simply like to see a fair and honest legal proceeding (gag, it's Bocas, I know...) determine the winners and losers in all of these conflicts. And right now in my humble opinion I think it would be much better for the long term strategic development of Bocas del Toro as a destination for tourism and development to fight these battles somewhere other than on the front page of this or any other website. This kind of crap is bad for everyone's business, and in fact every gringo in Bocas continues to get "played" by the lawyers who set one against the other. So, I hope that this article will serve as a warning shot across the bow, and the people who are trying to hide behind the anonymity of a proxy protected web server will realize that the smartest play is to simply take the stuff down. The stuff I never should have written. The stuff I wrote intending to do damage, rake the muck, and cause harm. The stuff I wrote with only half of the story. Basically, they are my mistakes, and I would like to see them go away. While I accept my share of responsibility, to continue to insist on pushing that material is an even more grievous error, considering the circumstances.

By Way of Disclosure: The **emerald monkey** project is about to launch an advertising campaign on my website. I would like to see every Bocas del Toro business and developer advertising on my website, and I have no reason not to accept advertising from the **emerald monkey** project. Does this create a conflict of interest for me? Of course it does - that's obvious and it's a fact I accept. However, the longer I do this job the more I learn from my on the job training. I was able to turn the Miller story around in a matter of days, for example, to figure out who were the actual good guys and bad guys. Lots of people try to "play" the media - to twist us in an attempt to have a story appear more favorable one way or the other. And I'll be the first to admit the stuff I wrote on Bocas back in 2007 and early 2008 was simply wrong. I got "played" and once I figured out what was going on, I took those articles down. And now I can't allow the "Bocas Unidos Foundation" to continue to use that material to cause harm. It's just not right - regardless of who's advertising on my website. Now, hopefully, **this** article will be up for about ten minutes or less. But if they insist, I can do the Bocas routine again. The dry season is coming and I could use a vacation...

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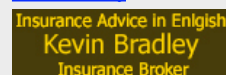
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