

Transcript of October 19,2021 phone conversation between Maui resident Bennett deBeer and Terilynne Gorman, communications advisor, Maui County Public Information Office

Bennett deBeer: Hi, Teri, this is Bennett deBeer.

Terilynne Gorman: Hi Bennett

deBeer: How are you?

Gorman: Good. How are *you*?

deBeer: I've been doing better. You know, I came down with the COVID and just kind of fighting it.

Gorman: Yeah. That's what I heard. I'm sorry to hear that.

deBeer: Yeah, a lot of people heard about it (laughs). You know what I mean?

Gorman: Unfortunately, some people heard about it too late.

deBeer: Well, so the reason I was calling, Teri, was I wanted to possibly try to talk with the person that wrote the press release that was sent out yesterday by the mayor's office.

Gorman: For what reason?

deBeer: There's false statements in it.

Gorman: Well, this is what happens when you get your information from social media.

deBeer: Well, they should've thought about that before they released it. They could've called me. I wish they would've called me.

Gorman: We can say exactly the same thing, Bennett. We wish you would've called us first. And there wouldn't have been any misinformation or miscommunication or [garbled] or drama surrounding this. For whatever reason, you chose not to.

deBeer: So Teri, I'll explain to you exactly what happened. Okay? I got tested.

Gorman: I really don't care exactly what happened. You came to a meeting, you had, you were positive for coronavirus.

deBeer: I was negative. I was negative. I had a negative test result when I walked in that office.

Gorman: Yes, listen, my friend, I just saw your ridiculous post on Instagram saying you're gonna call the mayor's office on Monday. Don't you think that you're responsible? You had several phone numbers of people that had cell phones that you could have called immediately when you found out. You chose not to. Rather you posted on Instagram. So, karma's a bitch, my friend.

deBeer: That's fine. So, I mean, you guys are gonna—

Gorman: It comes back to bite you in the ass. I'm sorry to tell you that. The right thing to do would have been to call the people that were around you, whether it was...

deBeer: I don't have your personal, I don't have your personal number. I don't have Tyson's personal number. I don't have anyone's pers--

Gorman: You have our cell phone numbers. Our cell phones ring any day, time or whatever.

deBeer: Is this your cell phone I'm talking on?

Gorman: That's just *weak*! That's just weak. I've called you more than once from my cell phone.

deBeer: Is this your cell phone I'm talking on?

Gorman: Don't give me this bullshit. Look, you're smarter than that. You're a professional community organizer. Don't tell me you didn't have anybody's phone number and you needed to wait until Monday to make a call. That's horseshit and I'm calling it out right now. I don't care how much ivermectin you're taking. It's horseshit.

deBeer: So that gives you guys the right to put false statements in a press release?

Gorman: There were no false statements in the press release.

deBeer: Yes, there is.

Gorman: There's a press release that stated what we knew at the time.

deBeer: No.

Gorman: There was nobody's name mentioned in that press release. Am I correct? Is anybody's name mentioned in the press release, Bennett. Anybody except for Mayor Victorino? Was your name in that press release? Was any of your buddies in that press release? There are no false statements.

deBeer: That's not the false statement. The false statement is saying, number one, two of the three attendees tested positive. That's false. And then you said...

Gorman: That was the Information that we received from [garbled]

deBeer: From who? From who? You didn't call John [Gangini, who also attended the meeting]

Gorman: You didn't even bother to make a phone call to say that you infected the ninth--you possibly infected the ninth floor of the mayor's office? Now you're going to grill me?

deBeer: I'm not grilling you.

Gorman: Bullshit.

deBeer: You're the one, you're the one using bad language and raising your voice to me.

Gorman: You're the one who called me, right? You're the one who called me. You're the one that insisted on this meeting; you are the one who behaved irresponsibly. You're the one who's sick because it's all a hoax, right? So deal with it.

deBeer: I'm not saying it's a hoax! Teri, what are you talking about? Teri!

Gorman: I have nothing to say to you. We are not going to apologize or not going to make any excuses. Had you done the right thing, the press release would have gone out with the correct information. You didn't.

deBeer: Wow.

Gorman: You chose to post this crap on Instagram. So, karma's a bitch my friend.

deBeer: Okay, that's fine. I'll take, I'll take the karma.

Gorman: Live by social media, die by social media.

deBeer: It's fine. I got no problem with that. But when you say two out of three people, when you say tested Friday, that's all false. I didn't test until Saturday afternoon. One person tested positive. *Me*. The other two gentlemen are walking away.

Gorman: Was your name...Bennett, was your name Bennett deBeer in that press release?

deBeer: That has nothing to do with it.

Gorman: It has everything to do with it. How do you even know it was you, maybe the mayor had another meeting. You don't know that.

deBeer: Anoth--What do you mean? Teri? What are you talking about? The press release says....

Gorman: What are *you* talking about?

deBeer: Can I finish?

Gorman: No information is in that press release that would identify you as the person who came down with COVID. You're not even in the story. You self-identified when you put your bullshit on social media...

deBeer: Teri...

Gorman: If you had just kept it cool, nobody would know anything. Am I right? Nobody's said in a press release that it was Bennett deBeer or any of his associates...

deBeer: I don't care about that. I don't care about that. But--

Gorman: Then, what are you calling about?

deBeer: I'm calling and saying the press release talked about the three residents that had an in-person meeting about a town hall. That's us, that's me and my two leaders that came in to have the meeting. Okay? Now, so...

Gorman: I thought you guys had 3,000 people behind your town hall. How can people know what the 2,999....

deBeer: Whoa. Let's just, just hold on, we're kind of going on two different pages.

Gorman: Hold on? *You* hold on! *You* hold on! You guys have been jumping up and down, screaming and yelling, about how you have 4,000, 5,000, 6,000 people behind you. I heard your little rally last weekend was pathetic. I heard there were less than 600 people who showed up. God knows how many of them were from off island. Certainly wasn't a large showing from Maui. Okay. You guys made a lot of noise. Hurray for you. That's great. At the end of the day, Bennett, you got COVID, cause you didn't think it was real. You didn't want to get the vaccination.

deBeer: Who? Who's telling you--How do you know I think it's not real. Are you a mind reader? Are you a mind reader? You a mind reader now?

Gorman: You potentially infected a lot of people in their workplace because you're pushing a political agenda. I'm sorry. You're talking to the wrong person. I have ze-ro sympathy for you. Zero..

deBeer: That's fine. I don't care. I don't care.

Gorman: But I have to say it's karma, babe. You brought it on yourself and don't call me saying it was false information.

deBeer: The only reason I'm calling is to talk to the person that wrote it [the press release]. So we could..

Gorman: Well, I'm not going to let you speak to the person who wrote it. How's that?

deBeer: So as public servant, what do I have to do? Get a public...

Gorman: I'm not a public servant, I'm a human being, and you should be too. Don't play this political horseshit with me.

deBeer: Well, you work for the mayor. The mayor is a public servant as well.

Gorman: I've been really kind to you. I listened to your story, I put it up the food chain, so that you could [garbled]

deBeer: Wow.

Gorman: So the mayor graciously agreed to meet with you. And you show up with who knows what and then, and then test positive for COVID and then have the nerve to post it on Instagram rather than doing the right thing like making a phone call to let people know--'Hey listen, you may have been exposed.' That's just not cool and this is person-to-person. I'm not your frickin' public servant, I'm a human being. I'm born and raised on this island, just like you were, Bennett. I would think your mother would have raised you with better morals than this.

deBeer: So you're going to make this totally personal, so totally personal talking about my dead mom?

Gorman: It *is* personal; it's person to person.

deBeer: That shows a lot of class right there.

Gorman: This is not a business situation. Give me a break. I'm sorry. You called the wrong person at the wrong time. I'm very, very angry. You don't know anything about the people who work in this office. You don't know that there's some people in here that have children that have compromised immune systems. There's parents that have not been able to come into work or can't eat with people, and that wear their masks constantly to protect their kids at home. You don't give a shit about that, all you care about is promoting a political agenda. And quite honestly, I have no time for you. So, you know, if you want to call around, you want to go 'wah, wah, wah' to Tyson [Miyake, the mayor's chief of staff] or somebody else, call, but you're getting no sympathy from me. What happened to you is brought on by your own actions.

deBeer: Okay.

Gorman: And next time, before you post on Instagram, think it through.

deBeer: Well, I just would like to talk to the person that wrote it.

Gorman: Well, I will speak to the person who wrote it, which it was not me. And I will see if that person would like to call you.

deBeer: Because it's going to look really bad for the office...

Gorman: I've already put enough people at risk by having a conversation with you, Bennett deBeer. You should be ashamed of yourself. You're from this place, you should know better.

deBeer: It's gonna, it's gonna, it's gonna look bad for the office when they--

Gorman: Oh, I'm so afraid...

deBeer: I'm not trying to threaten. I'm just saying it looks bad.

Gorman: [raising voice] Get out of here with your fake ass threats Bennett! I don't care how bad it's going to look for the office. Quite honestly, you're the one who looks bad. You and your people look bad. I've never seen such selfish behavior in my career. I'm embarrassed for you. I think it's better if we just finish this conversation right now. I have nothing else to say to you.

deBeer: All right.

Gorman: Goodbye.