



An Attempt to Mend a Broken Network & Save the Cause of Christ from Reproach

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Duane Clem Fired for "Bad Attitude" (Being a Whistle Blower?)

Duane Clem was fired for a "bad attitude" at 3ABN around 1988. Here he tells his side of the story.

Duane Clem's Account

----- Original Message -----

From: Duane Clem

Subject: Re: Glenn Dryden, Tommy Shelton, etc.

Date: Wed, 03 Jan 2007 00:09:13 +0000

I will first address my "bad attitude" and subsequent termination from 3ABN. I started as a volunteer in 1986 (I believe) as a camera operator when 3ABN was just in its infancy. In fact, the first program I worked on, it was me and the two broadcast engineers on the cameras. Now, THAT'S a skeleton crew. I eventually was put on payroll and began working in master control on a full time basis. Some time later (several months) a position opened up in production and I went back to cameras and floor directing, then learned audio and graphics, and eventually became an assistant director. I directed Kenny Shelton's "Behold The Lamb" program for quite some time.

[Donate Overtime?]

Danny called a meeting one day and explained that the ministry was operating on a tight budget. He told us it would be a "big help" if we would "donate" all hours over 40 hours a week so he didn't have to pay us overtime pay. He also stated that the SDA church as a whole was beginning to put pressure on him because people were being paid to work on the Sabbath, and would we mind if he asked us to volunteer if we did any work on Saturday. He told he realized that some of us were not Adventists, but that this would really be best for the ministry. There were at least 4 or 5 of us in the production department that were

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non-Adventist, but we did agree to his proposal. (What were we thinking?!?) We did very little production on Saturday anyway.

[Scheduled on Sabbath; Travel Expenses]

After agreeing to this, things began to change. You can probably see where this is going. Production began to be scheduled on a regular basis almost every Saturday. When we (Adventists and non-Adventists alike) expressed our concerns about it, Danny told us that if we wanted to remain employed at 3ABN we would follow management's decisions. Keep in mind that 3ABN refused to pay for our meals or even buy us a motel room when we went on remote shoots. I was bringing home about \$200 per week at the time. Danny said that we seemed ungrateful and he knew of several people who would love to work at 3ABN for what we were making, and possibly even volunteer. He also stated, and I quote, "Very few of our employees donate anything to this ministry." I guess working for free over 40 hours and on Saturday isn't donating.

[Department of Labor Audit]

Not knowing what else to do, I contacted Mr. Chris Rybak (he no longer works there) at the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division. I was told that even if we agreed to this proposal, it was not legal because of the way the labor laws were set up. He said he would do a "random" audit of 3ABN and their pay records. He did arrive one afternoon and interviewed several employees, myself included. We were in a private office with the door closed, only he and I in the room. I told him, in detail, what had been happening. The NEXT DAY, in "worship" before we began production, Danny launched into a tirade that someone had called Mr. Rybak and told him the whole situation, and that this was going to cost 3ABN "a lot of money" in back overtime. To this day, I think they had a hidden mike in the office taping the conversation.

[Termination]

The next week, I was transferred back to master control (an entry level position) and scheduled for straight midnights.

When I asked why, I was never given a straight answer. (Just making some changes, we needed someone with experience in there, etc.) After my 4th week or so on midnights, I asked Ronnie, Danny's brother who was there at the time, why I was still in master control. He told me there was no particular reason. I then was bold enough to tell him that I thought it was because I called Wage and Hour. Ronnie looked me in the eye and said, "Well, it's not because of the phone call, but the attitude that made you make the phone call." Bingo! Just what I had suspected. I asked how they knew it was me, and Ronnie said Chris Rybak had told them. I contacted Mr. Rybak the next day and told him this, and he said he would have lost his job for doing so because there are protections in place for whistle-blowers. I knew this already, I just wanted to hear him say it. The next week I was working my shift and May Chung came strolling through the door. She sat down and made small talk for a few minutes and then started telling me what a "privilege" it is to work in a ministry such as 3ABN, and how blessed I should feel to be there. The next day when I picked up my paycheck, there was a note inside it telling me I was terminated because I had a "bad attitude". They didn't even fire me to my face. I may still have the note somewhere, but it will take me ages to find it. If I come across it, I'll fax it to you.

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The more I read what the two of you are posting, the more I can see that you really do want to see the corruption and deceit end at 3ABN. I hope someone is able to get it done. It's been there long enough.

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***"Truth invites examination & needs no defense.
Lies hide in darkness & blame everyone else."***