

For Whom the Bell Tolls

(Asset Recovery Blog)

by Brian Mahany

Depending on your age, the title connotes a Hemingway novel or a song by Metallica. For the 37,000 residents of Bell, California, it is a song of victory. Most stories about asset recovery and fraud begin with men in suits. Shady bankers and investment fund promoters. In this tiny blue collar California town, it begins with corrupt politicians.

The L.A. County District Attorney has arrested much of Bell's city government. Why? Fraud. The DA says that these officials bilked taxpayers out of \$5.5 million.

That sounds like a lot of money for a small town and is. Instead of simply embezzling the money, city officials are accused of conspiring to pay themselves outrageous salaries and then hide that fact from voters. If the salaries were not enough, at least one official simply "loaned" himself additional monies from city coffers.

How high were the salaries? The city manager earned \$1.1 million per year. The part-time city council members - \$96,000 to \$110,000 per year. And the police chief, a paltry \$457,000.

In addition to the criminal charges, the state has brought a civil suit to recover the pay, loans and benefits. For now, Bell is left with one sitting council member.

Prior to posting his I visited Bell's website. Their motto: "Bell believes in promoting a healthy, balanced and moral lifestyle." Moral lifestyle?

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Brian Mahany and the fraud recovery lawyers at MahanyLaw concentrate on getting money back for victims of fraud. Asset recovery is a highly specialized area of law - we can help reunite victims with their hard earned money no matter where that money may be hiding. Contact Brian Mahany directly at (414) 704-6731 or at brian@mahanylaw.com. Please see our website, www.mahanylaw.com for more information.