



susan greene

Greene: DA Chambers trafficks in unreality

By Susan Greene
Denver Post Columnist

Posted: 03/07/2010 01:00:00 AM MST
Updated: 03/07/2010 03:16:07 AM MST

There's reality.

And then there's the world as Carol Chambers keeps trying to warp it.

The latest example of the 18th Judicial District Attorney's uncomfortable relationship with the facts involves allegations of human trafficking in the Ethiopian community.

"In the DA's office's agenda to prosecute so overzealously, it seems that the facts of a case aren't really an objective," says Chris Cashbaugh, foreman of the jury that cleared Ruth Tsehaye at trial.

Tsehaye is an Ethiopian immigrant who owns 7-Elevens in Aurora and Commerce City.

In 1996, she helped bring her distant cousin, Tsehai Hagos, a non-English-speaking woman then in her 40s, to the U.S. Hagos shared a bedroom, companionship and some housework with Tsehaye's mother while Tsehaye paid her expenses and urged her to get a job and live on her own.

"Relatives living together is common in our culture. You try to motivate them to become independent, but you don't one day decide to kick them on the street," she says.

After 11 years, Hagos had overstayed her welcome and moved in with other relatives. They demanded back pay for Hagos and money for her care, threatening otherwise to report Tsehaye for enslaving a household employee.

BOOKMARK

Print Email

15 Comments

Share

POPULAR

- TALKERS
- EMAILED
- VOTED
- YEAR AGO

- Let simplicity drive your interior design
- Lentils loaded with protein, easy on pocketbook
- Friend's low-carb diet has heart-attack written all over it
- Down the rabbit hole to a fashion wonderland
- Fit Finds: 36th Colorado Sportswoman of the Year
- CSU junior off to Mexico for rock, paper, scissors tourney
- Mountain-bike ambassador Ned Overend is honored

Front Page

- 82nd Academy Awards: Hollywood's big night delivers on the hype
- Youth factor heats up medical marijuana debate
- Despite cutbacks, plans for Denver's "Biennial" still ambitious
- Since 1970s, ID-theft victim has been dogged by someone else's "criminal" past

Front Page: Local News

- Aurora budget woes could put cuffs on police staffing
- Crowd outside Boulder church protests barring of child from Catholic school
- Logging beetle-killed forests challenged
- Bill pitting river enthusiasts, landowners runs into rough waters in Senate

Tsehaye refused what she saw as a shakedown.

Then followed an FBI investigation and a state attorney general's probe into claims that Tsehaye had held Hagos as a slave. Hagos, meantime, secured immigration status allowing her to stay in the U.S. as an alleged victim of human trafficking. She had motive to pursue allegations.

Holes became obvious in her story.

She claimed she wasn't allowed outside Tsehaye's home, although neighbors saw her walking alone. Hagos claimed she was limited on food and clothing, while photos show her celebrating family events in new outfits and eating what was offered at Tsehaye's table. Hagos claimed she was prohibited from going to church, though video and testimonies show she went regularly.

Recognizing problems with Hagos' credibility, the AG brokered a deal in which Tsehaye agreed to a not-guilty judgment in exchange for paying Hagos \$30,000 that her lawyer Dan Recht says otherwise would go to Tsehaye's defense. The agreement was nearly clinched when Chambers refused it, insisting on trying the case.

Arapahoe County jurors acquitted Tsehaye after a two-week trial.

"The alleged victim, in my estimation, was no victim at all," Cashbaugh says. "I think she was making these claims so she could stay in the country."

Chambers didn't comment.

The problem isn't that the case was investigated or initially prosecuted. The economics of immigration make arrangements like these all too open to exploitation.




The problem, rather, is that Chambers disregarded advice of the AG's office and ignored the voices of reason.

"She almost destroyed my life," Tsehaye says.

"There's a big difference between human trafficking and helping family come to America and build a life," added Endashaw Kelkele, pastor of Aurora's Ethiopian Evangelical Church.

"The DA, she was more interested to see Ruth lose, not to see the law served," he said. "What's sad is that people in our community are afraid. People who are aware of this case won't any more welcome their relatives into their homes."

Susan Greene writes Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reach her at 303-954-1989 or greene@denverpost.com.

 Print  Email  Return to Top > [Get Home Delivery](#)

Most-Commented, Past Hour

1. Crowd outside Boulder church protests barring of child from Catholic school [25](#)
2. Youth factor heats up medical marijuana debate [13](#)
3. Logging beetle-killed forests challenged [6](#)
4. States may ban credit checks on some job applicants [5](#)
5. Broncos to miss several key players in offseason program [4](#)

Recently Recommended

1. A wonderfully concise ruling on TABOR (about 33 minutes ago)
2. Book review: Trapped in the rubble, they tell each other tales (about 49 minutes ago)
3. Rubin: Lessons from European health care systems (about 2 hours ago)
4. A wonderfully concise ruling on TABOR (about 2 hours ago)
5. Increase Colorado's renewable standards (about 2 hours ago)

Most Popular: News: Past 3 Days

1. Alleged Vail cocaine asked, Vail sheriff obliged
2. TV show to focus on Denver gang life
3. Mountain lion killed after mauling dogs in Salida home
4. Boulder Catholic school denies preschooler with lesbian parents
5. Trinidad surgeon helps women escape past of mutilation
6. Hit-and-run driver returns to scene of pedestrian accident
7. Few on either side happy with proposed medical-marijuana licensing rules
8. Adoption initiative halves numbers of kids needing families
9. The Clark defense begins: Tale of two SUVs

More from Denver Post News

- Greene: DA Chambers' nondisclosure inexcusable
- Greene: Holocaust survival tale took in many
- DA criticized in child death
- Greene: Controversy dogs DA as judge's ruling rips funding in prison-murder case
- Joys, stress in visit by Grandma

Denver Post News Recommends

- Captured: Child Poverty in Colorado (Plog Photo Blog)
- Couple viciously stabbed in home (Cold Case Crimes Colorado)
- EPISODE #27: Drunk & loose in Thailand (Get Real Denver)

Like this article? Recommend it (1 rec') *all reader-recommended news*

Recommend Us On

Share

BOOKMARK

Or,

Article Comments (15) [Login](#) | [Sign Up](#) | [Email Support](#)

You must be registered to comment (your comment will be saved for you while you register). It's quick (it takes about 30 seconds) and we only require your email and name. Comments that include any offensive material are prohibited. By using our site you agree to our [terms of use](#).

» [View all this article's 15 comments](#)

1. Use the "Report Abuse" link when necessary (you don't have to be a member, or be logged in to use it)
2. Keep it clean and respect others — don't use language you wouldn't use with your parents
3. [Read the Post's Article Commenting Ground Rules here](#) (link will open in a new window)

» **Show oldest comments first** (currently newest comments are first)

If "Nixon" the poster disappears forever from this paper, it is because the Denver Post administrator takes real exception (and a personal reaction) to me--especially when I do NOT support ArtStarzz and his/her very racist Viva La Raza, Pro DREAM ACT for Criminals stances... just fyi!

I thought papers were non-partial...

Silly me---of course, I thought Obama would be bi-partisan to.... (jk!) :D

#10. Nederland man run over by his Lotus

Post Poll - School Protests Is it valid to protest a Boulder Roman Catholic school's decision to bar the child of a lesbian couple from attending? Read story	
Yes	
No	
I'm not sure	
I don't care if they protest or not	

Most Popular: Opinion: Past 3 Days

1. Rubin: Lessons from European health care systems
2. Bennet's nervous? Good
3. Colorado Christians must break silence
4. Harsanyi: Peculiar be thy name
5. Park passes as political payoff?
6. Haley: Extreme forces in Colo.
7. My Turn: The evidence for global warming is clear
8. Carroll: Make mall renovation worthwhile
9. Get well soon, governor
10. Energy usage in the 21st century

News: Recent Comments

- **Comment on Protest planned over Catholic preschool's refusal to re-enroll child of gay couple** (32 seconds ago)
Michael O and Carol O: I checked with the Monsignor of my parish, he said that I can absolutely dis...
- **Comment on Crowd outside Boulder church protests barring of child from Catholic school** (1 minute ago)
discusting or disgusting <!-- s:wink: --><img src="http://neighbors.denverpost.com/%7B\$MILIES_PATH...
- **Comment on Rockslide closes 17 miles of I-70 in Glenwood Canyon** (1 minute ago)
Thankfully no one was injured...
- **Comment on Logging beetle-killed forests challenged** (1 minute ago)
Why let beetle-killed trees rot? They have real value as 'blue lumber' or as bio-fuel. Wasting ten...



Permanent USA-Rocks - | 8:23 AM on Monday Mar 8

link to
this comment Report Abuse

slavetotheflyrod wrote: Nice, I wonder what this little vendetta cost the taxpayers of Arapahoe County?

The fact is, Ms. Chambers will soon be gone, If memory serves me right, she's term-limited. The real danger lies in the fact that whichever candidate has the little (R) next to their name is pretty much guaranteed the job. It's entirely possible that we end up with something far worse after the next election.

Rumor hath it that Ms. Chambers and her chief deputy have a scheme in place. The chief deputy runs for DA and names - ready? - Ms. Chambers as her chief deputy. It's up to the voters to make sure this outrage doesn't happen.



Permanent David B | 6:26 PM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this comment Report Abuse

A typical overzealous prosecutor. He care more for a conviction rate then for justice. Just think if he could have hoodwinked the jury would another inocent persons life be rewend by this petty tyrant we call a DA?

I can here the conservatives here grown as I write the above but consider that false conviction is common in the good old USA. Doubt that do you? follow the following links:

http://www.vdare.com/roberts/independent_review.htm

[http://cwcy.org/resources/65_attach_Fre ... 0Gross.pdf](http://cwcy.org/resources/65_attach_Fre...0Gross.pdf)

[http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/ ... xactitude/](http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/...xactitude/)

<http://www.rayeofhope.org/Statistics/Stats.htm>

<http://www.azjusticeproject.org/profiles.php>

<http://www.caught.net/innoc.htm>

I could list pages of stuff but then why bother, after all to the conservatives here these people are just forefingers and importers of illigal aliens not people. Sad that conservatives seem to have become so mean spirited, and selectively moral complaining about everything but the real point of the article which is that YOU could be subject to zealous prosecution on a false charge.

Comment on Aurora budget woes could put cuffs on police staffing (2 minutes ago)

What's the problem? With photo radar, we need less crimebusters. Budget problem solved...

Visit the news forum for more discussion

More recent comments on Denver Post news articles

Permanent Phillip R | 2:18 PM on Sunday Mar 7

link to



this comment Report Abuse

theairdog wrote: I wonder how Ms. Chambers hoodwinked the Grand Jury of ordinary citizens into determining that there was probable cause to suspect that a crime had been committed?

Remember, a Felony Charge must be brought by a Grand Jury....Can't be done by just the DA alone.

A Grand Jury isn't necessary.

Charges can be brought directly by the Prosecutor without one and this requires a preliminary hearing, but bypasses the Grand Jury.

A Grand Jury is probably the easier way to bring felony charges on weak cases though as less (maybe even no) solid evidence is really needed. As has been said: You can indict a ham sandwich with a Grand Jury,



Permanent Sid James | 1:17 PM on Sunday Mar 7

link to this comment Report Abuse

Prosecutors who abuse their discretion in this way should be removed from office and disbarred, period. It not only is a crime against the innocent, perpetrated on behalf of the public, but it also undermines our criminal justice system by bringing its credibility into question.



Permanent Steve harvey | 1:11 PM on Sunday Mar 7

link to this comment Report Abuse

I wonder how Ms. Chambers hoodwinked the Grand Jury of ordinary citizens into determining that there was probable cause to suspect that a crime had been committed?

Remember, a Felony Charge must be brought by a Grand Jury....Can't be done by just the DA alone.



Bruce Willis in CO NOT CA | 12:53 PM on Sunday Mar 7

this comment Report Abuse

To answer you Realworld,

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 establishes a Cabinet-level federal interagency task force and establishes a federal program to provide services to trafficking victims. government officials, or others, and; **grants of relief from deportation** and offers certain benefits and services to victims of severe forms of trafficking. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10492.pdf>

From this article, we know Dear Cousin is illegal here-she tried and may get, refugee status complete with all the welfare benefits afforded to such claims of trafficking victims.



Permanent **USA-Rocks** - | 10:58 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this   Report Abuse
comment

Why in the world does the Post allow a fluff opinion writer to post hatchet jobs like this under the NEWS section?

If there are serious charges to bring against the DA, the Post should do an in-depth investigative report like the one they spiked by Karen Crummy about the corruption in the Ritter gubernatorial campaign.



Permanent **Bob C** | 10:34 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this   Report Abuse
comment

How could she gain legal status after being here illegally 11 years, come on greene, ask some tougher questions. In between cocktail parties, grow a pair!



Permanent **jack I** | 10:09 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this   Report Abuse
comment

And Thomas-I can read btw. **IN FACT**, I read so very well that i read **ALL** the immigration laws of the USA.

The legal immigrant, by federal immigration law, should lose her businesses and be deported for breaking the law by aiding and abetting the **ILLEGAL** to come here.

The illegal violated federal law by coming here-and should be deported overnight.

But dollars to donuts, she will be like Obama's illegal alien aunt. Ordered deported in court six years ago, and still is living in housing that we **TAXPAYERS** pay for her!

Betcha...



PermanentUSA-Rocks - | 8:54 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this
comment



Report Abuse

Thomas--The so-called distant cousin Hagos is a ILLEGAL alien here...the legal immigrant Tsehaye should by law, have her businesses seized and auctioned and be deported herself for aiding and abetting the illegal.

that's immigration law-do we still have laws in America?

But other states are now running DNA on supposed relatives of the Somalian/Ethiopian people and finding-surprise-they are not related AT ALL!

This is the latest Scam the American taxpayer scheme, do you not understand that?

Refer to

Tsehaye is an Ethiopian immigrant who owns 7-Elevens in Aurora and Commerce City. In 1996, she helped bring her distant cousin, Tsehai Hagos, a non-English- speaking woman then in her 40s, to the U.S.

Hagos, meantime, secured immigration status allowing her to stay in the U.S. as an alleged victim of human trafficking. She had motive to pursue allegations



PermanentUSA-Rocks - | 8:50 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this
comment



Report Abuse

Nice, I wonder what this little vendetta cost the taxpayers of Arapahoe County?

The fact is, Ms. Chambers will soon be gone, If memory serves me right, she's term-limited. The real danger lies in the fact that whichever candidate has the little (R) next to their name is pretty much guaranteed the job. It's entirely possible that we end up with something far worse after the next election.



Permanentslave W | 8:39 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this
comment



Report Abuse

It really doesn't make much difference whether you're an immigrant (legal or otherwise), legal citizen or anything between: We live in a country where the irresponsible prey on the responsible with the blessings of a legal system that encourages it.

Changes need to b made that will hold prosecutors and judges responsible for aiding what often amounts to a

fraud perpetrated in -and sometimes by- the legal system.



Permanent Sid James | 8:23 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this   Report Abuse
comment

Typical empty column by Ms. Greene. An interesting story but not really researched or investigated. How did she "help" her come into the country, legally or illegally? What did her defense attorney say? Greene gets quotes from a juror and does nothing more. This is not journalism. Lame again. I do agree on her assessment of Chambers generally, however, but the story was not developed, as usual. Why do a whole job when the editor will print half a loaf?



Permanent robert b | 7:54 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this   Report Abuse
comment

This is common in the Ethiopian community.

Not slave trafficking, but smuggling illegal aliens into the U.S.

The largest growing population of illegal immigrants is now Black.
So-has Tsehaye been arrested for smuggling? Have her businesses been seized by the government per U.S. law? (*Tsehaye is an Ethiopian immigrant who owns 7-Elevens in Aurora and Commerce City. In 1996, she helped bring her distant cousin, Tsehai Hagos, a non-English- speaking woman then in her 40s, to the U.S.*)

And has Tsehai Hagos been deported as the illegal she is?



Permanent USA-Rocks - | 7:14 AM on Sunday Mar 7

link to
this   Report Abuse
comment

-
- » [View all this article's 15 comments](#)
 - » [Jump to the latest comment](#)
 - » [Bookmark this article](#)
 - » [Subscribe to this article's comments](#)

Denver & the West

• Front Page

Entertainment

• Husted

• | Denver

• | Movies

• | Feeds

• | Music

• | More

• | TV

• | RSS

• | Video

- Springs police use pepper spray to break up nightclub fight
- Wildlife officials move pronghorn to Western Slope
- Two people accidentally hit during target shooting

• 82nd Academy Awards: Hollywood's big night delivers on the hype

• Hollywood kicks it old-school with time-tested glam

• Sometimes understated is the best dress on the red carpet

Sports

• Rockies

• | Avs

• | Nuggets

• | Preps

• | RSS

• | More

- Mueller tries to hit stride with Avs
- Nuggets power past Blazers 118-106
- Rockies' Corpas has encouraging showing

Opinion

• Columnists

• | Letters

• | Cartoon

• | RSS

• Editorial: Listen to voters on medical marijuana

• Colorado Voices: A wonderfully concise ruling on TABOR

• Editorial: Energy usage in the 21st century

Business

• Penny Parker

• | Tech

• | RSS

• | More

- Fortune Valley casino owner files Ch 11 bankruptcy
- Stock futures rise slightly ahead of opening
- Oil maintains momentum to rise to near \$82

Watercooler

• Arcade

• | Crossword

• | Sudoku

• McDonald's parking spot dispute turns violent

• Accused scratch-off thief returns to same store

• Police: Woman again tries using cabs to steal TVs

All contents Copyright 2010 The Denver Post or other copyright holders. All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed for any commercial purpose.

[Advertise](#) | [Archives](#) | [Careers](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Ethics Policy](#) | [E-mail Alerts](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Web Feeds](#) | [RSS](#) | [My Yahoo](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Viva](#)
| [Terms of Use](#)

Our other sites: [Boulder Daily Camera](#) | [Boulder's Colorado Daily](#) | [Broomfield Enterprise](#) | [Sterling Colorado Journal-Advocate](#)
[Estes Park Trail-Gazette](#) | [The Lamar Ledger](#) | [The Fort Morgan Times](#) | [Brush \(Colorado\) News-Tribune](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [MNG Corporate Site Map](#) | [Copyright](#)