

Communication from Public

Name: Kim Cooper & Richard Schave

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Council File No: 23-1010

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers, To quote your own motion, "As our City deals with a crisis of faith in government... City residents deserve to have faith in their municipal government." Your proposed improvement is to create a stable funding source for the Los Angeles Ethics Commission, one that City Council cannot cut. Do not do this! We would like to know who directs the investigations of the staff of the Los Angeles Ethics Commission, and what oversight exists, especially as that body remains unable to meet due to lack of quorum because you, the representatives of the people, have failed to seat new Commissioners? What investigatory powers do they have? Subpoena power for, for example, telephone and banking records? At whose direction do they initiate investigations of citizens, and with whom do they share their findings? We ask because on Friday, September 8, 2023, we were quoted in the New York Times as the independent preservation activists who reached out to the office of Councilwoman Traci Park to advocate for revocation of the illegal demolition permits that LADBS approved for the home of Marilyn Monroe at 12305 Fifth Helena Drive. (see The Battle to Save Marilyn Monroe's Last Home - <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/us/marilyn-monroe-house-saved-los-angeles.html>) And on Monday, September 11, 2023 before 8am, an investigator for the Los Angeles Ethics Commission contacted us to discuss a whistleblower allegation that we are unregistered lobbyists. (See the attached PDF of our newsletter about the incident - <https://esotouric.substack.com/ethics>) It is suspicious that an investigation against us would be launched within hours of our helping to expose to an international readership the fact that LADBS routinely approves demolitions of historic properties that have not received the legally required 30 day notice. It is intimidating to be targeted by a body of Los Angeles city government for our volunteer activism, activity that is constitutionally protected. It is unconstitutional for the Ethics Commission to accuse of us unregistered lobbying while refusing to state on whose behalf we supposedly speak. We have a right to know what we are being accused of by our accusers, our city government. It is offensive to be accused by a body of Los Angeles city government of being for sale as a paid mouthpiece. We speak for ourselves and nobody can buy us and everyone knows it. You should not give the Los Angeles Ethics Commission a protected budget. Furthermore, you should conduct an audit to find out what they are doing with the budget they currently have. If the answer is surveilling and harassing citizen activists, you are not making the city more "ethical" by ensuring they cannot be cut off at the purse. We are naturally reminded of the last era in which criminal vice rackets blatantly operated out of Los Angeles City Hall, under Frank Shaw, who was the first big city mayor to be recalled by his citizens. The LAPD's notorious Red Squad intelligence bureau routinely spied on Angelenos who were critical of public policy, and ultimately escalated to the acting captain of the intelligence unit Earle E. Kynette setting off bombs in their cars and at their homes. (Parenthetically, we believe Kynette killed Jack Parsons in retaliation for Parsons' expert witness testimony in the 1938 Harry Raymond pipe bomb case. When a city allows its agents to go rogue, good people get hurt and killed.) Sincerely yours, Kim Cooper & Richard Schave (private citizens) Esotouric <http://www.esotouric.com/historicpreservation>

The Los Angeles Ethics Commission is investigating Kim Cooper & Richard Schave of Esotouric for unregistered lobbying



ESOTOURIC'S SECRET LOS ANGELES
SEP 13, 2023



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Gentle reader,

Los Angeles City Hall does not want us to do the work we do, which is to bring you the truth about why this beautiful town that we love almost as much as we love each other is in such a grim and miserable state.

This is a quick note to let everyone within the sound of our Substack know that this afternoon, we had a video call with Ephraim Turner, a Senior Investigator with the [Los Angeles City Ethics Commission](#), an entity that has [been in the news lately](#) due to City Council's unexplained [rejection](#) of a reform-minded commissioner.

Turner contacted us via email early on 9/11, writing:

"A confidential matter has been reported to the Commission that requires attention. Would you be available to discuss the matter via Google Meet in confidence sometime this week? I apologize for the vagueness of this email but as mentioned, Ethics Commission matters are conducted in confidence. I shall of course explain in more detail during a Google Meet."

We made ourselves available, wondering which of the many [crooked acts](#) by members of the City Family that we have witnessed or [uncovered](#) was under investigation. They've called us before to ask if we had any evidence of [Jose Huizar's crimes](#), after all.

Silly us. City Hall doesn't want or need our help. It wants to intimidate and annoy us.

As we informed Mr. Turner—and as anyone who is paying attention knows—nobody is paying us to [pester](#) elected and appointed officials to [do their damn jobs](#) and [listen to their constituents](#). The [crummy developers](#) destroying Los Angeles can't pay us to promote their lousy schemes, any more than they can pay us to stop telling you about why they should be driven out of California.

The “whistleblower” who filed this bullshit complaint knows it, too.

If that jerk is reading this, we want them to know that we're disgusted by their abuse of whistleblower protections, a powerful tool for giving a voice to ethical people who find themselves in the middle of unfolding white collar crimes. By falsely accusing us of lobbying, they have wasted taxpayer funds and time we would have been spending saving threatened buildings and helping vulnerable tenants deal with abusive slumlords.

But what the “whistleblower” has not done is to divert Ephraim Turner's attention from investigating some of the very real civic corruption that is happening in clear view, which we took the opportunity to mention to him.

Because the Ethics Commission doesn't actually investigate ethics violations. It stages show trials for small fry lobbyists who all cooperate and pay piddly fines for failing to register, and [cribs from](#) actual FBI investigations, a cynical performance which serves as cover for the systemic venality of the City Family and their kissin' cousins in the lobby shops and land use law firms.

We don't get paid for the [volunteer civic advocacy](#) we do. On the contrary, it has cost us a lot, in time and money, and in abject terror in early 2019, when another “whistleblower” complaint to a different agency resulted in what appeared to be an existential threat to our business and livelihood—even though that agency had no legal authority over us or our [mom and pop tour company](#).

It was still damn scary! And it happened immediately after [this article](#) was published. Draw your own conclusions. Unlike the “whistleblowers,” we only share allegations we can support with facts.

We didn't go public with the 2019 accusations and investigation, out of concern that it might make things worse. But we will not be quiet again while the corrupt forces that are ruining Los Angeles try to make us give up and go away. Because when they go after us, it also affects you, and you have a right to know it.

Why do we keep on digging for dirt and advocating for change? Why do we stick around when America is full of charming small cities with thriving historic districts and intriguing crime scenes that might lend themselves to guided history tours?

We keep on taking it on the chin because we fucking love Los Angeles and Angelenos and we hate the [mediocre greedsters](#) who have [sucked all the oxygen](#) out of a place where world changing ideas and books and songs and buildings and rocket ships and liberation movements were dreamed up. Our ancestors independently fled the lousy Old World for the hopeful New and landed here, and that matters. Everybody needs to belong some place. We belong in this place.

There is something mysterious and magical about Los Angeles, and if mysterious and magical people could just afford to live and create here again, everything would be better—not just in Los Angeles, but everywhere. We feel that in our bones. And so we stay and so we fight.

Our conversation with Mr. Turner had reached its natural conclusion. He had asked if we were unregistered lobbyists, and we'd spit tea out of our noses while denying it. Then we asked that the accusations against us be made public and published in the Ethics Commission agenda. Of course, that body has no quorum and cannot legally meet, so there are no agendas.

We asked then: "How is it that you are conducting investigations, when City Council won't seat a full Commission?" He explained that the work of investigators proceeded without any input from Commissioners, and that our case was a long way from coming to their attention, if it would at all.

It's chilling to think that investigators are doing this kind of thing with no oversight. What private information can they access? Who do they answer to, in City Hall or outside of it? Are we the only citizen activists who have been subjected to one of these unnerving inquiries?

Before we signed off, we had to know: had he ever read the novels of Raymond Chandler? Did he know the film character Philip Marlowe, the City Hall investigator bounced out into private practice for being "too efficient at a time and in a place where efficiency was the last thing desired by the persons in charge."

No, but he liked that old show, the one where they say "the names are changed." Yeah, *Dragnet*.

We recommended he read a little Chandler, for the 1930s Los Angeles in those books is much the same as the city we endure today. The power structure is the same, the competition for limited resources between heartless, unimaginative rich men, the broken trust, the loneliness and the beauty and the pain. We [wrote about all of this](#) for a New York Times advertorial piece in 2020.

And then we said goodbye to the man charged with getting to the bottom of ethical violations we didn't commit, suppressing the urge to call him [Officer Cool](#). We don't think we'll hear from him again, and we doubt he'll show up on a future [Raymond Chandler tour](#), except in the stories we tell, about all the trouble we get into, just for the crime of looking after Los Angeles.

Anyway, if you believe in what we do and want to support us on what has been a pretty tough day, you can do that with a [tip](#) or a [newsletter subscription](#) or a [gift certificate](#) for a couple of tours, by buying Kim's [novel](#) or [guidebook](#) or [Raymond Chandler map](#), or subscribing to our [webinar channel](#), or browsing the recommended reading bookshelves [on Amazon](#) and the [Bookshop](#) indie bookstore site. We give private tours, too.

We won't promise to do anything in return for your support, although we often do things for our gentle readers because we want to. We'll just keep following our own true compass, which points always to the true Los Angeles that we know is there, inside the filth and the misery and the corruption and the lies, and the mediocre people rattling around inside of a City Hall where nobody worth a damn would stoop to work.

Los Angeles noir is now, but it's not forever. We'll meet you in the light on the other side.

yours for Los Angeles,

Kim & Richard

Esotouric

UPCOMING BUS & WALKING TOURS

• [Franklin Village Old Hollywood Walking Tour](#) (Sat. 9/16) • [University Park Walking Tour](#) (Sat. 9/23) • [Angelino Heights & Carroll Avenue Walking Tour](#) (Sat. 10/7) • [Eastside Babylon Crime Bus Tour](#) (Sat. 10/14) • [The Birth of Noir: James M. Cain's Southern California Nightmare Bus](#)

Tour (Sat. 10/21) • [The Real Black Dahlia Crime Bus Tour \(Sat. 10/28\)](#) • [Evergreen Cemetery, 1877 Walking Tour \(Sun. 10/29\)](#) • [The Run: Gay Downtown History Walking Tour \(Sat. 11/4\)](#)



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Gordon Pattison Sep 13 [♥ Liked by Esotouric's Secret Los Angeles](#)

Sorry you were subjected to this blatant harassment. As I have said before, the work you do is important. We who care thank you.

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1 reply by [Esotouric's Secret Los Angeles](#)



Monica Haynes Sep 13 [♥ Liked by Esotouric's Secret Los Angeles](#)

Don't this people have better things to do with their time than pester the two of you, who are really doing everything they can to save this city from itself?

[♥ LIKED \(5\)](#) [REPLY](#) [SHARE](#) ...

2 replies by [Esotouric's Secret Los Angeles](#) and others

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