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[Mpls] We all need grace.

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I have had a lot of people contact me about my filing for a trademark and DBA for WedgeLive. The accusations are that I have somehow been trying to silence Mr. Edwards or retaliate. But the reality is that the worst that could have happened to Mr. Edwards, the absolute worst, is that at some point in the future, maybe, possibly, if all these stars aligned, he would have had to rename his blog. That is it. Something that businesses do all the time. Not the hysteria that he has been spreading. I would have done no real harm to Mr. Edwards.

But the real story isn't this. The real story is about why all these assets were available in the first place. Why Mr. Edwards, who is not only operating a blog and Twitter account but also a store and also receiving payments for his work, has not filed a DBA or articles of incorporation or a sole proprietorship or something that makes his business legal. We have laws like this because we need to know who is behind a business name. If you hire "Bob's Awesome Homebuilders" to build you a house and then the house falls down, you need to have someone, an actual human, to hold accountable behind a name. Why has Mr. Edwards not done this? Has Mr. Edwards not filed legal paperwork for the business that he is actually running to avoid legal liability for his actions? If someone were to file a lawsuit of slander or defamation, they can't do it against WedgeLive because it isn't a legal business. Is this because Mr. Edwards thinks he can avoid legal responsibility? Not to mention avoiding business taxes, as WedgeLive is not registered with the Department of Revenue either.

Perhaps instead, WedgeLive should be a non-profit. If so, that would mean 990 reporting, which would let the public know who is funding these activities, who are directing them and who is responsible. But again, none of that exists.

Likewise, WedgeLive is not filed with Campaign Finance Board. When two or more people come together to influence an election, they are supposed to file with the Campaign Finance Board. Clearly WedgeLive is this. Mr. Edwards alone is not producing everything behind the name WedgeLive. So why has he not filed with the Campaign Finance Board? He is clearly pushing a specific agenda for a certain group. We heard a rumor (that I have not been able to substantiate) that he is being funded by a dark money developer PAC who is funding similar operations around the country. Is this true? Who knows? Because he doesn't file the appropriate legal paperwork so we know who is behind these political activities. Why does this matter? Because maybe if the people who are funding this effort were unmasked, maybe they would not be spending their money this way. I was struck by FrontLine's recent piece on the Charlottesville Neo-Nazi march and how once the names of the people behind this were exposed, how quickly they ran from what they had done. Would Mr. Edward's world be different if those who were funding him had to come out into the daylight? If they had to actually own what he is doing? I had a reporter tell me that Mr. Edwards is funded by a 100 people who donate \$5 a month. If so, those people meet the legal limit for campaign reporting. But instead, Mr. Edwards operates from the dark, to his advantage.

Likewise, Mr. Edwards meets the definition of a lobbyist. He spends more than 30% of his time trying to influence elected officials. Now if anyone wants to tell me he has a full-time job and he is doing all this on the side, I would have to ask how do you get 570 YouTube Videos, thousands of Twitter posts, thousands of blog posts, posters, t-shirts, etc on a couple hours a week? Again, if he registered, he would have to disclose who he is representing and clearly he is representing some specific interests. And maybe those interests would be less likely to fund him if they had their name on what was coming out of WedgeLive.

Our last federal election was rife with groups functioning like this. Attacking from the shadows with no accountability. No one legally behind the name. No disclosure of funding. And people supported it because they liked what these people were saying. My Uncle Pete is still repeating some of the things he liked from Russian social media. But we have seen what a democracy functioning like this looks like and it is not good. Not healthy.

Now I have stepped aside so Mr. Edwards can come clean. He can start functioning as a legal entity. He can report on who is funding him. I did this because I want him to have that opportunity because I believe that we are limited human beings and we all make mistakes. We all need grace. The question is whether he will. Or will he continue to hide in the legal shadows.

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