

Desert Hot Springs Music Festival

World Wellness and Music Festival

Your One Site Grab Bag of Desert Hot Springs' World Wellness and Music Festival Story Amusement

The chronology of events that lead to the loss of more than **\$500,000** in city money is on this page documenting the hopes of a poor city were flushed down the drain by a city council believing a Hollywood promoter that ended up skipping town with the money. Twenty two chapters of fascination.

Where the Money Went

Tony Clarke's Feasibility Study	\$15,000
Tony Clarke's Consulting Agreement	\$250,000
City Attorney Rubin Duran	\$80,000
Still Owed Ziggy Marley	\$70,000
Estimate of City Personnel Expense Related to Event	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$515,000

It all began in 2009 with Tony Clarke and the Baruch Gayton entertainment firm of Los Angeles – and it's still not over yet in 2011. A new "music festival committee" has been formed and is meeting now, attempting to salvage *anything* that might be left.

The Tony Clarke Affair

*It started with the bright idea bandied about by several community members hungry to increase tourism in the city. It had been talked about for years. Flashback to a decade ago when council member **Jan Pye** was serving her first term when Pye voted to approve giving \$40,000 in city money to produce what they called "**Woodstock West**" featuring the heavy metal rap band, **Smashmouth**. The promoters skipped town with the money and the city did nothing to try to get the money back.*

*Around May 2009 **Bruce Barrett** began introducing his buddy around town as a big time Hollywood "music promoter." Barrett didn't tell anyone **Tony Clarke** was his classmate from **Beverly Hills High School** (class of 1973)*

In 2009 Jan Pye was back on the council as Bruce and Tony's plan started taking shape, making it possible for Pye to vote again to give away city money – this time over a half million dollars. Most of the council voted with Pye including council members Karl Baker, Scott Matas and Mayor Yvonne Parks. Only councilman Russell Betts voted no. The rest is history.

[Music Festival Moves Ahead](#)

Dot Reed

[Barrett's Promoter Pal On Inside Track](#)

[July 13, 2009](#)

Boss Lady in Pink

Dot Reed is the untouchable matriarch of the city. When the city council had an empty position she was appointed a seat. Reed has never run for an elected position and is a tireless volunteer for community services. She is a very nice lady and, as chairperson of the Cultural Affairs Commission, she rules with an iron fist full of brownies.

Later, we discovered Reed was the Tony Clarke's special guest at the Hollywood Bowl. No competing event promoters were ever considered by Reed, who backed Tony and Bruce all the way.

Reed's motto is "See Something? Do something!"



[Big Music Festival Tickets Announced by Tony Clarke](#)

[Ziggy Marley Plus a Yoga Instructor Show](#)

[July 17, 2010](#)

NO POT & NO CAMPING

Tony Clarke made an odd choice selecting Ziggy Marley as headliner of the event. Showcasing Ziggy Marley, an outspoken advocate of marijuana use, would be attracting fans attending the event assuming it was pot friendly. Local police said they had adopted an unforgiving attitude, saying they would enforce all laws – meaning zero tolerance for smoking of the herb.

Also at odds with this type of music festival was a "no camping" provision that seemed sure to conflict with gypsy vendors and music festival aficionados. The City Manager announced that law enforcement was ready for anything and everything.

Everything seemed to be good – except for one small thing – no tickets were for sale and we could not reach Tony Clarke by phone.

[City Manager Says Police Prepared for Music Festival](#)



[Three Desert Music Festivals Scheduled](#)

[August 26, 2010](#)



Rick Daniels City Manager



[Official: 'The Wellness And World Music Festival 2010 Might Be Delayed](#)

[Desert Hot Springs Music Festival Limbo](#)

In early September we got wind of the fact the event was in trouble. Tony Clarke was not returning phone calls from anyone. No tickets had been announced, much less sold. Despite the many assurances of city manager Rick Daniels that everything was OK, it was apparent that something was terribly wrong.

Our investigation into Clarke's background was beginning to turn up a big mess of lies and contradictions. Suddenly other media also began looking deeper into the issue. KESQ broadcast this on September 6, 2010. Other television affiliates went with the story. The Desert Sun was unusually silent.

[Baruch Gayton Music Festival Canceled by City Manager](#)

[Event Canceled Within Days of Opening](#)

[September 16, 2010](#)

Baruch and Gayton

"Postponed" But No Future Date Set

No one wanted to say "canceled" so the official word was "postponed." So, we all began to take a closer look at the players in this. Exactly who was Tony Clarke and who were Baruch Gayton? They were making some really impressive claims, telling a Chamber of Commerce luncheon they were responsible for the Pope's Tour of America and more. Dot Reed and Mayor Yvonne Parks enjoyed a friendly relationship with Baruch Gayton, stretching back to the very beginning of the Tony Clarke saga and that interested us.

The Desert Sun continued to publish "the party line" fed them by Daniels and staff.



City Manager Rick Daniels

[City Manager Rick Daniels in Rehab](#)

[A Sober Analysis as Music Festival Bombs](#)

[September 27, 2011](#)

No One Knew Anything

Everything was put on hold when Daniels went into rehab for alcoholism. No one knew how long he would be out. There was no communication with the city manager and the city was left in the dark about what was going on with the music festival.

[The Who Will Not Appear Music Festival](#)

[A Who's Who of Who is Not](#)

[December 22, 2010](#)

The Who

Unglued

After the close of the year it seemed that everything started coming unglued. Daniels, having returned to work after 30 days in Alcohol Rehab, seemed unusually apologetic and yet determined to make things work.

With his right hand assistant, Laura Green, gone, Daniels seemed kinda lost and often in a daze. Green had assumed a number of positions under Daniels over the years. With Green gone as project manager he would have to find a replacement.

The Desert Sun continued steering clear of the story.

Rick Daniels City Manager

[Rick Daniels' Music Festival Confusion](#)

[To Be or Not To Be](#)

[December 22, 2010](#)

Worried

We all became a little worried about the city manager's emotional stability. Was he confused? Or confident? Did he have guts? Or was he a fool?

After all, he was just back on the job after a 30 hospitalization for alcoholism. Had his support of Tony Clarke been a sober decision? No one was really sure.

[Rick Daniels' Music Festival Confidence](#)

[Struggling Event Has Checkered History](#)

[December 23, 2010](#)

Rick Daniels City Manager

Blame

Then councilman Karl Baker did some grandstanding at the council meetings with his gripes about the issue – calling city staff on the carpet for not giving him good advice. Prior to Baker's YES vote authorizing the no-bid contract for Tony Clarke the city attorney wrote a memo to the council members informing them of the non-performance aspect of Clarke's contract. Baker didn't read that memo but used his bully pulpit to rag on the city staff as if it was all their fault. Baker made a big splash with his diatribe, but was it effective in hiding his vote of approval?

Councilman Karl Baker

[“Baffled With Bullshit,” Says Councilman Karl Baker](#)

[Blames Others for His Vote](#)

[January 6, 2011](#)

Discovery

With Tony Clarke hiding out and his event seeming to be falling apart, we obtained bits and pieces of the Tony Clarke contract and began to examine aspects that the city did not know. A number of surprising things came to light. There was some foot dragging and denial – typical of government and public agency figures.

The Desert Sun continued ignoring the issues.

[Tony Clarke's Music Festival Held Up Again?](#)

[Contract Clause Causing Consternation](#)

[February 5, 2011](#)

Ed Smith Police Commander

Where Did The Money Go?

We discovered how Tony Clarke had been spending his advertising budget for the past year – with one billboard on the freeway (courtesy Kiner Communications) that told no one how to get tickets. We began to wonder... where did that quarter million dollars go? We asked but the city attorney kept us in the dark as much as he could, purposely and repeatedly delaying our information requests.

When we finally got a response the majority of pages was redacted with entire pages blacked out as if it contained CIA secrets.

Music Festival Billboard

[Kiner Dumps Music Festival](#)

[Clarke Loses Regions Top PR Firm](#)

[February 8, 2011](#)

One Job to Another

The very next day after Police Commander Ed Smith “retired” from his job he went right to work for Tony Clark of Tresed Ventures. Since he was not an employee of the city but a “contractor” this seemed to not be a conflict of interest. Prior, Smith had spent untold hours working on police logistics on behalf of the event under the direction of Rick Daniels.

The Desert Sun continued ignoring the issues.

[Ed Smith Now Working for Tony Clarke’s Music Festival](#)

[Police Commander’s Music Festival Role](#)

[February 8, 2011](#)

Ed Smith, Tresed Ventures

Canceled or Not?

Since the event was not yet officially cancelled but only “postponed” it came as a big surprise to some when Baruch Gayton backed out. They said Tony Clarke did not pay them. But Rick Daniels, the sole spokesperson for the city, insisted no one need worry, the music festival was just “postponed” and that he guaranteed a festival “sometime in 2011” but could not say exactly when.

The Desert Sun continued publishing what the city wanted them to say to the public.

Mr Gayton

[Music Festival Backbone Gone – Baruch Gayton Out!](#)

[No Word if Possible Suit To Include Baruch Gayton](#)

[February 8, 2011](#)

Bills Not Paid

We then learned it wasn’t just Baruch Gayton that Tony Clarke was not paying. The Internet website maintained by Kiner Communications suddenly went dark. The Desert Sun continued reporting – nothing.

[Music Festival Website](#)

Goes Dark

Domain Name Lost and Up for
Grabs

February 13, 2011

Down But Not Out

Just as suddenly as it went dark the website came back up again the very next day. We were not sure if the event was coming or going. Even reps from Kiner seemed confused or somewhat in the dark. They hadn't been paid either.

Festival Website Back Up

Website Saved by Top PR Firm

February 14, 2011

Spreading the Blame

Rick Daniels started blaming the city council for "firing" Laura Green and that her exit was the downfall of the music festival. By this time Green had cashed in her "keep quiet" money, the settlement she got from the city of close to \$100,000 for promising not to sue the city after she returned from a San Diego conference attended by herself with Rick Daniels. Green moved to Iowa.

None of this was reported in The Desert Sun. Rick Green, Laura Green's husband was the editor of The Desert Sun until Laura got her money and he transferred to Ohio to run another Gannett Corp. newspaper.

Daniels contract was up, and his renewal had been delayed three times. Now free from alcohol rehab, Daniels was ripe to get his contract renewed for another three years, worth close to a million dollars in total. If the music festival was a blunder it might affect his contract renewal. Daniels ended up getting his contract extended by a 4-1 vote. Councilman Betts voted "no" saying he had lost confidence in Daniels.

"They Fired My Project Manager," Said Rick Daniels

Explains Why Smith Picked for
Festival Gig

February 20, 2011

Rick and Laura

More Not Paid

Another voice spoke up about not being paid. Winner of the Chamber of Commerce business person of the year, newspaper publisher Max Lieberman said he, too, was cheated. Unknown to everyone, Clarke had signed an exclusive “print media sponsorship” with **The Desert Sun** while he had also signed a “print media sponsorship” with **The Bottom Line**, a gay publication. News media local to the city of Desert Hot Springs were locked out.

Lieberman cried foul. Nothing of this appeared in The Desert Sun.

Max Lieberman

[Burnt Bridges](#)

[Festival Screwed One Local Business](#)

[February 20, 2011](#)

Bruce Barrett Back Again

Re-enter Bruce Barrett, Tony Clarke's high school friend. He warned – the city can't sue Clarke and he may be right. While on the one hand Barrett claimed a complete independence from Clarke – on the other hand he was often the Clarke's spokesperson.

[Barrett Issues Festival Warning](#)

[City Stuck With Clarke Until June 1](#)

[February 20, 2011](#)

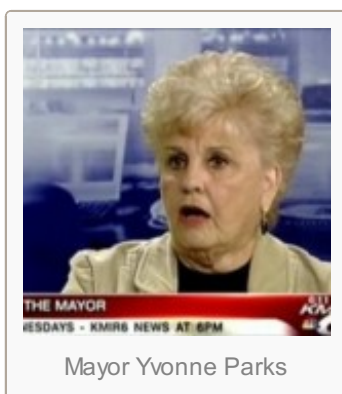


Bruce Barrett

Push Comes to Shove

Canceling the music festival planned for 2010 didn't stop the mayor from wishful thinking. Mayor Parks pressed onward, insistent the show **MUST** go on.

Parks picked on councilman Russell Betts who was the only **NO** vote on the Tony Clarke contract.



Mayor Yvonne Parks

[Music Festival on AGAIN](#)

[Mayor Blames Betts For Troubles – Competitors Still Locked Out](#)

[March 1, 2011](#)

Would It Ever Even Work?

We begin looking at the foundation elements of the event, including the feasibility study done by Clarke and costing the city another \$15,000. Of course Clarke found that it was “feasible” to do the music festival – so he could pocket \$250,000. That seems... feasible.

[Was Music Festival Ever Feasible?](#)

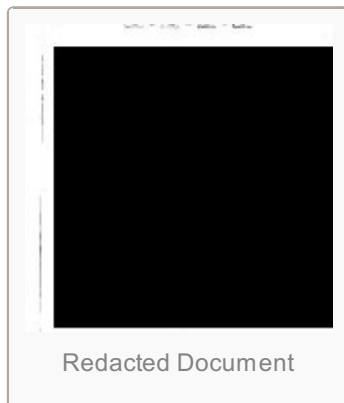
[The Tony Clarke Affair](#)

[March 21, 2011](#)



Public Records Act Request for Documents

Suddenly we began receiving some of the documents we have been requesting to see for over a year. Unfortunately many of the pages were redacted. Still, some interesting details leak out.



[Revealing Music Festival Secrets](#)

[\\$10,000 Paid to Create Facebook Fans](#)

[March 25, 2011](#)

Familiar Story

This all reminds us of a 2009 music festival scam we wrote about.

[Another Music Festival Scam](#)

[Music Lessons Learned](#)

[March 22, 2011](#)





Brian Quintana

The city of Desert Hot Springs has formed a Music Festival Committee to create another event for the city. Meetings are on-going with no progress to report.

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