

On Tuesday, February 5th, Dave Statter of WUSA9TV called Company 37's President, at approximately 1400 hours with evidence of a ride-along member from Company 17, who was convicted of arson approximately 17 years ago. After seeing the evidence, later that evening at our company's monthly meeting, our president told the membership that this person would be allowed to come in and pick up his personal belongings and leave - not to be allowed back.

On Wednesday, February 6th, Mr. Statter aired his report on TV followed by comments by PGFD PIO, Mark Brady, who said our company's leadership was notified that a convicted arsonist was riding at our station. On Thursday, February 7th, Mr. Statter aired a followup story about this person being a member of another volunteer fire department in Charles County.

Following all this negative coverage about the Ritchie VFD, we started our own investigation which revealed the following:

1. 6 hours after Mr. Statter notified us, this person was removed from our station.
2. There was never a letter sent by the PGFD which was verified by the career battalion chief (BFC) who they (PGFD) said delivered it.
3. The volunteer major who receives all notifications about any volunteer members was never sent anything in September or anytime thereafter regarding this person.
4. In the past 15 or 20 years, anything of this nature, notification is brought to you by a major or BFC and is handed to you. This was not done either.
5. On Friday, February 8th, thru our Association President, Bob Russell, a meeting was requested by the Ritchie VFD, Mr. Brady, and any officials from the PGFD and this request was denied.
6. Since September 2007, this person's name or ID number has appeared on approximately 500 reports to the PGFD and this person has had personal contact with several officials from the PGFD such as safety officers, BFC's and majors and not a word was said to him or the Ritchie VFD.
7. On Saturday, February 9th, the volunteer major received notification from PGFD fire officials that the arsonist would be suspended operationally if he did not complete the infectious control recertification. Further proving that the PGFD has no idea what the truth is.

In closing, thank you to Mr. Statter for telling us the truth so we could handle the situation and to the PGFD for all you do in falsely representing the volunteers at our station.