

THE REMY FORTIER LETTER

STORIES NEWS ADVICE WITH REMY FORTIER

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THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Stories are the most effective way of sharing our beliefs, values, and character.

Last month, I wrote about my love of reading. Reading goes hand in hand with storytelling. People love stories. Stories give us insight into a person's character and beliefs. If you are trying to make a decision of whether to hire a person, vote for a person, or attend an event, hearing their story, is often the catalyst that helps you make your decision.

One of the reasons I enjoy interviewing my guests on the podcast so much, is because I love to hear the stories. In a recent episode of Union City Advice Givers I interviewed Gabe Garcia.

Gabe was drafted to the Houston Astros and played professional baseball. When I asked him to share with our listeners his best story, he told the story of when the local Union City Little League team who made it all the way to the West Regional Championships (That's the whole West Coast.) Not only is it a cool story but it tells just how much the sport means to Gabe. If I am choosing a coach for my kid I

want to know their story, why they love the game enough to share that joy with our kids.

I've been helping my friend and past client, local defense attorney, Barbara Thomas, with her campaign to run for Alameda County Superior Court Judge. I like Barbara because she is straightforward and tells it like it is. She also loves dogs (see this month's "Monthly Pet Cuteness" on the last page of this Newsletter) and once she even baked me a delicious apple pie.

When I met Barbara it was at an Open House I was hosting at a Triplex in Oakland's Grand Lake neighborhood. She walked up the driveway in her bail bonds keychain necklace and suit, probably coming from court. I don't know what it was about her but we got to talking and I started venting.

You see just before she walked up, I had a visit from a bunch of local Realtors from a boutique real estate office. In Oakland and Berkeley there are several fancy brokerages. They maintain a certain image and

cater to the higher end properties in the Berkeley and Oakland hills. I have no problem with these brokerages at all. I think some of them do truly fantastic marketing, highlighting some beautiful homes.

But in this group of agents was a lady who came off as a snob and immediately looked down her nose at me. Obviously, I was being judged and coming up short. Perhaps she felt I encroached on their local territory.

To them I'm a no-name agent. Never mind my sales records or the people I have helped. Since I haven't plastered my face all over park benches, billboards, and shopping carts, I am a nobody.

Of course, that is deliberate. I feel that my advertising budget should be spent advertising the homes of my sellers instead of my own face.

In our book "The Value-Driven Approach to

Sell Real Estate," A practical guide to protect yourself from Real Estate Greed & bank an extra \$30,000 profit by thinking like the great Warren Buffett. Chapter Four, Fundamental Mistake #2

"Just because an agent does a lot of advertising don't assume that he or she is a good agent."

This particular property was no different. I told the property's story in my marketing. How the seller first bought it as a labor of love. He'd almost completed the renovation of the front house, restoring the home's Victorian era glory. The seller was very thorough. After finding the foundation of the house was unstable, he ended up putting in a new steel I-beam foundation. Next he started renovating the duplex behind the main house. The renovation was tragically interrupted, in the middle of that project that he was diagnosed with cancer.

When I first met the seller he was less than a month away from a foreclosure auction. After trying to save the house by modifying his loan,

he still couldn't keep up with his payments. By then he had been battling cancer for 2 years. Already, several months behind, the seller had given up. He knew he owed far more than the house was worth. He couldn't finish the remodeling or even afford to keep up with repairs his tenants needed. I was able to find a buyer and negotiate with his lender. We applied for a government program for relocation assistance and I was able to get \$10,000 in relocation funds for him, even though there was no profit from the sale of his property.

In order to stop the foreclosure I had to work very quickly. Prior to that open house I had blanketed the area with flyers for the home. Telling the story of a renovation interrupted and showcasing the opportunity for the new owner to complete it and make it their own. I shared some of the seller's story, about how

much he'd loved his home. So when this snotty agent walked

up to me at the open house, looked me up and down, and said, "So how long have you been in Real Estate?"

I was a bit pissed. Still, I resisted cussing her out. I said,

"Ten years. How long have you been in real estate?"

She didn't answer, just walked away.

Going back to how I met Barbara Thomas.

That same day she was the next person to walk into the open house. She asked me how the open house was going and I told her about the agent who had just left. We got into a long chat and became friends.

Now Barbara is running for Judge. We were talking about her campaign and I asked her, "What are some great stories you can share?" See Barbara has had a long career of public service in the local community and defending



people with no money. I knew she probably had some great stories to tell. Just like with my seller of the Grand Lake Triplex, what is her story?

My friend and colleague Ryan France said recently,

“Before you can like, respect and most importantly, trust someone, you have to know them. I mean truly know them. The real them. That only happens organically – through open, authentic communication. It happens by sharing with the world who you are, what you believe and how that translates to what you do.”

Barbara told me a story of how she represented a homeless Veteran with PTSD. Aaron Colyer was living in a Van, and had been issued a ticket from the Alameda Police. He was homeless because he couldn't afford his rent on his disability of only \$869 a month. Living off of that amount is pretty much impossible in the Bay Area, where he was trying to stay to be close to his son. Barbara represented him for free and got the citation dismissed.

Another story she shared was about her time on Alameda City Council. She used her experience as an attorney when a big new-home developer was not complying with the agreement to complete public works projects to benefit the city. Because of her determination a new Fire Station was built as well as parks and a school. There was a bit of money left over that Barbara made sure got spent, by buying a new Fire Truck for the station.

When I asked her why she became an attorney, she told me another great story. Barbara was working at the Alameda Naval Base with a bunch of engineers. She would get a report every time a plane crashed anywhere in the world. Then the engineers would go to work trying to find out what caused the plane crash and how to fix it. When Barbara wanted flextime so she could take more college classes, they denied her even though the men working there had access to flextime whenever they needed it. Barbara fought back against that discrimination and went on to help other women and minorities as well.

I helped her write and post the story on her website, you can find it at Barbaraforjudge.com under the heading *Fighting Discrimination and Winning*



FSBO VS. "REAL ESTATE AGENT"

The Battle Cards Are Set - Who Will Win?

D*avid vs. Goliath.*

That, sometimes, is what comes to mind when people hear that a "real estate agent" has approached a FSBO (For Sale By Owner). The perception that it's a battle against wills. From the start, it's known that the agent is there, at the homeowner's house, to sell the homeowner, while the homeowner must hold his ground, to prove a real estate agent isn't need... Then, occasionally, it's no battle at all.

Rather, more of a one-sided slaughter.

Let me tell you a story, then I'll make my point.

It comes from a conversation I heard the other day in a real estate FB group. The agent, it was a conversation he'd had with a homeowner attempting to sell his home. In his owner words, here's how the story went:

The agent said, "I was talking to a FSBO today when I asked the homeowner about how she went about pricing her home." She said, referring to the homeowner, "I invited 3 real estate agents to my house and they did a Comparative Marketing Analysis (CMA)."

The agent responded, "Interesting! And you used their recommended price?" The homeowner, "Yes."

The agent followed up, "I'm just curious, how did you invite them to your house?" What he really meant was, "What criteria did you use, to select those three agents that you invited to your house, to ask for the recommended price?"

The homeowner said, "I called them and I asked if they can prepare a CMA for me? And they did, in fact, they came very fast because all agents are desperate to get listings. Not only that," the homeowner said, "but I also asked them to leave me a copy of their marketing plan, which I am also using now."

The homeowner continued, "I hired a professional photographer for \$200 and put it on the MLS for \$200. And I do open houses for myself."

The agent responds, "Wow, you sound like you know what you're doing. What's your job?" The homeowner responds, "I am a tax consultant."

The agent says, "Excellent, I did have a lot of issues with my last accountant. I need a new one. When can I stop by for a FREE consultation?"

The homeowner said, "We don't offer free consultations, you have to pay." Dumbfounded the agents says, "So why do you get everything from these agents for free and you're not willing to do the same?"

The homeowner responds with this frank but obvious statement, "You guys sell yourself cheap." At this point, both upset and frustrated, the agent finally hangs up. And as he vented his frustration

to the other agents in that FB group, here's what he stated:

“It's a public perception about real estate agents that [they are] desperate to get business.” Then continued, “She [talking about the FSBO] met with three agents and not one of them was strong enough [in their sales skills] to pre-qualify her before the appointment or aggressively close her for a signature.”

I ask, folks, might that be the very problem? Maybe people don't want to be “sold.” Maybe people don't want to be “pre-qualified.” Maybe people don't want to be “aggressively closed.”

Maybe, if real estate agents weren't trained to behave as annoying salespeople—commission-driven vultures—then perhaps the public perception would be different.

As a real estate professional myself, I am well-qualified to speak to the Negative Reputation of my industry. Many agents like to pretend it doesn't exist. But it does. I know it does. And you know too, that it does.

The value proposition that most agents deliver, sadly, is precisely what that FSBO enunciated, after having requested the marketing plans of the 3 agents. “I hired a professional photographer for \$200 and put it on the MLS for \$200. And I do open houses for myself.” So why bother hiring an agent that demands an over-priced (by comparison to delivered value) commission fee?

And as far as the recommended price, speaking to how she arrived at it. “I invited 3 real estate agents to my house and they did a Comparative Marketing Analysis (CMA).” We don't do them, that's not how we operate. But pretty much any agent will hop when a homeowner says hop, and deliver that recommendation.

Again, I think it's sad.

Not because the homeowner is taking advantage of the real estate agent. That is, honestly, the least of my worries. If you want to be treated as a professional and compensated as a professional. Then, by God, you shouldn't sell yourself (or your knowledge) cheap.

That FSBO was a 100% correct.

Occasionally, it doesn't happen often, but occasionally a homeowner will ask if I want to interview for the position of being their agent. I kindly respond. “No thank you. I don't do interviews. But let me do you a favor. I'll send you a copy of my book. Read it. Then, as you interview those other agents, compare them, their marketing plan, etc. against the fundamental mistakes that I outline in my book. If any of them violate those fundamental mistakes, to the point you don't feel comfortable moving forward with them - then give me a call, and we can look into the possibility of executing our documented approach on your behalf, to maximize profit.”

Never forget, in business and in life, how you convey yourself dictates how you're treated. ■

ATTENTION: SCAM ALERT

Don't get suckered! The Real Estate Industry is full of greed. Agents and others in this industry will do just about anything for a profit. One of my clients bought a house in Union City in July. After getting these notices in the mail, my client contacted me asking if he needed to pay this bill. **Only it's not a bill at all.**

What these companies are doing is mailing these official looking invoices out to new homeowners. They are geared to make a homeowner think they need to pay to get a copy of the Grant Deed for their home. It goes on to imply that you need a copy of your deed to confirm the property was "in fact transferred to the individual"

Think back to when you purchased a home. Do you remember the mountain of paperwork you

signed? Do you recall that you were given a copy of everything you signed? The title company also sends you a copy of your Grant Deed after it is recorded with county. If for some reason you don't have yours you can simply call your title company and ask for it. There is no additional charge.

But this advertisement, disguised as an invoice, makes it sound to a homeowner that if they don't pay \$89 they aren't confirming that they own the home.

FIRST DOCUMENTS
160 W. Foothill Pkwy Suite 105-47
Corona, CA 92882
PHONE: 1-888-550-9588

THIS SERVICE TO OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT PROFILE AND GRANT DEED OR OTHER RECORD OF TITLE IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ANY GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. YOU CAN OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR GRANT DEED OR OTHER RECORD OF TITLE FROM THE COUNTY RECORDER IN THE COUNTY WHERE YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN.

RECORDED DEED NOTICE

3-DIGIT 945
ASF0826

Union City, CA 94587-2421

RECORD ID#	566632
PARCEL NO:	
Please Respond By	Document Fee
08/26/2016	\$83.00

Detach and mail

August 2016

08/26/2016
Requested Response Date
Parcel Number

Please Respond by: 08/26/2016

PAY BY PHONE
1-888-550-9588

Se habla español

Why you need a copy of Your Current Grant Deed and Property Assessment Profile?

First Documents recommends that all CA homeowners obtain a copy of their **Current Grant Deed and Property Assessment Profile**. These documents can provide evidence that the property at [redacted] was in fact transferred and/or has interest to the individual(s) [redacted].

A Property Assessment Profile provides a wealth of information useful to understand a subject property's makeup. This important report includes Tax assessed value, Tax delinquency, Area Comparable values, legal description current owner information and parcel ID number. This report will return all pertinent property and owner information for the designated property.

Records obtained through public information show a deed was recorded in your name [redacted] on 07/12/2016, which indicates your ownership and or interest in the specified property below.

ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION

Recording Date: 07/12/2016 Year Built: 1973 Land Use Desc: SFR
Transaction Amount: \$512,000.00 Square Feet: 1870 Carrier Code: C009
Parcel No: [redacted] Bedrooms: 3 Bathrooms: 2

Legal Property Address: [redacted] Union City, CA 94587-2421

To obtain a copy of your Current Grant Deed and Property Assessment Profile, Please detach and return in the enclosed envelope with your processing fee of \$83.00. You will receive your documents and report within 21 business days.

Upon receipt of your processing fee, your request will be submitted for document preparation and review. If for any reason your request for a Current Grant Deed and Property Assessment Profile cannot be obtained, your processing fee will be immediately refunded.

Current Grant Deed:	Property Assessment Profile:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Deed provides legal evidence of ownership/interest • Shows evidence that a transfer or interest was recorded for the subject property or entity • Shows evidence of subject property's legal description • Shows evidence to verify that the recorded information is indeed correct & mistake free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Tax & Assessment Information • Total Assessor Value • Total Tax Amount • Subject Property Comparable Values • Flood Report • Tax Delinquency

This product or service has not been approved, or endorsed by any government agency, and this offer is not being made by an agency of the government. This is not a bill. This is a solicitation; you are under no obligation to pay the amount stated, unless you accept this offer. If you are not 100% satisfied with this product, simply return it within 30 days for a full refund.

Take a look at this picture. Notice the disclaimer at the top? Even smaller at the bottom? It says “This is not a bill. This is a Solicitation; you are under no obligation to pay” I wonder how many new homeowners read that fine print? My client received two of these from two separate companies. Be smart and don’t fall for gimmicks!■



UNION CITY ADVICE GIVERS

In my next interview I’m speaking with a Union City Police, SWAT sniper team leader, Sergeant Freddy Camacho. If all that isn’t enough Freddy also owns CrossFit of Fremont and competes yearly in the CrossFit Games. I know he will have some great stories for our listeners.

Monthly Pet Cuteness!



Send Pics to
Remy@RemyFortier.com
to have your pet featured!

*This Month Say hi to
Barbara's two White
German Shepards,
Doc & Kate*



About the Author

In addition to operating *Union City Advice Givers* podcast and blog, where she seeks out and interviews the East Bay's brightest minds, business owners, Entrepreneurs and community leaders. Remy operates a successful real estate business where she shows homeowners how to extract up to \$30,000 or more of additional profit, through what she calls "The Value-Drive Approach To Sell Real Estate," the title of her latest book. Fortier is committed giver donating through food and clothing drives to those in need. Her business remains focused on three pillars of impact: Philanthropy, Business, and Growth.

Phone 510.589.0720

White German Shepherds