

The dark side



**Mack I.
Julion**

I want to start this article by first acknowledging the members of the NALC who, at one time in their life, served our country in the armed forces. These men and women volunteered to defend the very democracy that far too many of us take for granted. Whether or not they served during combat, the very freedom that we enjoy every day comes at a price. So again, I express my appreciation for your service. Thank you and happy Veterans Day!

On a different note, I recently received a call from a member of my branch who wanted me to know that two of my former stewards have

now crossed the line and gone into management. They wanted to know what my reaction was to these “traitors” who are now on the “dark side.” I admit I didn’t see these coming, but I was more disappointed than shocked. One of them I had appointed to Formal A. The other was someone for whose work I had a sincere appreciation, and whom I *thought* had a real commitment to her members.

While I totally understand the feelings of betrayal that the caller—and probably other members—may have, I guess over time that I am no longer taken aback by anger and resentment when these things happen. I’m just not totally surprised when someone makes that life choice and decides to go into postal management.

Years ago, when I was a regional administrative assistant in Region 3, I can recall how I reacted when I heard that someone at the Headquarters level had left the NALC to work for Postal Service management. I felt so personally offended and bitter because I had such respect for this person. We would talk regularly about how dirty and deceitful our counterparts were at the Postal Service, and now they were on the other side. I vowed that I would never speak to them again.

But over the years, I have seen it play out at so many levels—from co-workers in my station to branch presidents, officers and stewards, even Leadership Academy graduates and delegates. These were all people I had a working relationship with at some point representing the members of our great union. At times, I still question their moral compass, but it no longer works me into a frenzy where I harbor ill will like it did in the past.

Realize, I say this as someone who has a reputation for being notoriously anti-management. In fact, over the years, I have had more than a few counterparts in management confide in me the disdain with which their comrades speak of me in meetings or casual conversations. In my tenure as branch president, they tried to bar me from offices by calling the police (postal and city). I have even been arrested for attempting to represent members in a unit in which I was not welcomed by management. During one arbitration hearing, when we were removing a manager for the violation of the Joint Statement of Violence (JSOV), the Postal Service advocate told the arbitrator that I was being simply vindictive because of my hatred for postal management and that I had a “hit list” of managers and supervisors that I was seeking to bring down. This was not altogether true—I did not *hate* management. But I do have a strong contempt for “mismanagement” and those who mistreat our fellow letter carriers and co-workers. And sadly, there are far too many of them.

“If you create a hostile work environment by bullying, harassing or intimidating our members, you will face the full wrath of the NALC, and we will seek to remove you from your position!”

I believe, as letter carriers and postal employees, that we are blessed to be able to serve our country and customers by working for the most respected agency in the federal government. It’s just unfortunate that this storied institution is plagued with bad management at every level. One would hope those who have worked with us or had the privilege of representing our members would not forget where they came from or how hard we work as city letter carriers.

I’m told that some go into management because they no longer have the physical ability to do the job. Still, too many do so because they lack the work ethic and the mental capacity to be a city letter carrier.

Whatever the reason, I’m not judging. I just remind them all the time: If you create a hostile work environment by bullying, harassing or intimidating our members, you will face the full wrath of the NALC, and we will seek to remove you from your position! No matter who you are.

With that, I wish all a happy and blessed Thanksgiving!