

A scene from Keystone Cops

W-B fires towing contractor who leads police on bizarre chase in city hall

By James Conmy
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

City Wide Towing owner Bob Kadluboski made the most of his last day working for the City of Wilkes-Barre.

He snapped pictures, questioned elected officials, made police officers chase him around city hall, and joked with members of the media before finally leaving city property after almost 20 minutes of juvenile antics.

Kadluboski's unusual behavior came moments after Wilkes-Barre Mayor Tom Leighton announced Kadluboski's towing contract with the city had been terminated.

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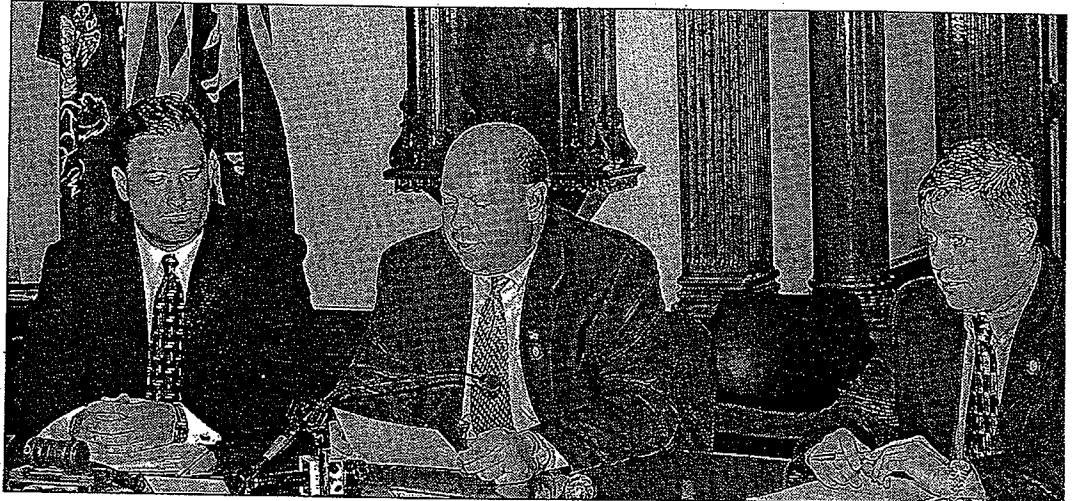
Towing's owner appeared in council chambers minutes before Leighton read a prepared statement. Just like at the previous night's council meeting, he was wearing dark sun-

glasses, an FBI baseball hat and carrying a camera.

Prior to Leighton's appearance, Kadluboski clearly knew what was about to take place. He was having a phone conversation in which he told the person on the other line, "They're going to fire me in five minutes."

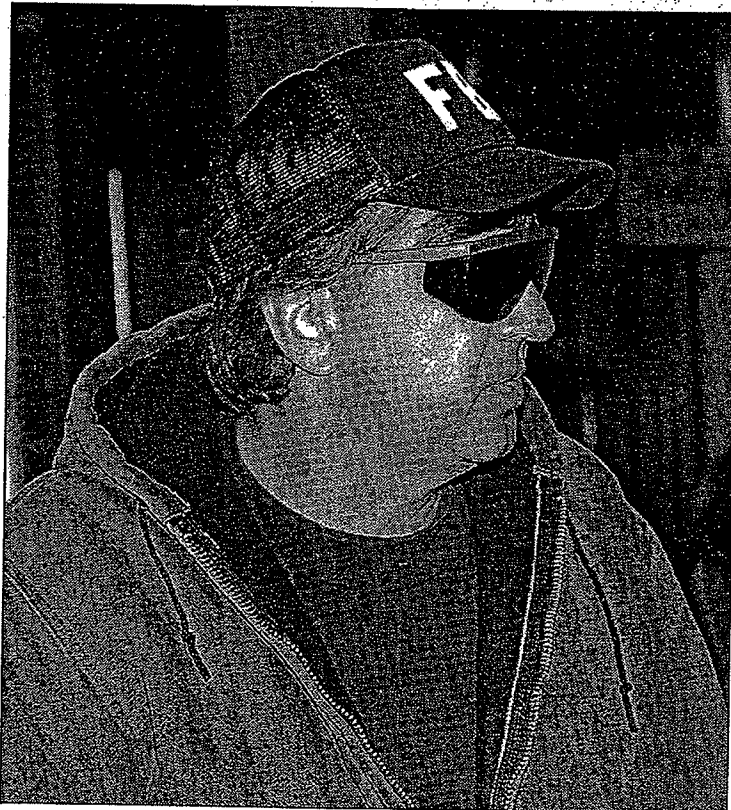
Leighton emerged from the hallway moments later and read his statement that did not mention Kadluboski by name.

"I made a pledge to the residents and taxpayers of the City of Wilkes-Barre that all work performed under my administration would be performed in



JACK KELLEY/CITIZENS'

Mayor Tom Leighton, center, announces the termination of City Wide Towing's contract with the city. At left is Assistant City Solicitor Bill Vinsko; right is city Administrator J.J. Murphy.



JACK KELLEY/CITIZENS' VOICE

Bob Kadluboski is upset his contract has been terminated.

professional, courteous and workman-like manner," Leighton said. "I will not tolerate any lack of professionalism

from my staff, my employees, my administration or any contractors working for the city.

"The residents deserve

more," he said.

The mayor explained the bitter designated in Kadluboski's contract, Ronald Trimb determined City Wide Towing was in violation of its contract and terminated the agreement. Kadluboski was accused of lacking professionalism and failing to provide itemized receipts.

After Leighton's remarks, Kadluboski repeatedly tried to ask Solicitor Bill Vinsko questions, but Leighton only would field questions from the media. Later, Leighton claimed if city officials tried to answer Kadluboski's questions, the situation only would have gotten more out of control.

Before he left council chambers, the site of Friday's pre-conference, Kadluboski took numerous pictures of Leighton, Vinsko, Administrator J.J. Murphy, Police Chief Gerry Dessoie, members of the media and the police officers who eventually escorted him from the building.

Kadluboski offered Capt. L. Crane and Patrolman Robert Bozek a chance to frisk him

SEE TERMINATED, PAGE

Terminated: Kadluboski is fired by W-B

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and raised his arms to shoulder height to further accommodate them, but the officers declined. He insisted on his way out the door they were violating his rights.

While Leighton was walking out of council chambers, Kadluboski emerged from a side stairwell and asked the mayor and Vinsko why he was not provided with a copy of the complaints made against him. The tower also claimed he sent certified letters asking for the complaints.

Leighton later said he did not give Kadluboski the complaints because he wanted to protect the complainants' identities.

"I'm not going to release those names," Leighton said. "I will not jeopardize anyone's safety."

Kadluboski was able to make his way into Leighton's office where he stopped Vinsko to question him about the complaints.

"Bob, the arbiter made his decision," Vinsko responded. "There is nothing I can do."

Kadluboski also accused Leighton of terminating him in retaliation for a petition drive he worked on to reduce the salaries of the city's elected leaders.

"You will get a pay cut next year," Kadluboski shouted at Leighton, "Guaranteed!"

Kadluboski, in a late-afternoon phone call, said he will "attack" city salaries in spring 2005; benefits in the fall and then pensions.

"I'll do it in increments," he said. "I have lots of time to think. Even when I'm sleeping, I'll be thinking, and I will come up with the right an-

swers."

In addition, Kadluboski said his business is in debt "and now (he will) have to start all over."

As for Friday, after questioning Leighton and Vinsko, Kadluboski then led police on a 10-minute chase through the building, which included another trip to the mayor's fourth-floor office for more pictures.

**'HERE
I COME TO
SAVE THE DAY.'**

**BOB KADLUBOSKI
ON LEAVING CITY HALL**

While running through the halls, Kadluboski sang a line from the Mighty Mouse cartoon's theme song.

"Here I come to save the day," Kadluboski bellowed while running up and down the halls.

While Kadluboski was on a lower floor, Dessoye directed Leighton to barricade himself in his office, but Leighton emerged only seconds later and told the chief to remove Kadluboski from the building.

"He's being disruptive to city hall business," Leighton told Dessoye. "Have him removed. Get him out of here."

Officers eventually caught up with Kadluboski on the third floor and told him he had to leave the building, but he was not charged in connection with the incident.

While awaiting the elevator, the tower tried to get a drink of water from a cooler, but it was broken. He also alerted the media to his police escorts, insisting again his rights were being violated.

When the elevator finally hit the first floor, the doors opened and Kadluboski started snapping pictures of members of the media gathered on the first floor.

He eventually made his way to the back door of city hall, which faces police headquarters. But first he stopped to hold the door for Bozek and Crane and to make one last comment.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the tower has left the building," he remarked in a humorous tone.

Kadluboski was not done though. He walked across the parking lot, removed papers from his tow truck and went into police headquarters.

Crane said he had the right to be in the building while walking up the ramp.

Kadluboski came out a few minutes later and took turns snapping pictures with a photographer before climbing in his tow truck.

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