

The Chief

Civil Service LEADER
THE CIVIL EMPLOYEES' WEEKLY

October 15, 2010

FOR THE RECORD

Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd was called a lot of things last year during a tight leadership election at his union that included an anonymous smear campaign. But even he was shocked to see himself labeled a “slave labor” leader on Glenn Beck’s blog The Blaze Sept. 30.

The brief post linked to an interview Mr. Floyd had given to radio host Ed Schultz about the One Nation rally in Washington D.C., where Mr. Schultz asked, “Are your members doing this because they have to, or they want to?” Mr. Floyd replied, “My members are doing this for both reasons; they have to, and they want to.”

“Slave Labor: Teamsters President says members ‘have’ to go to One Nation Rally,” read the headline on The Blaze, written by Associate Editor Pam Key.

“It’s amusing to see his sideshow,” Mr. Floyd said of Mr. Beck’s website in a phone interview. “I always thought that he was full of rhetoric, but now that I see what he’s trying to do to me, I can really see that he’s a phony and sick. He really needs help, professional help. I really hope no one gets hurt behind his rhetoric. Talk like this is dangerous.”

Even though he sounded largely amused by the posting, Mr. Floyd said the use of such charged language should be taken more seriously. “I’m actually the grandson of a sharecropper from South Carolina. My mother used to pick cotton as a little girl. And it was truly offensive to see my name and ‘slave labor’ used in the same sentence,” he said.

“To put that on anybody, in this day and age, especially an African-American labor leader, is truly insulting, to say the least,” he continued. “But in the absence of intelligence, I understand their frustration and pain. When you’re wrong, you don’t know what else to do. That was the desperate attempt to insult a rally that was successful.”

Ms. Key was contacted for comment but did not respond.