

Prosecutors frown on guy who makes dentures for ex-cons

Comments (2) By **Lauren Smiley** Wednesday, Sep 29 2010

In recent years, the ex-convicts and former addicts graduating from the **Delancey Street Foundation** have been able to replace missing teeth in their jack-o-lantern grins for free, thanks to **Robert Storey**. He is the ever-friendly owner and practitioner of Advanced Denture Care in **Daly City**. "It's hard for them to go to a job interview without teeth," he explains over the phone in a Texas lilt and with, we imagine, perfect teeth.



Fred Noland

Yet Storey has found out it's just as hard to *keep* your job when you're a denturist, an unregulated profession in California. Earlier this month, a letter from the San Mateo District Attorney's office arrived at the practice he opened in Daly City's Westlake Shopping Center in 2005, warning him that a state dental board investigator was accusing him of practicing dentistry without a license. According to Storey, **Deputy District Attorney Chuck Finney** delivered him an ultimatum last week: practice under the supervision of a dentist, or face a lawsuit and teeth-chattering fines.

Turns out it takes real balls to make fake teeth. For decades, denturists nationwide have been guerrilla combatants in an ongoing turf war with the **American Dental Association**, which Storey says has "unlimited funds to get rid of my profession." While the ADA paints denturists as untrained hacks who cannot adequately do oral exams, Storey argues they just want to destroy the competition.

True, state law says anyone who makes dentures is practicing dentistry. Yet Storey insists his work is protected under a 2002 law that allows "complementary and alternative health care practitioners" to perform certain procedures without fear of being in violation of the state's Medical Practice Act, as long as they notify their patients that they are not physicians.

Storey does so, requiring all his patients to sign a release stating that he is a "doctor of medical denturistry," having completed a "doctorate" training program in addition to crafting dentures since 1978.

Yet telling the deputy district attorney that was "like shooting a BB gun at a granite wall," Storey recalls. "It didn't make a dent." Facing a \$5,000 fine for each violation of state codes if he loses in court, and refusing to work under a dentist as a "middleman," he plans to leave the state to continue his practice.

Upon hearing the news last week, one 85-year-old patient started crying, Storey said. We're guessing the soon-to-be grads over at Delancey Street won't be smiling either.

Reference: <http://www.sfweekly.com/2010-09-29/news/prosecutors-frown-on-guy-who-makes-dentures-for-ex-cons>