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GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT

Like Abraham, Craig Watkins asks if we want to destroy the righteous with the wicked

A POET, A MUSEUM DIRECTOR AND A LAWYER WHO REFUSES TO LOSE

Frank Branson does just what he wants

HOW RICHARD HAYNES KICKED A SPITTOON AND LAUNCHED A LEGENDARY CAREER

THE BUSIEST SEPTUAGENARIAN IN TEXAS

By day, he wins million-dollar cases; by night, Wayne smokes six briskets a

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Being Buffalo Bill

J. Gary Trichter channels a Western hero

Even though J. Gary Trichter grew up in Miami, and spent his youth on boats and beaches in Island Marada and Key West in the summers, he always embraced “the cowboy way.” It just took him 50 years and a cowgirl to realize it.

A nationally renowned DWI attorney and a founding partner of Houston- and Bandera-based Trichter & Murphy, the 58-year-old says his recreational interests were skewed toward flying historic war planes in air shows before he met and hired Dee Dee Norman as his legal secretary in 1988. They married in 2002.

“She wanted me to become more involved in the things that she enjoyed,” Trichter says. That included horseback riding and the rural life.

Before he knew it, they moved to a 44-acre ranch in Bandera, Texas, that was previously owned by rodeo champion Larry Mahan. Bandera, the self-proclaimed Cowboy Capital of the World, is a four-hour drive west of Houston. Trichter still represents clients around the state, but works mostly there, which he describes as “a town of 952 people and three traffic lights.”

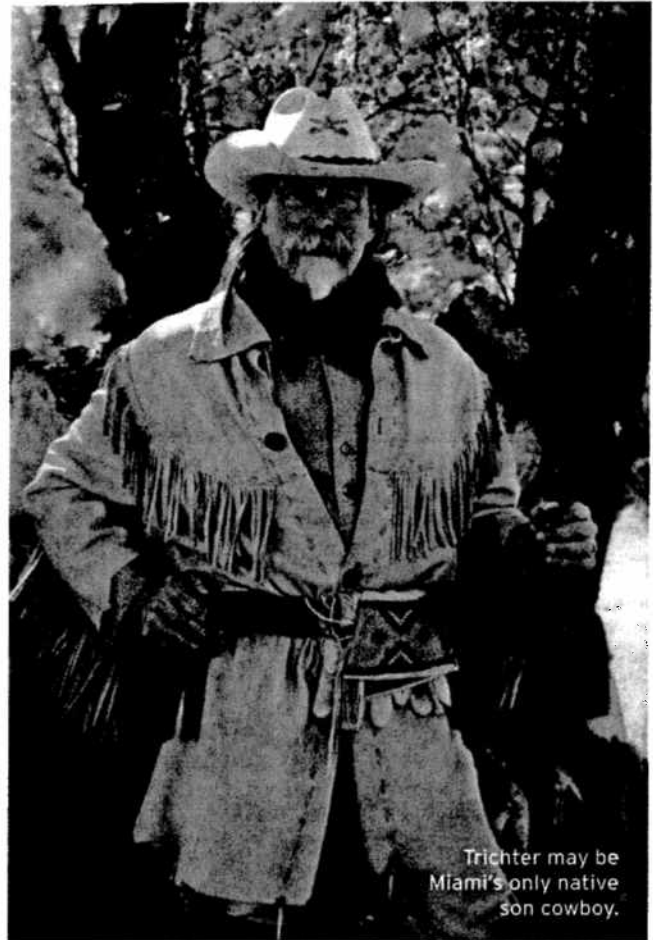
The Trichters were married in Cody, Wyo., where they visited the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. There, Trichter became fascinated with the life story of William Frederick “Buffalo Bill” Cody, one of the most colorful figures of the

American Old West.

“I liked the old values that I grew up watching in Westerns on the silver screen. I thought it would be fun to go into schools and teach kids those rules, so I asked my wife, ‘Do you mind if I become Buffalo Bill for a while?’”

He grew his hair out, learned some rope tricks and the harmonica, and improved his riding skills. Now he plays Buffalo Bill in Wild West shows in Sheridan, Wyo., every June and in Bandera every Labor Day weekend. He and Dee Dee also participate several times a year in Cowboy Mounted Shooting competitions, in which you fire at a series of balloons while galloping on horseback.

“When I am riding and shooting I am not playing a cowboy, I’m living it,” he says. “Being Buffalo Bill is a way



Trichter may be Miami's only native son cowboy.

for me to turn off some pressures and stresses of my lawyer life and share an American hero with so many people who forgot what significant contributions he made to this country.”

—Paul Nolan

Searching for Sodom

Jeff Kobs is digging in Jordan for a biblical hotspot

Compared to what Jeff Kobs sifts through in his free time, digging through discovery is a cakewalk.

For the past four years, the personal injury lawyer with Fort Worth’s Kobs, Haney & Hundley has traveled to Tall el-Hammam, Jordan, an ancient city eight miles northeast of the Dead Sea that is the site of a massive excavation project.

“To be fair, I am not an archeologist,” he says. “[The archeologists] all sit around with their important-looking brushes; I carry

buckets of dirt and rocks.” Kobs’ interest in archeology was spurred by his wife, Carroll, who recently received her master’s degree and is pursuing a Ph.D. in the field.

Based on geography and occupational chronology, some biblical scholars believe Tall el-Hammam was the site of the doomed city of Sodom. “No one knows for sure at this point,” Kobs says. “We’re looking for tablets and things like that.”

Last February, Kobs helped unearth a 10- to 12-gallon storage jar.