

**From:** Joe Monahan <jmonahan@ix.netcom.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: story from the Rio Grande Sun  
**Date:** March 24, 2006 9:20:19 PM MST

march 23, 2006

## **Former Top Cop, State Rep. Exchanged Cell Calls**

**State chief called Rodella  
nine times before resignation**

**By Mike Gisick**  
SUN Staff Writer

In the last months of his career, former State Police Chief Carlos Maldonado exchanged frequent phone calls with state Rep. Debbie Rodella, D-La Mesilla.

On Nov. 2, 2005, for example, Maldonado called Rodella from a trip to Virginia. It was 9:06 p.m., and he and Rodella talked for 92 minutes — the longest single call in the more than one year of phone records turned over last week by the Department of Public Safety.

During his final four months on the job, Maldonado talked to Rodella at least 19 times on his state-issued cell phone, those records show. Maldonado and Rodella talked nine times during the month-long billing cycle that ended Feb. 23.

Maldonado announced his plan to retire the next day.

A few days later, KRQE-TV reported a story already spreading fast. Maldonado was forced to retire, the story went, after the husband of a state legislator confronted the state with evidence of an affair between his wife and the chief.

[More . . .](#)

**March 23, 2006**

## **State Officials . . .**

The KRQE story did not identify its source, or the legislator. The SUN has been unable to independently confirm that story, although no one has challenged its veracity.

Rodella has not returned numerous phone calls from the SUN during the past month. Neither has her husband, former state cop and magistrate judge hopeful Tommy Rodella.

Whatever the subject of Maldonado and Debbie Rodella's phone conversations, if they were business-related a number of them were held well outside of normal business hours.

On Feb. 8, Rodella called Maldonado at 8:02 p.m. and the two talked for nine minutes. The next

night, Maldonado initiated a 20 minute conversation beginning at 9:03 p.m.

On Feb. 13, Rodella called Maldonado at 7:55 p.m. It was the last conversation between the two noted in Maldonado's phone records.

The phone records also show a spike in text message activity at the end of Maldonado's tenure. During the February billing cycle, he sent or received 316 text messages — a dramatic increase over the three previous cycles, when he sent or received 38, 60 and 14 messages.

In the wake of the KRQE story, DPS has remained tight-lipped about the reason for Maldonado's retirement.

Spokesman Peter Olson said DPS Secretary John Denko had no comment about the retirement except to say that Maldonado left for personal reasons.

Pahl Shipley, a spokesman for Gov. Bill Richardson, said the governor's office had no information about Maldonado's retirement besides that he retired for personal reasons.

"I don't know if he ever talked to the governor" before leaving, Shipley said of Maldonado.

Shipley did deny that anyone in the governor's office was approached by Tommy Rodella with information about an affair involving Maldonado.

"That answer to that is, no," he said.

Attempts to reach Maldonado were unsuccessful. A message left on the voice mail of his state-issued cell phone was not returned, although it is not clear whether he is still using that cell phone.

His retirement letter simply states that Maldonado left with a "heavy heart." He goes on to thank Denko and Richardson for their leadership.

While Maldonado has faded from view, however, the Rodella's have continued to go about their public lives.

Both attended the Rio Arriba County Democratic Party Convention Feb. 27, three days after Maldonado's retirement became effective. At that event, the political couple made a point of kissing in front of a SUN reporter.

The next day, Debbie Rodella spoke at the dedication of the renovated county courthouse in Tierra Amarilla. According to several people who attended the dedication, Rodella spoke of how the courthouse had a special meaning for her because it was where she first laid eyes on her future husband. She was a juror, she told the audience. Tommy Rodella was a witness.

Tommy Rodella called the SUN that same day to request a copy of the picture of he and his wife kissing, but later that week it was clear the Rodella's were no longer taking calls from the media. The voice mail message for Tommy Rodella's cell phone, which is also the cell phone for the Rodellas' Ayuda Bail Bonding company, now features Debbie Rodella's voice. The Rodella's home phone is now answered by a computerized voice that informs callers no messages can be accepted.

Tommy Rodella's opponents in the magistrate judge race said the rumors about the Rodellas had become so wide-spread they'd taken over center stage in that crowded race.

"Everybody's talking about it," Antonio Manzanares said. "I don't know what to make of it. I think the governor should address it. Somebody should address it."

Ray Tafoya said he believed high-level members of state government were covering up for

Debbie Rodella. Marlo Martinez — who Tommy Rodella previously accused of attacking his own son after a basketball game, which Martinez denied — said the latest melodrama involving the Rodellas was hardly a surprise.

"I don't know what to say," Martinez said. "Tommy could write a soap opera. I don't know what he's thinking. To me, it's crazy that he's even running."