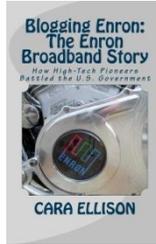


**RUMBLE PRESS INTERVIEW OF CARA ELLISON,
Author of *Blogging Enron: The Enron Broadband Story***



Rumble Press (RP): Thank you for taking the time for this talk. I know that some of the topics we'll discuss are covered in your book, but I wanted to make some of that information available to people who may read this interview before reading your book.

Okay, let's start with a bit of background on you. Tell us about yourself.

Cara Ellison (Cara): Well, I guess it's accurate to say that I've led a fairly diverse life. I've worked for companies, large and small, including start-ups. I've traveled quite a bit, and I've lived in a number of places, including Houston, Texas and, most recently, Washington, D.C. I currently live near London. My interests are diverse also – writing, food, fitness, photography are a few of the highlights.

RP: Tell us about your writing. How long have you been a writer? What kind of writing do you focus on?

Cara: I don't remember ever not being a writer. I've loved writing all my life and have been writing for my own enjoyment as long as I can remember. I've tried my hand at both fiction and nonfiction. I've recently published a romantic suspense novel, titled *At Any Cost*. I'm working on the sequel to that novel right now for the publisher, Diversion Books.

I love blogging and have had at least one or two active blogs ever since I discovered blogging many years ago. Blogging has been important to me because it's my way of exploring my interests, and it has helped me hone my writing skills. In fact, it was my *Enron Blog* that was the motivation behind *Blogging Enron: The Enron Broadband Story*.

RP: Tell us about your *Enron Blog*.

Cara: The *Enron Blog* has been around for many years now. It started as the *Cara Ellison Enron Blog*, and I eventually changed the name to *Enron Online: The Enron Blog*. As far as I know, it is the most complete and longest-running blog on the topic of Enron in existence. It is a rich source of information on Enron, and people use it quite a bit for research nowadays. Incredibly, it has remained quite popular over the years – I have a lot of regular readers, and I get lots of new visitors every day. It's great to see a new generation of readers, who were not caught up in the initial hyper environment of the Enron legal mess, now asking rational questions about Enron that should have been asked in the beginning.

RP: It is amazing that a blog dedicated to Enron has remained so popular for such a long time. What are the reasons for that?

Cara: A few reasons, I think. First, the Enron legal case was huge, one of the biggest white collar criminal cases in American history, and it was talked about endlessly while it was taking place. So everyone has heard the name "Enron" even though I find that few people really know much about the company or the legal case. Because of that widespread name recognition, people still want to learn about Enron, and when they come to my blog and see that the Enron story they think they know does not track with the real story of Enron, it makes them even more fascinated by the blog posts.

Second, I don't just talk about Enron on the blog – instead, I use Enron and the various Enron cases as a springboard to reflect on lots of topics that interest my readers. For example, the blog appeals to people interested in business, technology, the law, and current events, as well as people interested specifically in Enron.

Third, I hope my writing style on the blog has kept people coming back. I mix things up – lots of serious posts, of course, but mixed in with satire, philosophical reflections, modern fairy tales, and occasional craziness.

RP: Let's turn to your book, *Blogging Enron: The Enron Broadband Story*. I can tell by the title that your blogging career has influenced the book, right?

Cara: That's right. A friend suggested to me that I use my *Enron Blog* posts as a launching pad for a series of books about Enron. That struck me as a perfect way to approach the topic and to create books that would be accessible and appealing to anybody interested in Enron. My *Enron Blog* is written for everyone, and I have stayed true to that mission with the book.

I decided to write the first *Blogging Enron* book about Enron Broadband Services, or "EBS". I planned out how I wanted to unfold the story of EBS and then selected 54 of my posts about EBS to include in the book as "accent points". The book is not simply a collection of my posts; there is tons of new material in the book, including lots of inside information that has never been revealed anywhere else. I call the posts from my blog "accent points" because I use them to provide color and passion to the unfolding of the Enron story. Those posts span many years, and they retain the emotion that I felt at the time I originally wrote them, back when the EBS defendants were fighting the federal prosecutors in a legal battle that seemed as if it would never end.

RP: Why did you decide to blast off the *Blogging Enron* series with Enron Broadband instead of one of the other Enron cases, like that of Jeff Skilling, for example?

Cara: Enron Broadband – EBS -- is really the perfect way for a reader to start an investigation of the Enron saga. The EBS indictment was the first of the Enron indictments brought by the federal prosecutors of the Department of Justice's Enron Task Force, or "ETF". The tactics used by the ETF prosecutors and FBI agents in the EBS case are essentially the same ones used against defendants in the other Enron cases. John Kroger was the arrogant, "win-at-any-cost" prosecutor who brought the EBS indictments, and he is the archetype of the flawed squad of former Mafia prosecutors assigned to the Enron cases. And one of the EBS defendants, Rex Shelby, was the last man standing in the Enron legal wars – he fought the Feds for nine years and was the last of the dozens of Enron defendants to settle his legal case. So, with EBS, we have a legal case that spans most of the Enron legal history. It is the ideal way to learn about the issues that permeated all the Enron cases, including the Jeff Skilling case, which I will be covering in another *Blogging Enron* book, by the way.

Plus, frankly, EBS is just a fascinating company to explore. It was a classic high-tech start-up that launched near the end of the dot-com and telecommunications boom of the 1990's. EBS was a true pioneer in the application of a business model and a range of cloud-based technologies that have since become the hallmark of America's most successful technology companies. And many of the key players in the EBS saga have back stories that are truly fascinating. This makes the EBS story just plain fun to read about. Posts about EBS have been consistently among the most popular ones on my *Enron Blog*. The EBS story is the gem of the untold Enron tales – it is a story that seems to surprise and disarm people and makes them willing to rethink their old notions of Enron.

RP: It is clear from your comments that you are not a fan of the federal prosecutors who oversaw the Enron Broadband case and the other Enron cases, right?

Cara: (laughing) You got that right! Look, there were some good people on the government's Enron Task Force, but there were also arrogant and unscrupulous people on the ETF. Overall, the conduct of the prosecutors was abysmal, primarily because they found it impossible to make their cases without cutting corners. As prosecutor, John Kroger, wrote in his autobiographical book, the prosecutors were under intense pressure to "get scalps quickly" in the Enron cases, and they stepped over the line frequently, essentially turning what should have been a sober and careful investigation into an over-the-top witch hunt.

Another reason I have started the *Blogging Enron* series with Enron Broadband is that the misconduct of the prosecutors in that case is so blatant that even the most dedicated Enron haters are generally shocked by it. The EBS case helps make people more receptive to rethinking their notions about all the Enron cases.

RP: With your book, do you try to prove that the defendants in the Enron Broadband case are innocent?

Cara: No, proving that the EBS defendants are innocent is not one of my goals for the book. My mission is to tell the Enron Broadband story in a way that informs and entertains the reader. I believe people can draw their own conclusions about the defendants once they get the facts. Frankly, I believe it is so obvious that the Enron Broadband defendants were falsely indicted that the case of their innocence essentially makes itself. I don't need to push that theme, and I don't want to do so. However, I do hope that the book will motivate people to rethink their old assumptions about Enron and do a little more digging on their own.

What was done by the federal government to the EBS defendants is horrendous, and people need to be aware of it so that they can prevent it from happening to themselves and others in the future.

RP: You said that there is a lot of new information in the book. Where does that information come from?

Cara: I have been researching and writing about Enron, including EBS, for many years. I try to depend on primary sources whenever I can – actual documents from the period of EBS’ existence, including emails, presentations, white papers, status reports, technical manuals, etc. I also use trial transcripts, trial exhibits, legal motions and briefs a lot when examining the EBS trial and legal case.

I have also been able to talk with lots of people directly involved with EBS and the EBS legal events, including EBS employees, partners, customers, attorneys, witnesses, and the defendants themselves. I think the information I have uncovered, especially about the EBS legal proceedings, is incredible.

RP: I noticed that Enron Broadband defendant, Rex Shelby, wrote a Foreword for your book. Tell us about how that came about.

Cara: Yes, Rex Shelby contributed not only the Foreword, but surprised me by contributing a great Postscript as well. I knew from the beginning that I would want someone associated with the EBS legal case to contribute a Foreword to *Blogging Enron*. I immediately thought of Rex because he is the person who fought the federal prosecutors the longest – he was the last man standing in the Enron cases. Rex was the VP of Engineering & Operations at EBS, so he is a true expert on EBS. In addition, Rex is also an expert on the EBS legal events – he spent most of the nine years he battled the Department of Justice prosecutors by working in his attorney’s office. Rex drafted quite a bit of his own legal motions and briefs and participated personally in negotiating his own settlement. Really, the story of Rex’s fight against the government is an epic in itself – kind of a legal “Rocky Balboa” tale.

As a huge bonus, Rex is also a talented writer. I gave Rex no instructions at all about the Foreword – it is totally his creation. Rex chose to include in his Foreword an email he sent to me many years ago after I contacted him to ask for an interview – it was the first correspondence I received from Rex. That email and the Foreword fit perfectly with the spirit and style of *Blogging Enron*.

RP: You said that *Blogging Enron* was motivated by your *Enron Blog*. Are you going to use the *Enron Blog* to supplement the book in any way?

Cara: Absolutely! I will be supplementing the book with lots of additional new information about Enron Broadband that I uncovered during my research. In addition, I will be inviting readers of the book to submit questions that I or guest bloggers can answer for them. In addition, I hope to get some guest posts on EBS from a range of people, including some of the *Enron Blog* readers themselves. When you add all those activities to the tons of information about EBS and Enron already on the *Enron Blog*, it is just an incredibly rich source of information and fun for people interested in the topic.

RP: In addition to the *Enron Blog*, will you be interacting with your readers in other ways?

Cara: Yes, I am launching a number of activities which I hope will provide something for every type of reader. I will be providing information and extras relating to the book on a number of social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. In addition, I am working with Rumble Press which is hosting blogs dedicated to the *Blogging Enron* book on the Rumble Press website and on Tumblr and Google+.

Interestingly, I suspect that people will be surprised to learn that I have included nearly 60 images in *Blogging Enron: The Enron Broadband Story*. The images are from many sources, including from my own photo portfolio, and I use them to highlight the subject matter of each chapter of the book. Because of this rich visual content, I am working with Rumble Press to create some special photo boards on Flickr, Pinterest, and Tumblr.

So, I hope I can encourage lots of interaction with the *Blogging Enron* readers – that really is one of my goals with this book. In addition to entertaining people, I’m also hoping the book will motivate readers to do some additional exploration of the topic. And I will be available via blogs and social media sites to help people in those explorations if I can.

RP: Cara, thank you for your time on this interview. I wish you the best of success with this fascinating book!