

Juror #: _____

SUPPLEMENTAL JUROR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. AGE: _____ GENDER: Male Female
2. City of residence: _____ Zip code: _____
3. Do you (check one): Own your home Rent your home Live with other homeowners
 Live with relatives Other: _____
4. How long have you lived in Mississippi? _____
5. Where else have you lived in Mississippi, and how long did you live there?

6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status (check all that apply):
 Employed full-time Employed part-time Self-employed Unemployed
 Retired Disabled Student Homemaker
 Other: _____
7. How long have/did you work at your current/last job? _____
8. What are/were your main responsibilities at your most recent job? _____

9. In the course of your job, do you ever have to deal with lawyers? YES NO
10. Have you ever been responsible for: Hiring Firing Supervising employees? No
11. What jobs have you held in the past? _____

12. Which of the following best describes your current marital status: Single Married
 Live with partner/significant other Separated Divorced Widow(ed)
13. If you are married/living with someone, for how many years? _____
14. How many times have you been married? _____
15. If you have a spouse, partner or significant other, what is (or was) this person's occupation? (If he/she is retired, unemployed, homemaker, or disabled, what was their last job?)

16. What jobs has this person worked in the past? _____

17. Please list the sex, age and occupation for your children and step-children:

18. Have you or anyone in your family ever had training or employment in: Court system (local, state or federal), F.B.I., federal government, insurance industry, law or law office, law enforcement, local government, or state government or legislature? YES NO If YES, please explain:

19. Have you had any experience, training or education in: Accounting, arbitration, business, criminal law, ethics, hurricane disaster or relief, insurance, law, law enforcement, legal profession, psychology, settlements, or wire tapping? YES NO If YES, briefly explain: _____

20. Other than a traffic ticket, have you, any family members or friends ever been investigated, arrested, indicted, tried, or convicted for any crime? YES NO If YES, briefly explain:

21. Have you, any family members or friends ever worked for or contributed time or money to, any law enforcement agency(ies)? YES NO If YES, who and what agency(ies)?

22. Do you know anyone who has ever worked for the U.S. Department of Justice or the FBI? YES NO If YES, who and which agency(ies)? _____

23. Have you or anyone close to you ever held a job that involved filing, receiving or investigating insurance claims? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

24. On a scale of 1 (Very Positive) to 10 (Very Negative), what are your feelings and opinions of insurance companies? [Please circle ONE number that best describes your feelings/opinions.]

Very Positive Very Negative
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY: _____

25. Were you or anyone you know injured, financially harmed or negatively affected in any other way as a result of Hurricane Katrina? YES NO If YES, briefly explain: _____

26. Do you know anyone who is/was a party to any litigation regarding the damage done by Hurricane Katrina? YES NO If YES, please tell us about that situation: _____

27. Have you heard or read about any of the lawsuits brought against insurance companies as a result of Hurricane Katrina? YES NO If YES, please tell us what you have heard or read:

28. Do you have any family members or close friends who are attorneys? YES NO If YES, who, what type of law does this person practice, what firm does this person work for and what is your relationship to this person? _____

29. Have you or anyone close to you ever hired an attorney or law firm for any reason? YES NO If YES, who hired the lawyer, what was the name of the lawyer, when was the lawyer hired and what was the reason for hiring the lawyer? _____

30. Have you, any family members or friends ever had a bad experience with a lawyer? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

31. Which of the following best describes your opinion of lawyers in general:

Very Positive Positive Neutral Negative Very Negative

Why do you feel this way? _____

32. In general, what are your opinions or feelings about lawyers who bring lawsuits on behalf of plaintiffs? _____

33. Which of the following best describes your opinion of personal injury lawyers:

Very Positive Positive Neutral Negative Very Negative

Why do you feel this way? _____

34. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please check (✓) one box for each statement:

- a. Being a lawyer is an honorable profession. Agree Disagree
- b. Lawyers care about their clients. Agree Disagree
- c. Lawyers do the best that they can to help their clients. Agree Disagree
- d. Lawyers are honest. Agree Disagree
- e. Lawyers make a positive contribution to society. Agree Disagree

35. Have you or anyone you know ever filed a complaint or considered filing a complaint against a lawyer or law firm? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

36. If given the opportunity, would you want to be a lawyer? YES NO PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER: _____

37. Do you read a daily newspaper? YES NO If YES, which one(s)? _____

38. What radio and television programs do you enjoy?

- a. TV: _____
- b. Radio: _____

39. Have you followed news accounts of any trials in the news? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

40. Do you post or read internet blogs? YES NO If YES, which ones and why? _____

41. Have you heard, read or seen anything in the media lately about lawyers who have been accused of committing a crime(s)? YES NO If YES, please tell us what you remember reading, hearing or seeing and who was charged with the crime(s): _____

42. On a scale of 1 = Very unlikely to 10 = Very likely, in your opinion, how likely is it that a lawyer(s) who is accused of attempting to bribe a judge is guilty of the charge?

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Likely	Very likely					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

WHY DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY? _____

43. Using a scale of 1=Strongly Agree to 10=Strongly Disagree, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *A wealthy, successful and well-known lawyer would not bribe a judge.* [Circle only ONE number that best describes your feelings/opinions.]

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

WHY DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY? _____

44. Approximately how many times do you remember reading, hearing or seeing any media reports about Richard “Dickie” Scruggs, Zachary Scruggs or Sidney Backstrom?

More than 20 10 to 20 5 to 10 Less than 5 None

45. From which source(s) have you heard, read, or seen anything about Richard “Dickie” Scruggs, Zachary Scruggs, Sidney Backstrom or this case [Select all that apply]:

TV news Radio Newspapers Magazines Internet Word of mouth

Other: _____

46. Of all the things you have heard, read or seen about Richard “Dickie” Scruggs, Zachary Scruggs, Sidney Backstrom or this case, what stands out the most in your mind?

47. Have you formed any opinions on whether Richard “Dickie” Scruggs, Zachary Scruggs or Sidney Backstrom are guilty of any of the charges in this case? YES NO If YES, please explain:

48. Have you heard others express opinions about Richard “Dickie” Scruggs, Zachary Scruggs, Sidney Backstrom, or this case? YES NO If YES, what opinions were expressed?

49. Which of the following best reflects your opinion of whether Richard “Dickie” Scruggs, Zachary Scruggs or Sidney Backstrom are guilty of any of the charges in this case (please circle one number for each):

Guilty

	Not Guilty					No Opinion				
a. Richard “Dickie” Scruggs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. Zachary Scruggs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. Sidney Backstrom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

50. Using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 10 (Strongly Agree), do you believe everyone should be treated equally under the law? Please circle the ONE number that best describes your feelings or opinions:

Strongly Disagree			Neutral				Strongly Agree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY: _____

51. Have you or anyone close to you ever been treated unfairly by any branch of government?

YES NO If YES, please identify the government agency and explain what happened:

52. Some of the government’s witnesses in this case are testifying as part of a plea bargain. What are your feelings or opinions about a person who has pled Guilty to a crime and agreed to testify for the government in exchange for a reduced sentence? _____

53. What are your feelings or opinions about law enforcement’s use of Court-authorized telephone wire taps in conducting an investigation? _____

54. Regarding lawsuits, have you or anyone close to you ever been:

- a. A Plaintiff [the party bringing a lawsuit]? YES NO
- b. A Defendant [the party being sued in a lawsuit]? YES NO
- c. A Witness or testified in a lawsuit or trial? YES NO

If YES, to any of the above, briefly explain: _____

55. In most situations, do you consider yourself to be a: Leader Follower Team player

56. Please list your 3 favorite television shows: (1) _____
(2) _____ (3) _____
57. Please list the 3 people you admire *most*: (1) _____
(2) _____ (3) _____
58. Please list the 3 people you admire *least*: (1) _____
(2) _____ (3) _____
59. If you could have dinner with *any* three people, living or dead, with whom would you dine?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
60. Do you listen to talk radio? YES NO If YES, to which programs do you listen and why?

61. Do you watch any law or police related shows on television? YES NO If YES, to which programs do you listen and why? _____

62. Which of the following words best describe you?
 Assertive Analytical Cautious Courageous Decisive
 Detailed Dedicated Impulsive Judgmental Law & Order
 Logical Loner Loyal Negotiator Opinionated
 Organizer Outspoken Persuasive Politically active Practical
 Religious Skeptical Snap-decision Strict Thoughtful
 Trusting Thoughtful Trusting Pro-government Visual
63. Do you now or have you ever had a bumper sticker on your car? YES NO If YES, what does/did it say? _____

64. What is your religion? Baptist Catholic Jewish Methodist Protestant
 Southern Baptist Other: _____ No preference
65. Approximately how often do you attend church or religious services? Never
 Rarely Several times a year Once a month
 Several times a month Once a week Several times a week
66. What is your race? _____
67. Do you consider yourself to be [Check only ONE]:
 Very Conservative Conservative Moderate Liberal Very Liberal
68. With what political party are you affiliated: Democrat Republican
 Independent Libertarian Other: _____ None

69. Have you ever had a bumper sticker on your car or a sign on your property in support of someone who was running for Judge? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

70. Have you ever donated time or money to a judicial campaign? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

71. How closely would you say you follow Mississippi state politics?
 Very closely Closely Somewhat closely Rarely Do not follow

72. Do you or anyone close to you know or have any connection to any of the prosecutors in this case [Select all that apply]: Thomas Dawson Jim Greenlee Robert Norman David Sanders
If you selected any of the above, what is the connection and with whom?

73. Do you or anyone close to you know or have any connection to any of the following defense lawyers [Select all that apply]:

Warren Braunig Jim Craig Brook Dooley Nathan Garrett Todd Graves
 John Kecker Travis LeBlanc Jan Little Rhea Tannehill Frank Trapp

If you selected any of the above, what is the connection and with whom?

74. Have you or any family members had any contact with Judge Neal B. Biggers or Judge Henry Lackey? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

75. Do you or anyone close to you know or have any connection to Timothy Balducci, Joseph "Joey" Langston, or Steven Patterson? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

76. Please tell us one more thing you feel is important that we should know about you:

77. There are three defendants in this case. Each defendant and each charge must be considered separately. You cannot find a defendant guilty on any count unless the government has proven his guilt on that count beyond a reasonable doubt. You must not draw any conclusion from the fact that the defendants are on trial together, and you must not find one defendant guilty by reason of your finding another defendant guilty. Would you have any problem or difficulty following these rules? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

78. This trial is expected to last 2 to 3 weeks. A trial of this length is an extraordinary hardship on virtually every juror. Do you have such a severe hardship that it would be impossible to serve as a juror in this case? YES NO If YES, please explain and provide as much detail as possible:

79. Is there anything of a personal or professional nature that might make it difficult for you to concentrate on this trial? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

80. Is there any matter not covered by this questionnaire that you think the attorneys or court might want to know about when considering you as a juror in this case? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

81. Is there anything not covered by this questionnaire that may affect your ability to be a totally fair and impartial juror in this case? YES NO If YES, please explain: _____

OATH

I hereby swear or affirm that the answers contained in this Supplemental Juror Questionnaire are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Signature

Date

LEXSEE 119 F SUPP 2D 589

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VERSUS EDWIN EDWARDS, ET AL.

CRIMINAL ACTION No. 98-165-B-M2

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
LOUISIANA**

119 F. Supp. 2d 589; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792

July 27, 2000, Decided

July 27, 2000, Filed

DISPOSITION: [**1] Motion of the United States for an anonymous jury GRANTED.

COUNSEL: For EDWIN EDWARDS, defendant: Richard G. Crane, Corrections & Sentencing Law, Nashville, TN.

Edwin Edwards, defendant, Pro se, Baton Rouge, LA.

For EDWIN EDWARDS, defendant: Daniel I. Small, Butters, Brazilian & Small, LLP, Boston, MA.

STEPHEN EDWARDS, defendant, Pro se, Baton Rouge, LA.

For STEPHEN EDWARDS, defendant: James M. Cole, Bryan Cave LLP, Washington, DC.

For CECIL BROWN, defendant: Rebecca L. Hudsmith, Federal Public Defenders Office for Middle and Western Districts of LA, Lafayette, LA.

For ANDREW MARTIN, defendant: Servando C. Garcia, III, Ryan J. Roemershauser, Garcia & Bishop, Metairie, LA.

For ANDREW MARTIN, defendant: William H. Jeffress, Jr., James R. Heavner, Jr., Miller, Cassidy, Larroca & Lewin, LLP, Washington, DC.

For BOBBY JOHNSON, defendant: James Michael Small, Law Offices of J. Michael Small, Alexandria, LA.

U. S. Attorneys: James B. Letten, Peter G. Strasser, Thomas L. Watson, Department of Justice, United States

Attorneys Office, Michael William Magner, Stephen A. Higginson, United States Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana, Eddie J. Jordan, [**2] Jr., United States Attorney's Office, New Orleans, LA.

JUDGES: FRANK J. POLOZOLA, CHIEF JUDGE, MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA.

OPINION BY: FRANK J. POLOZOLA

OPINION

[*590] **RULING**

The United States of America ¹ filed a Motion for an Anonymous Jury in this case. ² The defendants opposed the motion. ³ On January 7, 2000, the Court granted the government's motion. ⁴ The Court now assigns its reasons for granting the government's motion.

1 The United States of America will hereinafter sometimes be referred to as "the government" and "the United States."

2 Rec. Doc. No. 278.

3 Rec. Doc. No. 296.

4 Rec. Doc. No. 887.

BACKGROUND

The grand jury for the Middle District of Louisiana returned a 34-count indictment and later a superseding indictment against Edwin W. Edwards, Stephen Edwards, Cecil Brown, Andrew Martin, Bobby Johnson, Gregory Tarver, and Ecotry Fuller. This indictment charged,

APPENDIX A

Juror No.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

CHIEF JUDGE FRANK J. POLOZOLA

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VERUS
EDWIN W. EDWARDS, STEPHEN EDWARDS
CECIL BROWN, ANDREW MARTIN, GREGORY
TARVER, BOBBY JOHNSON, ECOTRY FULLER**

CRIMINAL ACTION

NUMBER 98-165-B-M2

JUROR QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to speed up the process of jury selection, a juror questionnaire has been prepared for you to complete. These questions should be answered by you and returned to the Clerk of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana in the enclosed envelope. **A response is required by December 17, 1999.** Do not place your name, address or place of employment anywhere on this questionnaire. Your name, address or place of employment should only be [**71] placed on the cover sheet attached to the questionnaire. Please place your signature on the cover sheet. Your answers will have the effect of a statement made under oath.

The questionnaire is designed to obtain information about your background as it relates to your possible service as a juror in this case. Its use will avoid the necessity of asking each prospective juror every one of these questions in open court, thereby substantially shortening the jury selection process.

All information contained in this questionnaire will be kept confidential. It will be reviewed only by the Court and by the attorneys on each side. Neither your identities nor your answers will be released to the general public or the media. You will be identified at trial only by your juror number.

Respond to each question as fully and completely as possible. Your complete candor and honesty is necessary so that both the prosecution and the defense will have a

meaningful opportunity to select an appropriate jury. Your cooperation is of vital importance.

[*611] Because the questionnaire is part of the jury selection process, the questionnaires are to be answered under your oath as a prospective juror to tell the truth. [**72] You are instructed not to discuss this case or the questionnaire with anyone, including your family, friends, co-workers and fellow jurors. **You must complete the questionnaire yourself without consulting, talking to or seeking assistance from anyone.**

If you require additional space for your response or wish to make further comments regarding any of your answers, please use the additional blank pages attached to the back of your questionnaire. Please identify by number the question you are responding to on the blank page.

Please keep in mind that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Your answers will assist the Court and the parties in selecting an appropriate jury.

Please fill out the entire questionnaire. Do not leave any questions blank. If you are unable to answer a question or do not understand the question, please answer "do not know" or "do not understand" in the space after the question.

PLEASE WRITE OR PRINT LEGIBLY. IF YOUR ANSWERS ARE ILLEGIBLE, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO RE-COPY YOUR ANSWERS.

Thank you for your full cooperation. It is of vital importance to the Court that you return your completed questionnaire by **DECEMBER 17, 1999.**

1. Age: [**73]
2. Gender: Male Female
3. What is your race?

- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African-American
- Asian
- Native American

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *611; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **73

Other:

IF YES, please state the nature of the problem(s):

4. Do you have any difficulty reading, speaking, or understanding the English language? Yes No

9. Jury service is one of the highest duties and privileges of a citizen of the United States. Mere inconvenience or the usual financial hardships of jury service will be insufficient to excuse a prospective juror. Jurors are paid \$ 40.00 per day plus mileage expenses. Do you wish to apply to the Court to be excused on the ground that jury service would be a serious hardship?

5. Do you speak or understand any languages in addition to English?

Yes What language(s):

Yes No

No

IF YES, please briefly explain the hardship:

6. Do you have:

Any difficulty hearing

10. Is there anything else of a personal or professional nature that might make it difficult for you to concentrate on this trial?

Yes No

Yes No

Any difficulty seeing

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

Primary responsibility for a young child,

Residential History

a disabled or elderly relative

11. City of residence: Zip Code:

Yes No

12. Do you: (check one)

Regular doctor's appointments for a chronic health problem

Own your home

Yes No

Rent your home

IF YES, please briefly explain:

Live with other [**75] homeowners

7. Are you taking any medication on a regular basis?

Live with relatives, if so state relationship:

Yes No

13. How long have you lived in Louisiana? years

IF YES, which ones:

Where else have you lived in Louisiana, and how long did you live there?

Please answer the following questions even if the Court has previously denied your request to be excused for hardship reasons. The Court will reconsider any request to be excused for hardship reasons.

14. Please list the places outside Louisiana where you have lived and how long you have lived there:

[**74] 8. The Court estimates that the trial of this case may last 2-3 months. Do you have any personal problems or medical condition(s) which could affect your ability to serve as a juror in a trial of this length?

15. Where were you born?

[*612] Yes No

Background/Family History

In answering questions 16-31 do not give the name or address of any employer or employer's business. If a question asks about an occupation, only provide a general description about the nature of that occupation. (For example: construction, A/C, plumbing, government, etc.)

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *612; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **75

16. Marital status: (check one)
- Divorced for _____ years; married for _____ years
 - Single (never married) _____
 - Widowed for _____ years; married for _____ years
 - Living with a partner for _____ years
 - Married for _____ years
 - Separated for _____ years; married for _____ years

17. If you have children, stepchildren or grandchildren, please list: (do NOT list names)

Relationship	Age	Education	Occupation	Does he/she live with you?

[**76]

name of employer's business.

[*613] **Employment**

18. Current employment status (check **any and all** that apply):

- Self-employed _____
- Work full-time _____
- Work part-time _____
- Homemaker for _____ years
- Student for _____ years

22. Length of employment at current or last job: (years)(months)

23. Do you work for a:

- Small company (Less than 50 employees) _____
- Large company (50 employees or more) _____
- [**77] Self-employed Company name: _____
- Government agency -- Specify: _____
- Other: _____

Disabled and unable to work for _____ years or months

24. How satisfied are you with your current work situation?

- Unemployed/laid off for _____ years or months
- Retired for _____ years
- Other: _____

- Very satisfied _____
- Somewhat satisfied _____
- Somewhat dissatisfied _____
- Very dissatisfied _____
- Not working _____

19. What is or was your occupation? (If you are retired, unemployed, homemaker, or disabled, what was your last job?) Do NOT list name of employer or name of employer's business.

25. Have you ever been laid off?

20. What are (were) your main responsibilities on your most recent job?

Yes No

21. Please state the nature of your current or last employer's business (e.g. construction, A/C, plumbing, government, etc.) Do NOT list name of employer or

IF YES, please explain:

26. Do you supervise other people?

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *613; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **77

Yes No

If yes, how many?

Did you hire/fire others?

Yes No

Describe your responsibilities:

27. Whether or not you are currently employed, please complete the following information for **previous** jobs and employers: (Do NOT include current job and Do NOT list name of employer or name of employer's business.)

[*614]

Job Title or Kind of Work	Length

28. Have you or anyone in your family ever had **training or employment** in the following:

Federal government

Yes No

Internal Revenue Service

Yes No

State government or legislature

Yes [*78] No

Local government

Yes No

Law enforcement (local, state, or federal)

Yes No

Court system (local, state, or federal)

Yes No

Law or law office

Yes No

Gaming industry

Yes No

IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, please explain whether this is yourself or a relative, courses or job(s) held, and dates of employment:

29. Have you taken any courses or had training in business, finance, or accounting?

Yes No

Please explain:

30. Have you ever owned or invested in a business?

Yes No

a. Are you still operating the business?

Yes No

IF NO, why not?

b. Please describe the business but do not give the name:

c. Was this experience: (check one)
positive negative mixed

Please explain:

31. Have you or your employer ever done business or sought to do business with any state government agency?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

a. [*79] Were you or your employer treated fairly by the state agency?

Yes No

b. Was this experience: (check one)

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *614; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **79

positive negative mixed

Please explain:

32. What is the highest grade or degree you completed in school?

If more than high school, please fill in below:

Education

Dates	Area(s) of study/training	Degree/Certificate

33. When you were in school, what was your:

[*615]

Favorite Subject	Least Favorite Subject

35. What is your spouse's or partner's age?

Military

34. Have you ever been in the military?

Yes No

IF YES, which branch? What was your rank and dates of service, and what type of discharge did you receive?

If you served in the military, please describe the types of jobs you had, any special training, including law enforcement or military courts, and the types of skills you acquired.

36. Spouse or partner's current employment status (check **any and all** that apply):

Self-employed

Work full-time

Work part-time

Homemaker for years

Student for years

Disabled and unable to work for years or months

Unemployed for years or months

Retired for years

Other:

Your Spouse or Partner's Background

Please complete all of the following questions regarding your present spouse or [*80] non-married partner. If you are widowed, divorced, or separated, please complete all the following questions regarding your former spouse or partner.

37. What is or was your spouse or partner's occupation? (If he/she is retired, unemployed, homemaker, or disabled, what was their last job?) Do NOT list name of employer or name of employer's business.

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *615; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **80

38. What are (or were) your spouse or partner's duties and responsibilities:

39. List the nature of your spouse or partner's current or last employer(s)' business (e.g., construction, plumbing, government, etc.). Do NOT list name of employer or name of employer's business.

[**81]

40. Length of **spouse/partner's** employment at current or last job: years

41. What other types of work has he/she done?

42. Was your spouse/partner ever laid off?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

43. What is the last grade or degree your spouse or partner completed in school?

[*616] **If more than high school**, please fill in below:

Dates	Area(s) of study/training	Degree/Certificate

Activities

44. Have you ever done any volunteer work?

Yes No

IF YES, please describe:

45. Have you or your family been involved in any organizations, such as educational, religious, professional or political groups?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

46. Have you or has your spouse/partner ever belonged to a union?

Yes No

IF YES, who: Self Spouse/Partner

Dates of Membership: Self to Spouse/Partner to

47. Have you ever held a leadership position [****82**] in any organization?

Yes No

IF YES, please list the leadership positions you have held:

48. In terms of political party affiliation, are you a:

Democrat

Republican

Independent

Libertarian

Other:

None

49. Do you consider yourself to be politically:

Extremely Liberal

Liberal

Moderate

Conservative

Extremely Conservative

None of the above

50. Have you, or anyone close to you, ever run for,

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *616; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **82

been appointed or been elected to serve in any public office or governing board, such as a school board or police jury?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

51. Have you ever given a gift to a public official or contributed money or made a loan to a political candidate or campaign?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

52. Have you ever worked in the field of politics or donated your time to work on the campaign of a political candidate?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

[*617] 53. How closely would [**83] you say you follow Louisiana state politics?

Follow very closely

Follow somewhat closely

Follow rarely

Do not follow at all

54. What is your religion?

No preference

Baptist

Protestant

Catholic

Jewish

Other:

55. Approximately how often do you attend church or religious services?

Never

Rarely

Several times a year

Once a month

Several times a month

Once a week

Several times a week

56. Is there anything in your religion or personal beliefs which would prevent you from sitting as a juror, in judgment of the guilt or innocence of another person, or following the law given to you by the Court?

Yes No

Gambling

57. How do you feel generally about legalized gambling in Louisiana?

Approve

Disapprove

No opinion

58. Does your church or religious organization have a position on gambling?

Yes, it is against gambling.

Yes, it is **not** against gambling.

No, [**84] my church has no opinion on gambling.

Don't know.

Not applicable.

IF YES, do you agree with your church's position?

Yes No

59. Do you have any moral or personal opposition to legalized gambling?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *617; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **84

60. Do or did you support the campaign to reform or repeal the state gaming laws?

Yes No

61. Are you specifically opposed to any of the following:

Riverboat gambling

Yes No

Casino gambling

Yes No

Video poker

Yes No

62. Have you or has anyone close to you ever had an interest in or investment with any companies or person involved in the ownership of gaming operations?

Yes No

[*618] **IF YES**, please describe:

63. Do you know anyone who has had any contact with the Louisiana State Police Riverboat Gaming Division?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

64. Do you know anyone who now works or has worked in the gaming industry?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain [**85] in what job(s), when, and where he/she is employed:

65. Have you read, seen, or heard any news reports regarding regulation of the gaming industry in Louisiana?

Yes No

IF YES, what have you read, seen, or heard?

66. Do you believe that the citizens of Louisiana should have more influence over how gambling is regulated in the state?

Agree strongly

Agree somewhat

Disagree somewhat

Disagree strongly

No opinion

67. Do you believe that a person who is connected with the gaming industry is more likely to violate the law than one who is not connected with the legalized gambling industry?

Agree strongly

Agree somewhat

Disagree somewhat

Disagree strongly

No opinion

68. Do you believe that the gaming industry is necessary to Louisiana's economy?

Agree strongly

Agree somewhat

Disagree somewhat

Disagree strongly

No opinion

69. Do you believe there has been corruption in the awarding of Louisiana riverboat gaming licenses?

Agree strongly

[**86] Agree somewhat

Disagree somewhat

Disagree strongly

No opinion

70. Do you believe former Governor Edwards is responsible for previous or current problems in the state's gaming industry?

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *618; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **86

Agree strongly

Disagree somewhat

Agree somewhat

Disagree strongly

Disagree somewhat

No opinion

Disagree strongly

Jury Service/Experience and Opinions about the Court System

No opinion

72. Have you ever served on a jury?

[*619] 71. Do you believe that anyone who deals in large sums of cash is probably engaged in criminal activity?

Yes No

Agree strongly

IF YES, please complete the following for each case on which you served:

Agree somewhat

Civil or Criminal	Charges or Allegations	When	Where	Was a verdict reached? If no, why not?	Verdict	Were you the Foreperson?

73. Do you believe everyone should be treated equally under the law?

IF YES, please describe:

[**87] Agree strongly

76. Have you ever testified as a witness in a trial?

Agree somewhat

Yes No

Disagree somewhat

Please explain:

Disagree strongly

77. Have you or has a family member ever been involved in a lawsuit or legal action of any kind?

74. Do you believe the police are very thorough and accurate in their usual investigations?

Yes No

Agree strongly

Please explain:

Agree somewhat

[ILLEGIBLE SLIP OP. PAGE 19]

Disagree somewhat

[*620] 82. Do you know anyone who agreed to cooperate with the prosecution in a criminal case in order to get a reduced sentence or immunity?

Disagree strongly

Yes No

75. Have you or your family been the victim of wrongdoing by others (whether or not criminal charges were filed)?

IF YES, please explain:

Yes No

83. Some of the government's witnesses in this case are testifying as part of plea bargaining agreements or under a grant of immunity from prosecution. What is

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *620; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **88

[**88] your opinion about the use of plea agreements or granting immunity for this purpose?

- Approve
- Disapprove
- No opinion

Please explain your answer:

84. What is your opinion regarding law enforcement's use of Court authorized telephone wire taps in conducting an investigation?

- Approve
- Disapprove
- No opinion

Please explain your answer:

85. What is your opinion regarding law enforcement's use of informants in gathering information relating to possible criminal violations of the law?

- Approve
- Disapprove
- No opinion

Please explain your answer:

Connections with Parties to this Case

86. Do you or does anyone close to you know or have any connection with any of the prosecutors in the case: Eddie Jordan, Jr., Jim Letten, Michael Magner, Peter Strasser, Fred Harper, or Todd Greenberg?

- Yes
- No

IF YES, what is the connection and whom is it between?

87. Have you or has anyone close to you had any contact with Judge Polozola or his staff?

- [*621] Yes
- No

IF YES, please explain: [**89]

88. Do you know anyone who is or was associated with any of the United States Attorney's offices in Louisiana, the U.S. Department of Justice, or the F.B.I.?

- Yes
- No

IF YES, what was the association and what is your relationship?

89. Do you or does anyone close to you know of or have any connection with any of the following defense lawyers: Dan Small, Jim Cole, Pat Fanning, Sonny Garcia, Mary Olive Pierson, Hillar Moore, Rebecca Hudsmith, Craig Smith, William Jeffress, James Heavner, Ernest Johnson?

- Yes
- No

IF YES, what is the connection and whom is it between?

90. Do you or does anyone close to you know or have any connection with any of the defendants in this case: former Governor Edwin Edwards, Stephen Edwards, Cecil Brown, Senator Greg Tarver, Andrew Martin, Bobby Johnson or Ecotry Fuller?

- Yes
- No

IF YES, what is the connection and whom is it between?

91. Former Governor Edwin Edwards was previously tried and found not guilty of federal charges in 1986 in a separate case. Would your opinion of the verdict (in the prior case) make [**90] it difficult for you to sit as a fair and impartial juror in this case?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

IF YES OR NOT SURE, please explain:

92. Would your current opinion about former Governor Edwards make it difficult for you to be a fair and impartial juror in this case?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

93. Do you think former state officials (no longer in office) should be allowed to provide services to companies doing business with, or regulated by, the state?

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *621; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **90

Yes No

94. Do you think that a **current** state official's family members should be allowed to provide services to companies doing business with or regulated by the state?

Yes No

Media

95. Do you read a daily newspaper?

Yes No

Which one(s)?

96. What other magazines and newspapers do you read on a regular basis?

97. What radio and television programs do you enjoy?

TV:

Radio:

98. Have you followed news accounts of any trials in the news?

Yes No

[*622] IF YES, please explain:

99. [**91] Do you or have you ever had a bumper sticker on your car?

Yes No

IF YES, what does or did it say?

Pretrial Publicity

Because this case has received publicity, you have probably seen, read, or heard something about this case either in the media or from friends, relatives, or co-workers. It is important that you carefully and completely answer the following questions concerning what you have learned about the case. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as candid as possible.

100. a. Briefly tell what information you have read, seen, or heard about the case, the defendants, or their attorneys:

b. What have you read, seen, or heard about the government's investigation, the federal prosecutors, or government witnesses?

101. From which source(s) have you heard, read, or seen anything about this case? (Check **any and all** that apply)

TV news

Radio

Newspapers

Magazines

Internet

Word of mouth

Other:

102. Approximately how many media (television, newspaper, magazine, and radio) reports in total have you [**92] seen, read, or heard about this case?

None

1 - 5

6 - 10

11 - 20

21 - 30

31 - 50

51 - 75

75 - 100

101 - 200

More than 200

103. Have you heard others express opinions about this case or about any of the defendants?

Yes No

IF YES, what opinions were expressed?

[*623] 104. Have you personally met or do you

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *623; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **92

have any knowledge of anyone associated with this case?

Yes No

IF YES, please list who they are and how you know them:

105. Have you formed any opinion about the case or about any of the defendants?

Yes No

IF YES, (a) what is your opinion?

(b) would you be able to set aside your current opinion and base your verdict on the law and evidence in this case?

106. Every defendant is presumed innocent and cannot be convicted unless the jury, based solely on all the evidence in this case, unanimously decides that his guilt has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. The burden of proving guilt rests entirely with the [**93] government. The defendants have no burden of proof at all. Would you have any difficulty following these rules?

Yes No

107. If, as a juror, you determine that the government has proven a defendant guilty of a charged offense beyond a reasonable doubt, would you be able to vote in favor of a guilty verdict?

Yes No

108. Conversely, if, as a juror, you believe that the government has failed to carry its burden of proving a defendant guilty of a charged offense beyond a reasonable doubt, would you be able to vote for a verdict of not guilty?

Yes No

109. Do you believe that a defendant in a criminal trial should be required to testify?

Agree

Disagree

IF AGREE: the judge will instruct you that:

a. a defendant in a criminal trial has no

obligation to testify;

b. jurors cannot draw any conclusion from the fact that a defendant chooses not to testify; and

c. that the fact that a defendant chooses not to testify cannot be a factor in reaching your verdict.

Would you have any problem following those instructions if a defendant chooses not to testify?

Yes [**94] No

IF YES, please explain:

110. Would you be more likely to believe a law enforcement officer or other government agent than any other witness?

Yes No Treat all the same

111. You as a juror must follow the law as given to you by the Judge whether you agree with it or not. Would you have any difficulty following this rule?

Yes No

112. The indictment in this case is an accusation and not evidence of guilt. Would you have any difficulty treating the indictment as an accusation and not as evidence of guilt?

Yes No

[*624] 113. There are seven defendants in this case. Each defendant and each charge must be considered separately. You cannot find a defendant guilty on any count unless the government has proven his guilt on that count beyond a reasonable doubt. You must not draw any conclusion from the fact that the defendants are on trial together, and you must not find one defendant guilty by reason of your finding another defendant guilty. Would you have difficulty following these rules?

Yes No

114. Do you know of any reason [**95] why you could not fairly and impartially decide in accordance with your oath and based solely on the law and evidence,

119 F. Supp. 2d 589, *624; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15792, **95

whether the government has proved a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt?

Yes No

IF YES, what is the reason?

Conclusion

115. Is there any matter not covered by this questionnaire that you think the attorneys or court might want to know about when considering you as a juror in this case?

Yes No

Please explain:

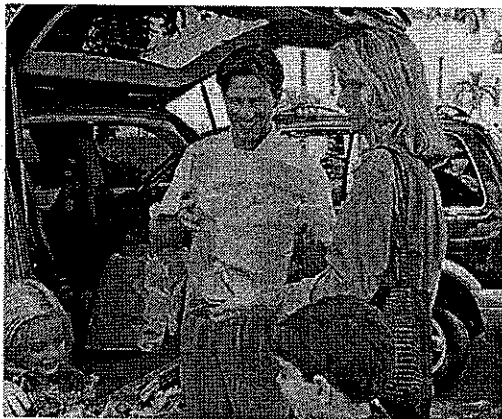
116. Is there any matter not covered by this questionnaire that may affect your ability to reach a fair and impartial verdict?

Yes No

IF YES, please explain:

Miss a day. Miss a lot.

MARKET PERSPECTIVE 2006



The Clarion-Ledger

clarionledger.com REAL MISSISSIPPI



Miss a day. Miss a lot.

Readership Growth

Readership of The Clarion-Ledger is growing!

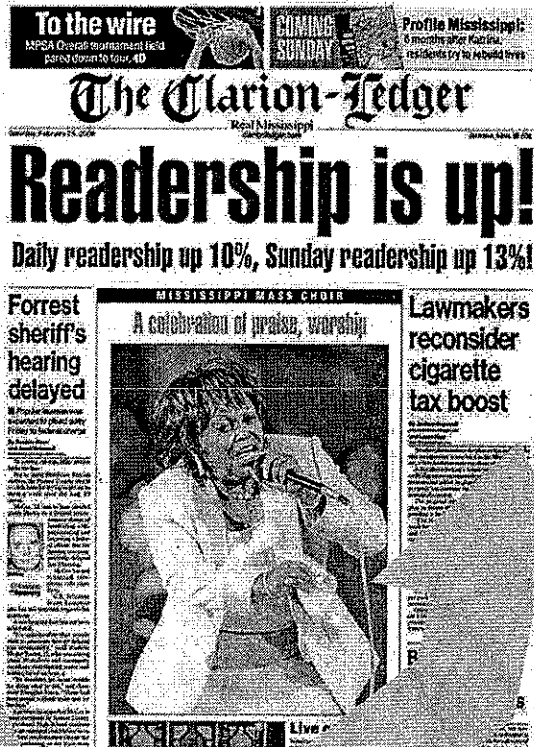
In just two years, 21,200 more adults read the newspaper throughout the week.

Read in Past 7 days – 2003.....	213,000
Percent of total adults.....	65
Read in Past 7 days – 2005.....	234,200
Percent of total adults.....	70

In just two years, 27,700 more adults are reading the Sunday newspaper.

Read Sunday in past 4 weeks – 2003.....	206,500
Percent of total adults.....	63
Read Sunday in past 4 weeks – 2005.....	234,200
Percent of total adults.....	70

Readership of The Clarion-Ledger has increased 10% or 21,200 readers for a total of 234,200 readers in metro Jackson in just two years.



Daily **Up 10%** Sunday **Up 13%**

Source: 2003 Market Study,
2005 Market Study.

1 Combined, The Clarion-Ledger and its products reach **79%** of all adults in metro Jackson

MISSISSIPPI PRIMARY AD SOURCE

Sunday Clarion-Ledger readership has increased 13% or 27,700 readers for a total of 234,200 readers in the same two year period. This means thousands of new readers will translate into shoppers who are ready, willing and able to buy your products or services.

Miss a day. Miss a lot.

Online Usage

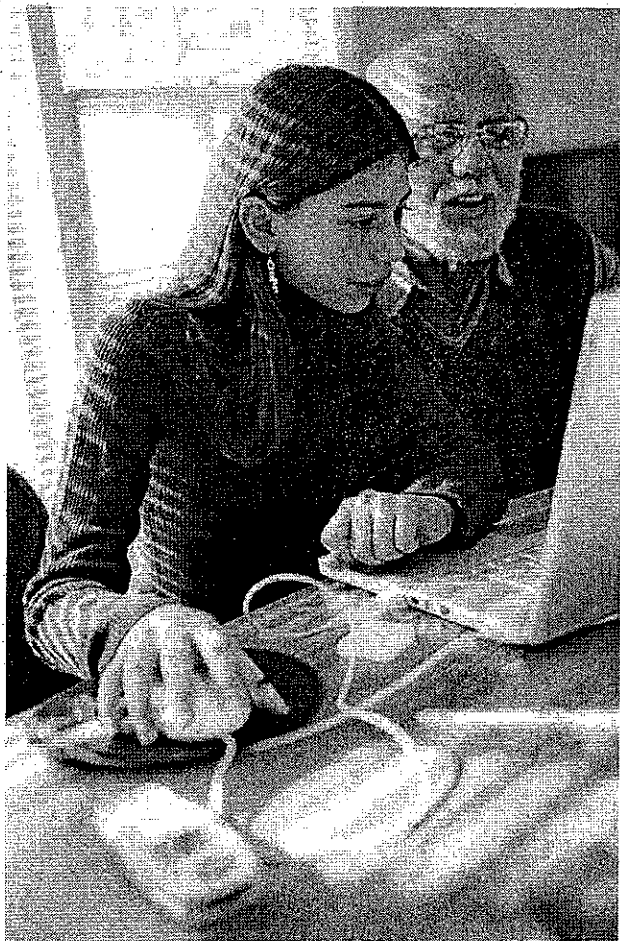
More than half of all adults in metro Jackson access the Internet in a typical week. These young adults are ready, willing and able to buy. They are highly educated and have disposable incomes higher than the market average.

Web site usage has exploded in the past few years. The number of adults visiting clarionledger.com – and consistently returning for news updates continues to grow.

For our advertisers, that means reaching highly educated and affluent consumers daily. ■

Demographic	Adults	Accessed the Internet 1+ times in past 7 days
Total	181,400	54%
Gender		
Male	94,200	52%
Female	87,200	48%
Age		
18-34	74,000	41%
35-49	59,300	33%
50-64	34,400	19%
65+	13,600	7%
Education		
HS Grad or Less	34,500	19%
Some College	54,600	30%
College Grad/no post	91,500	50%
HH Income		
Less than \$25,000	23,600	13%
\$25k to \$34,999	22,600	12%
\$35k to \$49,999	24,400	13%
\$50k to \$74,999	41,900	23%
\$75k+	69,200	38%
County		
Hinds	76,300	42%
Madison	31,900	18%
Rankin	73,200	40%
Race		
Black	60,900	34%
White	110,200	61%

Source: 2005 Market Study.



Miss a day. Miss a lot.

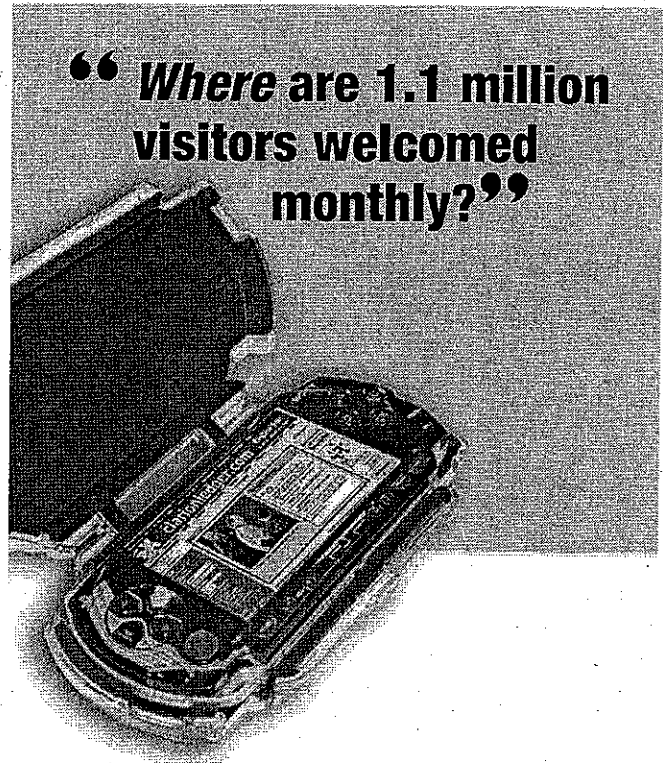
Online Reader Profile

Demographic	Adults	clarionledger.com Reader Profile
Total	44,200	13%
Gender		
Male	16,100	36%
Female	28,100	64%
Age		
18-34	22,100	50%
35-49	13,400	30%
50-64	7,100	16%
65+	1,600	4%
Education		
HS Grad or Less	8,100	18%
Some College	9,100	21%
College Grad	27,000	61%
HH Income		
Less than \$25,000	5,500	18%
\$25k to \$34,999	3,400	8%
\$35k to \$49,999	5,000	11%
\$50k to \$74,999	9,200	21%
\$75k+	21,100	48%
County		
Hinds	17,800	40%
Madison	10,100	23%
Rankin	16,200	37%
Race		
Black	16,400	37%
White	26,000	59%

Source: 2005 Market Study.

Clarionledger.com is read by 44,200 adults or 13% of the metro Jackson adult population over the course of 7 days.

Clarionledger.com readers are young, predominately female, highly educated and almost half have household incomes of \$75,000 or more annually.



On clarionledger.com, **over 1.1 million visitors come to the site each month, and traffic has increased 15% from just a year ago.** More readers continue to visit every month. For advertisers these prospects are highly educated and very affluent. They are ready, willing and able to buy a vast array of products and services.

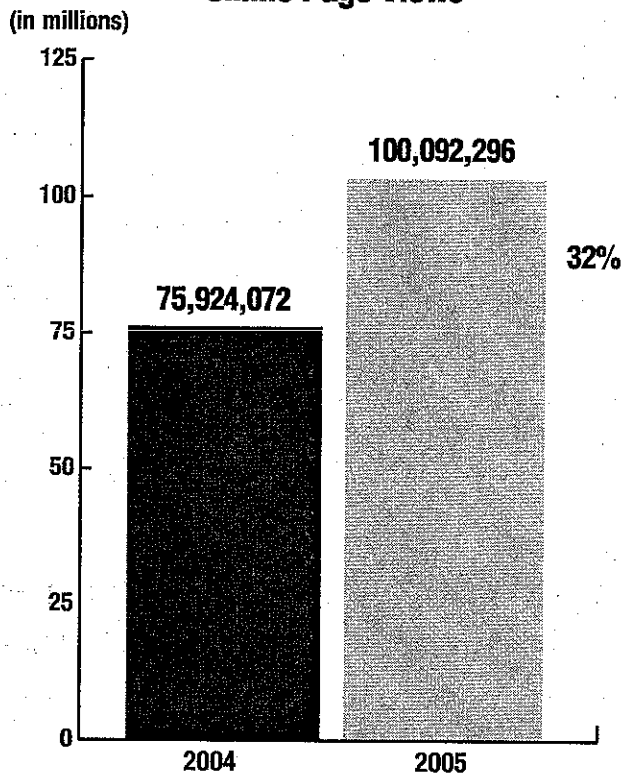
Combined, The Clarion-Ledger and its products reach **79%** of all adults in metro Jackson

1 MISSISSIPPI'S PRIMARY AD-SOURCE

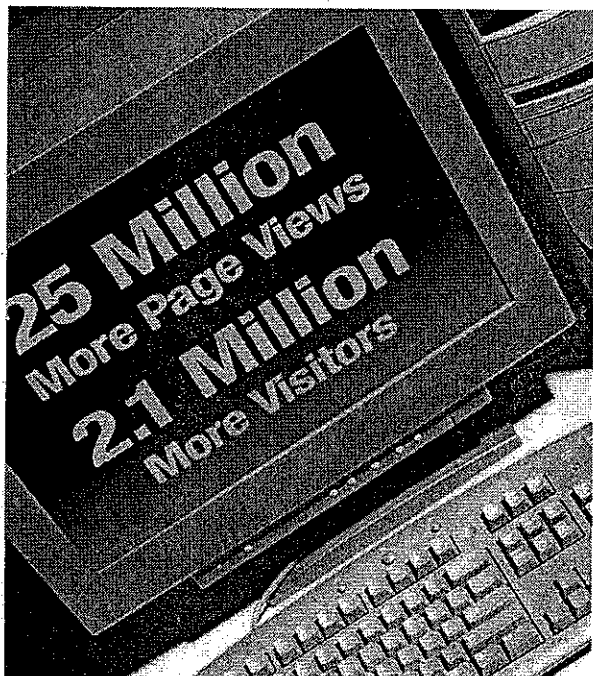
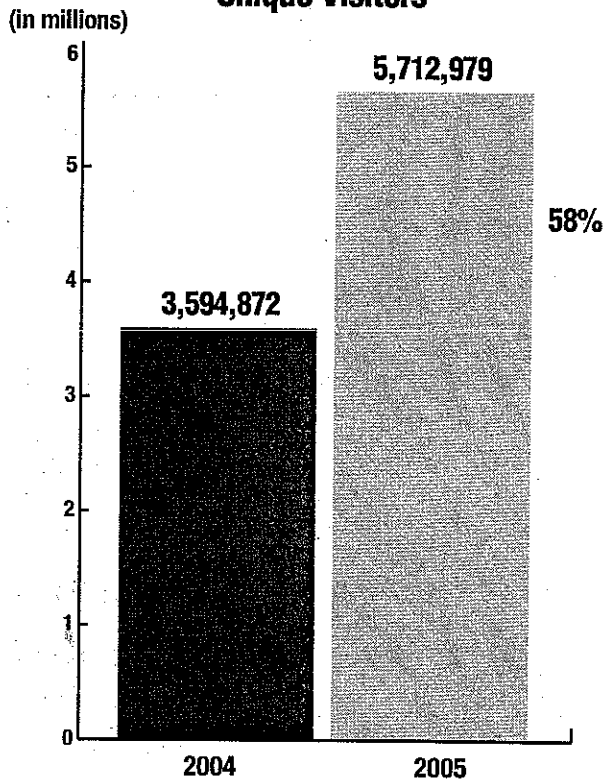
Miss a day. Miss a lot.

Online Growth

Online Page Views



Unique Visitors



Online readership growth is soaring! In just the past year, unique visitors have increased by more than 2 million visitors or 58% year-over-year. Page views have increased almost 25 million or 32% year-over-year.

Source: Omniture – Online Traffic Measurement.



Daily Journal

NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI

ESTABLISHED 1870

A locally owned newspaper dedicated to the service of God and mankind.

JANUARY 1, 2008

PRODUCTS



Elvis Presley's Birthplace
Elvis Presley's Birthplace attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year.

LEE COUNTY PLUS...
This TMC product features entertainment, retail ads and classifieds.
See page 3

NEIGHBORS...
This zoned product reaches Tupelo and Lee County, featuring local news, sports and civic events.
See page 3

VIEW...
View magazine publishes every Sunday, featuring television and movie schedules for the week.
See rates on page 3

SCENE...
North Mississippi's entertainment guide, publishes every Thursday.
See schedule on page 3

SPECIAL SECTIONS...
Target your audience with high readership editions from fashion to football.
See schedule on page 3

QUOTE, UNQUOTE...
"The Daily Journal extends the definition of a newspaper far further than possible any newspaper in America. The paper exercises leadership, it reflects and encourages its community, but it also pulls the community along. I think it succeeds because it is perceived by its readers as being accessible and essentially on their side."
Randy Craig
Publications Editor, The Information Magazine
October 2007

INSIDE

- Circulation Page 2
- Retail Rates Page 3
- Headlines Page 3
- Special Editions Page 4
- Classified Rates Page 5
- National Rates Page 6
- Reader Profiles Page 6
- Big News On Direct Mail Page 7
- Market Study Page 8

Daily Journal Advertising Rates

The rates published in this card are effective January 1, 2008.

The Daily Journal does more than just sell you advertising space. We want to help you get results. This rate card will show you how to get the greatest advertising impact for your money.

Whether you want to run your ad larger, more frequently or both, the

Daily Journal has an advertising program to fit your specific needs. As a rule, the more space you buy, the less your cost per column inch. Advertising frequency is your surest route to sales success. It increases sales by building name recognition and making customers aware of your product or service when they're ready to buy.

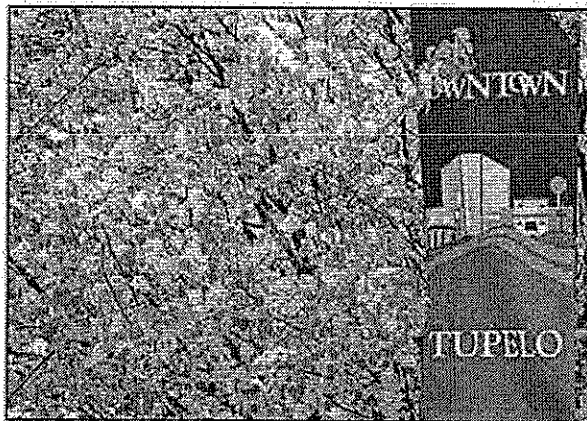
The Daily Journal offers a number of moneysaving plans for running your advertising to build frequency and cost efficiency, as well as a variety of products and services to target your

customer.

As the first and foremost advertising medium in Northeast Mississippi, there isn't a more powerful or proven advertising vehicle at your disposal.

Your Daily Journal advertising message reaches nearly 100,000 of the adults in our market every day. With PLUS, our total market coverage product, your ad will reach nearly every household in Lee County.

See **RETAIL RATES** on page 3.



Published Sunday Through Saturday Morning
Every Day Except Christmas Day



Daily Journal: Living Legacy of Visionary Owner a Vital Component of Community's Continued Growth

The late George McLean noted he bought "a bankrupt newspaper from a bankrupt bank" in 1933. At his death in 1983, he had taken the biweekly Tupelo Journal with less than 5,000 circulation to the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal with more than 33,000 circulation. One of his newspaper's mottos, still prominent today, he put his vision: "A locally owned newspaper dedicated to the service of God and mankind."

"It is the responsibility of the educated people of Mississippi," McLean em-

phasized, "to raise the level educationally, economically, spiritually and otherwise of the people of Mississippi." To this effort he dedicated his life and backed up his values with his own money, time and energy. George McLean pledged \$1 million from his newspaper to put reading aides in every first-grade classroom in Lee County for 10 years. The New York Times said it was the largest gift to a United States public elementary school.

Personnel & Departments

Retail Advertising
(662) 842-2614

Advertising Director
Richard Crenshaw
(662) 678-1550

Classified Advertising
(662) 842-2622

Classified Advertising Manager
Cindy Carr
(662) 678-1534

Creative Solutions Manager
Paula Hall
(662) 678-1529

National/Agency Coordinator
Erielle McGee
(662) 678-1506

Online Director
Bill Johnson
(662) 678-1548

Publisher
Billy Greys
(662) 678-1504

Chief Operating Officer
Clay Foster
(662) 678-1505

Business Office
(662) 842-2611

Circulation Department
(662) 842-2613

Facsimile
(662) 620-8301

Visit Our Web Page
<http://www.djournal.com>

RETAIL RATES

PAGE 3

3 out of 4 NEMS adults use the Journal to make daily shopping decisions



CLASSIFIED RATES

PAGE 5

85% of NEMS adults read Journal Classifieds!



DEMOGRAPHICS

PAGE 6

80% of Journal readers own their home ... meaning they buy everything from mowers to entertainment centers.



POLICIES

TERMS OF PAYMENT

- a. Payments for advertising are due the 10th day of each month. A 1.5 percent per month service charge will be added on all accounts past due. No discounts allowed. Failure to pay advertising bill within 60 days makes contract subject to cancellation by the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal and the advertiser agrees to being re-billed at the OPEN RATE for all unpaid advertising.
- b. Accounts payable in advance, except for firms or individuals with established credit with the Daily Journal.
- c. All "going out of business" accounts must pay in advance unless there are multiple locations.
- d. All local rates are non-commissionable.

GENERAL POLICY

- a. **Rate Increases:** The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal may revise its advertising rate schedule at any time upon 30 days written notice to the advertiser. Once notified, the advertiser may, without penalty, cancel its advertising contract at any time prior to the time the new rates become effective by providing written notice to The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal.
- b. **Advertising Subject to Approval:** The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reserves the right to reject any and all advertising submissions that it considers objectionable and concerning material that are subject to content regulation and compliance with state, federal or local law. Gaming ads accepted upon content approval. Tobacco advertisements not accepted. Alcohol beverage advertising: beer accepted, liquor upon approval of content.
- c. **Advertising simulating news can be set in body type, but must carry the word "Advertisement" at the top of the ad.**
- d. **Advertising placed by groups, such as concerned citizens, must carry a contact name such as the president or chairman.**
- e. **Mechanical Requirements** - Minimum depth for all advertising is one inch. Advertising exceeding 18 inches in depth are set

to occupy full column depths of 21 1/2" and charged accordingly.

- f. **Position** - Although position of an ad will not be guaranteed, every effort will be made to meet any reasonable request. No position in violation of standard rates.
- g. **Tax** - Any advertising tax imposed on the publisher will be added to the rates shown herein.

CONTRACT AND COPY REGULATIONS

- a. **Contract Coverage:** Contracts cover only the advertising of the firm signing the agreement, and that firm shall be a retail advertiser selling directly to the consumer and be permanently located within this newspaper retail trade zone.
- b. **Cancellation or Termination:** If during the period covered by a contract, the full amount of revenue contracted for is not used, or if this contract is terminated because of breach thereof by the advertiser, then the advertiser shall be "short rated" and shall pay for the space actually used at the rates set forth on the rate card of the Publisher.
- c. **Deadlines/Mechanical Requirements:** All copy and proof deadlines and requirements must be observed. Proofs when submitted, are for typographical corrections only. Changes from original copy will be charged on the basis of the time required to make such changes.
- d. **Error Responsibility:** The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or for omission of copy beyond the cost of their space. Claims for adjustment must be made within 7 days of publication. Credit allowable for first insertion only. In the event of an error or omission, we will, upon request, furnish a letter of explanation which can be utilized by the advertiser.
- e. **Indemnification:** Advertiser agrees to indemnify the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, its agents and assigns of and from any and all loss, liability, claim, cause of action, lawsuit, damages of any type, attorney



The Barrow-Johnson Arena has seen a number of sold out audience for such performers as Bill Cosby, Fred Stewart, the Eagles, Travis Tritt and Elton John. It's also the home of the Mississippi Mudcats of the American Indoor Football Association.

neys fees and expenses and other related costs as a result of the newspaper's publication of an advertisement or advertising campaign prepared by the advertiser or its agents and submitted to The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal for publication. This agreement shall be performed at least in part in the State of Mississippi whose laws shall govern any dispute arising hereunder. The Circuit Court of Lee County, Mississippi shall have the exclusive jurisdiction over any dispute arising under the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

- f. **Screens:** Screens ranging from 85 to 100 lines are required. Publisher not responsible for reproduction quality of screens denser than 100 lines.
- g. **Alteration Charges:** A charge will be made for excessive alterations (not caused by publisher's mistakes) which are made by the advertiser.
- h. **Proofs:** A maximum of one set of proofs will be furnished upon request on any advertisement that meets the proof deadline (see Closing Times, Page 3) and is the required size of 30 column inches or larger.
- i. **Copy and Material:** The submission of copy should include all components of the advertisement, including layout, copy, art, etc. Copy will be considered complete only

when all components of the advertisement are on hand.

- j. **Cancellations or Size Changes:** Not acceptable after 5 p.m. day of copy deadline.

CIRCULATION

SINGLE COPY PRICES
50¢ daily per copy, \$1.50 on Sunday

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES
\$11.00 per month delivered by carrier
\$120.00 per year delivered by carrier
\$45.50 for 3 months by mail throughout most of Mississippi, call (662) 842-2613 or 1-800-270-2613 for out of state mail rates.

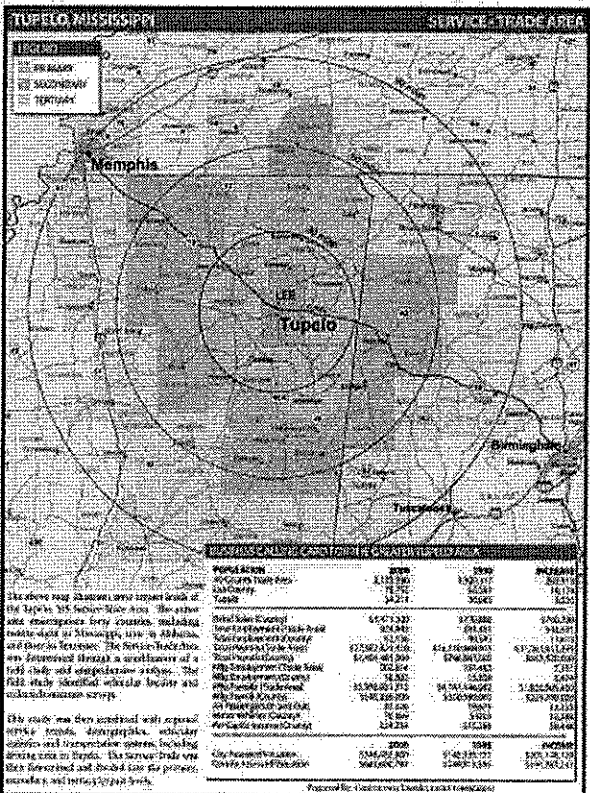
The Daily Journal is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation.

Total Average Paid Circulation*

Daily	36,508
Sunday	36,486

Average Daily Readership: 90,010**

*ABC Newspaper Publisher's Statement for the period ending September 2007.
**Pulse Research, Portland, OR



Average Paid Circulation:

Weekday **36,508** Sundays **36,486**

certified by Audit Bureau of Circulations, September 2007

- read by about 90,000 Northeast Mississippians daily
- published 7 days a week, 364 days a year
- the South's largest circulation for cities Tupelo's size
- reaches +51% of households in Lee County
- 55% of circulation is regional, outside Lee County

25,000	The Journal dominates
20,000	newspaper circulation
15,000	throughout Northeast Mississippi
10,000	
5,000	COMMERCIAL APPEAL
0	CLASH COURSE

36,508

THE OXFORD EAGLE

Established 1867

2008 Rates

The Oxford EAGLE

Oxford Town

The LafaShopper News

Home Market Guide

www.oxfordeagle.com

www.oxfordtown.com

Published

Afternoons

5 Days A Week

Monday - Friday

No Publication on

New Year's Day,

Fourth of July,

Labor Day,

Day After Thanksgiving,

& Christmas Day

916 Jackson Avenue P.O. Box 866

Oxford, MS 38655

Advertising & Editorial

662.234.4331

Circulation

662.234.2222

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Mrs. J. C. Goolsby, Editor Emeritus
 Jesse P. Phillips, Publisher Emeritus
 Rita Vasilyev, Co-Publisher
 Tim Phillips, Co-Publisher
 Dan Phillips, Assistant Publisher 1958-2005
 Don Whitten, Editor

Commission and Terms of Payment

All advertising rates are non-commissionable.

No cash discounts.

Advertising accounts are due by the 10th day of each month following statement. Any account not paid by the 25th day of the month following the date of the purchase(s) will be charged a service charge of 1 1/2 percent per month (an annual percentage rate of 18 percent), with a minimum charge of one dollar. Accounts must be kept on current status to earn contract rates. Failure to pay advertising account within 90 days makes contract subject to cancellation and the advertiser agrees to being rebilled at the open rate for all unpaid advertising. Credit will not be extended to past due accounts over 90 days. Political advertising and "Going Out Of Business" advertising is accepted only with payment in advance.

General Rate Policy

The Oxford EAGLE reserves the right to refuse any advertising which it deems objectionable, slanderous, misleading, or in poor taste.

Position- Every effort will be made to grant reasonable position requests, but this cannot be guaranteed at regular rates. Guaranteed page placement is available for a charge of 25 percent of the cost of the ad on a first-come basis.

Proofs- Proofs for ads which are 3 1/2" or larger will

be furnished upon request. Proofs are submitted for the correction of errors only, not for any revisions in copy. Proofs of smaller ads may be seen at our office by the advertiser. All proofed ads must be back in the office the day before publication. The Oxford EAGLE is not liable for errors in advertisements proofed by the advertiser. The Oxford EAGLE is not liable for advertisements placed on a no-proof basis and for advertisements received by phone. The Oxford EAGLE is not responsible for errors after the first publication of a repeat ad. The Oxford EAGLE will be responsible for reprinting that portion of an advertisement which is in error, and not the entire advertisement.

The Oxford EAGLE will accept alcoholic beverage, tobacco and gaming advertising.

Ad proofs for advertiser use of corrections may not be used by other publications without Oxford EAGLE permission.

Special Services

Sales representatives are eager to assist advertisers in designing advertisements and developing an advertising campaign. The graphics department is equipped with the latest computer equipment to design effective advertisements for the advertiser. Let our award-winning team design the perfect advertisement for you today.

Ad Copies - A fee of \$20 pdf /\$35 for separated pdfs will be charged to the newspaper or business requesting the advertisement. Ads will be e-mailed only after they have been approved by the advertiser and only if they run in our publication first or on the same day. We will not create ads that do not run in our publication.

Ads published in the Oxford EAGLE may not be used in other publications without permission of the Oxford EAGLE.

ROP Requirements

Standard Page: Minimum display advertisement acceptable, one column by one inch. Advertisements over 19 inches deep will be charged the full column depth of 21 inches.

Double-Page Ads - On all double truck ads the "gutter" column will be charged as one/half column (10 1/2 inches) of advertising.

Contract and Copy Regulations

Contract Regulations -

Advertisers receiving contract rates must have a signed contract. Accounts must be kept on current status to earn contract rates. Contracts cover only the advertiser signing the agreement. If an advertiser uses more than they have agreed upon, the advertiser will be entitled to the benefit of the rate applicable of the space used as shown on the rate card. If the full amount is not used, the advertiser will pay the difference between the contract rate and the amount actually used.

Copy Regulations -

All copy deadlines are the same as space reservation deadlines. General policies are the same as copy regulations.

Special Classification Rates

Political rates \$9.25 per column inch
 All political advertising is payable in advance.

Legal rates - Rates are set by the state and are available upon request.

MCAN - Mississippi Classified Advertising Network

MDAN - Mississippi Display Advertising Network

Deliver your message to more than 2,347,070 homes throughout the state in 104 newspapers.

Contact your sales representative for rates.

The Oxford EAGLE

Established 1867

ROP Open Rate - \$9.25

The Oxford EAGLE Contract Rates

up to 250 inches.....	\$9.25
250 to 499 inches.....	\$8.95
500 to 999 inches.....	\$8.40
1,000 to 1,999 inches.....	\$8.05
2,000 to 2,999 inches.....	\$7.65
3,000 to 4,999 inches.....	\$7.20
5,000 to 7,999 inches.....	\$6.65

Color Rates

Spot color per page.....	\$80.00
Two color per page.....	\$160.00
Full color per page.....	\$240.00

Deadlines

ROP and Classified Display

Publication Date	Deadline
Monday	3 p.m. Thursday
Tuesday.....	3 p.m. Friday
Wednesday.....	3 p.m. Monday
Thursday.....	3 p.m. Tuesday
Friday.....	3 p.m. Wednesday

Cancellation of an ad after deadline results in a charge of 25 percent of the cost of the ad.

Classified

Classified line advertising is noon the day prior to insertion date.

Inserts

Noon three days prior to insertion.

Mechanical Measurements

The Oxford EAGLE	
6 column format - SAU unit	
Standard page.....	6 column by 21 inches
Column inches per page.....	126
One column.....	1.992
Two columns.....	4.187
Three columns.....	6.381
Four columns.....	8.576
Five columns.....	10.77
Six columns.....	12.961

Classified- 8 column format

One column.....	1.5
Two columns.....	3.167
Three columns.....	4.833

Four columns.....	6.5
Five columns.....	8.15
Six columns.....	9.667
Seven columns.....	11.334
Eight columns.....	12.961

Classified Rates

Number of Days	Base Rate (<15 words)	Additional Per Word (> 15 words)
1	7.00	0.45
2	9.50	0.60
3	10.35	0.64
4	11.35	0.69
5	12.05	0.72
10	22.60	1.34
15	29.40	1.71
20	35.00	2.00

All Classified line ads also appear on our web site.

Classified Display Advertisement

\$7.35 per column inch

A service charge of \$5.00 is made for blind box ads

The LafaShopper News Established 1985

The LafaShopper is delivered to 15,200 homes, in Lafayette, Yalobusha, and Panola counties, reaching more individuals than any publication in the area.

Rates
 Open Rate - \$13.85
 Pick up Rate - \$4.60
 Deadlines

The advertising deadline is 3 p.m. Thursday.

Mechanical Measurements
 5 column tabloid
 Standard page.....5 column by 13 inches
 Column inches per page.....65
 Column width same as The Oxford Town.

The Oxford Town Established 1993

Alternative Weekly Entertainment Magazine

Oxford Town is inserted in The Oxford EAGLE's Thursday edition, and distributed on The University of Mississippi campus and other locations throughout Oxford. Over 7,500 copies are distributed each week.

Rates
 Open Rate - \$8.55
 Pick up Rate- \$4.80
 Contract Rates Available Upon Request
 Deadlines
 Advertising deadline is 5 p.m. Monday.

Mechanical Measurements
 5 column tabloid
 One column.....1.833
 Two columns.....3.833
 Three columns.....5.833
 Four columns.....7.833
 Five columns.....9.833

Home Market Guide Established 1987

The Home Market Guide is the premier Oxford real estate magazine published the first Friday of every month. The magazine is printed on glossy paper in full color throughout.

Deadlines
 The advertising deadline is three Wednesdays prior to publication, unless specified in advance.

Dimensions & Costs
 1/4 page- 3.63" x 4.88", \$70
 1/2 page- 3.63" x 9.75" or 7.25" x 4.88", \$135
 Inside Full- 7.25" x 9.75"
 \$250 each, 1-3 pages
 \$225 each, 4 or more pages

Covers
 Inside Covers- \$450 Back- \$475.00

Cover deadlines one week prior to regular deadline. The inside front and back covers are reserved for realtors who are members of the NCMBR. The inside covers are reserved for realtors and affiliates who are members of the NCMBR.

Preprint

Preprint Rates - non-commissionable

Size	Cost
4 pg tab/single sheet.....	6.0 ¢ ea.
4 pg broadsheet/8 pg tab.....	6.5 ¢ ea.
6 pg broadsheet/12 pg tab.....	7.0 ¢ ea.
8 pg broadsheet/16 pg tab.....	7.5 ¢ ea.

(other sizes quoted on request)

Partial Distribution: For less than total circulation \$65.00 per thousand up to and including 4 page tabloid.

Fold Requirements: Quarter fold.

Delivery Requirements: Request inserts in boxes.

Request delivery times:
 M - F, 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Odd sizes: An extra handling charge will be imposed for inserts which are delivered unfolded; folding charge is 2¢ each piece

Zoning: Not available

Business Builders

Blitz Advertising* - Ad runs four times in the EAGLE and once in the LafaShopper for the combo price:

2 columns x 2"	\$148
2 columns x 4"	\$295
3 columns x 4" (2x6)	\$440
3 columns x 9"	\$995

Multiple Run Discount

- Run any ad 12" or larger a second time in the EAGLE within 5 print days and receive a 15% Discount.

For added value with both the Blitz Advertising and the Multiple Run Discount, you may also pickup the same ad within five print days in The LafaShopper News or Oxford Town at the reduced pickup rate

* Only available for these sizes and must be used within a four-week time period.

The Oxford EAGLE Online Edition

Rates

- Top Banner ads are available for \$295 per month, side tower ads for \$150.
- Pick-up any EAGLE or Oxford Town ad within five print days for only an additional \$10 per week online.

• All classified line listings in our paper will also appear online.

Special Sections

The Oxford EAGLE publishes special theme sections to benefit advertisers throughout the year. Some of the most popular special sections include Bridal, Graduation, Apartment Guide, Tax Tips, Women in Business, Welcome Back Rebels, Game Day Previews, Holiday Gift Guide and Season's Greetings.

Contact your sales representative for information on sections.

The Oxford EAGLE

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 Oxford, Mississippi 38655
 Phone: 662-234-4331
 Fax: 662-234-4351

\$9.25 per column inchThe Oxford EAGLE
 \$13.85 per column inch.....The LafaShopper News
 \$4.60 per column inch..... The LafaShopper News pick up rate
 \$8.55 per column inch.....Oxford Town
 \$4.80 per column inch.....Oxford Town pick up rate
 \$7.35 per column inch.....Classified Display

Size	Oxford EAGLE	LafaShopper	LafaShopper Pick-up	Town	Town Pick-up	Classified
2x2	37.00	55.40	18.40	34.20	19.20	29.40
2x3	55.50	83.10	27.60	51.30	28.80	44.10
2x4	74.00	110.80	36.80	68.40	38.40	58.80
2x5	92.50	138.50	46.00	85.50	48.00	73.50
2x6	111.00	166.20	55.20	102.60	57.60	88.20
2x7	129.50	193.90	64.40	119.70	67.20	102.90
2x8	148.00	221.60	73.60	136.80	76.80	117.60
2x9	166.50	249.30	82.80	153.90	86.40	132.30
2x10	185.00	277.00	92.00	171.00	96.00	147.00
3x3	83.25	124.65	41.40	76.95	43.20	66.15
3x4	111.00	166.20	55.20	102.60	57.60	88.20
3x5	138.75	207.75	69.00	128.25	72.00	110.25
3x6	166.50	249.30	82.80	153.90	86.40	132.30
3x7	194.25	290.85	96.60	179.55	100.80	154.35
3x5.25 (1/8 OE)	145.69	218.14	72.45	134.67	75.60	115.77
3x10.5 (1/4 OE)	291.38	436.28	144.90	269.33	151.20	231.53
6x10.5 (1/2 OE)	582.75					
6x21 (full OE)	1165.50					
5x13 (full OT or LS)	601.25	900.25	299.00	555.75	312.00	477.75
5x6.5 (1/2 OT or LS)	300.63	450.13	149.50	277.88	156.00	238.88

One color charge.....\$80.00
 Two color charge.....\$160.00
 Process color.....\$240.00

DEADLINES:
 The Oxford EAGLE.....3 pm two days prior to insertion date
 The LafaShopper News.....3 pm Thursday
 The Oxford Town.....5 pm Monday

Pick-up rate available for one insertion in The Lafashopper News or Oxford Town after running an advertisement in The Oxford EAGLE at regular price.
 Prices effective January 1, 2008

Circulation & Subscription

Circulation		By Carrier		Senior Citizen Discount for 65 or older - 10 percent.
The Oxford EAGLE	6,000	Three Months	\$22.50	
The LafaShopper News	15,200	Six Months	\$45.00	
The Oxford Town	7,500	One Year	\$85.00	
Home Market Guide	9,000			
		By Mail		
Subscription Rates		Three Months	\$36.00	
EAGLE Single copy price 50¢		Six Months	\$72.00	
		One Year	\$144.00	

Circulation- 234-2222

THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

2/11/08 - Deadline for filing motions in bribery case today

Home

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

Staff Writer

News

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Purchase Photos

Obituaries

Archives

All pretrial motions must be filed by 5 this afternoon in the case against powerful trial lawyer Richard "Dickie" Scruggs and two other attorneys who faces charges for allegedly trying to bribe a circuit court judge.

Last month, U.S. District Court Senior Judge Neal B. Biggers Jr. granted a motion to continue the trial until March 31 and marked today as the final day for motions to be filed by defense attorneys.

Scruggs, his son and law partner, Zach Scruggs, and attorney Sidney Backstrom, were charged in November with attempting to bribe Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey with more than \$40,000 during a civil lawsuit against Scruggs. Two other defendants, Timothy Balducci and Stephen A. Patterson, have already pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

Interaction

Advertising

Letters to the Editor

Submit Classified Ad

Submit Announcements

Submit Calendar Item

Submit a Story Idea

Contact Information

Subscription Information

Meet the Staff

Any hearings related to the motions filed today must be heard by the court by Feb. 25.

Defense attorneys for Scruggs alluded to some of the motions they may be filing today in their request for continuance filed last month. It's expected that the defense attorneys will be filing a motion to suppress evidence, including recorded conversations via wire taps.

During the continuance hearing last month, Scruggs' attorney John Kecker claimed that the government purposely left out evidence that may have exonerated Scruggs in its attempt to extend an order for wire taps.

Defense attorneys claim prosecutors deliberately left out parts of the conversations from their request to continue the wire taps, including where Balducci "specifically distances Scruggs from the process" when he delivered \$20,000 in cash to Lackey on Sept. 27.

Around Oxford

City Government

Chamber of Commerce

Other anticipated motions may include:

— To dismiss the case based on "outrageous government conduct" based on the defense's claims the government left out exculpatory evidence from its affidavits for the wire tap extension.

- County Government** — To allow for separate trials for each defendant.
- Important Numbers** — Regarding the accuracy and reliability of the taped recordings.
- Community Calendar** — To dismiss counts 2, 3 and 4 of the indictment, claiming there is significant legal questions whether attempted bribery of a state court judge can exist due to the lack of federal funds involved.
- Yoknapatawpha Arts Council** — Conspiracy issues, related to whether statements by co-conspirators are admissible in court.
- University of Mississippi** — Regarding jury selection due to the case’s publicity.
- Oxford School District**
- Lafayette School District**
- Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology**

WOXD 95.5 (FM)

WQLJ 93.7 (FM)

WUMS 92.1 (FM)

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THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

2/12/08 - Scruggs' attorneys accuse feds of creating crime

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)
Staff Writer

Home

News

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Purchase Photos

Archives

Defense attorneys for three lawyers charged with bribing a judge accused the government of omitting specific evidence that proves their clients' innocence, according to documents filed Monday afternoon.

"The affidavits omit numerous specific facts known to the government which show that no such conspiracy existed and that, in fact, it was the government that created the alleged crime here," states a motion to suppress filed by the attorneys representing Scruggs, his son, Zach Scruggs, and attorney Sidney Backstrom.

Interaction

The trio was charged in November with attempting to bribe Circuit Judge Henry Lackey with \$40,000 for a favorable ruling in a lawsuit against the senior Scruggs and his firm.

Advertising

Letters to the Editor

Submit Classified Ad

Submit Announcements

Submit Calendar Item

Submit a Story Idea

Contact Information

Subscription Information

Meet the Staff

Another two men, Timothy Balducci and Stephen A. Patterson, were also indicted, but they have pleaded guilty and are assisting the government in its case against the others. They are awaiting their sentencing hearing.

The defense attorneys filed eight motions late Monday that included a motion to dismiss, motion to suppress evidence, motion to sever trials and a motion to change venue.

Monday was the deadline to file pre-trial motions for the March 31 trial date, scheduled by U.S. District Senior Judge Neal Biggers Jr. last month.

The motion to dismiss says the government pursued Balducci to the point of manufacturing a crime in its attempt to "paint a dark picture of conspiracy," involving the five defendants. It alleges the government engaged in a pattern of concealing the excessive government involvement in the alleged bribe along with exculpatory evidence in order to be granted permission to use wiretaps and search warrants. The defense included transcripts of the recorded conversations as evidence for its motions.

Around Oxford

City Government

Chamber of Commerce

County Government

Important Numbers

"If this is not ... Mr. Scruggs' money, I don't want a nickel of it," Lackey told Balducci on Sept. 27.

"I want you to know ... this is between me and you, and just

Community Calendar

between me and you ... this is just between me and you ... there ain't another soul in the world that knows about this ...," Balducci replied.

Yoknapatawpha Arts Council

"I would think Mr. Scruggs would have to know something," Lackey said.

University of Mississippi

Balducci responded that it was not going to work like that and all Scruggs would know is that "I solved a problem for him."

Oxford School District

Lafayette School District

Defense attorneys claim that leaving similar conversations and comments out of the government's application for the wire taps and search warrants was misleading and "outrageous conduct."

Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology

Zach Scruggs and Backstrom also filed motions to sever their trials from each other and from the senior Scruggs, claiming their roles in the "alleged conspiracy" are minimal.

WOXD 95.5 (FM)

WQLJ 93.7 (FM)

"If the alleged conspiracy were a movie, Zach Scruggs's character might not even have a name, or, more likely, would have been cut from the final script," his lawyer, Todd P. Graves, wrote.

WUMS 92.1 (FM)

One of the last motions to be filed last week was a request by the defendants to move the trial out of Mississippi due to the "extraordinary pretrial publicity of this case in the Northern District of Mississippi and throughout the state of Mississippi."

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Biggers has not ruled on any of the motions and hearings are expected to be scheduled and heard by Feb. 25.

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THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

2/20/08 - Judge may rule today on motions in Scruggs case

Home

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

Staff Writer

News

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Purchase Photos

Obituaries

Archives

Attorney Timothy Balducci told a federal court this morning that it was the junior Scruggs who first suggested Balducci's using his relationship with a local judge to "corruptly influence" him into ruling in favor of Richard "Dickie" Scruggs in a lawsuit against him.

That new information came out at a hearing which began this morning at the U.S. Federal Courthouse in Oxford, where a judge may rule today on several motions filed by defense attorneys for three local attorneys.

Scruggs, his son Zach and associate Sydney Backstrom are all charged with trying to bribe Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey in an attempt to influence the outcome of a civil lawsuit filed against Scruggs last year.

Interaction

Advertising

Balducci and former state auditor Steve Patterson were also charged, but both have pleaded guilty and are working with the government in its cases against the other three men.

Letters to the Editor

Submit Classified Ad

Submit Announcements

Submit Calendar Item

In this morning's hearing, Balducci was called to the stand after defense attorney John Keker, representing Scruggs, asked the judge to allow Balducci to be questioned in relation to a motion to dismiss. The motion, filed by Keker last week, claims the government acted "outrageously" and even caused the crime that Scruggs and the others are charged with.

Submit a Story Idea

In testimony, Balducci told the court that he looked up to Lackey and considered him his "mentor."

Contact Information

Subscription Information

Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Norman asked Balducci if he was asked anything specific during a meeting in March among all five men charged with the bribe attempt.

Meet the Staff

"I was asked to utilize my personal relationship to corruptly influence (Lackey) for a favorable ruling," Balducci replied.

Around Oxford

City Government

Norman asked him who brought it up first.

Chamber of Commerce

"Originally, it was Zach Scruggs who brought up my relationship with Lackey, which was generally known," Balducci said. "He asked me to go and have an off-the-record conversation and see if

County Government

I could persuade him into a favorable ruling.”

Important Numbers

Weighing motions

Community Calendar

Today’s hearing began at 9 this morning in front of U.S. District Senior Judge Neal B. Biggers Jr. It broke for a 10-minute recess at 10 a.m. and is expected to last most of the day.

Yoknapatawpha Arts Council

University of Mississippi

Last week, defense attorneys filed several motions including a motion to dismiss the charges against the three men, claiming the government behaved badly by leaving out exculpatory evidence from its affidavits for wire tapping.

Oxford School District

Lafayette School District

The government released several transcripts of those conversations Tuesday along with its responses to the defense attorneys’ motions.

Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology

Included in those transcripts is a conversation between Balducci and Backstrom:

WOXD 95.5 (FM)

Balducci: “You know it’ll take some more money, is the other side ...”

WQLJ 93.7 (FM)

WUMS 92.1 (FM)

Backstrom: “mm-hmm.”

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Balducci: “ ... you know, I mean, we’ve given him 50 to, to get us to where we are now, but you know, for a little bit more, you know, he’s willing to play ball I think and get this thing like we want it, so”

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Backstrom: “Mmm.”

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In another taped conversation between Scruggs and Balducci, Balducci tells Scruggs that Lackey may need a little “more.”

Balducci: “I think that you would do a little something else, you know, about ten or so more? ... Because I’ve already, you know, taken care of everything and I’m just ...”

Scruggs: “Uh, I’ll take care of it ...”

The three men are set for trial on March 31.

THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

2/21/08 - Judge denies motion to dismiss charges

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

Staff Writer

Home

News

A federal judge denied a motion Wednesday to dismiss the charges against three local attorneys charged with attempting to bribe a circuit court judge for a favorable ruling in a civil lawsuit.

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. denied the motion filed by attorneys representing Richard "Dickie" Scruggs, his son, Zach, and attorney Sydney Backstrom. It claimed the indictments should be dismissed because the government acted outrageously in its attempt to "create the crime" the three men were charged with in November by leaving out exculpatory evidence from wire tap affidavits and pursuing the defendants "aggressively."

Purchase Photos

Scruggs, his son and Backstrom are all charged with trying to bribe Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey in an attempt to influence the outcome of a civil lawsuit filed against Scruggs last year.

Archives

Interaction

Two other men, Timothy Balducci and his associate Steve Patterson, were also charged but have since pleaded guilty and are working with the government in its case against the other three.

Advertising

Defense attorneys filed several motions last week, including the motion to dismiss. Hearings on those motions continued today at the Federal Courthouse in Oxford.

Letters to the Editor

Submit Classified Ad

In denying the motion, Biggers said, according to state law, to have a motion dismissed on the grounds of government misconduct, it must be shown that the defendants only played a passive role in the alleged crime and that they wouldn't have committed the crime if the government hadn't acted.

Submit Announcements

Submit Calendar Item

Biggers said that even though the government played an active role, it does not "wipe out that there was an active participation in this crime" by the defendants.

Submit a Story Idea

Contact Information

Attorney John Keker, representing the elder Scruggs, spoke for all three defendants during the all-day hearing Wednesday. Keker asked Biggers to allow testimony from Balducci, Lackey and FBI agent William Delaney to prove the crime "was instigated through the government."

Subscription Information

Balducci takes stand

Meet the Staff

Biggers allowed Balducci to take the stand, and he was questioned by Keker and Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Norman for more than an hour.



While on the stand, Balducci described Lackey as a long-time friend and mentor.

City Government

“He was someone I really looked up to,” Balducci told the court.

Chamber of Commerce

Balducci testified that during a meeting in March between all five men, talk of corruptly influencing the judge was first mentioned by Zach Scruggs, who asked Balducci to use his personal relationship with the judge to try to influence him for a favorable ruling in the lawsuit, Jones vs. Scruggs. The lawsuit was filed as part of a dispute over \$26 million in legal fees from a settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

County Government

Important Numbers

At the time, Balducci said, while the comments may have been “unethical,” he didn’t consider what he was going to do “illegal” at the time.

Community Calendar

Yoknapatawpha Arts Council

“I knew I risking my law degree,” he said.

Balducci said no discussion of money was made at that meeting.

University of Mississippi

Balducci contacted Lackey and asked to meet with him. After exchanging pleasantries, Balducci told Lackey that he would consider it a personal favor if Lackey would side with Scruggs and send the case to arbitration. At the end of the conversation, Balducci said he told Lackey he would consider it an honor if Lackey would join his new law firm in an “of counsel” position after he retired.

Oxford School District

Lafayette School District

“I did not intend that as a bribe,” Balducci said. “In retrospect, I can see how he may have interpreted it that way.”

Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology

WOXD 95.5 (FM)

Lackey contacted the government about two weeks after the meeting, apparently unsure of Balducci’s intention but suspicious enough to alert authorities. Lackey withheld ruling on the arbitration motion for almost six months. In September, during another conversation with Balducci, Lackey said he was having financial problems and wanted \$40,000 for his ruling for arbitration. Balducci told Lackey he was sure that could be arranged.

WQLJ 93.7 (FM)

WUMS 92.1 (FM)

Another judge bribed?

Norman asked Balducci if there was something that led him to believe he would be able to secure the \$40,000 from Scruggs.

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Balducci: “I was privy to conversations on another matter when

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Scruggs bribed another judge to solve another matter.”

In cross examination by Keke, Balducci testified that Scruggs had tried to use former Sen. Trent Lott to influence rulings made by Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in another dispute involving legal fees. DeLaughter has denied any wrongdoing and has not been charged.

Keker: “Who was the judge?”

Balducci: “Judge DeLaughter”

Keker: “Who was he bribed by?”

Balducci: “Dickie Scruggs”

Keker: “How was he bribed?”

Balducci: “Scruggs offered the influence of his brother-in-law (Trent) Lott to put him on the list for consideration for a federal appointment.”

Keker accused the government of “hounding” Balducci throughout the summer, even after months went by with no “offers” made by Balducci.

Later in the day, Delaney took the stand during a hearing to suppress the evidence gathered from wiretaps and affidavits. Keke questioned why he left certain comments from the conversations — that Keke claims is exculpatory for his client — out of his affidavits for the wire taps. Delaney answered most of the questions by saying he simply felt the information wasn’t relative or that other information used in the affidavits was more pertinent to the case.

Biggers reserved ruling on the motion to suppress the evidence and asked each side to submit a list of the omitted and false statements so that he could see that if they were included in the affidavits originally. He asked both sides to prepare case law and arguments and submit them by Monday as well.



News

2/22/08 - Trent Lott may be witness in Scruggs trial

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

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Home

News

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Purchase Photos

Obituaries

Archives

Sen. Trent Lott could be called as a witness for both the defense and prosecution in the bribery case against Richard "Dickie" Scruggs and two other attorneys if a judge allows testimony from an unrelated case to be admitted during their trial.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. is considering a motion that would allow testimony about what a federal witness called a bribery attempt of Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in an unrelated case.

It was the second time during a two-day hearing to deal with several motions that the former Republican senator's name was brought up in connection with Scruggs. Lott is Scruggs' brother-in-law.

Witness Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty to a federal bribery charge and is cooperating with the prosecution, said Wednesday that Lott called DeLaughter on Scruggs' behalf.

Balducci claimed Lott told the judge that he would put him on the list of potential candidates for a federal judgeship if he made a favorable ruling in a case involving a dispute over legal fees.



DeLaughter and Lott deny any wrongdoing and neither have been indicted on any criminal charges.

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Scruggs, his son and law partner, Zach, and attorney Sidney Backstrom are accused of trying to bribe another judge to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits. Steve Patterson, who worked with Balducci, was also charged, but has also pleaded guilty and is awaiting sentencing.


A trial is set to begin March 31.

The prosecution would like to introduce the claim that the Scruggs Law Firm bribed DeLaughter to show the jury that the elder Scruggs had a history of trying to influence judges before he allegedly conspired to pay Circuit Judge Henry Lackey \$40,000 for a favorable ruling.

Contact Information Scruggs' attorney John Keker and Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Norman gave lists of whom they would call if Biggers allowed testimony about the alleged bribe to DeLaughter. Lott's name came up both times.

Subscription Information

Meet the Staff "And I believe his testimony would be short," Norman said.

 Norman also said he would call U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran to testify since Mississippi's congressional delegation likely came to a consensus on who to recommend.

City Government Keker argued that testimony about the alleged bribe attempt should be excluded because there is nothing illegal about a lawyer suggesting a judge for a federal posting. He also noted that Chamber of Commerce DeLaughter is a Democrat, making it unlikely that he would be appointed by a Republican administration even if Lott used his considerable influence for his cause.

County Government

Important Numbers "If the government thinks this is a crime, they have a way to deal with it," Keker said. "They can bring a charge."

Community Calendar Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Dawson told the court the DeLaughter case "is under active investigation by the Public Integrity section at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., even as we speak."

Yoknapatawpha Arts Council

University of Mississippi In a follow-up interview, Dawson said Lott was not involved in the federal probe. He said he's aware of news reports that Lott is being investigated, but had no direct knowledge of any investigation of the former senator.

Oxford School District Scruggs' former defense attorney, Joey Langston of Booneville, has pleaded guilty to trying to influence DeLaughter.

Lafayette School District **Close to home**
In the afternoon, Biggers denied a motion by the defense to move the trial out of state due to mass media coverage of the case since the five men were indicted in late November.

Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology

WOXD 95.5 (FM) "People in Mississippi and in this area are fascinated by this case," Keker said. "But those that don't live (in Mississippi) aren't. It would be easy to get a jury unaffected elsewhere."

WQLJ 93.7 (FM) Admitting he had little hope for the motion's approval, Keker argued that due to the wide-spread "negative" coverage of the case, the defendants could not get a fair trial in Mississippi. Biggers asked Keker if he had any ideas where they should move the trial.

WUMS 92.1 (FM) "New Orleans is nice," he said. "Nice hotels, a beautiful courthouse ... the people there need a distraction ... and there's

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good food.”

Dawson said just media coverage alone was not sufficient grounds to move the trial.

“The question is whether or not those who have been exposed (to media) can set aside that publicity and make their decision based on the law,” Dawson said.

Biggers denied the motion saying he had no way to judge how many people actually read newspapers and that just having a story in a newspaper doesn't mean people are influenced one way or another. He said he felt with proper questioning of the potential jurors — called voir dire — there should not be a problem finding a fair and unbiased jury in the Northern District of Mississippi.

“Just because someone has heard of the case, doesn't necessarily mean that's grounds to remove them from the jury pool,” Biggers said.

Biggers also listened to arguments by the attorneys of Zach Scruggs and Backstrom, who filed motions to have their cases severed from Dickie Scruggs, saying their clients' involvement in the case was minimal and that the amount of evidence the government has against Dickie Scruggs greatly outweighs the amount of evidence against Zach and Backstrom. The attorneys also argued it is unfair to their clients' chance of a fair trial if Biggers rules in favor of allowing the evidence in the case involving DeLaughter, since their clients were not involved with that case.

Biggers reserved ruling and said he would make a decision by Tuesday on the motion to sever as well as the motions to suppress wiretapping evidence and exclude testimony about the alleged bribery of DeLaughter.

(The Associated Press contributed to this story.)

THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

2/26/08 - Judge expected to rule on motions in bribery case

Home

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

Staff Writer

News

A federal judge is expected to rule today on several motions in the judicial bribery case against three local attorneys, including trial lawyer Richard "Dickie" Scruggs.

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Last week, Senior Judge Neal Biggers Jr. reserved ruling on several motions in the government's case against Scruggs, his son, Zach, and Sydney Backstrom, who were all indicted in November for allegedly trying to bribe Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey with \$40,000 for a favorable ruling in a civil suit against the elder Scruggs.

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Obituaries

Archives

The expected rulings include: whether he will allow evidence gathered from wire taps and searches; whether he will allow evidence to be presented from another unrelated open bribery case and whether Zach Scruggs and Sydney Backstrom should have separate trials from the senior Scruggs.

Interaction

Advertising

Biggers asked for some additional case law to submitted by the government and defense attorneys on Wednesday and announced Thursday at the end of the day that he would rule on all the outstanding motions by today.

Letters to the Editor

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Timothy Balducci and Stephen Patterson were also charged but have since pleaded guilty.

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Scruggs' former defense attorney Joey Langston pleaded guilty in December for trying to bribe Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter while working with Scruggs, which is the basis of the unrelated case that Biggers is expected to rule on today as to whether the evidence in that case can be used in the case against the Scruggses and Backstrom.

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Meet the Staff

Last week, the government requested that Balducci and Langston's sentencing dates be continued until the other defendants' trial is over. The trial is currently slated for March 31. U.S. District judge Mike Mills ruled to continue Langston's sentencing until further order of the court. There's been no ruling about Balducci's sentence as of Monday.

Around Oxford

City Government

Chamber of Commerce

County Government

Important Numbers

Community Calendar

**Yoknapatawpha Arts
Council**

University of Mississippi

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THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

2/27/08 - Criminal charges against Scruggs firm may affect outcome of pending civil lawsuit

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

Staff Writer

Home

News

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Purchase Photos

Archives

Interaction

Advertising

Letters to the Editor

Submit Classified Ad

Submit Announcements

Submit Calendar Item

Submit a Story Idea

Contact Information

Subscription Information

Meet the Staff

Around Oxford

City Government

Chamber of Commerce

County Government

Important Numbers

Circuit Court Judge William Coleman ruled Tuesday that the circuit court has the authority to hand down sanctions against Richard "Dickie" Scruggs and his codefendants in a civil lawsuit stemming from legal fees associated with Hurricane Katrina insurance-related litigation.

Scruggs and four other men have been indicted for attempting to bribe Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey with \$40,000 for a favorable ruling in a lawsuit filed against them by Jackson firm Jones, Funderburg, Sessums, Peterson & Lee.

The suit was filed March 15, 2007, by Oxford attorney Grady F. Tollison Jr., representing the plaintiffs. In it, the firm claims Scruggs is withholding money the firm is owed for working on Hurricane Katrina insurance-related litigation.

The Jones firm claims it is entitled to 20 percent of all past attorney fees collected by the Scruggs Katrina Group, of which it was once a part before being "frozen out" by Scruggs and the other attorneys in the group who are also listed in suit — the Barrett Law Office, Nutt & McAlister and Lovelace law firms.

In Tuesday's hearing, Tollison argued that Scruggs' actions have damaged his client's case, but more importantly, "the honor and dignity of the profession."

He told Coleman that since this alleged crime happened in Lafayette County Circuit Court, that's where it should be handled and that the court should have jurisdiction to hand down sanctions as it sees fit.

Representing the Scruggs firm, Oxford attorney Cal Mayo of Mayo Mallette law firm argued that any sanctions should be considered after arbitration.

In the criminal case against Scruggs, prosecutors say the alleged bribe was offered to Lackey so he would send the case into arbitration.

In January, attorneys for Scruggs attempted to have the case, once

Community Calendar again, sent into arbitration. Coleman ruled in February to send the case to arbitration, but only after he decided whether the circuit court had jurisdiction to sanction.

Yoknapatawpha Arts Council

University of Mississippi On Tuesday, he ruled to stay the order for arbitration and entertain an evidentiary hearing on a motion to strike by Jones' attorneys, to determine if Scruggs' actions were detrimental to the lawsuit.

Oxford School District "To ignore the alleged misconduct, would allow a win-win result for the offender," Coleman said. "If the bribe results in a favorable ruling, the offender wins. If the court cannot strike the pleadings as a sanction, the offender wins again."

Lafayette School District

Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology No date was set for the hearing and both sides agreed no depositions would be taken before March 31, the date of the criminal trial.

WOXD 95.5 (FM)

WQLJ 93.7 (FM) Coleman also ruled that all of the members of the Scruggs Katrina Group could be liable for the acts of one if the acts were in furtherance of the joint venture.

WUMS 92.1 (FM)

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Today's Eagle

News

2/27/08 - Judge denies Scruggses' defense motions

Alyssa Schnugg
Staff Writer

Home

News

Sports

Opinions/ Editorials

Classifieds

Purchase Photos

Archives

In what must be a disappointment for the defense attorneys for three men charged with bribing a judge, U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. denied several of their motions in one clean sweep Tuesday.

Last week, Biggers heard arguments on several motions in the judicial-bribery case against Richard "Dickie" Scruggs, his son, Zach Scruggs, and attorney Sydney Backstrom, who are accused of trying to bribe Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey with \$40,000 for a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees.

Interaction

Biggers denied the defense's motion to keep the government from including evidence of alleged prior similar "bad acts" in the trial.

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Meet the Staff

The prosecution wanted to introduce the claim that the Scruggs Law Firm bribed Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in an unrelated case, to show the jury that the elder Scruggs had a history of trying to influence judges.

Witness Timothy Balducci, who was also charged in the bribery attempt against Lackey, has pleaded guilty and is working with the government. In his testimony, Balducci said Scruggs used his influence to have his brother-in-law, U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, call DeLaughter and put him on the list of potential candidates for a federal judgeship if he made a favorable ruling on Scruggs' behalf.

Balducci's former partner, Steve Patterson, was also charged and has since pleaded guilty and is awaiting trial.

Around Oxford

City Government

Chamber of Commerce

County Government

Attorneys on both sides announced last week that they may call Lott as a witness if Biggers allows the evidence. The government also said they may call Sen. Thad Cochran to testify since Mississippi's congressional delegation likely came to a consensus on whom to recommend.

Scruggs' former defense attorney, Joey Langston of Booneville, has pleaded guilty to trying to influence DeLaughter, but no other charges have been filed in that case. Both DeLaughter and Lott deny any wrong-doing.

Important Numbers

Attorneys for Zach Scruggs and Backstrom argued last week that if Biggers allowed the evidence to be presented, it would greatly prejudice their clients since they were not involved in the DeLaughter case.

Community Calendar**Yoknapatawpha Arts Council**

But in his ruling Tuesday, Biggers said the younger Scruggs is, in fact, implicated in the evidence, and while Backstrom was not, that was not enough reason to separate the trials. He denied both motions to sever the trials.

University of Mississippi**Oxford School District**

What is probably the biggest upset for the Scruggses and Backstrom defense teams, though, was the court's denial to suppress evidence gained from wire taps and searches — where the government got most of its evidence against the five men.

Lafayette School District**Oxford-Lafayette School of Applied Technology**

The defense argued that the affidavits submitted by the government to gain the wiretaps and search warrants “omit several specific facts known to the government which show that no such conspiracy existed and that, in fact, it was the government that created the alleged crime.” Also omitted, the defense says, were recorded audio comments they say defeat the government's claim of conspiracy.

WOXD 95.5 (FM)**WQLJ 93.7 (FM)****WUMS 92.1 (FM)**

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Balducci testified last week that during a meeting in March 2007, Zach Scruggs asked Balducci to use his personal relationship with the judge to try to influence him for a favorable ruling in the lawsuit, Jones vs. Scruggs. The defense argued that FBI agent William Delaney's statement on the affidavits for the wiretaps that “Mr. Balducci made corrupt overtures to Judge Lackey” was false, since no mention of money was made.

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Biggers ruled Tuesday that while no money was mentioned, simply sending Balducci over to speak to Lackey about a case he was not involved with to “use his friendship to persuade Judge Lackey” amounts to an effort to corrupt a judge.

The defendants listed several examples of allegedly misleading statements or omissions, but Biggers ruled the court was satisfied that Delaney “adequately explained the bases for his various affidavits” and that even if the omitted statements were included in the affidavits, there was still “ample evidence to cause a reasonable person to believe that a crime has been committed.”

Last week, Biggers also denied a motion to move to trial out of Mississippi. Defense attorneys argued that pre-trial publicity would make it difficult to find an unbiased jury. Biggers said he felt with proper questioning of the potential jurors, there should not be a problem finding a fair and unbiased jury in the Northern District of Mississippi.

He also denied a motion by the defendants to dismiss the case, claiming the government had acted “outrageously” and even created the crime by pursuing Balducci.

The trial is set for March 31 at the Federal Courthouse in Oxford.

THE OXFORD EAGLE

Online Edition

Today's Eagle

News

3/05/08 - DUI manslaughter case not immune to judicial bribery

[Alyssa Schnugg](#)

Staff Writer

Home

Katie South knew something wasn't right.

News

Her husband, Joe, has been dead for almost three years and the man charged with his death has still not gone to trial. She was promised the case would go to trial in November, only to face another disappointment when it was continued again.

Sports

"No one would give me any answers," she said Monday. "I've been fighting every day for three years. I'm emotionally and physically drained."

Opinions/ Editorials

Joe South was killed on Feb. 4, 2005, while driving to work at Dolco Packaging in Memphis, Tenn., from his home in Abbeville.

Classifieds

According to court records, South was traveling north on Highway 7 a mile north of Waterford when a car, driven by Darron Lee Minor, slammed into him. Minor was traveling south on Highway 7, but for unknown reasons, lost control of his vehicle and crossed over the center line into South's path, killing him.

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Obituaries

Minor, nephew to Northern District Transportation Commissioner Bill Minor, was charged with aggravated DUI in January 2006.

Archives

The Langston Law Firm of Booneville was hired by Minor's father for \$30,000 to defend him, according to court records. The attorney on the case, Timothy Balducci left the firm, led by attorney Joey Langston, shortly after and took the case with him.

Trials ahead

If the names of the attorneys sound familiar, both have made local and national headlines in the last few months after being indicted for attempting to bribe judges.

Interaction

Balducci was arrested in early November for his role in a scheme to bribe Circuit Judge Henry Lackey with \$40,000 for a favorable ruling in a lawsuit against attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs. He pleaded guilty on the day of his indictment and has worked with the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office in their case against Scruggs, who was also indicted.

Advertising

Letters to the Editor	Scruggs' son, Zach, attorney Sydney Backstrom and former State Auditor Steve Patterson were also charged in the case. Patterson has also pleaded guilty to the charge and is awaiting trial. The Scruggses and Backstrom are set to go to trial on March 31 in Oxford.
Submit Classified Ad	
Submit Announcements	In December, Langston was indicted for bribing Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in an unrelated case. He has pleaded guilty to the charge and is also awaiting sentence.
Submit Calendar Item	The investigation was sparked when Lackey was approached last March by Balducci, who asked Lackey to rule in Scruggs' favor during the civil lawsuit that involves \$26 million in legal fees over Hurricane Katrina litigation.
Submit a Story Idea	Lackey contacted the FBI, and for several months, Lackey's phone and office were tapped to try to gain evidence against Balducci and the others.
Contact Information	
Subscription Information	The taped conversations have recently been made public. The mass of recorded conversations covers months of telephone calls and personal visits between Balducci and Lackey. They are easily accessible on various Internet blogs and Web sites that have posted links to the transcripts.
Meet the Staff	<p>Seeking explanations</p> <p>It was within those transcripts that South found part of her answer as to why her husband's accused killer had not gone to trial in November.</p>
	
City Government	<p>“My niece is a stay-at-home mom with two small children so she spends a lot of time on the Internet,” South explained. “Last week, she called me up and told me she had something to show me but that I wouldn't like it.”</p>
Chamber of Commerce	<p>South read over the section of transcripts her niece sent to her while she was on the phone with her.</p>
County Government	<p>“It was like a dream,” South said. “My niece kept asking me if I was all right.”</p>
Important Numbers	<p>The conversation was recorded on Nov. 1 — the day Balducci dropped off the final payment to Lackey and was later arrested by the FBI. During their conversation, Balducci brings up the case against Minor.</p>
Community Calendar	<p>Balducci: “This one, this one's kinda tailor made ... for, for, for this sort of deal.”</p>
	<p>He explains the relationship between Minor and his uncle.</p>

Yoknapatawpha Arts
Council

“Big politicos. Got money. You know? Been around for awhile ... Darron Minor, Bill’s nephew, is just a habitual (expletive). I mean just, there’s no other way to say it ... Just drugs, alcohol I mean just a ... been involved you know, never been arrested for felony, but has had just all kinds of damn DUIs and simple possession of marijuana ...

University of Mississippi

“Darron is involved in a vehicular manslaughter ... gets indicted for it ... Early one morning, bad, heavy fog, he’s going down the road and he crosses over the center line, hits a man head on and causes a collision. Then another car trailin’ ’em rams in from the rear and hits that car. OK? Man died. OK?”

Oxford School District

Lafayette School District

‘Illegal’ tests

Balducci goes on to describe how the Mississippi Highway Patrol officer working the wreck orders a blood test on Minor, but unfortunately, he ordered it under an old statute that was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The test, according to Balducci, was positive for amphetamines and methamphetamine.

Oxford-Lafayette School
of Applied Technology

Balducci: “I mean, our guy’s tanked up. But the DA’s office has conceded that that’s an illegal test, OK, that they can’t use that as basis of his prosecution.”

WOXD 95.5 (FM)

Minor was apparently wounded in the wreck and while being treated at the hospital, was given a urine test that came back positive for methamphetamine. A year after the wreck, he was indicted.

WQLJ 93.7 (FM)

WUMS 92.1 (FM)

Balducci and Lackey discuss how the second test could be considered privileged since the urine was gathered while being cared for medically without permission and that Balducci plans to ask the court to dismiss the charge against Minor.

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He explains that Minor’s family paid Langston \$30,000 for his firm to represent Minor, but Balducci said that when he left the firm, the \$30,000 was not paid to him. He told Lackey he planned on going back to Minor’s family and asking for another \$20,000 since he never got paid by Langston.

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He offers Lackey \$10,000 to rule in his favor.

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Balducci: “I think I’ve got a good theory. I think I can get the legs cut out of this beforehand, gimme twenty grand to do it, and if he does, then I thought me and you could split it and we could, you know, we could get it taken care of.”

Debating delays

Lackey, knowing he’s being taped, agrees. Balducci asks Lackey to

continue the case for him in November.

Balducci: "We'd put it off 'til February and then I'll file a motion to quash in the meantime after I get paid."

The case was continued, but District Attorney Ben Creekmore said it wasn't because Lackey did what Balducci requested. In fact, it was Judge Andrew Howorth who continued the trial in November until March 27.

Since Balducci was arrested a few days after the conversation, Minor was without representation and a new lawyer had to be appointed. Attorney Casey Lott entered an appearance on Minor's behalf but quickly pulled out. Attorney David Hill took over as defense attorney about two weeks ago, Creekmore said.

"We expect the defense to motion for another continuance, but we will vigorously oppose that," Creekmore said. "It's a shame this case has taken so long to come to trial."

Creekmore denied that the attempted bribery by Balducci caused any of the previous delays in Minor's trial.

"To say that the Scruggs case delayed this trial would be fair but only from the November trial date until the March date," Creekmore said. "But this story is about what Darron has done. And he's going to be tried on that."

But for South, she won't believe it until she sees it, she said.

"It's gone on too long. It's to the point of ridiculousness and Joe's still dead," she said, her voice breaking with emotion.

"The longer it's put off, the less people remember. I've got to fight and no one will listen. It's been three years of torment. It's not just the fact your husband was killed for no reason, it's that everyone fighting me every step of the way to bring him justice."

Minor's trial is set to begin March 27 in Holly Springs.



[News >> State News](#)

Lawyers in bribery case ask judge for dismissal

Print Page

Published: Tuesday, February 12, 2008 1:42 PM CST

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS ? Law-yers for three Mississippi attorneys charged with trying to bribe a state court judge accused federal authorities Monday of relying on ?made-up conspiracies? to manufacture a case against their clients.

Richard ?Dickie? Scruggs, his son and law partner, Zach, and attorney Sidney Backstrom were charged in November with conspiring to bribe Circuit Judge Henry Lackey for a favorable ruling in a dispute with other lawyers over \$26.5 million in fees.

In court papers filed Monday, defense attorneys asked a federal judge in Oxford to dismiss the charges against the three lawyers, citing the government?s ?outrageous conduct? in the case.

Defense lawyers claim investigators enlisted Lackey to ?instigate the crime? and later concealed evidence that Scruggs and his associates weren?t involved in the alleged scheme. To support that argument, defense attorneys cite excerpts from wiretapped conversations between Lackey and attorney Timothy Balducci, who already has pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge.

Scruggs? lawyers say the taped conversations show that Lackey, acting as a ?government agent,? solicited a \$40,000 bribe from Balducci ?in an unsuccessful attempt to create evidence of a crime.?

?This is the crux of the government?s outrageous conduct: blatantly manufacturing a crime where there was no evidence of a previously existing crime,? defense lawyers wrote.

The tapes also show Balducci repeatedly telling Lackey that Scruggs wasn?t involved and wouldn?t know about their conversations, according to defense lawyers.

?Yet, after eight months of efforts to find ? and then create ? evidence of a crime, the government was still left with only made-up conspiracies,? Scruggs? lawyers wrote.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. didn?t immediately rule on the motion to dismiss the charges. Biggers has set a March 31 trial date for Richard and Zach Scruggs and Backstrom. U.S. Attorney Jim Greenlee did not immediately respond to messages left Monday.

Richard Scruggs is one of the nation?s wealthiest plaintiffs lawyers, having earned tens of millions of dollars from tobacco and asbestos litigation.

Lackey was presiding over Scruggs? dispute with other lawyers over \$26.5 million in fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits. Prosecutors claim the attorneys offered to pay Lackey to issue an order sending the case to arbitration.

Defense lawyers said it would make little sense for Balducci to bribe the judge for an arbitration order

because it was a request they were likely to win anyway.

?Moreover, sending the case to arbitration was no guarantee of victory on the merits of the case,? defense lawyers added.

On Sept. 18, investigators were listening when Lackey told Balducci he needed money to ?help get me over a little hump I?ve got,? defense lawyers say. On Sept. 27, Balducci allegedly gave Lackey \$20,000.

?I want you to know, though ... this is just between you and me,? Balducci told Lackey during that Sept. 27 meeting, according to defense lawyers.

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[Opinion >> Columns](#)

Hood's mea culpa? seems a tad contrived

Print Page

By Sid Salter
Political Columnist

Published: Wednesday, February 13, 2008 12:21 PM CST

JACKSON -- There's no doubt that Attorney General Jim Hood is reading Mississippi's political tea leaves correctly -- but his timing on making that assessment is more than a little suspect.

Hood's right when he suggests that he's catching some heavy flak from Mississippi voters over his past political alliances with wealthy trial lawyers who have recently either been accused of judicial bribery or entered guilty pleas to such charges.

On Monday, Hood said in a press release touting a list of campaign finance reform he's backing: "Despite the recent attacks on my character and innuendo about my honesty in regard to the campaign contributions which I have accepted, I am the only current statewide elected official who has consistently called for meaningful campaign finance reforms."

"Since my election in 2003, I have always sought these changes," said Hood. "Rather than level attacks at me for following the law as it exists presently, my critics would be better advised to join me in pushing for these reforms."

Hood parses the language of his claim -- "the only current statewide elected official" -- to seek campaign finance reform. Hood can make that claim with a straight face, but only by about six weeks.

Former Secretary of State Eric Clark was a longtime champion of campaign finance reform before he stepped down, as has been state Supreme Court Chief Justice Jim Smith and a number of others, but Smith doesn't run statewide.

Give Hood his due. He has paid prior lip service to wanting campaign finance reform. But lacking the ability to provide any leadership toward getting those reforms enacted, Hood went about his merry way engaging in some of the campaign finance practices he said Monday should be remedied.

Hood called for the following campaign finance reforms:

Contributions sent through a political action committee at the candidate's direction should be considered direct donations to the candidate and be reportable as such.

Disclosure of sources giving to "soft money" political advertising by special interest groups.

Candidates should disclose the name of any individual offering loans or extending credit and be required to report how the money was used.

Electronic reporting of donations and expenditures by state candidates that exceeded \$75,000 in a

calendar year.

All of those proposed reforms are sound reforms that should be enacted. Hood has an excellent grasp of some of the most frequent campaign finance abuses.

But as to criticism of Hood's own campaign finances, is he really shocked that the voters would raise their eyebrows?

Hood got \$44,000 in direct campaign contributions from Oxford attorney Richard Scruggs, who is currently facing federal judicial bribery charges in Mississippi. Scruggs also gave \$300,000 to the Democratic Attorneys General Association.

Booneville attorney Joey Langston gave Hood over \$100,000 in direct campaign contributions and \$100,000 to the DAGA.

In 2007, Hood got \$400,000 for his campaign from DAGA in the same year that Langston and Scruggs gave DAGA \$400,000.

As Hood said, he has been 'following the law as it exists presently' and there exists no evidence that any of the Scruggs or Langston contributions were obtained illegally.

But Hood's close political and legal ties to Scruggs and Langston are ties of Hood's own choosing. Attempts to distance himself from Scruggs and Langston at this late date seem at best contrived.

Campaign finance reform should be a nonpartisan issue. But Hood's efforts to change the political subject when he's under significant fire himself aren't the ideal circumstances in which campaign finance reform legislation of this nature can best succeed.

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[Opinion >> Editorials](#)

Hood not credible as PAC reformer

[Print Page](#)

Published: Wednesday, February 20, 2008 11:50 AM CST

It's humorous when politicians talk about reforming campaign finance after they've been elected taking advantage of the loopholes they want to close.

A few years ago, then-Lt. Gov. Amy Tuck proposed to clarify in law that all loans to candidates are reportable. Her interest in the issue came ironically after it was shown that she was a half-million dollars in hock to wealthy plaintiffs' lawyer Richard Scruggs, a financial connection she hid during her successful 1999 campaign. That reform is yet to be enacted.

Now comes Attorney General Jim Hood, again recommending that political action committees that donate to Mississippi candidates be required to report the actual source of their funds. This proposed reform is intended to stop the way donors try to conceal their involvement in state elections.

The idea is a good one, but Hood is not exactly a credible proponent of it, since he has been one of the beneficiaries of this money dodge. During last year's election, Hood received \$400,000 from the Democratic Attorneys General Association's PAC. Coincidentally, that's precisely the amount that Hood's now embattled trial lawyer buddies -- Scruggs and Joey Langston -- donated to that same PAC.

When Republicans pull this shenanigan of funnelling money to a candidate through an out-of-state PAC - Hood equates it to money-laundering. That's a good comparison, but it's one that applies to both parties.

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[Opinion >> Columns](#)

It's a little late for Hood to fret about appearances

[Print Page](#)

By Sid Salter
Political Columnist

Published: Wednesday, February 20, 2008 11:51 AM CST

JACKSON -- Attorney General Jim Hood has gone to great lengths in recent days to quell what he sees as a barrage of criticism from the media and from bloggers.

Hood has written newspaper columns complaining about "pundits" and "bloggers" generating criticism of his office and suggested that those critics want to "do them harm" -- "them" being "Mississippi's families."

He's granted TV and newspaper interviews in which he dismissed suggestions that he return campaign funds donated by at least three sources who have already entered plea bargains in a federal judicial bribery probe. He suggested that it was unfair for him to be asked to return the donations because Republicans had taken political action committee donations and that: "There's a danger in our politics, when people, corporations are able to buy offices that belong to the people."

That reference came after Hood railed about "big corporations" circumventing Mississippi laws prohibiting campaign contributions over \$1,000 by making legal PAC donations exceeding that amount -- which is true. But in the same breath, Hood draws a distinction between PAC donations from "big corporations" and the \$400,000 in legal campaign contributions he received from the Democratic Attorneys General Association's PAC -- which is the same amount donated to that PAC by Oxford attorney Dickie Scruggs and Booneville attorney Joey Langston.

In November, a federal grand jury indicted Scruggs, his son Zach Scruggs, attorneys Tim Balducci and Sidney Backstrom and former State Auditor Steve Patterson on federal bribery charges involving a lawsuit over \$26 million in legal fees connected to litigation on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims. Scruggs, his son and Backstrom have pleaded not guilty.

But Balducci and Patterson have pleaded guilty, and Langston has pleaded guilty to bribery charges in a separate case in Jackson. Hood's close ties to Langston and Scruggs have been criticized -- fairly and unfairly -- in connection with the judicial bribery allegations, the Katrina cases pushed by Scruggs against State Farm and the entire concept of outside counsel contracts.

Let's set the record straight. Jim Hood hasn't been accused of a crime by the feds in these cases.

But Hood is drawing fire for not filing state charges against his campaign finance sugar daddies. His defense? Hood says his friendships, legal associations and his acceptance of campaign donations from these figures have created the "appearance of impropriety" and that from a legal standpoint, it would be unethical for him to even try to prosecute the cases.

"The average guy is going to say, 'If he's that close to somebody, he doesn't need to be prosecuting

the case,?? he said. ?It would be like prosecuting relatives.?

From a legal standpoint, lawyers I trust tell me Hood?s telling the God?s truth about that. But selling a legal precept like that to laymen is a tough sell.

That ?average man? Hood talks about sees a public official not prosecuting people who?ve given him large sums of money. There is an ?appearance of impropriety? all right, but the appearance is related to Hood?s failure to prosecute, not his abstention from doing so. That ?appearance of impropriety? ship, in the minds of many it would seem, has long since sailed.

Hood says the local district attorneys in Lafayette and Hinds are the appropriate ones to prosecute this case and that his office will assist if necessary, but that he won?t and can?t.

Thank God Jim Hood didn?t take any campaign cash from Edgar Ray Killen or Frank Melton ? cases in which Hood had no problem pressing state charges.

But admitted felons shouldn?t be able to escape state charges of trying to bribe a judge because they?re friends with or donors to the state?s attorney general.

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[News >> State News](#)

Judge: Scruggs bribery case can go to trial

[Print Page](#)

Published: Thursday, February 21, 2008 10:53 AM CST

Associated Press

OXFORD ? A federal judge is expected to hear more arguments Thursday in the judicial bribery case against powerful attorney Richard ?Dickie? Scruggs and two others.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. ruled on Wednesday that there is enough evidence against the Scruggs and the others for the case to go to trial. They have pleaded not guilty to counts including wire fraud and defrauding the federal government.

Scruggs, his son Zach and law partner Sidney Backstrom are accused of trying to bribe a judge to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

A trial is set to begin March 31.

Richard Scruggs, who made hundreds of millions of dollars from taking on tobacco, asbestos and insurance companies, could get 75 years in prison if convicted.

Three other defendants have pleaded guilty in the case: attorney Timothy Balducci; Richard Scruggs? former defense attorney Joey Langston; and former state Auditor Steve Patterson, a former business partner of Balducci?s.

Biggers heard testimony Wednesday from Balducci, who prosecutors say approached Circuit Judge Henry Lackey with a ?bribe overture? last year. The judge reported the attempt and worked undercover for the FBI. Balducci allegedly delivered \$40,000 to the judge in three installments between September and November. Richard Scruggs, Zach Scruggs and Backstrom say Balducci acted alone.

On the stand Wednesday, Balducci said Zach Scruggs suggested that Balducci have an off-the-record conversation with Lackey and persuade him to rule in their favor. After that discussion, Balducci said he met with Lackey on March 28.

On Tuesday, federal prosecutors filed with the court transcripts from some wiretaps to support their case.

The transcripts appear to contain conversations secretly recorded by Balducci in which Richard Scruggs and others discuss the wording they want in Lackey?s order in the fee dispute case.

Balducci said it wasn?t until September that Lackey brought up the idea of a payoff.

?We talked about the case,? Balducci said. ?We talked about the fact that he said he was in a position he had gotten himself into. He?d created a hump that he needed to get over and gotten himself into a fix that he needed \$40,000 to get out of. I told him I thought Mr. Scruggs would give him the \$40,000 to rule in his favor.?

He said Scruggs later agreed to the bribe and guaranteed he would reimburse Balducci.

Balducci also testified that Scruggs had tried to use former Sen. Trent Lott ? Scruggs? brother-in-law ? to influence rulings in another dispute. Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby De-Laughter ?was offered the influence? of Lott ?to put him on a list to be considered? for a federal vacancy, Balducci testified.

Lott?s former chief of staff, Brett Boyles, has said Lott called the judge about a federal court vacancy but that it was among many courtesy calls he made and that he recommended someone else for the job.

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[News >> State News](#)

Hearing gives insight into judge's role in Scruggs case

[Print Page](#)

Published: Saturday, February 23, 2008 10:32 PM CST

Associated Press

OXFORD — For two weeks, Judge Henry Lackey agonized over what to do.

He was pretty sure Tim Balducci had just offered him a bribe and was torn about his next move.

Testimony from Balducci and FBI Special Agent William P. Delaney during a hearing in the federal bribery case against Richard "Dickie" Scruggs and his associates offered the first in-depth look at Lackey's role in building evidence against the famed plaintiffs attorney.

"Judge Lackey was terribly troubled by the whole incident," Delaney said. "He was troubled for two reasons. A, he knew what Mr. Balducci was doing was wrong and at the same time he was conflicted because he didn't want to get his friend in trouble."

Lackey is the key figure in the federal bribery case against Scruggs, his son and law partner Zach, and Sidney Backstrom. All three have pleaded not guilty to charges that include defrauding the federal government and wire fraud.

The judge has not returned multiple messages left by The Associated Press. Testimony last week, however, offered a glimpse of testimony that likely will be offered during a trial, which is set for March 31.

Federal authorities' description of what led to the charges sounds straight forward: Scruggs and his associates paid a judge \$40,000 to rule in their favor in a dispute involving \$26.5 million in Hurricane Katrina settlement fees. But the picture was not so clear to Lackey last March as he considered contacting the U.S. attorney's office in Oxford.

In testimony last Wednesday, Balducci said he first went to Lackey to talk with him about the case involving the Scruggs law firm. He told the judge he thought the case should go to arbitration, something that would likely favor Scruggs.

Lackey felt uncomfortable with the discussion.

"He knew something improper had happened," Delaney said. "He just didn't know if it was illegal or not."

He agreed to help the government find out. He began wearing a wire and recording phone conversations with Balducci from May through September.

Yet even six months after their first conversation, Delaney said Lackey still wasn't sure there had been a crime. So he finally forced the issue and asked the question. Would Scruggs be willing to pay him to rule in his favor in a dispute over \$26.5 million in Hurricane Katrina settlement attorneys fees?

?It took Judge Lackey all summer, from my perspective, to get this thing resolved,? Delaney said. ?And to get this thing resolved, he decided he had to ask that question.?

The answer, according to Balducci, was yes. Balducci has pleaded guilty in the conspiracy and is working with prosecutors to build the case against the three defendants.

Balducci said the idea of going to Lackey was first broached by Zach Scruggs in a meeting at the Scruggses' downtown Oxford office. The Scruggses knew of Balducci's close relationship with the Lafayette County circuit judge and hoped to exploit it.

When asked by defense attorney John Kecker if he had volunteered to approach Lackey, Balducci responded: ?Volunteered? I don't know if I'd put it that way. I was asked to, and I agreed to.?

He recounted the meeting later to federal investigators.

?What I said to the agents is we didn't talk about giving money to Judge Lackey at that meeting,? Balducci said. ?We certainly discussed improperly influencing the judge at that meeting.?

Balducci was startled when Lackey asked for money in a Sept. 18 phone call that was recorded, and went to his office to meet with him three days later to clarify exactly what the judge wanted.

Lackey concocted a story about needing \$40,000 to get himself out of a personal bind and asked Balducci if he thought Scruggs would pay the money, the witness testified.

?I said, yes, that I would help him,? Balducci said. ?I would get it together and help him.?

Balducci contacted Backstrom, a lawyer in the Scruggs firm, to see if the elder Scruggs would pay the judge. Balducci was told to go ahead and pay the money.

He testified that he was willing to front the money, but his business partner, former state Auditor Steve Patterson, wanted word from Scruggs. So Patterson, who has also pleaded guilty in the case, contacted P.L. Blake, another Scruggs associate and a former Leflore County farmer.

?He wanted some direct confirmation because the \$40,000 meant a lot to us at the time and he wanted to make sure that if we were going to do this we would get our money back,? Balducci said.

Word came back from Blake ?that we would be covered and not to worry about it.?

Balducci said he and Patterson finally talked directly with the elder Scruggs about the bribe on Oct. 16.

?Steve and I were there to meet Dick on an unrelated matter, and before we even sat down, he brought it up,? Balducci said.

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Hood's blessing has become ki death



By Tim Kalich
Editor

Saturday, February 23, 2008 4:15 PM CST

Jim Hood is a trip.

Last week, Mississippi's attorney general was pouting because the Legisla give him additional wiretapping authority. He said he would need access to surveillance in order to do a better job of rooting out public corruption, suc bribery scandal that has snagged his two largest benefactors.

Hood, a Democrat, blamed the Republicans on the House committee for ki wiretapping proposal. This, however, looked more like a bipartisan rejectic signaled their disagreement by their absence. Ten of the 15 Democrats on didn't show for the vote. Obviously, they weren't too moved by Hood's a


Both parties have reason to be skeptical.

Hood has forfeited any stature he might have in ferreting out corruption w justice system. A couple of days before his wiretapping proposal was rejec his office would not be pursuing a separate state investigation into the cor Scruggs, Joey Langston and other plaintiffs' lawyers implicated in a judicia because of Hood's past close personal and financial ties to them. So far, ti pursued solely by federal authorities.

Hood argues that few would take an investigation under his direction serio what he turned up. That is true. But even though he personally shouldn't

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probe due to obvious conflicts of interest, he could certainly appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the state. Hood is prosecuting responsibility to the district attorneys, knowing full well that this risks making enemies among what have been some of the richest, most powerful people in the state.

Since Hood is saying that his friends, even those who have acknowledged their conflicts of interest, are hands-off when it comes to his office, why should anyone trust him with prosecutive authority? If he's only going to snoop on those who don't give money to his office, that power could be easily abused.

Remember Richard Nixon's enemies list? The bunch surrounding that president included the power of incumbency, including the power to prosecute, to in revenge on Nixon's political opponents. Nixon was a big fan of wiretapping on the phone conversations of his own advisers and others to try to discover information to the press.

So far, Hood has used his office to reward his trial lawyer friends by steering business their way or by helping them put the squeeze on insurance companies. An office to punish enemies is just the flip side of the coin.

If giving the attorney general broader wiretapping authority is a good idea, why couldn't it be a much worse pitchman for the idea than Hood.

Just as self-defeating is his advocacy of campaign finance reform. Hood does the Republicans' laundry money by funneling campaign contributions to his candidates through out-of-state political action committees.

This dodge has been going on for several years, but it's not just the Republicans. Hood himself has been a big beneficiary. In the last election, he collected \$1 million for a national political action committee that funds Democrats running for attorney general. Coincidentally, that's precisely the amount that Scruggs and Langston donated to their PAC.

Hood says he backs a reform, pushed by good government groups, to require disclosure from PACs that contribute to Mississippi candidates. Unfortunately, Hood's hypocrisy these days is like the kiss of death - even sensible ideas get tainted by it.

After the 2007 elections, Hood was the anomaly, the lone Democrat left in office. He's doing his best to help the GOP claim a clean sweep next time around.

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Scruggs? son wants own trial

Print Page

By Chris Talbott
Associated Press

Published: Monday, February 25, 2008 11:17 AM CST

OXFORD ? For most of his life, Zach Scruggs has benefited from his last name.

As a partner in his father Richard "Dickie" Scruggs' law firm, the younger Scruggs is entitled to millions in legal fees and the acclaim of working with one of the nation's most powerful and media savvy plaintiffs lawyers.

Now that he faces trial with his father and an associate on charges of conspiring to bribe a Mississippi judge, however, Zach Scruggs is in the unusual position of having to distance himself from Richard Scruggs.

A federal judge is expected to rule Tuesday on Zach Scruggs' request to have his case severed from his father's, among other key decisions on pending motions.

Despite the formal setting, the Scruggses' feelings showed through in court last week during a two-day motion hearing. They consulted during recesses, leaning in to each other to discuss strategy in quiet tones, and even greeted each other with a special handshake.

Yet in Zach Scruggs' best interests, his attorney argued his case should be separated from his father's because the name that has served him so well in the past now may stand in the way of his defense.

"The whole matter is difficult," Zach Scruggs' attorney, Todd Graves, said in an interview Sunday with The Associated Press. "It's a father-son relationship. He's concerned about his father, but at the same time, though, he's in this case and our contention is he should be tried separately in his own case."

The Scruggses, who declined comment for this story, and fellow defendant Sidney Backstrom have pleaded not guilty to defrauding the federal government and wire fraud, among other charges. Backstrom also is asking U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. to separate his case from the others.

They are accused in a federal indictment of paying Lafayette County Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey \$40,000 to rule in their favor in a dispute over \$26.5 million in Hurricane Katrina insurance settlement fees. Lackey is not accused of wrongdoing and worked with federal investigators.

During last week's hearing, Graves told Biggers that he had counted the number of times attorneys, the judge and witnesses had distinguished between the senior Scruggs and his son during the proceedings and came up with only a handful.

He noted that all parties often had to clarify who they were talking about in the hearing and that wrongdoing was often attributed to the "Scruggs law firm" rather than to the individuals.

"That element of confusion could lead to prejudice," Graves argued.

Graves also argued that the cases against father and son should be split because of the "huge disparity" in evidence against the two. He argued evidence against Richard Scruggs seemed more substantial than that gathered against his client.

"Their proof against Zach is so minimal," Graves said. "The proof that they're going to offer against his father would be a lot more than that. And our concern is a jury wouldn't be able to judge him based solely on the minimal proof (prosecutors) indicate they're going to offer at this point."

In one instance, he said the government claims Zach Scruggs took part in a recorded conversation about the alleged Lackey bribe on Nov. 1. Graves told the court, however, he doubted prosecutors could show Zach Scruggs was in the room for much of the conversation. That secretly recorded conversation included references to "sweet potatoes" ? code, authorities say, for the money paid to Lackey.

"He was in the room for a very short period of time where the government alleges code words were being spoken," Graves said Sunday. "But if you're not part of the conspiracy, a code word doesn't mean anything to you."

Tom Dawson, first assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi, took issue with Graves' description of the case against Zach Scruggs during the hearing. He said there was not only evidence that the younger Scruggs actively participated in the conspiracy, but that he also may have been a part of another bribery scheme.

Biggers also will rule Tuesday on whether to allow testimony about Scruggs' participation in another alleged conspiracy to bribe Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Bobby DeLaughter.

Dawson said the DeLaughter bribery allegations are being investigated by the Public Integrity section at the U.S. Department of Justice. DeLaughter has not been named in any indictment and has denied wrongdoing.

"We have become aware of some evidence that might indicate that Zach Scruggs had some knowledge of the backdoor attempt to influence a judge," Dawson told the court.

Dawson also said Graves was understating Zach Scruggs' involvement in the alleged bribery of Lackey. He noted that federal witness Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty in the conspiracy, testified Zach Scruggs was the lawyer who brought up the idea of Balducci approaching Lackey, his good friend, in an attempt to persuade him to rule in their favor.

And he quoted a transcript of a recording Balducci made of a meeting that allegedly involved the Scruggses.

"Mr. Balducci says, 'Zach, let me bring you up to speed. This is on the Judge Lackey thing,'" Dawson said.

"The statement is made, 'We need to get this exactly right because we are paying for it.'"

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[News >> State News](#)

Lawyer says witness lied to grand jury

[Print Page](#)

Published: Tuesday, March 4, 2008 1:45 PM CST

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS ? A key government witness lied to the grand jury that indicted several attorneys on charges they conspired to bribe a state judge, one of the accused lawyers claims in court papers filed Monday.

Zach Scruggs, an Oxford, Miss.-based attorney whose well-known father and law partner also faces a bribery charge in the same case, is asking a federal judge to dismiss his indictment due to alleged government misconduct.

Scruggs? lawyers claim grand jurors heard false and misleading testimony from an FBI agent and from former attorney Timothy Balducci, who already has pleaded guilty to conspiring with Scruggs and others to bribe state Circuit Judge Henry Lackey.

Zach Scruggs? indictment is a product of their ?patently false and misleading? testimony, his lawyers argue.

?It has been clear since the filing of this indictment that the government has no credible evidence that (Zach Scruggs) knowingly participated in any scheme to bribe a judge,? the defense lawyers wrote.

U.S. Attorney Jim Greenlee didn?t immediately return a call for comment Monday. Balducci has represented himself in the criminal matter. His office number has been disconnected.

A trial for prominent plaintiffs lawyer Richard ?Dickie? Scruggs; his son, Zach; and fellow Scruggs Law Firm attorney Sidney Backstrom is scheduled to start March 31 in Oxford.

Richard Scruggs, a brother-in-law of former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., made tens of millions of dollars from tobacco and asbestos litigation. His role in a landmark settlement with tobacco companies was depicted in the 1999 film ?The Insider,? starring Al Pacino and Russell Crowe.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. rejected a different motion by all three defendants to dismiss the charges based on the government?s ?outrageous conduct.? However, Zach Scruggs? attorneys didn?t see transcripts of grand jury proceedings until last week.

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Tuesday 26 February, 2008

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'Poster child for greed...'

February 26, 2008

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We could not agree more with Dickie Scruggs' defense team's declaration that Scruggs has been made "poster-child for greed, attorney malfeasance and tort reform."

Of course the court papers, filed in Oxford earlier this month in an effort to move the case to another venue, stated that such a view of their defendant was unfair and a result of media coverage.

We agree with U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr., decision not to move the case. In our opinion there has not been an abundance of press coverage - in fact we need more coverage of this case.

If the charges are proved true - and some of those involved have already pleaded guilty - this case strikes at the very foundation of the justice system of law upon which everything in this nation is founded.

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POWER

Feds are investigating Scruggs' link to Hinds County judge

BY JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@JACKSON.GANNETT.COM • FEBRUARY 21, 2008

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OXFORD — Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Dawson said this afternoon that federal authorities are investigating an alleged bribery case involving Dickie Scruggs and Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter.

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"That case is under active investigation of the Public Integrity Division of the Justice Department as we speak," Dawson said.

When asked if former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, Scruggs' brother-in-law, was involved, Dawson said no.

The Wall Street Journal today reported that Lott was being investigated by federal authorities as part of the ongoing Scruggs conspiracy case.

This morning, the prosecution said Lott may have to testify in Scruggs' upcoming trial on bribery charges in another case involving Lafayette County Circuit Judge Henry Lackey.

The prosecution indicated it planned to also call as witnesses lawyers Timothy Balducci and Joey Langston, both of whom already have pleaded guilty in the scandal.

Scruggs, son Zach Scruggs, and lawyer partner Sidney Backstrom, all of Oxford, have pleaded



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Scruggs' attorney, John Keker of San Francisco, has said his client is innocent and that Scruggs "didn't corruptly influence Judge DeLaughter."

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newtrick wrote:

humpty, I was just playing with your "name" :)

2/22/2008 12:02:11 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Newtrick, you're right...FOLO changed their information - I hadn't seen the correction until now. My apologies. Though, I'm still interested in other times I've "fallen off the wall".

2/22/2008 2:01:30 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Newtrick - give me some examples of times I've "fallen of the wall". Re the motions...I copied/pasted that straight from FOLO before I left the office...so I won't dispute that if you have the info. Koolaid...I'm glad you're back. Please, give us some opinions re what happened yesterday/today w/ Scruggs...I'm interested in your point of view.

2/22/2008 1:55:40 AM

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BaronLee wrote:

I recently sat on a jury. Honestly, we looked at the evidence and not what we had heard or read. I believe that the court in Oxford can select a jury in this case that will look at what is presented on the witness stand and put aside what the individual members have heard or read. Members still have to look at themselves in the mirror once they have rendered their verdict.

2/22/2008 12:57:35 AM

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TRUTHOUTLET wrote:

He has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

2/21/2008 10:39:02 PM

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TRUTHOUTLET wrote:

I am glad that something is being done about people like Scruggs who think that money can buy a victory. He moved to Oxford, Ms. and has tried to run everything from the football team to the university while maintaining a law practice. The worse thing he has doing is getting his own son involved in this terrible situation which could cause this young man several years in the pen.. I admire Judge Biggers who will up hold the letter of the law and insure a fair and balanced trial.

2/21/2008 10:37:42 PM

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speakerofthetruth wrote:

May Dickie Scruggs be mounted by a rabid dog!!!!

2/21/2008 8:58:33 PM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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Franklin wrote:

MITCHELL--ESE Jerry Mitchell can sure take a perfectly fascinating story and just sap the life right out of it ---techniques include : 1) confusing chronolgy; 2) facts entering and exiting like ghosts in a haunted house; 3) lack of story-stelling ; 4) no topic sentences or overall context; 5) Mundane verb choice; 6) tired journalistic cliches ----- and he wins awards for this stuff , amazing.

2/21/2008 8:56:59 PM

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WhiteTrash wrote:

I say we waterboard 'em and get to the bottom of this.

2/21/2008 8:55:13 PM

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JanetbGood wrote:

All my Trent Lott posts are Folo today have been expoided as complete BS! I'll cover by ripping Jerry Mitchell's writing style again. Yeah, that's the ticket. Latah.

2/21/2008 7:47:49 PM

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POWER

Feds are investigating Scruggs' link to Hinds County judge

BY JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@JACKSON.GANNETT.COM • FEBRUARY 21, 2008

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"That case is under active investigation of the Public Integrity Division of the Justice Department as we speak," Dawson said.

When asked if former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, Scruggs' brother-in-law, was involved, Dawson said no.

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Scruggs, son Zach Scruggs, and lawyer partner Sidney Backstrom, all of Oxford, have pleaded



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Scruggs' attorney, John Keker of San Francisco, has said his client is innocent and that Scruggs "didn't corruptly influence Judge DeLaughter."

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newtrick wrote:

humpty, you fell off the wall - not that it's your first time to be "off the wall" - the Judge took the Motions to Sever under advisement.

2/21/2008 6:49:51 PM

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JamesSavik wrote:

Since Jim Hood took office, he hasn't missed a single opportunity to grandstand until Scruggs got caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Since when has a politically partisan and aggressive AG been satisfied letting the Feds handle a high profile public corruption case that he could easily ride to higher office? It just doesn't happen. Hood's silence in this matter speaks volumes.

2/21/2008 6:41:48 PM

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RUs25601 wrote:

So who out there hasn't figured out that when Lott recommended another judge, he had been tipped off by the Bush administration about the investigation of

Scruggs? Good grief, the feds investigation of judicial bribery in Mississippi began in 2001, when Scruggs first came into focus for his gifts of payoff of loans for Mississippi justice Oliver Diaz. Guess Scruggs felt pretty secure about his power to get so stupid with it.

2/21/2008 6:37:01 PM

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snowflake1 wrote:

EXCUSE ME GUYS--- I meant COMPLETELY OUT OF CIRCULATION.

2/21/2008 6:27:49 PM

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snowflake1 wrote:

I totally agree with GOAHEADFRED. He is so right, the state will always be last (50th) in everything until ALL the good ole boys are completed out.

2/21/2008 6:26:45 PM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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moslander wrote:

Trent Lott went to Congress poor and retired RICH...he is, in my view an arrogant bastand with a processed hair cut.....

2/21/2008 6:23:33 PM

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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koolaid wrote:

Yawn yawn yawn, the Fed's are investigating EVERYTHING except why everything from China is KILLING us and WHERE to find Bin-Laden!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2/21/2008 5:56:27 PM

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madres wrote:

What ever happened to innocent until proven guilty? The media and public have convicted these men already, without having heard their side of the story. I seriously doubt they will get a fair trial in this state. It is a shame.

2/21/2008 5:03:54 PM

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goaheadfred wrote:

As George Costanza once said and I paraphrase: this thing is like an onion, the more layers you peel off the worse it stinks. Whether you're talking about politicians or lawyers, the good 'ole boy system has completely ruined this state. We will never elevate out of 50th place until we round up all these good 'ole boys and run them clear out of the state.

2/21/2008 4:58:24 PM

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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humptydumpty wrote:

The motions for a change of venue and to sever as to Zach Scruggs and Sidney Backstrom were denied.

2/21/2008 4:50:46 PM

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Feds are investigating Scruggs' link to Hinds County judge

BY JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@JACKSON.GANNETT.COM • FEBRUARY 21, 2008

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humptydumpty wrote:

I'm starting to feel like an "ignorant yahoo" without the masterful guidance of Koolaid...his sheer genius and flawless insight need to be expressed on this canvass so that we too can see through the facts and pay our respects to Dickie Dick and The Funky Bunch in a respectful and unbiased fashion. Koolaid...whereyat?

2/21/2008 4:45:47 PM

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kwestjr@yahoo.com wrote:

ANYONE can suggest a candidate for a Senator to consider for a nomination. That is your right as an American. The fact that all of this has a side show attached is irrelevant.

2/21/2008 4:43:08 PM

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speakerofthetruth wrote:

Maybe it can be called "All My Criminals"

2/21/2008 4:31:51 PM

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Gunslinger6 wrote:

As the stomach turns, so do the days of our lives and the politics in Mississippi. DeLaughter does look like Sutherland. The more they stir the more it stinks, poo poo.

2/21/2008 4:25:57 PM

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speakerofthetruth wrote:

Is it just me or does DeLaughter look like Donald Sutherland????? Maybe Sutherland can play him when they make a movie on all this corruption!!!

2/21/2008 4:17:52 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

...unless Dickie rolls on Trent in some sort of deal...

2/21/2008 3:36:12 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

MJC - Agree...there's got to be more to that story. They can't get Lott on that - it would be difficult to get him even is he did know about the 'bribe' aspect of it... I'm guessing there won't be a trial - so we may never know.

2/21/2008 3:35:11 PM

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mjcIII wrote:

By the way, thanks for that link Folo! I would also like to add clarity to my sentence a couple of posts ago....it will be next to impossible for them to prove that Lott knew that Scruggs promised Delaughter a consideration for a judgeship IN RETURN FOR ILLEGAL JUDICIARY FAVORS.

2/21/2008 3:25:26 PM

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mjcIII wrote:

Here's the best part::: Scruggs outdid them, with his \$4.3 million. A registered Democrat, Scruggs was part of a legal team that won a \$246 billion settlement against tobacco companies on behalf of a group of states. Scruggs's law firm was awarded a \$1 billion legal fee. If the Republican proposal to limit high legal fees became law, Scruggs stood to lose most of his fee. Moreover, other trial lawyers who also received huge fees would also have been hit. Given that trial lawyers are major donors to the Democratic Party, Scruggs saw the attack on their fees as a Republican effort "aimed at essentially de-funding the Democratic Party by penalizing trial lawyers."

2/21/2008 3:21:32 PM

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mjcIII wrote:

Whatever Lott's link to this case is (ignorance or corruption), it will be virtually impossible to prove that he knew that Scruggs was promising Delaughter consideration for a judgeship. So don't get too excited you cute little Demmy's. I wonder when the ole C-L will start discussing this interesting piece from the Boston Globe which shows Scruggs reaching out to other Republicans:

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2006/03/31/special_interes
page=full
2/21/2008 3:20:39 PM

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POWER

AG pulled into Scruggs fray

Balducci says he was promised \$500K to convince Hood not to indict State Farm

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 27, 2008

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A Mississippi lawyer who already has pleaded guilty to bribing a judge told the FBI that Dickie Scruggs promised him \$500,000 to persuade Attorney General Jim Hood to back off filing criminal charges against State Farm Fire and Casualty Cos.

ADVERTISEMENT New Albany lawyer Timothy Balducci - who has pleaded guilty to paying a \$40,000 bribe to Circuit Judge Henry Lackey to rule in Scruggs' favor in an attorneys' fees dispute - is expected to be a key witness against Scruggs in his upcoming criminal trial. Scruggs' attorney, John Keker of San Francisco, insists his client is innocent of bribery charges and knew nothing about Balducci paying the bribe.

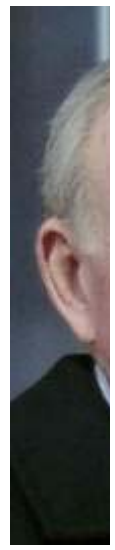
Hood responded Tuesday that his decision not to indict State Farm was based solely on advice from senior prosecutors.

In other court action Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers denied several defense motions, including one to keep prosecutors from introducing certain evidence against Scruggs in his upcoming trial, such as wiretaps and another alleged "bad act" by him.

In a Nov. 12 memo by FBI agent William Delaney, Balducci is described as a "confidential human source" who gave federal authorities his version of events.

The memo, contained in U.S. District Court documents, says, "Scruggs Law Firm and State Farm were near a settlement; however, Dickie Scruggs learned that the Mississippi State Attorney General's office had threatened to indict State Farm Insurance Co. due to some impasses between the attorney general's office and State Farm ..., (which) was not going to settle the civil cases with Scruggs Law Firm, if the company was going to be indicted by the attorney general's office.

"Dickie Scruggs asked Steve Patterson to speak with Attorney General Jim Hood since Steve Patterson and



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Hood had a long standing relationship. Dickie Scruggs offered to pay (the New Albany law firm) Patterson Balducci \$500,000 if they could get Hood to relent on indicting State Farm."

Balducci told the FBI he accompanied Patterson in that meeting with Hood, who later agreed not to indict State Farm.

In a statement Tuesday, Hood - who has acknowledged he had dinner with Balducci and Patterson - said his decision came after prosecutors discussed the lack of evidence.

"Several days before the Jan. 23, 2007, settlement with State Farm, after our prosecutors heard three days of testimony before a Jackson County grand jury, the majority of the prosecutors ... determined ... that no fact pattern existed that fell squarely within the insurance fraud statute," Hood said. "I made my decision that there was insufficient evidence to uphold a conviction of State Farm on evidence we had at the time ... I am too hardheaded to be influenced by outside forces ..."

Hood noted Balducci said of him in one of the FBI's wiretaps: "He ain't gonna dance with the one who brought him to ... the dance."

Phil Supple, a spokesman for State Farm, said Tuesday, "We're not involved in that legal dispute, and we don't think it would be appropriate to comment."

The Scruggs Law Firm settled with State Farm, yielding \$26 million in attorney fees.

"Dickie Scruggs reneged on his pledge to pay Patterson Balducci \$500,000, but later agreed to pay Patterson Balducci \$100,000 per month over five months," the memo says.

Balducci told the FBI that in March 2007 he was concerned Scruggs wouldn't pay the \$500,000 if Balducci didn't speak to Judge Lackey about the dispute over the \$26 million in attorney fees.

On March 31, Scruggs goes on trial along with son Zach and law partner Sidney Backstrom. Like Scruggs, Zach Scruggs and Backstrom insist they are innocent.

Biggers denied requests by Zach Scruggs and Backstrom to have separate trials.

The Balducci memo includes his description of political operative P.L. Blake, who initially was described in affidavits for wiretaps as a possible co-conspirator before being dropped in later documents.

In the memo, Balducci describes Blake as a "bagman" during tobacco litigation.

"Blake is paid approximately \$1 million per year out of attorney fees, which are controlled by Dickie Scruggs," the memo says. "Blake receives the money directly from Dickie Scruggs. (Balducci) does not know why Blake receives money from the Tobacco Settlement Fund."

According to court documents, Blake was supposed to earn \$50 million from the tobacco settlement for clipping newspapers and keeping track of politics for Scruggs.

Blake, who has not been indicted in this investigation, pleaded no contest in 1988 to a federal charge that he offered bribes to Mississippi Bank officials in exchange for preferential treatment. He was ordered to pay a \$1.5 million fine. Blake could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

Patterson was working for Mississippi Bank at the time Blake offered bribes. Patterson has pleaded guilty to his involvement in the scheme to bribe Lackey.

On Tuesday, Special Circuit Judge William Coleman said if lawyers in the \$26 million legal fees dispute with

Scruggs can prove there was an attempt to bribe Lackey, he as judge can enter a default judgment for them.

"The court has the inherent power to protect the court's integrity," said Grady Tollison of Oxford, an attorney for the lawyers. "I can't think of anything worse in a judicial proceeding than trying to bribe a judge."

To comment on this story, call Jerry Mitchell at (601) 961-7064.

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abovethelaw wrote:

Boo Hoo Sniff Sniff is what I say. There is many more of these cases, in similar situations. Check out the Aug 9th case in Hattiesburg, where a judge ruled one way with both Attorney's present. Same judge ruled on Aug 22nd and went the opposite direction. There was only one law firm at the hearing. The opposing firm was not invited. The next hearing the following month was to get the the ruling set aside, because of an ilegal hearing, and an Attorney told the judge a lie, that the other Attorney was invited and was not. This was only 13 days between Aug 9th and Aug 22nd. The judge couldn't remember what was agreed, and couldn't find his file. The ruling was not set aside, the Attorney that told the lie was not reprimanded, and the (society club) fell Victim to the (good ole boys club) again. Something simple, because he was in Iraq, and couldn't get leave. Cost him 20,000 dollars for asking.(OH..FORGOT TO TELL YA,,YES..A LOCAL ATTORNEY'S FAMILY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE)

2/27/2008 12:58:10 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

HappytobeMS - I think Koolaid should respond to your question. Koolaid - whereyat?

2/27/2008 12:53:37 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

Yep, gonna be a lot of mullet-growing going on if Jimmy comes out of this without a scratch on him.

2/27/2008 12:47:52 PM

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HappytobeMississippian wrote:

Why did Hood not report this offer to the FBI?

2/27/2008 12:47:14 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

I need to lose about 5lbs so I don't look too guilty on camera. Maybe grow a mullet.

2/27/2008 12:43:38 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

I'm having much too gnarly a time to join you on the leaf, HD, but I applaud your openness to experimentation. I can see it now: a spot in the MPB lineup is coming open for you and Koolaid.

2/27/2008 12:40:11 PM

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2/27/2008 12:34:40 PM

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2/27/2008 12:05:36 PM

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2/27/2008 12:04:16 PM

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2/27/2008 12:02:12 PM

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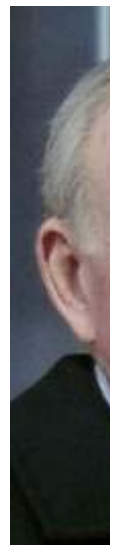
Balducci says he was promised \$500K to convince Hood not to indict State Farm

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 27, 2008

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2/27/2008 12:02:12 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

"Going down with Daddy" - Sounds vaguely obscene.

2/27/2008 11:41:47 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

Myself, I prefer the Gnarly Head Old Vine Zin and if the HORSEPOO gets any deeper I may have to resort to the Gnarlier Head Zin.

2/27/2008 11:38:15 AM

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slickdawg wrote:

I can't not believe how delusional some people are being. These are FEDERAL INDICTMENTS, and they've already led to three guilty pleas. I find it funny that Zach Scruggs and Backstrom want seperate trials than Dickie - what's the matter boys, are you scared of going down with Daddy?

2/27/2008 11:36:17 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

Oh, no, HD, it sounds like you've been sipping that Turning Leaf Merlot a little too steadily this morning! Say it ain't so. :-)

2/27/2008 11:34:28 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Stick, I hear that guy may be in some trouble too - but with me turning a new leaf all and starting to see the light..all of this as just a coincidence, I might reconsider...thanks for the suggestion. Oh, and don't believe that stuff about Balducci and Langston...it's not true. I wasn't aware they did anything wrong. It's the C-L that should lose their license, man...

2/27/2008 11:21:18 AM

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Reeves wrote:

DemsDemsDems: If you read my post I said most likely. I never said that there was not any gay people who were Republicans. Remember the Log Cabins? You got to ask you self, which party is more closely connected to same sex marriage.

2/27/2008 11:11:41 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

HD: Here's an idea (agent-wise) - "One call, that's all."

2/27/2008 11:07:40 AM

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DemDamDems wrote:

Reeves, you said "I rather my son turn out to be gay rather than turn out to be a Democrat. But than again if he does turn out to be gay there's a very good chance also be a democrat. Well there goes that line of thinking." If this is the case, you might want you invite your son's republican boyfriend over for dinner. The last I heard there were a couple of republicans in Washington who were courting, or attempting to court little boys, like U.S. Rep. (R) Mark Foley, and U.S. Senator (R) Larry Craig. Also there is Bob Allen, Republican member of the Florida House of Rep. and Florida Chairmen of John McCain's Presidential campaign. Oh, let's don't forget Bush's pastoral counselor Ted Haggard.

2/27/2008 11:02:03 AM

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tjhl1964 wrote:

"Several days before the Jan. 23, 2007, settlement with State Farm, after our prosecutors heard three days of testimony before a Jackson County grand jury, the majority of the prosecutors ... determined ... that no fact pattern existed that fell squarely within the insurance fraud statute," Hood said. Then the Judge rejected the agreement and the pressure was put back on State Farm by the Attorney General who got slapped by a Federal Judge and yet came out claiming victory. He claims to be hard headed, but ignorant seems a better description.

2/27/2008 11:00:32 AM

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koolaid wrote:

I went to hear Buckley speak one time years ago, may he rest in heaven in peace.

2/27/2008 10:57:34 AM

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JustAVoter wrote:

Hood grossly misuses Balducci's statement: "Hood noted Balducci said of him in one of the FBI's wiretaps: "He ain't gonna dance with the one who brought him to ... the dance." Actually, Balducci made that statement when relaying that Hood was "dancing" with Langston rather than with Balducci and Balduccia felt slighted by Hood's alliance with Langston over him. Jim--I suggest you re-read the transcripts---or more likely, your intent was to deceive in the first place.

2/27/2008 10:56:29 AM

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slickdawg wrote:

Now, does anyone wonder why Hood has been extremely quiet about all of this? Hood told the Clarion Ledger editorial board that he was not pursuing state charges because "that would be like prosecuting family". Well Jimmy boy, the official word is out, you are part of the family. Only when pressed do you admit having dinner with Patterson and Balducci. I wonder what else is going to come up in the next few days.....

2/27/2008 10:55:21 AM

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koolaid wrote:

Friends, Louisiana's got NOTHIN on us! We got it all, top camapign contributors under indictment, US Senators that are icons resignin after 1 year out of 6, A governor that made being a DC Lobbyist an HONORABLE calling, another US Senator that stated that John McCain "sent cold chills down his spine", then endorsed him for President a week later, a big-city mayor who faints in meetings and doesn't pay his taxes, it is only fit for FICTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2/27/2008 10:54:13 AM

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sailor wrote:

So say we believe Hood's claim that he met w/ P&B over dinner to discuss there newly formed partnership. Wouldn't he have told them that it is against the Bar rules for a non-lawyer (Patterson) to be a partner in a law firm?

2/27/2008 10:53:30 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

Well, you apparently won't be able to use Balducci or Langston. The C-L has posted an item that shows the state Sup. Ct. is being petitioned for disbarment of them. Also, even those of us in the middle of the road or to the left of the road may have to pause here for a few minutes out of respect. The C-L has posted a note that William F. Buckley died this morning at age 82. Our friends on the RRIIGGHHTT will be feeling a little lost. I remember being forced to watch WFB and John Kenneth Galbraith on Firing Line when I was a kid. Heck, those guys were so polished they should have had a cooking show and invited Julia Child on to referee.

2/27/2008 10:49:58 AM

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koolaid wrote:

Stick61, I love it! A cooking show, and Governor Hog could make guest appearances. And after the show, we could all "lets go walkin" down Capital or State streets. And Hog can say things like" ya know, I love our food here in Mississippi, me and my trophy wife of 30 years often enjoy a meal together, thinking of how good it is that at least we collect 7% sales tax off of the liberal-welfare democrats, makes it all taste sooooo good"! "C'mon babe, lets go walkin"! God I think it would work.

2/27/2008 10:46:38 AM

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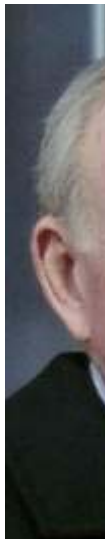
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To comment on this story, call Jerry Mitchell at (601) 961-7064.

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humptydumpty wrote:

Stick that's a great idea. We need an agent....anybody know a good attorney?

2/27/2008 10:42:47 AM

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js1976 wrote:

It doesn't matter if they are right or left, if you play you pay. Everybody out there want to know why their insurance rates are so high? Legal suits that line the pocketbooks of attorneys such as this!

2/27/2008 10:36:59 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

I think maybe y'all should start with a cooking show on TV rather than a book. Let the book, complete with recipes, grow out of the show. That way, Koolaid, the show could be something like "The Right Heat" and you could make recommendations about the best cuisine over which to conduct dirty bribe deals. You could also do a Top 10 list of the best foods to throw at your political adversaries - stuff that not even the best stain removers can get out.

2/27/2008 10:35:20 AM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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koolaid wrote:

Title of the Book: IN THE HEEEEEEAAAAATTTTTT OF THE RIGHTTTTTTTT, MUST BE AN ENDING, TO IT AAALLLLLLLLLL. Wonder when they do all of their crooked, dirty, bribe-laden deals, if they meet in THE BOTTOMS?

2/27/2008 10:29:14 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

I'm starting to turn a leaf here...maybe using common sense is the wrong thing to do. Maybe there is no evidence to support any possible wrong doing involving Scruggs and/or Hood (and for that matter DeLaughter and/or Peters)...I guess all of this is just happenstance and bad luck for those involved.

2/27/2008 10:28:08 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

HD: Put me down for a copy. Can we have a signing somewhere? Somewhere big enough for the rest of the crew to stage a food fight.

2/27/2008 10:24:01 AM

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mjclll wrote:

Yeah, you guys are creating this link to Hood out of thin air. I will continue to lay in

the fetal position and proclaim that anyone who incriminates Hood must be a "hater" and "freak." That is my last line of defense as I pray that the following facts will disappear from print: "Dickie Scruggs asked Steve Patterson to speak with Attorney General Jim Hood since Steve Patterson and Hood had a long standing relationship. Dickie Scruggs offered to pay (the New Albany law firm) Patterson Balducci \$500,000 if they could get Hood to relent on indicting State Farm..... Balducci told the FBI he accompanied Patterson in that meeting with Hood, who later agreed not to indict State Farm....In a statement Tuesday, Hood - who has acknowledged he had dinner with Balducci and Patterson - said his decision came after prosecutors discussed the lack of evidence."

2/27/2008 10:20:51 AM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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tjhl1964 wrote:

Well, now Mr. Hood is implicated. The same Mr. Hood that I have emails from telling me it is not his job to prosecute Judges that have accepted bribes. Yet he told the Editorial Board at Clarion Ledger that it is. Curious why he would tell me one thing and another to someone else. Oh, I remember why, the people involved in the bribe that affected me contributed to his campaign fund. Remember Mr. Hood, I told you that this would come around to bite you. I just had no idea how soon.

2/27/2008 10:20:24 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Stick, I appreciate the support. Maybe Koolaid and I can write a book together.

2/27/2008 10:17:59 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

I vote for Humpty and Koolaid. They're the best.

2/27/2008 10:13:13 AM

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AG pulled into Scruggs fray

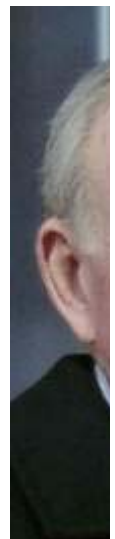
Balducci says he was promised \$500K to convince Hood not to indict State Farm

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 27, 2008

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humptydumpty wrote:

I just don't know if I can impress you at this point...I think any bashing I could do at this point would get overshadowed by your capacity of knowledge, understanding and logic. It's simply too intimidating.

2/27/2008 10:06:01 AM

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coolchange wrote:

Koolaid fell into the drink and suffered irrepreble damage.

2/27/2008 9:56:55 AM

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koolaid wrote:

Thanx Humpty..... I am sitting back and watching you freaks, so don't disappoint me, come on now, BASH BASH BASH..... BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO.....

2/27/2008 9:54:39 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Koolaid, you're a genius.

2/27/2008 9:46:48 AM

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coolchange wrote:

shasar wrote: Stupid-Stupid-Stupid! Thanks for enlightening us with your stupidity.

2/27/2008 9:32:48 AM

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Reeves wrote:

I apologize for the typing errors below, with the lost words.

2/27/2008 9:31:42 AM

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Reeves wrote:

I that this whole Scruggs thing is just a big conspiracy created by all those Ole Miss lawyers to give their other Ole Miss buddy, John Grisham, writing material for the rest of his life. Just joking! Somebody is going to jail over this.

2/27/2008 9:30:19 AM

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Reeves wrote:

["PARADISE FOR THE DEM HATERS TODAY"] I rather my son turn out to be gay rather than turn out to be a Democrat. But than again if he does turn out to be gay

there s a very good chance also be a democrat. Well there goes that line of thinking.

2/27/2008 9:27:17 AM

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speakerofthetruth wrote:

Democrat Haters??? I just said Barbour is probably a crook too! I am sure ole Trent Lott is a lot more involved than it appears. What do yo think he and ole Dickie talk about over family dinners,,, the weather????? Heck no,, I am sure they are discussing "favors" for each other or friends!!!! Power corrupts,, and absolute power corrupts absolutely!!!!

2/27/2008 9:21:56 AM

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koolaid wrote:

Oh boy oh boy oh boy, PARADISE FOR THE DEM HATERS TODAY, MORONS! A story that mentions BOTH Hood and Scruggs in the same place. BINGO for the FREAKS to come out! They are all crooks, they are all crooks, take bribes, give bribes, rig the vote, let dead people vote, hate all big business, love welfare, WANT all illegal aliens, yada yada yada. Sit back and watch the FREAKS go to work.....

2/27/2008 9:13:23 AM

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senjimoma wrote:

In the book THE GODFATHER Don Corleone said "a lawyer can steal more money with a briefcase than a man with a gun". WOW who knew!!! A thief is a thief whether he has a briefcase or a gun and in my not so humble opinion they should go to the same maximum security prison. What a picture it would be having not so attractive Dickie, swaggering Jim, slinking Mike Moore trying to make a friend in the pen, all for greed. Trent Lott would NEVER have left the Senate if he had not known that this was about to blow sky high. He may not have been directly involved but Scruggs is his brother in law and he has turned a blind eye more than once. Good riddance to him.

2/27/2008 9:09:27 AM

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speakerofthetruth wrote:

what are you talking about? I have been bashing Jimmy Boy Hood from day one!!! I am sure Haley Barbour is just as crooked as them. I am not about bashing people,, unless they are crooks.

2/27/2008 9:07:00 AM

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shasar wrote:

What a bunch of crud. Now the commentators are bashing Jim Hood. Barbour must be padding these bashers pocket books because he doesn't want Jim Hood to win the election. If Jim Hood does win, Barbour is going to have a heck of a time making decisions that he is not legally able to do, but which he does at this time. If it were up to Barbour, he would be appointing Wicker to his permanent replacement position of Trent Lott's rather than the citizens of Mississippi voting on their own choice. Talk about corruption, it's even down to the lower level of these bashing Hood commentators. It's obvious as to the bashing because the entire article is not about Hood at all, but these bashing commentators are attempting to make it "all" about Jim Hood. Stupid, stupid and another stupid!

2/27/2008 8:58:58 AM

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speakerofthetruth wrote:

Oh, Jimmy Boy!!! I knew you were a crook!! The boys in the Federal Pen cant wait to make you their punk and run thier fingers through that pretty mullett of yours. Not only are you a crook,, you have bad hair. Oh,, Mike Moore,, i know you are a crook too. I am just ready to read your name in the paper!!!

2/27/2008 8:39:35 AM

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robot0 wrote:

Maybe it's time for Jim Hood to face feds on this on now.

2/27/2008 8:37:39 AM

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DeltaDawn wrote:

One additional comment: Mississippi will never be the laughing stock of the nation, no matter how much corruption is turned up and proven. The last time I checked Louisiana is still down there!

2/27/2008 8:37:09 AM

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DeltaDawn wrote:

Thanks to the press, guilty or not guilty, this case will never go to court and be finalized anywhere around here. No matter if the accused are 100% guilty, they are still entitled to a fair trial which will be impossible with a blow by blow of everything the CL wants you to hear daily. Some articles I have to read and re-read to figure out the he said, she said scenarios. I think they need to settle out of court, let Mr. Scruggs and company pay the state coffers \$500 million dollars, which will bail Medicaid out for quite some times, then start afresh with an updated set of rules for lawyers to abide by before castration. His money is worth much more to us than the satisfaction of jailing his butt at our expense.

2/27/2008 8:33:03 AM

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fedup2008 wrote:

Ah come on guys, whatever happened to innocent until proven guilty. LOL! JUST KIDDING! Jim Hood and Dickie Scruggs have attacked insurers across the State whether they did anything wrong during Katrina or not. Insurers were the target of Jim Hood b/c he wanted to protect Mississippians along the coast. Bunk! He wanted to clear the way for his buddy Scruggs to come in and clean out any insurer he could get his paws into! Mississippians are now paying the price for lawsuits. I am not saying that all the insurers were in the "right" but trial attorneys like to make it appear that all insurance companies are the bad guys. Maybe some of these guys need to look in the mirror before they start screaming "bad guy" about someone else. What I can't wait to see is where the good ole' brother-in-law of Scruggs comes into play here. Hang on folks.....this is going to be a bumpy corrupted ride! Our State is going to be the laughing stock b/c of corruption!

2/27/2008 8:31:01 AM

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falcon47 wrote:

You have to wonder if the state is going to be sued over the outcome of all this corruption. The known 2 billion 84 million our claims were used to acquire awards for to which the awards were kept as DeLaughter has released the claims. we have demands for relief to the lower court the District court and have forwarded documents to the AG. Even if they all go to jail, what about the rights of anyone to gain relief amidst these band of thieves. we have reported to everyone and our keeping our records which only show that the court simply and fully intended to use us to its personal gains. you'll need to get your head out of that place the sunshine law hasn't been. I will never stop trying to have this matter heard. attorneys no longer chase ambulance they moved on to hearse and are ruining lives in the process.

2/27/2008 8:18:42 AM

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missx7 wrote:

And don't forget the other coast connection--our former AG, Mr. Moore, who set this all in motion. The whole Mississippi plaintiff's bar who have benefited from all this should be held accountable. They have colluded, manipulated, pillaged and embarrassed us all.....

2/27/2008 8:12:11 AM
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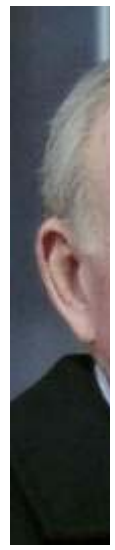
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JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 27, 2008

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alleged "bad act" by him.

In a Nov. 12 memo by FBI agent William Delaney, Balducci is described as a "confidential human source"

who gave federal authorities his version of events.

The memo, contained in U.S. District Court documents, says, "Scruggs Law Firm and State Farm were near a settlement; however, Dickie Scruggs learned that the Mississippi State Attorney General's office had threatened to indict State Farm Insurance Co. due to some impasses between the attorney general's office and State Farm ..., (which) was not going to settle the civil cases with Scruggs Law Firm, if the company was going to be indicted by the attorney general's office.

"Dickie Scruggs asked Steve Patterson to speak with Attorney General Jim Hood since Steve Patterson and Hood had a long standing relationship. Dickie Scruggs offered to pay (the New Albany law firm) Patterson Balducci \$500,000 if they could get Hood to relent on indicting State Farm."

Balducci told the FBI he accompanied Patterson in that meeting with Hood, who later agreed not to indict State Farm.

In a statement Tuesday, Hood - who has acknowledged he had dinner with Balducci and Patterson - said his decision came after prosecutors discussed the lack of evidence.

"Several days before the Jan. 23, 2007, settlement with State Farm, after our prosecutors heard three days of testimony before a Jackson County grand jury, the majority of the prosecutors ... determined ... that no fact pattern existed that fell squarely within the insurance fraud statute," Hood said. "I made my decision that there was insufficient evidence to uphold a conviction of State Farm on evidence we had at the time ... I am too hardheaded to be influenced by outside forces ..."

Hood noted Balducci said of him in one of the FBI's wiretaps: "He ain't gonna dance with the one who brought him to ... the dance."

Phil Supple, a spokesman for State Farm, said Tuesday, "We're not involved in that legal dispute, and we don't think it would be appropriate to comment."

The Scruggs Law Firm settled with State Farm, yielding \$26 million in attorney fees.

"Dickie Scruggs reneged on his pledge to pay Patterson Balducci \$500,000, but later agreed to pay Patterson Balducci \$100,000 per month over five months," the memo says.

Balducci told the FBI that in March 2007 he was concerned Scruggs wouldn't pay the \$500,000 if Balducci didn't speak to Judge Lackey about the dispute over the \$26 million in attorney fees.

On March 31, Scruggs goes on trial along with son Zach and law partner Sidney Backstrom. Like Scruggs, Zach Scruggs and Backstrom insist they are innocent.

Biggers denied requests by Zach Scruggs and Backstrom to have separate trials.

The Balducci memo includes his description of political operative P.L. Blake, who initially was described in affidavits for wiretaps as a possible co-conspirator before being dropped in later documents.

In the memo, Balducci describes Blake as a "bagman" during tobacco litigation.

"Blake is paid approximately \$1 million per year out of attorney fees, which are controlled by Dickie Scruggs," the memo says. "Blake receives the money directly from Dickie Scruggs. (Balducci) does not know why Blake receives money from the Tobacco Settlement Fund."

According to court documents, Blake was supposed to earn \$50 million from the tobacco settlement for clipping newspapers and keeping track of politics for Scruggs.

Blake, who has not been indicted in this investigation, pleaded no contest in 1988 to a federal charge that he offered bribes to Mississippi Bank officials in exchange for preferential treatment. He was ordered to pay a \$1.5 million fine. Blake could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

Patterson was working for Mississippi Bank at the time Blake offered bribes. Patterson has pleaded guilty to his involvement in the scheme to bribe Lackey.

On Tuesday, Special Circuit Judge William Coleman said if lawyers in the \$26 million legal fees dispute with Scruggs can prove there was an attempt to bribe Lackey, he as judge can enter a default judgment for them.

"The court has the inherent power to protect the court's integrity," said Grady Tollison of Oxford, an attorney for the lawyers. "I can't think of anything worse in a judicial proceeding than trying to bribe a judge."

To comment on this story, call Jerry Mitchell at (601) 961-7064.

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Deltapirate wrote:

The time has come for Mr. Hood to consider stepping aside. Another headline like Wednesday's will move him closer to being a cartoon character vis a vis the state's top lawyer. The Mississippi Bar Association isn't helping its reputation by being a spectator. Where's its investigation of the attorney general? When does that start? The scary thing is that a rich lawyer like Mr. Scruggs has the power to buy the political structure of the entire state.

2/27/2008 8:05:26 AM

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moslander wrote:

Hood should resign.

2/27/2008 7:34:43 AM

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AlgerHiss wrote:

RJ Reynolds Philip Morris you need to get into this fray and spend some big dollars for private investigators and forensic accountants. The evidence on Scruggs and Hood is there somewhere. You owe it to your shareholders and employees to help nail these bas***ds.

2/27/2008 6:43:04 AM

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loner wrote:

i will be glad when all the evidence is introduced in this scandal.anytime big money is passed between influential people in high places,there has to be a motive.the problem, with our state is that there is not such thing as ethics when it comes to politicians and lawyers.anytime, politicians can introduce or be a part of legislation that contributes to their financial wealth and it is legal, we have major problems at the bottom of the food chain.

2/27/2008 6:21:13 AM

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yazoskeptic wrote:

Methinks Mr Shakespeare had it correctly way back then...."First, lets kill all the lawyers....."

2/27/2008 5:18:53 AM

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joedink1 wrote:

and all Satans children cried "OCH"!!! HAHA ! These scum have no morals, intergrity or shame. Making tons of stolen \$\$\$\$\$ AND WANTING MORE, never enough for greedy people. God set's his sites on guys like them and one day he pulls the trigger and BAM!! Dead Dogs. "be sure a man will reep what he sow's" The Holy Bible...

2/27/2008 5:06:35 AM
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Dickie Scruggs

2/14/2008

Blogosphere becomes authority, issue in Scruggs case

by John O'Brien

JACKSON, Miss. - In many ways, the saga of indicted trial lawyer Richard "Dickie" Scruggs was made for the Internet, not the time-consuming production of a novel or movie.

"This is history in the making, and not even John Grisham could make this stuff up," said Alan Lange, editor of the Mississippi political site [Y'all Politics](#).

And it's history unfolding at a quick pace, giving bloggers like Lange an edge over newspapers, television stations and talk radio shows. The Scruggs world demands instant updates and unlimited copy as the famed attorney battles allegations he attempted to bribe a state judge.

Y'all Politics was even mentioned in Scruggs' motion for a change of venue.

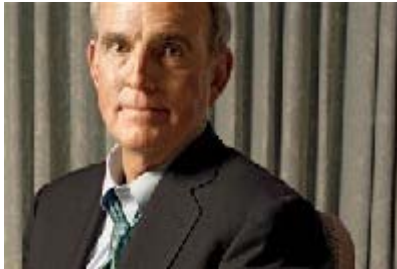
"The Scruggs case has definitely put our site at another level," Lange said. "We have easily tripled our site traffic in terms of page views since late November when this began.

"The reason for the success of the political blogs in covering this story is that the story is extremely complex. It can't adequately be covered in a few inches of news text or a two-minute TV package.

"The second reason is that it moves so very fast. By the time respected news writers or TV crews lock onto a story and produce it, it's already old news. By design, we have a platform that is custom made for a story that moves this fast."

Blog sites like Lange's, David Rossmiller's Insurance Coverage Law Blog and Folo have been a source for breaking news on:

-[Scruggs' bribery trial](#) (he and two others from his firm have pleaded not guilty to



Scruggs



Rossmiller

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offering \$40,000 to Lafayette Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey for a favorable ruling in a dispute over at least \$26.5 million in Hurricane Katrina attorneys fees, while two of the original co-defendants, attorney Timothy Balducci and former state Auditor Steven Patterson, have pleaded guilty);

-State Farm Insurance Cos. [fight with Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood](#);

-Booneville attorney Joey Langston's guilty plea in [another alleged judicial bribery scheme](#) involving Scruggs; and

-Scruggs' criminal contempt trial [in Alabama](#).

Each site has something different to offer, Lange said.

"Y'all Politics has very much taken on the role of aggregator," he said. "We try to link to as much first-source data and comment as possible. There are sites such as [Folo](#) or the [Insurance Coverage Blog](#) and Legal Newsline that have more in-depth analysis on specific pieces of the puzzle.

"What we try to do is function as a clearinghouse where someone can come and get all the news, comment on it and put it in some kind of context. We have done that very effectively."

Rossmiller, an attorney at Dunn Carney in Portland, Ore., started his blog for the purpose of opining on court issues involving insurance companies. When Katrina litigation heated up, his focus shifted primarily toward it.

When Scruggs, who partnered with other firms to create the Scruggs Law Firm, was indicted, it was only natural that he follow it -- "Scruggs Nation," he titled his posts.

"The interest is sky-high," said Rossmiller, who noted that his blog's traffic multiplied seven-to-eight times after the indictment.

Rossmiller, a former newspaper reporter in Phoenix, even found himself in the middle of things for a few days.

He had remarked on allegations made by State Farm that Courtney Schloemer, the head of Hood's Insurance Fraud Unit, had consulted with the SKG in an effort to team up on the company.

Schloemer took the time to write Legal Newsline, asking that her message be sent to Rossmiller. Her e-mail can be found [here](#).

The blog world may yet have an impact on the outcome of the case. Scruggs' defense team said the coverage has potentially influenced the jury pool and wants the case moved to a federal court outside of Mississippi.

Scruggs made his fortune in litigation against asbestos companies and by representing several states in their case against tobacco companies. His work helped lead to 1998's Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, which has an estimated worth of \$246 billion to the 52 participating states and territories.

"The print media blitz has been supplemented by Mississippi-based web logs



(blogs) that report, in excruciating detail, every event in the prosecution and defense of the Scruggs criminal case, the criminal contempt case against Scruggs in Alabama, the recently dismissed State Farm case against Attorney General Hood and the various cases in which State Farm has sought Scruggs's testimony," wrote Scruggs' attorney, John Kecker of San Francisco.

"The stories at times border on the ridiculous. Articles and blog postings have detailed the Scruggs family's annual Christmas party; the flight of Scruggs's private plane to Dallas for a maintenance visit; and the efforts of Joey Langston to sell his ski house at Telluride."

To Lange, it's all proof that his site is having its intended effect -- dispersing as much information as possible.

"It's very obvious to me that lawyers on both sides of the Scruggs criminal case are watching," Lange said. "Obviously, the blog coverage has been mentioned in various court pleadings. However, we are also seeing little signs such as some court filings being scanned instead of electronically converted so that those PDF files are not text-searchable.

"They are now keenly aware of what happens to their work product once it gets in the public domain."

And the public demands even the most intimate details of the case.

"There's an old saying that Mississippi is a club, not a state," Lange said.

"Mississippi is so small that just about everyone in the state has had some personal interaction with at least one of the players in this tragedy, so it's compelling on an individual level.

"It also involves a fall from grace of people who were well-known and larger than life. Dickie Scruggs, Jim Hood, Joey Langston, (former Attorney General) Mike Moore and Steve Patterson are all household names in Mississippi and all are intimately involved in this story."

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Very good comments on blogs

We also appreciate all of the hard work and information. The claims adjusting community has a hard time obtaining information as carriers do not discuss this with staff folks (at the local claim management or adjuster level) much less independent adjusters. Both groups have been named in many of the Scruggs cases. Seeing the documents posted on Blogs such as yours, Rossmiller's, Folo, and Ya'll Politics is making us much more aware of the details. We can also examine the

documents from our claim handling perspective. These are issues facing the adjusting community each and every time they meet with an insured or public adjuster who brings up these cases. It is much easier dealing with it when we can see the big picture by reading the pros and cons of each case through the eyes of attorneys commenting on their blogs versus carrier "talking points" just prior to a media press release. We APPRECIATE you!

- Debbie (2/15/2008 2:04:56 PM)

blogs

great great information.as a state farm agent.i have read many of your blogs and also ya ll politics. it is very interested to see what lawyers are saying about the case. i was particularly happy that one lawyer from the coast stood up for state farm and said he was please with his claim on the coast. i guess he had flood coverage.. i am satisfied after all this we paid many millions of dollars we didn t owe..fat chace we will ever get that back or even ask for it back.at the end of the day we will all learn from this horrible experience..thank you for your hard hard work when you were tired to write your views on the tough legal situation..

- harris gholson 11 (2/15/2008 11:36:35 AM)

yall politics

You notice how Lange includes Jim Hood, Mississippi Attorney General as those who have taken "a fall from grace." Yall Politics has been after Hood for over a year and they are still steaming because he won re-election. They would rather MS take a fall from grace over State Farm who had to re-evaluate 5000 claims due to the efforts of our Attorney General. Hood is not involved in the Scruggs scandal. The site is biased towards republicans, hence the "Politics" in the name. They censor and quell dissent.

- bellesouth (2/15/2008 10:37:00 AM)

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Who's in da house - UPDATED

March 1st, 2008 - by lotus · [7 Comments](#)

UPDATED BELOW

I was just checking in with something called Google Analytics to see (since the in-house sitemeter knows only that, so far, www.folo.us has had over 222,000 visits) who-from-where has visited here since *either* we moved over from folo.wordpress.com on February 10 *or* we hooked up with Google on the 13th — I'm not sure which it means. Anyhow, pretty interesting stats:

1. Yep, most foloers check in from the U.S., but the other most-interested countries are, in order,

Canada
Norway
Belize
Germany
Australia
United Kingdom

Kuwait
Hungary
(and 9 from somewhere Google knows only as “not set” — is that you, Elvis?)

2. Within the U.S., Mississippians account for approximately two-thirds of us hanging out here. I'll tell you the next nine states in order eventually, but first I'm interested in what y'all would guess about that. (Hint: #2 wasn't my only surprise.)

3. As we know, ours is a pretty “sticky” table: the average visitor spends 9:18 minutes here per visit, taking in 4.14 pages at a time. Since either February 10 or February 13, 17% of us have wandered in and sat down for the first time, and 43% of us have returned between nine and 50 times — but 456 people have it *rill* bad, coming back from 101 to 200 times apiece.

Now tell me, after Mississippi, what's your guesstimate of the next nine most-Scruggsed-up state populations?

UPDATE: Very good guesses, you four, and everybody got close — but (you may be relieved to hear) no cigar. I hope this doesn't hurt any feelings, but believe it or not, those folks next-door in Alabam' don't even crack the Top 10. (I dunno, either they're so transfixed by their own muck, they got no time for Mississippi's; or they're running low on confusers over there; or they're all down at Florabama raisin' hell and tossin' mullet 24/7.)

Anyhow, here's the list of the most-folo-following states, in order through yesterday. To'dja to expect surprises:

1. Mississippi
2. New York — *Noo Yawk?* Well, um, *Hey*, youse goise!
3. Illinois — Hallooo there, State Farm!
4. Tennessee
5. Louisiana
6. Georgia
7. Florida
8. District of Columbia — Greetin's to our loyal FBI agents!
9. Texas
10. California — Yoohoo, Keker VanNest (and all you screenwriters)!

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7 responses so far ↓

- [1 duckweedpond](#) // Mar 1, 2008 at 9:59 am
AL, LA,FL, TN,TX,CA, D.C./Virginia, NY, NC?
- [2 Magnolia](#) // Mar 1, 2008 at 10:23 am
LA,TX,AL,D.C.,CA,NY,GA,FL,CA,TN.
- [3 op99](#) // Mar 1, 2008 at 11:16 am
CA TX NY FL IL OH MA NJ DC
- [4 MSlawyer](#) // Mar 1, 2008 at 4:02 pm

Illinois, Oregon, New York, Washington DC, Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee, Maryland, Virginia

- [5 Delta Boy](#) // Mar 1, 2008 at 8:11 pm

Since I usually check in via Hughes, I wonder in what state I show up?

- [6 Shelby](#) // Mar 2, 2008 at 7:38 am

This Alabamian folos you almost every day.. keep up the good work.

Countdown to the Scruggs trial .. at 28 days and counting.

- [7 lotus](#) // Mar 2, 2008 at 7:56 am

Woohoo, glad to have you with us, Shelby!

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Swinging and went out Schwinging” On the other I agree with Mags...not much...

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- o [kingfish](#) on **Eliot Spitzer resigns:** First of all, much of this occurred while he was AG. He should be disqualified from office because that left him open to extortion and blackmail while in office....
- o [lotus](#) on **Adm. Fallon resigns - UPDATED:** Try not to hyperventilate, kingfish. Ya might stroke-out on us, and that wouldn't be good a-tall.
- o [Jane](#) on **The Innocence Project's new case: Steven Hayne:** Let's face it, Hayne is no doubt still doing his 1000 autopies a year. He'll be testifying in criminal cases for years.
- o [kingfish](#) on **Adm. Fallon resigns - UPDATED:** scare? Um, yeah. Hezbollah killed 271 Marines. remember that? Hezbollah is controlled and funded by Iran. Iran has given Al Qaida training and support in...

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Judge: Scruggs indictment stands; Lott's name mentioned

2/20/2008, 5:59 p.m. CST
By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

OXFORD, Miss. (AP) — Powerful plaintiffs attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs tried to use his brother-in-law, former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, to influence the ruling of a sitting Mississippi judge, a government witness testified Wednesday in federal court.

The testimony about Lott came during a hearing in a separate federal case in which Scruggs, his son Zach, and law partner Sidney Backstrom are charged with trying to bribe Circuit Judge Henry Lackey to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees.

Lott is not charged with any wrongdoing in either case.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. refused Wednesday to dismiss the charges against Scruggs and others in the alleged bribery attempt involving Lackey. The hearing was scheduled to continue Thursday. A trial is scheduled to start March 31.

Former New Albany attorney Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge and is helping prosecutors in their case against Scruggs, brought up Lott's name during his testimony.

Prosecutors say Balducci approached Lackey with a "bribe overture" last year. The judge reported the attempt and worked undercover for the FBI. Balducci allegedly delivered \$40,000 to Lackey in three installments between last September and November.

When asked if he was sure Scruggs was actively involved in the conspiracy, Balducci said yes and said he was also privy to another alleged attempt by the Scruggs Law Firm to influence a judge for a favorable ruling.

When pressed by Scruggs' attorney, John Kecker, Balducci testified that Scruggs had tried to use Lott to influence rulings made by Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in another dispute involving legal fees. DeLaughter has denied any wrongdoing and has not been charged.

[deaths](#) 3/2/2008, 12:46 p.m. CST

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"(DeLaughter) was offered the influence of Mr. Scruggs' brother-in-law, who was Sen. Trent Lott, to put him on a list to be considered for a federal vacancy," Balducci testified.

Balducci testified that Lott made the call during the first quarter of 2006.

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Published: February 22, 2008 12:06 pm  

Lott could be potential witness in Scruggs trial

Associated Press

Oxford — Both the defense and prosecution in the federal bribery case against famed plaintiffs attorney Richard “Dickie” Scruggs and his associates plan to call retired Sen. Trent Lott to the stand if a judge allows testimony about Scruggs’ “prior bad acts” in the upcoming trial.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. is considering whether to allow testimony about what a federal witness called a bribery attempt of Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in an unrelated case.

It was the second time during a two-day hearing to deal with several motions that the former Republican senator’s name was brought up in connection with Scruggs, his brother-in-law.

Witness Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty to a federal bribery charge and is cooperating with the prosecution, said Wednesday that Lott called DeLaughter on Scruggs’ behalf.

Balducci claimed Lott told the judge that he would put him on the list of potential candidates for a federal judgeship if he made a favorable ruling in a case involving a dispute over legal fees.



DeLaughter and Lott deny any wrongdoing.

Scruggs, his son and law partner Zach, and attorney Sidney Backstrom are accused of trying to bribe another judge to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

All three have pleaded not guilty and a trial is set to begin March 31.

Richard Scruggs, who made hundreds of millions of dollars taking on tobacco, asbestos and insurance companies, could get 75 years in prison if convicted.

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The prosecution would like to introduce the claim that Scruggs bribed DeLaughter to show the jury that the elder Scruggs had a history of trying to influence judges before he allegedly conspired to pay Lafayette County Circuit Judge Henry Lackey \$40,000 for a favorable ruling.

Lott has denied to The Associated Press through a spokesman being involved in any bribery attempt of DeLaughter. The former senator said the judge, who also has told the AP he has done no wrong, was among several people Lott made courtesy calls to about a vacancy in the federal court system. Lott recommended Gulf Coast attorney Sul Ozerden for the post.

Scruggs attorney John Keke and Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Norman gave lists of who they would call if Biggers allowed testimony about the alleged bribe to DeLaughter. Lott's name came up both times.

"And I believe his testimony would be short," Norman said.

Norman also said he would call Sen. Thad Cochran to testify since Mississippi's congressional delegation likely came to a consensus on who to recommend.

Keker argued that testimony about the alleged bribe attempt should be excluded because there is nothing illegal about a lawyer suggesting a judge for a federal post. He also noted that DeLaughter is a Democrat, making it unlikely that he would be appointed by a Republican administration even if Lott used his considerable influence for his cause.

"If the government thinks this is a crime, they have a way to deal with it," Keker said. "They can bring a charge."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Dawson told the court the DeLaughter case "is under active investigation by the Public Integrity section at the Department of Justice in Washington D.C. even as we speak."

In a follow up interview, Dawson said he's aware of news reports that Lott is being investigated, but had no direct knowledge of any investigation of the former senator.

The case that DeLaughter presided over goes back to 1994 when two of Scruggs' former associates, attorneys Alwyn Luckey and William Roberts Wilson Jr., sued Scruggs for a bigger cut of millions of dollars that the attorneys won in asbestos litigation. The case worked its way through the courts for years before DeLaughter ruled in August 2006.

Scruggs' former defense attorney, Joey Langston, of Booneville, has pleaded guilty to trying to influence DeLaughter.

DeLaughter, a former assistant district attorney, is renowned for prosecuting Byron De La Beckwith in the early 1990s for the 1963 murder of NAACP field secretary Medger Evers. That case was portrayed in the 1996 movie "Ghosts of Mississippi."

Biggers wrapped up the hearing by denying the defense's request to move the upcoming trial out of Mississippi. Keker noted what he described as heavy negative coverage that seemed limited to the state and especially the Oxford area, where Scruggs' went to the University of Mississippi and has a law office downtown.

The judge said he would rule on motions to suppress wiretapping evidence, exclude testimony about the alleged bribery of DeLaughter and sever Zach Scruggs and Backstrom from the case of Richard Scruggs by next Tuesday.



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Lawyer in judicial bribery case claims witness lied to grand jury

3/3/2008, 4:58 p.m. CT

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A key government witness lied to the grand jury that indicted several attorneys on charges they conspired to bribe a state judge, one of the accused lawyers claims in court papers filed Monday.

Zach Scruggs, an Oxford, Miss.-based attorney whose well-known father and law partner also faces a bribery charge in the same case, is asking a federal judge to dismiss his indictment due to alleged government misconduct.

Scruggs' lawyers claim grand jurors heard false and misleading testimony from an FBI agent and from former attorney Timothy Balducci, who already has pleaded guilty to conspiring with Scruggs and others to bribe state Circuit Judge Henry Lackey.

Zach Scruggs' indictment is a product of their "patently false and misleading" testimony, his lawyers argue.

"It has been clear since the filing of this indictment that the government has no credible evidence that (Zach Scruggs) knowingly participated in any scheme to bribe a judge," the defense lawyers wrote.

U.S. Attorney Jim Greenlee didn't immediately return a call for comment Monday. Balducci has represented himself in the criminal matter. His office number has been disconnected.

A trial for prominent plaintiffs lawyer Richard "Dickie" Scruggs; his son, Zach; and fellow Scruggs Law Firm attorney Sidney Backstrom is scheduled to start March 31 in Oxford.

Richard Scruggs, a brother-in-law of former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., made tens of millions of dollars from tobacco and asbestos litigation. His role in a landmark settlement with tobacco companies was depicted in the 1999 film "The Insider," starring Al Pacino and Russell Crowe.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. rejected a different motion by all three defendants to dismiss the charges based on the government's "outrageous conduct." However, Zach Scruggs' attorneys didn't see transcripts of grand jury proceedings until last week.

Zach Scruggs claims the transcripts, when compared to wiretap evidence, show that Balducci lied to the grand jury and mischaracterized Scruggs' knowledge of and participation in the alleged conspiracy.

Prosecutors claim Balducci was acting on Richard Scruggs' behalf when he allegedly tried to bribe Lackey for a favorable ruling in a dispute with other lawyers over \$26.5 million in fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

The FBI arrested Balducci on Nov. 1 and sent him into the Scruggs Law Firm wearing a body wire. Balducci later testified that he met with Zach Scruggs and Backstrom that day and told them that Lackey wanted \$10,000 for the favorable ruling.

However, Zach Scruggs' lawyers say a recording of that Nov. 1 conversation shows that Balducci used confusing, coded language while their client "only participated in an ordinary conversation about how a judge's order reads."

Zach Scruggs' lawyers also accuse FBI Special Agent William Delaney of giving grand jurors a misleading account of taped conversations between the suspects in the case.

"The Government seeks to convict (Scruggs) on coded words uttered after he is disengaged from a conversation and on actions perceived through a presumptuous lens; yet they indicted a man relying on testimony they knew was facially false and wholly inaccurate," they wrote.

Bribery charges stand in case against Scruggs

By By Chris Talbott
Associated Press

Thursday, February 21, 2008

OXFORD -- Powerful plaintiffs attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs tried to use his brother-in-law, former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, to influence the ruling of a sitting Mississippi judge, a government witness testified Wednesday in federal court.

The testimony about Lott came during a hearing in a separate federal case in which Scruggs, his son Zach, and law partner Sidney Backstrom are charged with trying to bribe Circuit Judge Henry Lackey to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees.

Lott is not charged with any wrongdoing in either case.

U.S. Dist. Judge Neal Biggers Jr. refused Wednesday to dismiss the charges against Scruggs and others in the alleged bribery attempt involving Lackey. A trial is scheduled to start March 31.

Former New Albany attorney Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge and is helping prosecutors in their case against Scruggs, brought up Lott's name during his testimony.

Prosecutors say Balducci approached Lackey with a "bribe overture" last year. The judge reported the attempt and worked undercover for the FBI. Balducci allegedly delivered \$40,000 to Lackey in three installments between last September and November.

When asked if he was sure Scruggs was actively involved in the conspiracy, Balducci said yes.



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Lott may be called in case

Former senator's brother- in-law faces bribe charges

By By Chris Talbott
Associated Press

Friday, February 22, 2008

OXFORD -- Both the defense and prosecution in the federal bribery case against famed plaintiffs attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs and his associates plan to call retired U.S. senator Trent Lott to the stand if a judge allows testimony about Scruggs' "prior bad acts" in the upcoming trial.

U.S. Dist. Judge Neal Biggers Jr. is considering whether to allow testimony about what a federal witness called a bribery attempt of Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in an unrelated case.

It was the second time during a two-day hearing to deal with several motions that the former Republican senator's name was brought up in connection with Scruggs, his brother-in-law.

Witness Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty to a federal bribery charge and is cooperating with the prosecution, said Wednesday that Lott called DeLaughter on Scruggs' behalf and told the judge that he would put him on the list of potential candidates for federal judgeship vacancies if he made a favorable ruling in a case involving a dispute over legal fees.

DeLaughter has not been charged with a crime.

Scruggs, his son and law partner Zach, and attorney Sidney Backstrom are accused of trying to bribe another judge to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

A trial is set to begin March 31.

Richard Scruggs, who made hundreds of millions of dollars from taking on tobacco, asbestos and insurance companies, could get 75 years in prison if convicted.

The prosecution would like to introduce the claim that the Scruggs Law Firm bribed DeLaughter to show the jury that the elder Scruggs had a history of trying to influence judges before he allegedly conspired to pay Lafayette County Circuit Judge Henry

Lackey \$40,000 to send the dispute to arbitration.

Lott has denied to The Associated Press through a spokesman being involved in any bribery attempt of DeLaughter. The former senator said the judge, who also has told the AP he has done no wrong, was among several people Lott made courtesy calls to about a vacancy in the federal court system. Lott recommended Gulf Coast attorney Sul Ozerden for the post.

Scruggs attorney John Keker and Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Norman gave lists of who they would call if Biggers allowed testimony about the alleged bribe to DeLaughter. Lott's name came up both times.

Keker argued testimony about the alleged bribe attempt should be excluded because there is nothing illegal about a lawyer suggesting a judge for a federal posting. He also noted that DeLaughter is a Democrat, making it unlikely that he would be appointed by a Republican administration even if Lott used his considerable influence for his cause.

"If the government thinks this is a crime, they have a way to deal with it," Keker said. "They can bring a charge."

Biggers ruled Wednesday that there is enough evidence for the case to go to trial. Scruggs and the others have pleaded not guilty to counts including wire fraud and defrauding the federal government.

Biggers said he would rule shortly on whether to allow testimony during trial on the alleged bribing of DeLaughter and was scheduled Thursday afternoon to consider motions calling for change of jurisdiction and allowing the defendants to have separate trials.



Judge to rule on severing cases

Zach Scruggs asks to be tried separately

By By Chris Talbott
Associated Press

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

OXFORD -- For most of his life, Zach Scruggs has benefited from his last name.

As a partner in his father Richard "Dickie" Scruggs' law firm, the younger Scruggs is entitled to millions in legal fees and the acclaim of working with one of the nation's most powerful and media savvy plaintiffs lawyers.

Now that he faces trial with his father and an associate on charges of conspiring to bribe a Mississippi judge, however, Zach Scruggs is in the unusual position of having to distance himself from Richard Scruggs.

A federal judge is expected to rule today on Zach Scruggs' request to have his case severed from his father's, among other key decisions on pending motions.

Despite the formal setting, the Scruggses' feelings showed through in court last week during a two-day motion hearing. They consulted during recesses, leaning in to each other to discuss strategy in quiet tones, and even greeted each other with a special handshake.

Yet in Zach Scruggs' best interests, his attorney argued his case should be separated from his father's because the name that has served him so well in the past now may stand in the way of his defense.

"The whole matter is difficult," Zach Scruggs' attorney, Todd Graves, said in an interview Sunday with The Associated Press. "It's a father-son relationship. He's concerned about his father, but at the same time, though, he's in this case and our contention is he should be tried separately in his own case."

The Scruggses, who declined comment for this story, and fellow defendant Sidney Backstrom have pleaded not guilty to defrauding the federal government and wire fraud, among other charges. Backstrom also is asking U.S. Dist. Judge Neal Biggers Jr. to separate his case from the others.

They are accused in a federal indictment of paying Lafayette County Circuit Court

Judge Henry Lackey \$40,000 to rule in their favor in a dispute over \$26.5 million in Hurricane Katrina insurance settlement fees. Lackey is not accused of wrongdoing and worked with federal investigators.

During last week's hearing, Graves told Biggers that he had counted the number of times attorneys, the judge and witnesses had distinguished between the senior Scruggs and his son during the proceedings and came up with only a handful.

He noted that all parties often had to clarify who they were talking about in the hearing and that wrongdoing was often attributed to the "Scruggs law firm" rather than to the individuals.

"That element of confusion could lead to prejudice," Graves argued.

Graves also argued that the cases against father and son should be split because of the "huge disparity" in evidence against the two. He argued evidence against Richard Scruggs seemed more substantial than that gathered against his client.

Biggers also will rule Tuesday on whether to allow testimony about Scruggs' participation in another alleged conspiracy to bribe Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Bobby DeLaughter.

Tom Dawson, first assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi, said the DeLaughter bribery allegations are being investigated by the Public Integrity section at the U.S. Department of Justice. DeLaughter has not been named in any indictment and has denied wrongdoing.

"We have become aware of some evidence that might indicate that Zach Scruggs had some knowledge of the backdoor attempt to influence a judge," Dawson told the court.

Dawson also said Graves was understating Zach Scruggs' involvement in the alleged bribery of Lackey. He noted that federal witness Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty in the conspiracy, testified Zach Scruggs was the lawyer who brought up the idea of Balducci approaching Lackey, his good friend, in an attempt to persuade him to rule in their favor.





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Business

Feb. 20, 2008, 1:18PM

Judge won't dismiss indictment of Mississippi attorney

Associated Press

OXFORD, Miss. — A federal judge today declined to dismiss an indictment in a judicial bribery case against powerful attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs and two others.

Scruggs, his son Zach and law partner Sidney Backstrom are accused of trying to bribe a judge to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. ruled that there is enough evidence against the three for the case to go to trial. They have pleaded not guilty to counts including wire fraud and defrauding the federal government.

Richard Scruggs, who made hundreds of millions of dollars from taking on tobacco, asbestos and insurance companies, could get 75 years in prison if convicted.

Three other defendants have pleaded guilty in the case: attorney Timothy Balducci; Richard Scruggs' former defense attorney Joey Langston; and former state Auditor Steve Paterson, a former business partner of Balducci's.

Biggers heard testimony from Balducci, who prosecutors say was the one who approached Circuit Judge Henry Lackey with a "bribe overture" last year. The judge reported the attempt and worked undercover for the FBI.

Balducci allegedly delivered \$40,000 to the judge in three installments between September and November. Richard Scruggs, Zach Scruggs and Backstrom say Balducci acted alone.

On the stand today, Balducci said Zach Scruggs suggested that Balducci have an off-the-record conversation with Lackey and persuade him to rule in their favor. After that discussion, Balducci said he met with Lackey on March 28.

On Tuesday, federal prosecutors filed with the court transcripts from some wiretaps to support their case. The transcripts appear to contain conversations secretly recorded by Balducci in which Richard Scruggs and others discuss the wording they want in Lackey's order in the fee dispute case.

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HEARST newspapers



Business

Feb. 20, 2008, 7:27PM

DIGEST

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NATURAL GAS

Iran, Russia create joint company

Iran and Russia agreed to establish an energy venture as the countries seek new markets for their natural gas reserves, equal to more than 40 percent of the world's total.

Iran "reached an agreement with Gazprom to form a joint company with the participation of a third country," Oil Minister Gholamhossein Nozari told the official Shana news agency after a Tehran meeting this week with Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller. Nozari didn't name the third country.

Iran, holder of the world's second-largest gas reserves after Russia, has yet to build facilities for super-cooling the fuel into a liquid form capable of being shipped by tanker to overseas markets. Gazprom, Russia's state-run gas exporter, wants to help Iran develop LNG production, he said.

COURT

Katrina bribery case to proceed

OXFORD, MISS. — A federal judge on Wednesday declined to dismiss an indictment in a judicial bribery case against attorney Dickie Scruggs.

Scruggs, his son Zach and law partner Sidney Backstrom are accused of trying to bribe a judge to get a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a mass settlement of Hurricane Katrina insurance lawsuits.

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. ruled that there is enough evidence against the three for the case to go to trial. They have pleaded not guilty.

PRIVATE EQUITY

KKR unit again puts off repayment

NEW YORK — A unit of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., one of the world's largest private-equity firms, on Wednesday said it has delayed payment on billions in loans and opened debt restructuring talks with creditors.

It was the second time the fixed-income fund KKR Financial Holdings, an affiliate of the U.S. buyout shop, has put off repaying asset-backed commercial paper.

The fund, which invests in corporate debt and mortgages, did not provide details of how much debt was affected, according to a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

It was a further embarrassment for KKR following a \$270 million bailout in September of the leveraged investment vehicle amid a widening credit crisis that has swept through global financial markets.

OIL

Venezuela to get hearing on Exxon Mobil freeze

At a hearing in Great Britain next Wednesday, Venezuelan state energy company PDVSA will seek an end to a \$12 billion asset freeze obtained by Exxon Mobil, said Bernard Mommer, a board member.

Venezuela and the Irving-based oil company are locked in a legal battle over compensation after the country nationalized a heavy-oil project.

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Markets

Feb. 25, 2008, 2:58PM

Scruggs Son Wants to Be Tried Separately

By CHRIS TALBOTT Associated Press Writer
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OXFORD, Miss. — For most of his life, Zach Scruggs has benefited from his last name.

As a partner in his father Richard "Dickie" Scruggs' law firm, the younger Scruggs is entitled to millions in legal fees and the acclaim of working with one of the nation's most powerful and media savvy plaintiffs lawyers.

Now that he faces trial with his father and an associate on charges of conspiring to bribe a Mississippi judge, however, Zach Scruggs is in the unusual position of having to distance himself from Richard Scruggs.

A federal judge is expected to rule Tuesday on Zach Scruggs' request to have his case severed from his father's, among other key decisions on pending motions.

Despite the formal setting, the Scruggses' feelings showed through in court last week during a two-day motion hearing. They consulted during recesses, leaning in to each other to quietly discuss strategy and even greeted each other with a special handshake.

Yet in Zach Scruggs' best interests, his attorney argued his case should be separated from his father's because the name that has served him so well in the past now may stand in the way of his defense.

"The whole matter is difficult," Zach Scruggs' attorney, Todd Graves, said in an interview Sunday with The Associated Press. "It's a father-son relationship. He's concerned about his father, but at the same time, though, he's in this case and our contention is he should be tried separately in his own case."

The Scruggses, who declined comment for this story, and fellow defendant Sidney Backstrom have pleaded not guilty to defrauding the federal government and wire fraud, among other charges. Backstrom also is asking U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. to separate his case from the others.

They are accused in a federal indictment of paying Lafayette County Circuit Court Judge Henry Lackey \$40,000 to rule in their favor in a dispute over \$26.5 million in Hurricane Katrina insurance settlement fees. Lackey is not accused of wrongdoing and worked with federal investigators.

During last week's hearing, Graves told Biggers he had counted the number of times attorneys, the judge and witnesses had distinguished between the senior Scruggs and his son during the proceedings and came up with only a handful.

He noted that all parties often had to clarify who they were talking about in the hearing and that wrongdoing was often attributed to the "Scruggs law firm" rather than to the individuals.

"That element of confusion could lead to prejudice," Graves argued.

Graves also said the cases against father and son should be split because of the "huge disparity" in evidence against the two. He said evidence against Richard Scruggs seemed more substantial than that gathered against his client.

"Their proof against Zach is so minimal," Graves said. "The proof that they're going to offer against his father would be a lot more than that. And our concern is a jury wouldn't be able to judge him based solely on the minimal proof (prosecutors) indicate they're going to offer at this point."

In one instance, he said the government claims Zach Scruggs took part in a recorded conversation about the alleged Lackey bribe on Nov. 1. Graves told the court, however, he doubted prosecutors could show Zach Scruggs was in the room for much of the conversation. That secretly recorded conversation included references to "sweet potatoes" _ code, authorities say, for the money paid to Lackey.

"He was in the room for a very short period of time where the government alleges code words were being spoken," Graves said Sunday. "But if you're not part of the conspiracy, a code word doesn't mean anything to you."

Tom Dawson, first assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi, took issue with Graves' description of the case against Zach Scruggs during the hearing. He said there was not only evidence that the younger Scruggs actively participated in the conspiracy, but that he also may have been a part of another bribery scheme.

Biggers also will rule Tuesday on whether to allow testimony about Scruggs' participation in another alleged conspiracy to bribe Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Bobby DeLaughter.

Dawson said the DeLaughter bribery allegations are being investigated by the Public Integrity section at the U.S. Department of Justice. DeLaughter has not been named in any indictment and has denied wrongdoing.

"We have become aware of some evidence that might indicate that Zach Scruggs had some knowledge of the backdoor attempt to influence a judge," Dawson told the court.

Dawson also said Graves was understating Zach Scruggs' involvement in the alleged bribery of Lackey. He noted that federal witness Timothy Balducci, who has pleaded guilty in the conspiracy, testified Zach Scruggs was the lawyer who brought up the idea of Balducci approaching Lackey, his good friend, in an attempt to persuade him to rule in their favor.

And he quoted a transcript of a recording Balducci made of a meeting that allegedly involved the Scruggses.

"Mr. Balducci says, 'Zach, let me bring you up to speed. This is on the Judge Lackey thing,'" Dawson said.

"The statement is made, 'We need to get this exactly right because we are paying for it.'"

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HEARST *newspapers*



Markets

Feb. 28, 2008, 9:53AM

FBI: Scruggs Paid 2 Men to Persuade AG

By HOLBROOK MOHR Associated Press Writer
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JACKSON, Miss. — A prominent attorney embroiled in a judicial bribery case paid two associates \$500,000 to convince Mississippi's Attorney General not to file criminal charges against an insurance company, according to court records.

Plaintiffs lawyer Richard "Dickie" Scruggs, who sued State Farm Fire and Casualty Cos. soon after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, was afraid the company "was not going to settle the civil cases" if the attorney general's office filed criminal charges, according to an FBI report filed Monday in the bribery case.

Attorney General Jim Hood said Wednesday he would not have met with the men if he had known they were paid to persuade him not to file charges. "If I knew they were getting paid that much I would have told them to get out of the office because it just didn't smell right," Hood said.

Hood acknowledged meeting with former State Auditor Steve Patterson and attorney Timothy Balducci around Christmas 2006, but said he was not influenced by them.

"It was like they were fishing for information more than anything," Hood said. "I didn't get a dime, wasn't offered a dime and wouldn't have taken a dime."

Scruggs, Patterson and Balducci were indicted in November 2007, along with Scruggs' son and law partner Zach, and another attorney in the Scruggs' firm, Sidney Backstrom. The men were charged with conspiring to bribe a state court judge for a favorable ruling in a dispute over \$26.5 million in legal fees from a settlement of Katrina insurance cases.

Balducci and Patterson have pleaded guilty and are cooperating with investigators. The Scruggses and Backstrom have pleaded not guilty.

While being interviewed by the FBI in November 2007, Balducci told agents that Scruggs paid him and Patterson to see "if they could get Hood to relent on indicting" State Farm, according to the report filed in federal court on Monday.

John Kecker, an attorney for Scruggs, told The Associated Press on Wednesday: "I'm not going to talk about Balducci's claim until we get to the trial."

The FBI report, entered into federal court records in the bribery case against Scruggs and two associates, is based on an interview with a confidential source, apparently Balducci.

A judge on Tuesday ruled that he will allow evidence of prior bad acts, particularly that Scruggs allegedly tried to influence at least one other judge when the trial begins March 31.

The FBI document was filed Monday as part of a defense motion introducing a potential witness. It says Balducci accompanied Patterson, who had a long-standing relationship with Hood, to a

meeting in which the lawyers allegedly asked Hood not to charge State Farm.

"Hood later agreed not to indict," the report said.

Hood said the reason he didn't file criminal charges against State Farm at the time was because he didn't have enough evidence to prove the insurer violated state law.


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Feb. 29, 2008, 4:58PM

Judge Tosses Ala. Case Against Scruggs

By JAY REEVES Associated Press Writer
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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A federal judge dismissed a criminal contempt charge against Mississippi attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs on Friday, leaving the prominent lawyer with one less case to worry about as he fights a more serious bribery indictment.

U.S. District Judge Roger Vinson ruled that an Alabama court lacked jurisdiction to charge Scruggs with contempt for allegedly ignoring an order to turn over documents about insurance claims after Hurricane Katrina.

Also, Vinson said, Scruggs was protected from prosecution because he gave the papers to Mississippi's attorney general, Jim Hood, who was probing fraud allegations related to Katrina.

The decision was a clear victory for Scruggs, but it won't affect the case in Mississippi, where Scruggs is accused of conspiring to bribe a judge over \$26.5 million in attorney fees stemming from a huge settlement with State Farm insurance over Katrina claims.

Attorneys for Scruggs did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment. Neither did U.S. District Judge William Acker, who initiated the contempt case against Scruggs.

Scruggs was accused of violating an order to surrender documents taken from the Alabama-based E.A. Renfroe and Co. Inc., which adjusted claims for State Farm insurance after Katrina.

Renfroe filed suit in Alabama seeking the records, which were taken by two sisters who worked for the company after the hurricane. The women provided documents to Scruggs, and Acker sought the prosecution of Scruggs after ruling he violated an order to return the papers to Renfroe.

The U.S. attorney's office in Birmingham declined to prosecute Scruggs, so Acker appointed special prosecutors who moved forward with the case. Vinson, from Pensacola, Fla., was brought in to preside after Alabama judges stepped aside.

In his decision, Vinson said he was troubled by Scruggs' actions. He said there was a "cloud of suspicion" surrounding Scruggs' decision to give the papers to Hood instead of Renfroe and Co.

But Scruggs can't be cited for criminal contempt since he wasn't formally involved in the Alabama case, Vinson said. Also, he said, Acker's order did allow for the documents to be turned over to law enforcement, and Hood qualifies as the Mississippi attorney general.

In Mississippi, Scruggs and four other men were indicted in November in the judicial bribery case. Two of the original defendants have pleaded guilty and are cooperating with authorities.

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Mississippi's ongoing judicial bribery scandal is bringing national attention to the state's judicial system and fostering a false image of this state operating like a bad Dukes of Hazzard episode.



FBI wiretaps in which highly regarded attorneys speak in code regarding admitted bribery attempts in terms of delivering another bushel of "sweet potatoes" to a Mississippi judge has a way of playing to every negative stereotype about our state.

Oxford attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs, his son Zach Scruggs and Sidney Backstrom face federal conspiracy charges in connection with the alleged bribery scheme.

Scruggs and Backstrom have denied any wrongdoing.

Attorneys Tim Balducci and former state auditor Steve Patterson have already pleaded guilty in the case and are cooperating with federal prosecutors.

Booneville attorney Joey Langston has pleaded guilty in a separate case and is also cooperating in a case involving an alleged conspiracy between him and Scruggs to win a favorable ruling from Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter.

DeLaughter has denied any wrongdoing.

Last week, FBI documents surfaced in which Balducci told the feds that he and Patterson were paid \$500,000 by Scruggs to try to influence Attorney General Jim Hood against indicting State Farm Insurance company.

Hood met with the pair, but has denied any wrongdoing.

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ADVERTIS

The Mississippi Bar has already asked the state Supreme Court to terminate the law licenses of Balducci and Langston. That's appropriate, but both the Bar and the Supreme Court have more work to do.

Judicial elections in Mississippi have turned into a virtual bidding war between business and medical interests and the state's trial bar.

The outside counsel contract relationship between the attorney general's office and campaign contributors is also problematic with no outside oversight.

There is much political hay to be made over these issues by Republicans and Democrats alike and the interests those parties represent.

But this is not at heart a political problem.

The Supreme Court and the Mississippi Bar need to be proactive in crafting solutions that protect access to the courts, the ethical considerations of the bar and the setting of appropriate boundaries between lawyers and judges in the political arena.

The time is now. Mississippians don't trust the current process and are skeptical of the campaign finance competition between both business interests and the trial bar.



Does the Mississippi judicial system need reform?

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Does the federal government have to come in and clean up the courthouses of Mississippi like it cleaned up the road barns of county supervisors in this state in the 1980s?

No, it's time for some internal housecleaning - and the Supreme Court and the Mississippi Bar should be wielding the broom. They can start with revisiting how judges are selected.

in your voice

READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY



becca45 wrote:

Hold Up. 1. Scruggs gives documents to Jimmy the Hood. 2. 5 million to influence Hood. 3. Money to be used to influence Jim Hood. 4. Recent leak of an agreement by Hood with state farm for 5 million stops charges against state farm. 5. Article states that effected vtcims may receive compensation. Me thinks it's the same deal, does Scruggs still get a cut ? Laxatives wouldn't move this state in the right direction hence the enema.

3/2/2008 8:08:26 AM

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Texamigo wrote:

A "false image of this state operating like a bad Dukes of Hazard episode"? I believe you just identified part of the problem. I believe we can safely say we are in fact operating like a bad Dukes of Hazard episode. No need to pretend it is some sort of delusion of "false image". Whether or not convictions are gotten in all this, we know enough now to understand that there is more than an image problem in Mississippi.

3/2/2008 7:51:50 AM

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falcon47 wrote:

Thank God. Let's see National attention might aid in the Greatest injustice know. No not Dukes of Hazzard. To many have been harmed and worse at the criminal acts of those who have denied common rights. As such the 84 million intial

settlement as well accompanying 2 billion known to be transacted under my family's claims to which that Judge has asended to the supreme court and settlement was held by another Judge who denied relief and transfered the cause before DeLaughter who again denied relief and dismissed our claims and kept awards. The District Court is acting very reluctant to hear this matter and countless criminal allegations and judge recusals are present. again OH THANK YOU, LORD and please forgive the court of their bias injustice regarding pro se' litigation.

3/2/2008 7:47:05 AM

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peanutgallery wrote:

"But this is not at heart a political problem" So massive VPAC contributions by Scruggs et al should just be ignored. Your own newspaper connected the dots and now you want disconnect them ? A judiciary as corrupt as ours has become cannot survive without a tort friendly legislature.

3/2/2008 7:46:26 AM

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maeleoin2002@yahoo.com wrote:

Remember that it was a judge, a "country judge" by his own account, who blew the whistle in the scandal at hand. Also recall that campaign funding is not an issue in the Scruggs investigations. In fact, a judicial appointment is at issue in the inquiry into potential influence on Judge Delaughter. It is important to remember that our justice system is working. It is bringing to the light of day allegations of wrongdoing; and, it is giving the people and the accused their day in court. An Operation Gray Beard may be required, but that is for the executive not the judiciary to initiate. What the judiciary can do is what each judge or justice can do personally; that is, avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

3/2/2008 6:48:38 AM

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