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POWER

Hood: Sealed settlement invites rumors, mistrust

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In announcing that he was going to push for campaign finance reforms, Attorney General Jim Hood on Monday suggested that he was the target of "rumor and innuendo" regarding his acceptance of prior campaign contributions from attorneys implicated in the state's ongoing judicial bribery scandal.

ADVERTISEMENT Yet at the same time he's talking a good game about openness in government and transparent campaign finance laws, Hood's latest foray into the courtroom on behalf of Mississippi taxpayers resulted in a sealed settlement with State Farm Insurance.

That sealed settlement ended Hood's criminal investigation of State Farm Insurance companies after U.S. District Judge David C. Bramlette III found Hood had signed an "unambiguous and enforceable" agreement to conclude the inquiry.

That settlement came as a result of a lawsuit against Hood filed by State Farm accusing him of using the criminal investigative powers of his office to force settlement of a civil lawsuit against State Farm filed by a group of policyholders led by Oxford attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs.

Scruggs faces his own legal troubles both in a federal judicial bribery investigation in Mississippi and in a federal contempt citation in Alabama. In the Alabama case, Scruggs was held in contempt of court by a federal judge who ordered Scruggs to surrender "whistleblower" records related to Scruggs' litigation against State Farm.

Instead, Scruggs gave the records to Hood, who had made Scruggs a "confidential informant" - angering a federal judge.

Scruggs has been a substantial campaign donor to Hood, as has Joey Langston - the Booneville attorney who has already entered a plea bargain with federal prosecutors in the Mississippi judicial bribery probe.

In the midst of the confusing vortex of charges and countercharges, Hood is correct in his assumption that he's been the target of "rumor and innuendo" regarding his political associations with people mired in the Scruggs and Langston investigations.

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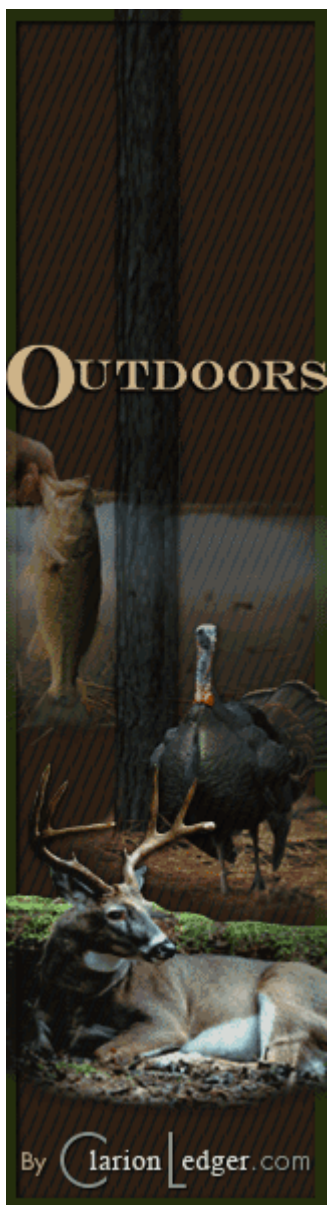
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Yet exactly how does a sealed settlement with State Farm help taxpayers focus on facts rather than rumor and innuendo? If Hood has a private agreement with State Farm regarding his personal conduct, perhaps such secrecy is understandable.

But in his official capacities, why should Hood execute a settlement on behalf of the taxpayers of Mississippi that is to remain hidden away under seal?

A sealed settlement of a case that ostensibly originated as one representing the interests of state taxpayers who weren't being treated fairly by an insurance company after a hurricane is a settlement that suggests to Hood's clients - those dissatisfied insureds - that they don't need to know the details of the settlement but should be grateful for it.

In the long nightmare of the ongoing judicial bribery probes, guilt by association remains wrong - but it's a byproduct of needless secrecy and belief of frustrated taxpayers that lawyers somehow operate under a different set of rules than their clients do.

in your voice

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penreese wrote:

Airwolf, ...please... jim hood was a "player" in the suit???? A Player??? Jim Hood was the DEFENDANT in this action! To describe him as a "player" seems to suggest this entire ado was nothing more than a game. What Hood did was very serious and it needs to be seen as such.

2/13/2008 9:05:51 AM

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Airwolf wrote:

Jim Hood was a player in the suit, he couldn't seal the settlement. The Judge made that decision. What's with all these conspiracy theories in every blog on here?

2/12/2008 8:56:36 PM

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koolaid wrote:

Maybe now Hood can start that investigation into Rosemary Barbour's company that had the many millions no-bid FEMA contract. You remember, don't you, she is the Governor's neice, you know the one, the one that the FBI raided her offices last year, remember that one ????????????

2/12/2008 6:31:03 PM

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HappytobeMississippian wrote:

Once again, a bunch of fools put the hood in office with the clarionledger's endorsement. Makes me sick. What a scumbucket. If I had to get up every morning and know that I was a dishonest guy like hood or dickie I would be sick.

2/12/2008 4:55:46 PM

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redneck wrote:

I have evidence sufficient to indict and convict mr hood along with the entire bench-bar monarchy in a conspiracy against the rights of we the people in the taking of the entire clarke countys private roads by decree of the county attorney, no notice no hearing, no payment. and when this sovereign citizen attempted to have these people act within the law, was promptly arrested and held prisoner for 17 days. welcome to the mississippi judicial system. I can be reached @ bskrmnett@bellsouth.net. in the very unlikely event this newspaper would care to invistigate. better yet call me 601-693-1110

2/12/2008 4:17:57 PM

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markF wrote:

The fact that Haley Barbour's money is in a blind trust and that he (Mr. Barbour) does not know what makes up that trust sent AG Hood into hysterics. When Mr. Hood acts dumb enough to think Haley should tell us what is in his blind trust, the C/L gave him a pass because he is a dumb redneck who never heard of a blind trust. Now the C/L is not giving him a total pass. But will this be the last time we hear about it. Maybe. If Haley sued "Big Trial Lawyers", do you think the settlement would be sealed?

2/12/2008 2:19:24 PM

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penreese wrote:

Sorry bestfinds but it seems you still don't get it. Read the transcripts of the hearing. Hood buffooned himself. His big donors are the ones he's protecting...not the citizens of the state. Follow the money. If truth be told, Hood would not want the agreement to be revealed because it would surely be to his detriment.

2/12/2008 2:09:13 PM

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bestfinds wrote:

It's an absolute shame that no one, not even the state's largest newspaper, can simply stick to the facts. Jim Hood did not seal the settlement-- a federal judge did that. So instead of blasting away as usual at the wrong person, why not submit your concern to the judge? And the settlement dealt with an investigation that no law enforcement agency in their right mind would ever comment about. Please, look under every rock in the field because what you're going to find in the end is

nothing. Jim Hood is a good man, a lifelong prosecutor. So what's his motive in all this "sinister" activity? Simple, to protect the taxpayers of Mississippi. David, Jim, Sid, please get it right.

2/12/2008 11:06:02 AM

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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koolaid wrote:

I'll tell you low-eds what really continues to invite rumors and mistrust, is the fact that everyone in South Mississippi wants to know why Barbour and his MDA still have 3 to 4 billion out of 5 billion sitting up there in Jackson when the Feds gave it to the state for Katrina housing purposes. And why my friends are still in Fema trailers when the money that they should be getting is going to build roads in North Mississippi. Jim Hood could put a pop-knot on y'all's punk little heads in a New York minute if the truth be told!

2/12/2008 10:33:41 AM

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georgemarlowe wrote:

Our Great Attorney General Jim Hood, is something. The way I see it Jim Hood is setting on the top of a big bonfire in MS. and there is smoke pouring out all threw it. I have never believed in any settlement beeing sealed when there is taxpayers money involved and this case with so mcuh going on around it. I can't even believe any judge would allow this to be done either, with taxpayers money, except Judge DeLaughjter

2/12/2008 9:47:26 AM

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POWER

Hood's campaign finance 'mea culpa' seems a little contrived

SID SALTER • [SSALTER@CLARIONLEDGER.COM](mailto:ssalter@clarionledger.com) • FEBRUARY 13, 2008

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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.

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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

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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 "Dickie" Scruggs, 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 association.

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

Contact Perspective Editor Sid Salter at (601) 961-7084 or e-mail ssalter@clarionledger.com. Visit his blog at <http://www.clarionledger.com>.

in your voice

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redneck wrote:

anyone in state government who knowingly fails or refuses to perform the duties of office is subject to fine and or imprisonment. we have justice court judges, county attorneys, district attorneys and the attorney general of our state willfully engaged in a conspiracy against the rights to private property, due process of law, and other crimes of which the commission on judicial performance as well as the state bar can find judicial misconduct. neither can the lt. governor or the governor. the bench-bar

oligarchy has complete and total control of our state government with the approval of the legislative and judicial branches. the constitution the law of the land that is totally ignored without recourse of we the people is simply outlaw government . we the people are represented by nothing but common outlaws.

2/21/2008 7:32:48 PM

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gepeters wrote:

Riddle: What do you get when give \$444,000 in "campaign contributions" to Jim Hood? Answer: Criminal immunity! You get what you pay for and Scruggs knew that. Hood should've told the rest of us that that is how the game is played.

2/16/2008 11:48:19 AM

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gepeters wrote:

koolaid and HopeinMS: Do you realize that Scruggs and Balducci don't even have to worry about being investigated by Hood? Hood will not investigate or ask any other state law enforcement agency in Mississippi to investigate Scruggs and Co. for bribing a judge. EVER! If Hood won't enforce laws against bribing judges, then Hood would never enforce any law that stops his gravy train of campaign contributions. His actions speak louder than his words.

2/16/2008 11:38:23 AM

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Sartoris wrote:

This and related issues are about Hood and his associates, but some are intent on defending Hood on the basis of what Barbour does or does not do. If these are the rules of the debate, the writer who called one Senator a "lapdog" of Barbour should not take offense when Hood is called a "lapdog of trial lawyers," especially his chosen favorites. Such indiscreet croynism apparently made Jimmy's role model and mentor Mike Moore back off his political ambitions for the present. Oh, that we might be so lucky as to see Jimmy's hair-dominated profile appearing on fewer front pages.

2/14/2008 9:55:21 AM

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Supercynic wrote:

This is why I'm so cynical. It doesn't matter whether you have good ideas or bad ideas. It matters more whether you're a Democrat or Republican. Mr. Salter, I give you credit for calling our Barbour on the cigarette tax, but that shimmer of non-partisanship is outdone by your numerous columns railing against Hood. Did Hood associate with some folks who ended up doing bad things? Yes. No question. I bet there are just as many Republicans who have similar bad connections. But can we please, for the sake of good government and a better society, start evaluating ideas based on their respective merit rather than whether they come from politicians with a D or R beside their names? In other words, are Hood's disclosure suggestions good policy or bad policy? State your opinion. But let's stop with the tact of complimenting the position but tearing down the person.

2/14/2008 8:08:04 AM

[Recommend \(10\)](#)

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koolaid wrote:

Yea, I don't see haley Barbour BLOWING HIS HORN for any type of finance reform. Come on Sid, once again, you can do better than this!!!

2/13/2008 10:15:32 PM

[Recommend \(13\)](#)

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HopeinMS wrote:

Campaign finance reform would already be in place had the governor not vetoed the bill that was passed by the house and senate in 2004.

2/13/2008 2:59:09 PM

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Male, Age: 49, Forest

About Me: Sidney L. (Sid) Salter is Perspective Editor of The Clarion-Ledger and serves as a r the newspaper's editorial board. He is a member of the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of F is a native of Philadelphia, Miss. He earned a BA degree at Mississippi State University where r C. Stennis Scholar in Political Science. A former associate professor and Cook Chair in Journali: University of Mississippi faculty, Salter was named the 2004 National Alumnus of the Year at M He and his wife, Leilani, have four grown children and one grandson. They are members of For Methodist Church.

You're most likely to see me around town at: The State Capitol Building, Bass Pro, Comm a Braves game.

On the weekends I love to: hunt, travel, go to ball games and spend time with my family

The high school, college or pro sports teams I root for are: Mississippi State University, School, Green Bay Packers, Boston Red Sox

If I'm watching a movie or listening to music, it's probably: An old movie, Sinatra or co

I am passionate about: My family, Mississippi State University and the Neshoba County Fair

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Sid Salter

Mississippi government, politics and the people who make it happen

Hood: Prosecuting Langston, et al, on state charges "would be like prosecuting a relative."

Posted 2/18/2008 3:49 PM CST

Attorney General Jim Hood granted an interview to The Clarion-Ledger Editorial Board today and said that it would create the "appearance of impropriety" for him to prosecute state judicial bribery charges against Joey Langston, Steve Patterson and Tim Balducci after they entered plea bargains in the federal judicial bribery case in Oxford.

"It would be like prosecuting a relative," said Hood, who said that he believed that those who were guilty of judicial bribery charges "should go to jail." But Hood said that he was "too close" to those defendants and to Oxford lawyer Dickie Scruggs and his "family" to prosecute the case. Hood said the local district attorney had "everything he needs" to prosecute the case and that his office "would help

any way that we can," but that he would not personally be involved with any such prosecution. Hood lambasted "big corporations" and the Republican party, saying that Democrats represented the interest of "the working people."

"Really, unless you make \$200,000 a year or more, you're a Democrat," said Hood. "You may vote Republican, but your economic interests are with the Democrats."

At the end of his remarks, Hood told C-L Executive Editor Ronnie Agnew that the paper needed to hire "a Democratic writer" to counter my work — characterizing me as "a Republican writer."

"I make a big target for critics like you," said Hood. "But I'm just trying to do what's right and represent the working people."

Hood called U.S. Chamber of Commerce PAC spending in Mississippi a Republican "money-laundering operation" while saying he had no choice but to take \$440,000 from a Democratic Attorney Generals Association PAC — a sum that matches donations from to DAGA from Scruggs and Langston.

Hood's basic pitch to our newspaper today was that Democrats and trials lawyers are good and represent honest, hard-working people while Republicans and corporations are bad and represent greed and avarice.

He also doesn't like critics in the media and he really doesn't like bloggers.

Jim also thinks I'm a bad conservative Republican journalist and that the C-L needs more good liberal Democratic journalists to counter my stuff.

Hood also opposes partisanship — which he suggests that Republicans, corporations and conservatives in the media promulgate.

Hood thinks corporations circumvent state campaign finance laws by giving to PACs but that he has to take PAC money funded by trial lawyers to survive.

I love to hear a man who just got \$400 grand from a PAC tell me the evils of PAC giving...

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penreese wrote:

"Like prosecuting a relative"?????? I don't know about yall but no relative of mine ever gave me \$400,000. Hood needs to replace 'relatives' with the words 'biggest campaign donors'.

2/23/2008 1:48 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Talk about being a moron forhim. The whole hearing was about whether the feds could step in. They were going to argue Younger and the bad faith exception which obviously didn't pan out otherwise they would have resumed the hearing don't you think. The judge had pretty much had decided on Younger. State Farm obviously didn't prove their case since it was dismissed. The settlement probably forced SF to go back to Judge Senter's agreement (which is under seal IIRC). And we don't know if Judge Bramlette thought the Jan. 23, 07' agreement was valid under it's strict interpretation to mean that Hood could start a new criminal investigation, based on the in camera stuff he saw (grand jury material under seal).

2/22/2008 9:29 AM CST

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forhim1981 wrote:

You want to figure out who came out on top in the State Farm v. Hood settlement...watch and see if Jim Hood resumes his criminal investigation of State Farm.

Bellesouth, I generally try to show everyone respect; even those with whom I ardently disagree. In your case, I will suspend my own civility and call it like I see it: you're a moron. I only pray that you aren't married to coastal cowboy. Such a pairing would be catastrophic for Mississippi's already tarnished educational image. In a famous opinion, Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "three generations of imbeciles is enough." In your case, one generation will do.

2/20/2008 11:22 PM CST

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forhim1981 wrote:

It is absolutely ridiculous that Jim Hood is claiming victory in the State Farm lawsuit. Guys, federal

courts do not get involved in state criminal prosecutions. The fact that the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi became involved means that there was substantial proof that the state prosecution constituted a violation of due process and was being conducted for the purpose of harassment. A temporary restraining order had already been entered preventing Hood from continuing his prosecution. After being torn to shreds in deposition, Hood gave up and agreed to settle with State Farm. As an attorney, let me tell you this, State Farm did not settle with Jim Hood so that he could continue his criminal prosecution.

2/20/2008 11:07 PM CST

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forhim1981 wrote:

Lost in this entire discussion is the fact that Jim Hood should no longer be in possession of a law license. It is a violation of the ethical code to which all lawyers are bound under the Mississippi Bar to use the threat of criminal prosecution to facilitate the settlement of a civil matter. Jim Hood has unabashedly thumbed his nose at the Bar.

The fact that he characterized the recent federal court dismissal as a victory for him strains credulity. The court validated State Farm's understanding of an agreement.

No one is saying that insurance companies should not be kept honest. No one is above the law. The thing to realize, however, is that it works both ways.

2/20/2008 10:48 PM CST

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JimMac wrote:

You think Hood is doing a good job? Read what the Wall Street Journal has to say.
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119862967805249827.html>

2/20/2008 9:19 PM CST

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graham wrote:

Sid,
first, i'd have to say you are too biased on this subject, but your recent articles have been toned appropriately.

second, hood has very capable prosecutors in his office. he should've allowed one of them to offer assistance to the feds (the feds don't need his assistance)

third, does anyone at the paper know if the state would be blocked from pursuing state charges because of double jeopardy?

fourth, why don't y'all discuss the campaign finance laws that were "vetoed" last year??

2/20/2008 8:12 AM CST

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plblake50m wrote:

Hey, I'm not a lawyer, and I voted for the man, but I've got to think that when people are confessing to bribing judges in MS that the state's attorney general needs to be involved in it. I don't really understand how he claims to have won his latest battle with State Farm either. At best it looks like a draw if not an embarrassing defeat.

2/20/2008 8:12 AM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

Gee, Hood's managing 12 divisions with at least 100 personnel, Belle tells us, and not one can apparently handle a prosecution of an admitted felon on a charge of trying to bribe a Mississippi judge. But I'm certain, CERTAIN, that somehow that's Roger Wicker's fault, isn't it, Belle?

2/19/2008 7:17 PM CST

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koolaid wrote:

Allright children settle down. Hood will hold his own, heck, Boss Hogs millions given to the state Republican party last fall couldn't bring Hood down. Wicker, well, what can you say, nothing between his two ears but white hair. Poor guy is clueless, another "droned-clone".

2/19/2008 6:28 PM CST

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Male, Age: 49, Forest

About Me: Sidney L. (Sid) Salter is Perspective Editor of The Clarion-Ledger and serves as a r the newspaper's editorial board. He is a member of the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of F is a native of Philadelphia, Miss. He earned a BA degree at Mississippi State University where r C. Stennis Scholar in Political Science. A former associate professor and Cook Chair in Journali: University of Mississippi faculty, Salter was named the 2004 National Alumnus of the Year at M He and his wife, Leilani, have four grown children and one grandson. They are members of For Methodist Church.

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Sid Salter

Mississippi government, politics and the people who make it happen

Hood: Prosecuting Langston, et al, on state charges "would be like prosecuting a relative."

Posted 2/18/2008 3:49 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Hood manages 12 divisions within the AG's office. His staff are at least at one hundred personnel. I think he is doing his job just fine. All the bickering here is not going to change that. Didn't last year and it won't this year. This dog won't hunt. Give it up.

2/19/2008 4:43 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

Hahahahahahaha! "Trolls like bridges"!! I know funny when I hear it and that's funny!!

2/19/2008 4:13 PM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

BELLESOUTH: You can do the Wicker dance as often as you like, but that's really not the subject of this thread, is it? But I can understand your need to change the subject, because you aren't faring particularly well on this subject. Trolls normally like bridges, and there several nice ones over the Pearl River.

2/19/2008 4:00 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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Stick61 wrote:

If Hood has genuine fears that he may endanger federal prosecution by moving too quickly at the state level, then the least he should do is form a task force on corruption in the Mississippi legal system to provide assistance to the feds where necessary and to provide DAs with the support they need to look into potential problems in their jurisdictions. Hood should do more than try to find a way to beg off. The judicial bribery issue is hot and he needs to address it. Moreover, Hood could make a strong personal statement about being offended by corruption in his profession by holding a fund-raiser among his supporters to donate the amounts he received from the likes of Langston to worthy charitable causes.

2/19/2008 3:56 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

P.S. I always wondered what that revolving door meant but it is pretty clear when you look at that story. Aurora to Wicker to Lobbyist who hired Wicker Chief Keast. Aurora to Lobbyist to Wicker to Aurora. And around and around we go! Now they have DOD money to spend on Wicker's senate election. DOD didn't want that money spent on paper airplanes, they already have their own.

2/19/2008 2:13 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

What Wicker did by the account of the Washington Post "attracted ****bipartisan**** criticism and gave rise to the most far-reaching ethics overhaul legislation in a generation: The firm retained the services of the congressman's top aide after he passed through the revolving door to become a lobbyist, and its employees helped underwrite Wicker's reelection.

2/19/2008 2:07 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Of course not, Sid, you're a republican. If Hood started investigating you'd be pissed he was wasting money on something that is already being spent on by the feds.

2/19/2008 2:03 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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sidsalter wrote:

BELLESOUTH: So far, you're right. Hood's not accused of violating the law. But if that's the only test you apply to this matter, then shouldn't you apply that same test to Roger Wicker's behavior as well? Again, we're right back to the voodoo logic — GOP, corporations BAD, DEMS, trial lawyers, GOOD. Both contentions, and the reverse, are an exercise in partisan ignorance. There are bad actors in both parties and in both professions. But neither party and neither profession has the market cornered.

2/19/2008 1:41 PM CST

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PLaker wrote:

Hood reminds me of the Clintons. When he starts to feel the heat he lashes out, pointing fingers, making excuses. He seems delusional. If he feels threatened by someone, at least seemingly, as middle-of-the-road as Sid the rest of us might want to steer clear.

2/19/2008 1:39 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Hood has not done anything illegal. Nor has DAGA. Period.

2/19/2008 1:35 PM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

Bellesouth: Yesterday, you thought I made up Hood's comments and demanded video tape. We posted video tape and other reporters confirmed my report. Today, EVERYONE concurs that the state shouldn't get involved.

What planet are you on? EVERYONE doesn't concur in that.

I'm not a huge Roger Wicker fan, but when and if any of Roger's contributors get indicted for bribery or other federal crimes, I'll treat them exactly the same. But your only pitch when Hood hoists himself on his own petard is to try to change the subject to Wicker. Sell it someplace else, lady. I'm not buying it. Perhaps EVERYONE is, but I'm not.

2/19/2008 1:33 PM CST

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cardinal0602 wrote:

Belle:

I'm typing this slowly in the hopes that you will read it slowly. I will also make an analogy that you (hopefully) will understand. Repeat after me:

Pork barrel spending, much like white shoes after Labor Day, is tasteless. BUT NOT ILLEGAL.

Conspiracy, bribing a judge (or politician), money laundering are ILLEGAL.

The topic is Jim Hood and what he is/not doing to defend the state of Mississippi against an assault of its legal system by those who wish to personally profit from it, by any means necessary. Can we please, pretty please, stay on topic????

2/19/2008 1:31 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Sid, Hood addressed all of that, but you won't listen to good reason. Hood is our AG like it or not. Let the guy do his job. Everyone now concurs that the state shouldn't get involved until after the feds are done. Why don't you go after Wicker and his campaign contributors who received \$6 million for a

model airplane plant of 45 people.
2/19/2008 12:19 PM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

TFRANK: You're a lawyer and I trust your analysis of Hood's legal options. But it's clear that when Hood wants to interject the AG's office into a local case — Killen, Frank Melton, for example — he does so. I happen to think Hood did a good job in both those matters and wrote columns or C-L editorials stating just that. But Hood's contention that prosecuting Langston, et al, would create the "appearance of impropriety" is ridiculous to everyone but lawyers. To mere mortals, not prosecuting your political campaign contribution sugar daddies is what creates the "appearance of impropriety" and Jim should be smart enough to realize that and get someone appointed to fill that role in pushing for state prosecutions and assist the local DA or act in his stead if the local DA won't prosecute.

2/19/2008 12:10 PM CST

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TFrank wrote:

donnyboy: We can agree that Hood should not involve himself in any prosecution.

Sid: Yours is a fair response with respect to Hood's work in Killen. With respect to your comparison of Killen and the judicial bribery cases, Hood had no conflict in Killen. He admits he does in the judicial bribery cases. That is why he cannot involve himself in the latter. What should be "disturbing" is the underlying crimes, not Hood's position. Finally, I agree about campaign finance.

2/19/2008 11:24 AM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

EARLY CULVER: Posting the entire video is not my call. Earnest Hart, our assistant managing editor for multimedia, runs that department. You can reach him by calling the C-L switchboard at 601-961-7000.

2/19/2008 11:14 AM CST

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donnyboy wrote:

TFrank, the decision to provide or not provide assistance and at what levels is, in-and-of itself, a meaningful decision. His involvement has to end completely, on all levels. He HAS NOT, at this point, recused himself from the process in it's entirety. Can you at least stipulate that point or would you like to argue that as well?

2/19/2008 11:13 AM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

TFRANK: In columns published both in the C-L and in statewide syndication, I've roundly praised Hood's work in the Edgar Ray Killen conviction. Generally, I think Jim has excellent skills in criminal prosecutions from his days as a district attorney. Jim's experience in death penalty cases is also excellent. But I've been complaining about the outside counsel process and the cozy relationship between the trial bar and the AG and the trial bar and state judicial candidates for the better part of the last 20 years.

The fact that Hood could and would choose to make himself a player in the Killen case but can't find a staff member or seek a court-appointed special prosecutor to go after folks who have admitted they took part in a judicial bribery scheme is disturbing.

Further, I don't buy into the whole "GOP and corporations bad, Dems and trial lawyers good" political mindset. Both sides need watching and both side engage in abuses.

2/19/2008 11:10 AM CST

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EarlyCulver wrote:

Sid, could you all post the entire video and transcript?

2/19/2008 10:57 AM CST

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TFrank wrote:

donnyboy:

You make a factual leap I do not. If a local DA chooses to prosecute, Hood could ensure that assistance is provided by his office and also remain outside the decision making role. He could, and presumably would based on what he has said, leave decision making to the DA.

What I find amusing is that so many are clamouring for an "independent prosecutor." That is precisely what the local DAs are - independent from the AGs office.

2/19/2008 10:57 AM CST

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donnyboy wrote:

CoastalCowboy, I take pride in my ability to make buffoons like you mutter and stammer.

2/19/2008 10:23 AM CST

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donnyboy wrote:

Yes he is TFrank. YOUR OWN WORDS - "If the local DAs choose to prosecute, he said the DAs would be provided whatever assistance is needed from the AGs office. He said that if the local DAs had some problem (presumably their own conflict of interest), he would involve his office further." How is this not part of the decision making process? Also, by not appointing someone to consolidate resources and head the investigation he is essentially castrating the process. Do you really not see this? HE HAS TO ENTIRELY REMOVE HIMSELF FROM ANY INVOLVEMENT WHATSOEVER INCLUDING COORDINATION WITHIN HIS OWN OFFICE.

2/19/2008 10:18 AM CST

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Donnieboy pardner your single minded self servin' out house lawyerin' makes you look a bigger fool by the day. Jim Hood could care less what you, me, the folks over at Yall politics or Sid Salter thinks. He is doin' his job best he can. Hey Belle, you were useful over at Folo as long as you toted water for Lotus. One day you is a live blogginn' courthouse star and the next yesterday's trash. For all them so called lawyers over there it took ole Steffey one news article to make 'em all look silly with their Hood bashin'. Some of us appreciate your viewpoint even if we don't always agree. Check your C-L profile please.

2/19/2008 10:14 AM CST

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TFrank wrote:

donnyboy:

You are arguing with yourself. He has abstained in favor of the local DAs. The local DAs are charged

with prosecuting crimes within their jurisdictions. He is not in a decision making position.

2/19/2008 10:10 AM CST

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JustAVoter wrote:

The vicious cycle is that these indicted and/or guilty individuals make enormous donations to Hood; they in turn receive these contracts and/or Special AG prosecutor status from Hood to net themselves more money; Hood keeps the contracts coming; they keep the donations coming. If a problem (ie indictments, calls for state investigation or prosecution) occurs, Hood claims that he's "too close." Of course he is---that was the plan. Their money made him "too close." They're getting what they paid for. And Hood stays silent to make sure his "relatives" stay quiet about him as well. Watching and waiting, hoping that he's not implicated or indicted himself. This didn't just happen---it was their intention from the get-go. Hood has denied that their money has bought any influence over him, but has now finally admitted that was a lie.

2/19/2008 10:08 AM CST

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donnyboy wrote:

He should not wait to see if local prosecutors pursue charges against admitted felons. To satisfy the conflict of interest, a special prosecutor should be appointed who can lead the effort with assistance from the local DA's. He is simply buying time to see what shakes out in the federal case. Now that he has identified his conflict of interest it is improper for him to make ANY decisions in regards to the direction and breadth of the State's case. This includes making a decision on whether or not the feds have "done enough" when they conclude their prosecutions. IF HE IS AN ETHICAL MAN, AS MANY OF YOU HAVE CLAIMED, HE CAN NOT PROCEED IN A DECISION MAKING CAPACITY AS IT RELATES TO THESE CASES.

2/19/2008 9:52 AM CST

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TFrank wrote:

With respect to your perceived bias, ask yourself this question: During the entirety of Jim Hood's tenure, have you ever written a single thing which casts a positive light on anything Jim Hood has ever done? If you have, there certainly have not been more than a couple 0 and I don't recall them.

Despite the hate-filled political opposition spewed by many, Hood has done some really good things. Neshoba county prosecutions - finally, justice. MCI - recovery of 110% of taxpayer money. Yet, I don't recall you saying anything positive about him with respect to either of these matters.

Instead, it seems as if you criticize and attack Hood every chance you get. I understand you are an opinion editor - by definition, you are paid for your opinion and it doesn't have to be right or fair. But, as such, you at least must recognize that many people find your what you write and choose not to write reveals a heavy Repub, and certainly anti-Hood, slant.

2/19/2008 9:51 AM CST

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TFrank wrote:

Sid:

Setting the stuff about your perceived bias and PAC giving, what do you believe the problem to be with Hood's position with respect to Scruggs et al.

He said he has a personal conflict of interest. When that exists, the appropriate thing to do is abstain. He is doing that.

He said that his abstention should not and does not preclude state prosecution. He said the local DAs from the respective jurisdictions can exercise their discretion and prosecute as they see fit. If the local DAs choose to prosecute, he said the DAs would be provided whatever assistance is needed from the AGs office. He said that if the local DAs had some problem (presumably their own conflict of interest), he would involve his office further.

Isn't this exactly what he should do?

2/19/2008 9:36 AM CST

[Recommend \(9\)](#)

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koolaid wrote:

By the way Sid, I was wondering where 'ol Governor Barbour has been. The Sun Herald a couple of weeks ago asked him to come down to the Coast and explain some stuff. You know, stuff like his endorsement for the salt-dome storage project, and Katrina housing money for roads in north Mississippi, stuff like that. He has been nowhere to be found. Has he moved back to Washington?

2/19/2008 8:30 AM CST

[Recommend \(8\)](#)

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Paulywalnuts wrote:

Hey Salter. I guess you and your neocon running buddies didn't get the news story you wanted today. Does the Barbour's office oops I mean you have anything else to say about Jim Hood?

2/19/2008 8:08 AM CST

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About Me: Sidney L. (Sid) Salter is Perspective Editor of The Clarion-Ledger and serves as a r the newspaper's editorial board. He is a member of the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of F is a native of Philadelphia, Miss. He earned a BA degree at Mississippi State University where r C. Stennis Scholar in Political Science. A former associate professor and Cook Chair in Journali: University of Mississippi faculty, Salter was named the 2004 National Alumnus of the Year at M He and his wife, Leilani, have four grown children and one grandson. They are members of For Methodist Church.

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Sid Salter

Mississippi government, politics and the people who make it happen

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Posted 2/18/2008 3:49 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

HOOD SHOULD RESIGN---I agree interloper. I predict more facts will come out on the cash for contracts scheme run by Hood with Felon Langston, and soon-to-be Felon Scruggs.

2/19/2008 7:56 AM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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kolivieri wrote:

I emailed Jim Hood's office asking for clarification. Also, I tried to call his office and couldn't leave a message because the "voice mail box" was full. I bet....

2/19/2008 7:53 AM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

Oh Puleez interloper! Got another line?

2/19/2008 12:30 AM CST

[Recommend \(7\)](#)

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theinterloper wrote:

Hood's comment's sound like Richard Nixon in the last days of Watergate. And just like Nixon, he should resign, or face impeachment. He has obviously decided that protecting the "family", is more important than doing the job that he was elected to do. What a disgrace! I cannot help but wonder if he is afraid of what the "family" would reveal about him, were he to attempt to prosecute them.

2/19/2008 12:14 AM CST

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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koolaid wrote:

Oh, and it probably wouldn't hurt to send him a campaign contribution either. Well, as Bill O'reilly would say, "because we're looking out for you". I need to go to bed before I have a bad day tomorrow like some other folks around here.

2/18/2008 10:47 PM CST

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koolaid wrote:

Sid, you better be careful and follow the law! 'Ol Jimbo may be watching you closely from here on out. Pay all of those parking tickets in downtown and such, you complete Republican, right-wing, need a "counter-balance" reporter to combat your Republican writing mean old self!!! I think Hood was having a bad day.....

2/18/2008 10:44 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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jimattherez wrote:

AG Hood = audacity and/or delsuion. Wow, Sid, did David Hampton think he was right, lol?

2/18/2008 10:18 PM CST

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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MrJWS wrote:

I don't have the same recollection of Sid's record as you do, bestfinds. Have you missed the fact that Sid has not "towed the line" with the Governor's opposition to the Tax Swap Plan? He's not as monolithic as all that...

2/18/2008 10:06 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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bestfinds wrote:

First, Hood, I believe, asked to come meet with the ed board, he "granted" you nothing, Sid. Second, have you ever analyzed your past columns in terms of your positions? You should, because, yeah Sid, you are a "bad conservative Republican journalist." Hood was simply asking for balance. Third, there's no way to beat you and Hood understands that. He's willing to suffer the consequences of meeting with you rather than create the appearance he's somehow hiding. Fourth, did you mention any of the positive things his office is doing? I know he discussed them with you. I'm sure it's no fun being on the blood-end of your pen every day. You're a scary guy, Sid, but at least you're consistent.

2/18/2008 9:43 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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MrJWS wrote:

So Mr. Hood has issues with Bloggers. Aren't most Bloggers just regular folks who likes to air their opinion? I've done it from time to time, and I am as Blue Collar as you can get. Safe to say, I definitely make less than \$200,000 a year. Hood ought to repeat his complaint to me...

2/18/2008 9:38 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

HOOD AND CHARACTER---need an example of personal lack of character, and on a pocketbook personal money issue in Hood's personal life ---read this article--
<http://www.djournal.com/pages/story.asp?ID=266455&pub=1&div=News--and> draw your own conclusion about a man who would have a poor working man adjuster charged with a felony; and himself seek damages for "emotional distress" in a fender bender----all for his persoanl money
2/18/2008 9:16 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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Franklin wrote:

HOOD AND MONEY ---So what if you make \$35,000 a year but are pro-life; pro-gun; anti-big government; and anti-union. Should you still be a Democrat, Jim? Maybe it's not all about money ---at least for some of us. For Hood, we are witnessing a basic lack of character and integrity---it is unsettling to watch, and he cannot hide behind a smokescreen of cliché populism. It's sad really. For the State I mean.

2/18/2008 9:04 PM CST

[Recommend \(10\)](#)

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vhdawg wrote:

Funny, not four months ago the Editorial Board was in love with Jim Hood.

"Jim Hood is the best choice with a proven record of the right leadership needed for this office." - Clarion-Ledger Editorial Board, November 2, 2007

<http://www.clarionledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071102/OPINION01/711020328/1008/OPINION>

2/18/2008 8:41 PM CST

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rscool wrote:

I've never read anything quite like thie from a public official. I guess he does not plan on running for

any future office. As far as the \$200K mark goes, I would reduce that to about \$50K or just barely above the line where people have to actually pay income tax. I've never liked Jim Hood, but I had no idea he was so delusional or out of touch. He'll be lucky to make it though this term if he really believes his own rhetoric.

2/18/2008 8:08 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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shorty wrote:

Kinda like a wounded animal. Will bite anybody who comes close to him. Whether they are too close to him or not, his job is to prosecute the criminals. If he won't do his job, he should resign.

2/18/2008 8:03 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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JanetbGood wrote:

Have any of you 30%ers heard of Jack Abramoff?

2/18/2008 7:45 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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OccamsRazor wrote:

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Three questions after reading this:

- 1) So how else can the money coming from DAGA be described if it wasn't coming from a "money laundering operation" itself, since all it did was pass through? A necessary evil?
- 2) Given a choice between maintaining his integrity and honesty and not running for AG he will take money that's been through a "money laundering operation." How else would he collect enough money to run for the job since the other part of the Democrats (income under 200K) won't donate to him om sufficient amounts.
- 3)What else will he do for money?

2/18/2008 7:34 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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benjamin wrote:

Sid, send Jim Hood fifty bucks and he'll leave you alone. For a \$100, he won't prosecute you. Make your check payable to DAGA.

2/18/2008 7:16 PM CST

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Jim Hood ain't back hisself into nothin'. All your whinin' ain't gonna change nuttin' boys, he is YOUR attorney general for the next 4 years. This Cowboy would like to see ole Sid Salter hold all the politicians to the same standard he holds Jim Hood 'cause from Boss Hogg Barbour on down they is mostly a bunch of crooks.

2/18/2008 6:50 PM CST

[Recommend \(12\)](#)

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64dog wrote:

Hood has really backed himself into a corner. And at every term he spins another tale that no one believes. Now it is "Clintonian" with the great right wing conspiracy out to get him. It appears that he and his mentor Mike Moore have a real problem with the truth.

2/18/2008 6:44 PM CST

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beancounter49 wrote:

geez...what an ass (hood, not sid) regardless of how this turns out and regardless of the depth of his involvement....these comments, if true, show him to be a vindictive child incapable of defending himself coherently...."you bad repubs stop persecuting me....i only wanna he'p the po' folks" ...this is the guy we've elected to represent the state's legal interests?????

2/18/2008 6:10 PM CST

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

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paperreader wrote:

Hey Sid, why don't you contact Alan Nunnellee and let him know that you are a conservative "Republican writer." He probably would not agree after Friday's blog where you referred to him as a Niedermeyer.

Also, AG Hood just informed me that I -- along with probably 98 percent of Mississippians -- am a Democrat. If that is the case, the party has done an extremely poor job winning statewide elections. Also, did Hood say if you make more than \$200,000 you are a Republican -- that probably would surprise his "family" of friends such as Scruggs, Balducci, Langston, Nutt, Barrett, etc. And if you make \$14 million that does make you a staunch Republican?

2/18/2008 5:37 PM CST

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

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kolivieri wrote:

Great blog post, Sid. I love your work and think you are a terrific writer. And, I don't make over \$200,000 a year and I'm a republican. Is this guy serious? The aspect that bothers me tremendously is that he will not prosecute a "member of his family". I was always taught (by my uncle who was a judge and lawyer) that friendships ended when the law was broken. Who does Hood think he is? I really don't get this.

2/18/2008 5:31 PM CST

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koolaid wrote:

Well, this just sounds kind of strange all the way around. While I do agree with Hood in principle that folks who don't make six figures probably should line-up and vote more for Democrats on economic issues and such, I don't really understand the kind of personal shot taken at Sid. I also don't consider Sid a "lockstep" Republican who exists at the CL to only serve as a Republican shill. Andy fills that role! I always kind of viewed Sid as being the counter balance to some more liberal-leaning reporters there. I mean, I am definitely a Democrat, vote that way 80% of the time, but I also see a lot of the points that Sid makes. I also do agree that the Chamber of Commerce bunch does have to much influence and money involvement in our state's politics. Still, seems like Hood was having a really bad day. This is strange.....

2/18/2008 5:27 PM CST

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JustAVoter wrote:

Is it that Hood doesn't get it or is it that Hood thinks WE don't get it? Jim Hood--why do you think Scruggs, Langston, Balducci, Patterson et al donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to your campaigns??? You've just given us all the answer... they paid for your silence. They tried to buy Lackey with \$\$\$ too, but he refused. They didn't attempt to pay the Feds. YOU paved the way for all of them---and I honestly can't figure out if you didn't/don't realize that yourself. Are you that stupid?

2/18/2008 5:17 PM CST

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andiamo wrote:

I got news for you belle. From my reading of the blogs extremely few people believe anything getting punched out of your keyboard.

2/18/2008 5:08 PM CST

[Recommend \(14\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

I hope that sit down with Hood was taped, because I don't believe anything Sid writes. I'd be pretty funny if it was taped and then Hood comes around and sues Sid for libel and slander.

2/18/2008 4:46 PM CST

[Recommend \(13\)](#)

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statedawg wrote:

I agree with bluedog in that Minor and Hampton are farther left than Sid ever thought about being right. The reason that those two won't touch the Hood issue is because the actions of his "relatives" and the resistance to act by Hood are not defensible... not even by Hampton and Minor. That's saying something.

2/18/2008 4:46 PM CST

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DeltaNative wrote:

Please post a transcript of this interview so that it may be read in total by all. If your summary is correct, then he should be recalled, if that is possible. Both Republicans and Democrats break the law. Or did he miss that lesson in reality?

2/18/2008 4:43 PM CST

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humptydumpty wrote:

Sid, PLEASE do a column on this tomorrow...people are thirsty for the C-L to put some gloves on!

2/18/2008 4:42 PM CST

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bluedog wrote:

Wow! He actually said these things? In front of witnesses? Trial lawyers are "good" except, perhaps, for the ones who have gotten caught and pled guilty to various crimes and thus can't slither out of it. Does he ever read Hampton's blog? Hampton is still (despite all the evidence) in the "Paul Minor is a political prisoner!" camp and is a much bigger up front liberal Democrat than Sid is a conservative Republican. In fact, I would consider Sid a sometimes conservative Independent. This is mind-boggling that Hood would say this stuff out loud. He doesn't even pretend to be an objective law enforcement officer.

2/18/2008 4:36 PM CST

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donnyboy wrote:

I am still sitting here shaking my head trying to make sense of what The Hood just said to the C-L. I can not help but think this looks a lot like the words of a cornered rat. Sounds like he may be coming apart. Just my opinion of course.

2/18/2008 4:30 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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Paulywalnuts wrote:

It looks like Hood has this one called right, especially the part about the paper needing somebody to counter balance Salter.

2/18/2008 4:20 PM CST

[Recommend \(11\)](#)

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sidsalter wrote:

DONNYBOY: There were C-L reporters in the meeting. I suspect you'll see an account of this meeting in the print edition tomorrow. I may write a print column on it as well. Amazing choice of words...

2/18/2008 4:20 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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humptydumpty wrote:

See, I'm no genius..."appoint"
2/18/2008 4:20 PM CST

[Recommend](#)

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humptydumpty wrote:

THEN APOINT A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR, JIM! Sheesh...I'm no genius, but isn't that an option? Keep it up Sid!

2/18/2008 4:19 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

Sid, can I assume that you will include this in a letter in the print edition sometime soon? Even for a snake like The Hood this seems like an astonishing admission of bias.

2/18/2008 4:17 PM CST

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unhappygilmore wrote:

What a delusional, brain-dead man - and to think I considered voting for him. Nice way to categorize voters and parties. Loser.

2/18/2008 4:12 PM CST

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Office of attorney general continues to defend Miss. citizens

JIM HOOD / • SPECIAL TO THE CLARION-LEDGER • FEBRUARY 18, 2008

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Jim Hood is attorney general for the state of Mississippi.

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donnyboy wrote:

EarlyCulver, it is certainly an admirable quality to try to be nice, but you are wasting your time with CoastalCowboy. He is one of these lunatics that believes all Republicans are evil by default and all Democrats are either as pure as the wind driven snow or made to get down in the mud by evil Republicans. And as for his cowboy or good ole boy persona he is a good ole boy who believes that his neighbors should be made to subsidize his life by virtue of the fact that he is breathing. Best to just laugh at him and then point out all of the reasons why he is a raving psychopath.

2/19/2008 3:44:20 PM

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donnyboy wrote:

Jack Abramoff? How about Norman Hsu, Mr. rootin' tootin' hypocrite?

2/19/2008 3:37:23 PM

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Early pardner I hear what you is sayin' and I have my concerns about Jim Hood's handling of State Farm just like I have concerns over Dunn Lampton's handling of State Farm. But I think this hollerin' against Hood is more political than anything. You see it on Yall, you see it from the conservative dude here on the C-L and you see it from Insurance Attorney David Rossmiller. Folks scream Joey Langston like

it means something but forget all about Jack Abramoff when it comes to their hero George Bush. Meantime we gots Buck Clarke and Phil Bryant doin' nothin' for us on insurance while common folk here are being kicked in the nuts by their insurance company come renewal time for policies that don't pay no how but they gotta have 'em to make the bank happy. I hear them Democrats attracted quite a payin' crowd Saturday over Bay St Louis way. All I know is I used to vote Republican but no more pardner.

2/19/2008 2:29:50 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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EarlyCulver wrote:

Cowboy, I hear what you're saying and appreciate your authenticity and response to my post. I disagree that only "right wing hacks" are concerned with Hood's behavior (see, e.g., J. Nash) and that all of the attacks on him are politically motivated. Are some? Sure. Are many of the responses on behalf of Hood? Sure. But I think all citizens--left and right--should be concerned when you have an AG who is either embarrassingly dumb or completely without shame.

2/19/2008 12:14:31 PM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Early I yam what I yam and thats who I yam pardner. You boys kin call me what you will 'cause it don't bother this Cowboy one bit. This Cowboy's basic position is twofold folks: 1) These attacks on ole Hood are politically motivated and State Farm is the main beneficiary. 2) I ain't seen one shred of evidence of anything against ole Hood except he ought to do a better job pickin' his friends. So the right wing hacks like Donnyboy can scream and holler all they want it don't change nuttin'. Ole Hood is Donnyboy's attorney general whether he likes it or not and that makes this Cowboy laugh hard!

2/19/2008 11:55:21 AM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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ggdawg wrote:

Pay no attention to the corrupt politician behind the curtain! Mr. Hood completely sidesteps the issue in this piece, and instead lambasts the evil republicans and their corporations and PACs. Nice diversionary tactic, and it unfortunately works all too often. What Mr. Hood does not address is the fact that an Attorney General receiving \$440,000 in PAC contributions from two of the state's biggest plaintiffs attorneys constitutes a HUGE conflict of interest. End of story. I can't believe I voted for this guy, and I won't make the mistake again.

2/19/2008 10:58:33 AM

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EarlyCulver wrote:

cardnal, whether the cowboy is down at hood's office typing away at this stuff, the "cowboy schtick" gets old real fast and makes it difficult to suffer through reading the arguments. "them boys," "pardner," "bootlickin," etc. cowboy, i'm interested in hearing what you have to say, but i think you might be more effective if you just used modern english instead of sounding like the stranger come to town on gunsmoke. anyway, for what it's worth. it's a free country and you can obviously say and do what you want.

2/19/2008 10:56:11 AM

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redneck wrote:

wow glad to see our chief outlaw is willing to defend the defenseless,I suppose mr

hood will have to indict himself for his refusal to perform his duties, and as such enjoined himself in a conspiracy agains the property rights of we the people. considering he could find no wrongdoing in the confiscation of an entire countys private roads and drives without the use of the courts. the bench-bar oligarchy is becoming more and more apparent, as is the lies of mr hood . the true irony is the clarion ledgers steadfast refusal to print the truth, yet allows the freeflow of known lies. then has the audacity to complain about 1st ammendment issues. the propaganda division of our govt. is doing a superb job.in dispensing half thruths and lies, while refusing to expose our outlaw judicial system and its chief outlaw.

2/19/2008 6:17:24 AM

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newtrick wrote:

I find Belle's comments interesting and can't help but wonder what sort of disorder those who attack her must have - but surely there's a cure. Viagra, maybe?

2/18/2008 8:15:42 PM

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OccamsRazor wrote:

Belle: Up the dosage on your meds...the OCD you display for singing Jim Hood's praises in the face of mounting evidence of his arrogance and gross stupidity are getting monotonous. No one but his poor momma could possibly beleive he's as good as you make him out to be. obsessive-compulsive disorder - an anxiety disorder characterized by recurrent and persistent thoughts and feelings and repetitive, ritualized behaviors...(like blogging incessantly on all things Jim Hood)

2/18/2008 8:06:50 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

Donnyboy, from the CL -- "State Attorney General Jim Hood said today it would be a conflict of interest for his office to file charges against several attorneys involved in a high-profile judicial bribery scandal. Filing a state case now could interfere with a federal case that is already in the courts, Hood told The Clarion-Ledger at an editorial board meeting. Hood said instead of his office getting involved, he would hope any concurrent state case would be filed by a local district attorney. "If the DA can't do it, then we'll step in," he said. Hood, when pressed, said he believed any of the guilty attorneys should go to jail." He said he would support anyone who wanted to do so. Besides all that, I say wait until the feds are through with their investigation. There is no reason to duplicate efforts. Besides all that -- he's the boss -- just got re-elected by the people of MS --fair and square.

2/18/2008 7:25:01 PM

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donnyboy wrote:

Man, that link is LOOOOONG. If it won't work just go to the blog section and look at Sid Salter. Hood is a worthless waste of an Attorney General.

2/18/2008 4:11:36 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

CoastalCowboy, you mentioned Sid Salter's blog. Check out his latest entry.

<http://www.clarionledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?category=PluckPersona&U=771196c526a447e6a9ae22047cac674f&plckController3a771196c526a447e6a9ae22047cac674fPost%3a5b2ddf4a-b614-4a4f-b68f-e88c128dd7c8&sid=sitelife.clarionledger.com>
2/18/2008 4:09:22 PM

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donnyboy wrote:

Bellesouth, so it is perfectly OK for the Attorney General to not pursue admitted criminal violations of state law? Until you answer the question you have no credibility.

2/18/2008 4:08:26 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Welp Card you can call this Cowboy about anything pardner so long as you don't say I'm from Rankin County. Yippe Kia Yea! LMAO!!!!

2/18/2008 4:08:00 PM

[Recommend \(7\)](#)

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Begood wrote:

It seems Mr. Hood is blaming all the questions and blogs on the people who fought him during the general election. The simple truth is I voted for, and supported him in both elections and had no involvement in the election except to vote and voice my support for him when asked. Now, I get a knot in my stomach thinking I've been wrong and wasn't smart enough to see it. Forget State Farm, it's the dealings with, and contributions from, convicted and indicted lawyers and friends that bother me. The citizens are entitled to know his involvement with these people and his feelings as the Attorney General on their conduct. Heck, they may even think he should support and assist in the investigation any way he can.

2/18/2008 4:04:34 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

donnyboy, if he went a prosecutin' then you'd scream murder that he is wasting your money. The guy can't win in your book. Alls y'all can do is sling mud but it ain't stickin'. If Dunny Boy Lampton couldn't touch him, neither can you, so just sit down and hush.

2/18/2008 4:04:18 PM

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

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cardinal0602 wrote:

Anybody else here think the cowboy is hoody bangin' away on his comput-ah, hanging out at the job club (aka AG office) downtown?

2/18/2008 3:57:53 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

Still no answer. Still no credibility. You are a rootin' tootin' hypocrite. Pardner...

2/18/2008 3:44:00 PM

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

I don't answer to you or your ilk pardner. You wanna go off bangin' on Jim Hood with some yes folks and need the lynchin' mob to spark from then go check out Sid

Salter's blog, head over to Yall politics or go hunt up NMC over at Folo. Me, I'm not into guilt by association or political mudslingin' especially when crooks like State Farm make Republicans like you their tools so they can screw my nieghbors on the coast. And Justavoter all I got to say about ole Big Business Lackey is if he was Tim Balducci's friend then ole Tim sure nuff didn't need any enemies. And what's ole Lackey do first off when his boy Balducci was cuffed, he runs off gloatin' to the Wall Street Journal. He couldn't wait to git his name in the paper. The truth will be comin' out boys and when it does some of you will look mighty silly.

2/18/2008 3:39:39 PM

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donnyboy wrote:

CoastalCowboy, you still have not answered the question and by refusing to answer you have made your position crystal clear - you have no problem with The Hood giving cover to his admitted criminal friends. You have no credibility. You have no ethical or moral backbone.

2/18/2008 3:08:36 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Donnyboy one day you and your trailer park lynch mob ilk from Yall politics will realize how wrong you are when Jim Hood brings them State Farm crooks to justice. Until then he laughs at you from the pages of the Clarion Ledger secure in the 3 years and 11 months he has left in his current term and there ain't nothin' you or the rest of your State Farm bootlickin' buddies can do about it. So question this Cowboy's ethics all you want but I ain't soft on crime and if Dunn Lampton won't do his job thanks goodness Jim Hood will. Yippee Kia Yea.

2/18/2008 2:58:03 PM

[Recommend \(10\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

CoastalCowboy, I still didn't hear your defense of The Hood not prosecuting his buddies? Do you not have any problem with him refusing to prosecute ADMITTED CRIMINALS? Give an answer. You can call me all the names you want but it won't

cover up your hypocrisy.

2/18/2008 2:29:26 PM

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JustAVoter wrote:

And if I'm a crook... who has been indicted by the Feds for judicial bribery.... and have given hundreds of thousands of \$\$\$ to Jim Hood... then I have Zero to worry about... because then Hood won't be coming after me at all.

2/18/2008 2:13:46 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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DeltaNative wrote:

General Hood - I have a solution: Why don't you post the settlement agreement you recently reached with State Farm on your website so that us "Little People" can decide for ourselves (move the Court to lift the seal if necessary)? Furthermore, did Judge Bramlette really "throw out" the lawsuit? That is an interesting spin on what happened. Placing your settlement agreement under seal is a perfect way to leave all of us wondering about what really happened. Finally, you have done such a poor job that you've succeeded in making State Farm look like a victim. That's quite an achievement. P.S. Did Courtney write that for you? Will you be able to remember?

2/18/2008 2:13:30 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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JustAVoter wrote:

If I'm a crook... and Jim Hood is coming after me... well, I have very little to worry about.

2/18/2008 2:02:56 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Gonna come a time when we all gonna hafta ante up. Ante up and kick in like men. LIKE MEN! You watch who you callin' a crook! If there's any crooks around here, it's YOU. Just a stupid, smart-mouthed, swamp-runnin' crook just like them boys at State Farm. Jim Hood is coming' for you and them blind bloggers won't ever see it comin'!

2/18/2008 1:39:06 PM

[Recommend \(13\)](#)

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JustAVoter wrote:

It should be no wonder to anyone that Judge Lackey didn't call our own Attorney General to report the attempted bribery, but rather called the Feds... nor should it be a wonder to any that the Feds didn't call Hood either. Speaks volumes.

2/18/2008 1:33:00 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

CoastalCowboy, the same goes for you. You are constantly posting about Barbour or Bush's cronies and how they are crooked and corrupt yet you have no problem with The Hood letting his buddies avoid prosecution by the state. This is very revealing of who you are as a person and shows that you are exactly as devoid of ethics and morality as I had you pegged to be.

2/18/2008 1:26:21 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

Bellesouth, So your position is that as long as the feds are prosecuting the case then Hood is free to ignore the violations of state law and let his buddies pass on their admitted violation of state law? That is your position? Your elected Attorney General can simply decide not to prosecute violations of state law because the perpetrators are under federal indictment? If this is your position then you have ZERO credibility in discussing political issues.

2/18/2008 1:16:50 PM

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POWER

Office of attorney general continues to defend Miss. citizens

JIM HOOD / • SPECIAL TO THE CLARION-LEDGER • FEBRUARY 18, 2008

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There's an old saying that goes: "You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life."

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As attorney general of the state of Mississippi, I have enemies - plenty of them.

The 2007 campaign season has long since ended. But for some who can find no solace in the outcome, their battle apparently continues. Last summer and fall, millions of dollars were spent trying to divert attention away from the real issues facing ordinary Mississippians, especially the problems plaguing our citizens on the Gulf Coast. Through a bombardment of television ads, they screamed about who you should blame for your troubles. They hollered at levels so high that nothing else could be heard above it. The shouting continues today.

But those who are yelling the loudest are those who are squealing the most - the big corporations, the insurance companies, the losers of a hard-fought political campaign. And they will continue to squeal because, at the end

of the day, they understand that the office of attorney general will never stop its fight to protect the citizens of Mississippi. They know that this office will never side with anyone over the interests of the hardworking families of our state.

They charge that I have improperly and unfairly targeted one of the nation's largest insurers and that I should leave them alone. The pundits and bloggers who will listen have fallen into step. It's not an overly complicated case. In fact, it comes down to one point: Simply doing the right thing. And when Hurricane

more c

[CHIP: He](#)

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Katrina leveled our Coast, leaving 30,000 policyholders homeless, destitute and desperate, the insurance company that was supposed to look after their interests failed them miserably. I repeatedly called upon this corporate giant to make good on its promises to our residents, but to no avail.

Specifically, this insurance company failed to establish an administrative procedure to reevaluate claims. It failed to establish an orderly, fair and prompt resolution of those claims. It failed to submit the procedure for approval to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi. It failed to make an offer of settlement to the policyholders based upon criteria and guidelines approved by the court.

If this corporation had met its obligations and complied with the orders of the court, Gulf Coast homeowners would have long ago been able to resume their lives and put the devastation and sorrow of August 2005 behind them. So if this company - or any other - believes that I am going to suddenly stop my pursuit of justice for our citizens and just walk away, it should radically alter its thinking.

In fact, allegations lodged against me by this insurer were shown to be false when a federal judge recently threw out a lawsuit it had filed against my office. And due to our efforts, the company now claims to have paid an additional \$70 million to Coast homeowners.

My entire professional career has been spent as a prosecutor - first as a special assistant with the attorney general's office, then as district attorney in north Mississippi, and now as attorney general. I do it because I have always had a sense of what it must be like to be a good citizen who suddenly finds himself alone, helpless and with nowhere to turn. I do it because the victims of injustice have just as much right as the big corporations to everything this state and nation have to offer. And no amount of criticism, threats or attacks will stop the office of attorney general from simply doing the right thing.

So the pundits will continue speculating. The bloggers will keep on blogging. And my critics will yell and squeal the loudest. They offer no solutions, of course, only empty words. But as for this office, the business of protecting Mississippi's families will continue over the din of those who would do them harm.

Jim Hood is attorney general for the state of Mississippi.

in your voice

READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY



CoastalCowboy wrote:

Ole Jim Hood could be a federal judge one day but ole Dunn won't. Paybacks are he11 boys. "Sen. David Vitter, R-La., angry that the nomination of Baton Rouge U.S. Attorney David Dugas to a federal judgeship is being held up by Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., tried to advance the nomination last week through a unanimous consent request on the Senate floor. He was rebuffed when Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., objected. Vitter said he still hopes Landrieu will relent and allow a hearing on the nominee. Landrieu has said she has serious concerns about the nomination of Dugas because he failed, as U.S. attorney, to investigate allegations from insurance industry whistleblowers that companies had engaged in an intentional policy to deny valid wind claims after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, in some cases passing along the liabilities to the government-subsidized Federal Flood Insurance Program."

2/18/2008 12:40:43 PM

[Recommend \(14\)](#)

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JustAVoter wrote:

Title should be "Office of attorney general continues to defend... Attorney General." Ironically, Hood decries the input of blogs, but I never would have found this were it not on a blog. Offended by much in this ridiculous piece, but mostly that our top law official would blatantly lie. Suit was thrown out?? The fact: "The Court further finds that, based on a confidential settlement agreement between the parties, which shall remain under seal, this case shall be dismissed with prejudice" and that the Letter Agreement which was being fought over between the two, was

ordered "unambiguous and enforceable" against Hood. A settlement between two parties is NOT "thrown out by the judge" as Hood would have less informed readers think. This "standing up for the little guy" routine that Hood attempts to spew holds little value to the Gulf Coasters whom Hood has failed miserably by botching this from Day One.

2/18/2008 12:30:01 PM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Welp pardners I see all the State Farm apologists have slithered out from the holes whinin' about Jlm Hood pickin' on them. This Cowboy never ceases to be amazed by all one track political hacks that have no problem throwin' every coastie overboard just to get at Jim Hood. Ole Dunn Lampton won't do his job so this Cowboy is glad Jlm Hood is tryin' to step in for him and tryin' to recoup all the taxpayer money that State Farm stole form the flood insurance program. The day will come when these Gucci suit wearin' crooks are brought to justice and this Cowboy hopes Jlm Hood gets the pleasure of doin' it.

2/18/2008 11:52:08 AM

[Recommend \(14\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

I don't see the point of his investigating what the Feds are already doing quite effectively.

2/18/2008 11:40:04 AM

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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TwoDogs wrote:

Personally, I think that AG Hood misses the entire point with this article. Not only is the whole thing written for the sole purpose of blaming everyone but himself, it completely ignores that fact of all of his in-state backers getting indicted for illegal activity involved in cases that came through the AG's office. This article is a smear campaign that ignores the real issue entirely. And I am not a big corporation, but I am working on it.

2/18/2008 11:19:18 AM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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Boogiewoogie wrote:

Jim Hood - you've lost the trust of Mississippians. If you want it back, a good start would be to first return all those campaign dollars you talk about - the ones that came to cthe AG campaign from your criminal buddies - those dollars that were laundered by the Democractic Attorney General's Association. Secondly, unseal the Natchez agreement with State Farm so Mississippians can see what REALLY transpired. (By the way, they paid my claim and I'm happy!)

2/18/2008 9:39:55 AM

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

Bellesouth, my OPINIONS (and others) are not governed by the American legal system. When I smell a rat I seek to find it and dispose of it. Do you not find it interesting that The Hood has not pursued charges against his friends - including some who have ADMITTED guilt? Not interesting to you? That seems fine and dandy to you?

2/18/2008 9:19:48 AM

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

I found this quote in a trial brief and I believe it says it just right. If only I could append it to the bottom of the column. "In the American legal system, criminal conduct must be proven and the intent/scienter requirements of the law cannot be disposed of with the two-step 1) presumed guilty and 2) guilt by association."

2/18/2008 8:57:29 AM

[Recommend \(14\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

Also, a fair minded person would likely say that it is in the "people's interest" to prosecute attorneys and judges that engage in bribery. You have not yet filed any state charges against your friends for their alleged wrongdoing. Put your money where your mouth is and prosecute them. Show that justice is blind. Or is it possible that you are afraid they will start singing if you decide to prosecute? In absence of justice we all must speculate...

2/18/2008 8:50:58 AM

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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andiamo wrote:

Was "doing the right thing" walking away from prosecuting SF for criminal acts? Hood, you are a loser.

2/18/2008 8:50:48 AM

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POWER

AG fears conflict in bribery case

Hood says friendships, feds' case preclude his involvement

LEAH RUPP • LEAH.RUPP@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 19, 2008

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If a case is brought by the state against attorneys involved in the recent judicial bribery scandal, it should be a district attorney that does it, Attorney General Jim Hood told The Clarion-Ledger editorial board Monday.

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His friendships forged with some of the troubled lawyers through years of working together on cases and their financial support on the campaign trail have created the "appearance of impropriety," he said.

"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."

Filing a state case now could hinder the federal case that's already under way as well, Hood said.

Hood, under fire for some of the campaign contributions, also stressed the need for campaign finance reform.

"This is a no-win situation. ... (Critics) know that, and they use it," he said.

In November, a grand jury indicted wealthy Oxford attorney Dickie Scruggs, his son and several others on federal bribery charges involving a lawsuit over \$26 million in legal fees connected to litigation on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims. Scruggs has pleaded not guilty.

Attorney Joey Langston has pleaded guilty to bribery charges in a separate case in Jackson.

Hood's close ties to Langston and Scruggs have been criticized, with some wondering why he hasn't filed charges as well. - Both Langston and Scruggs have contributed thousands of dollars to the Democratic attorney general's campaigns and worked with him on high-profile cases .

Hood, when pressed, said he believed any of the attorneys who are found guilty should go to prison.



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But because of the perceived conflicts of interest, it would be better for a district attorney to prosecute if a case comes from the state, he added.

"I've talked to the U.S. attorneys... and they're doing their jobs," Hood said Monday.

Usually state and federal cases are not brought at the same time, agreed Mississippi College law professor Matt Steffey.

"If there are going to be dual cases, the federal government usually goes first" because they have more and better resources such as authority to wiretap, Steffey said.

And unless something "falls through the cracks" on the federal prosecution, there may not be a reason to bring a case by the state at all, he added.

But Hood's "appearance of impropriety" argument holds less water, Steffey said, as "there are ways to handle these situations at the attorney general's office."

As far as campaign finance reform, Hood has proposed several changes that would strengthen the existing laws. The changes are in a bill sponsored by Rep. Tommy Reynolds, D-Water Valley.

Under the legislation, contributions sent to a candidate through a political action committee at that candidate's direction would be reported as a direct donation.

PACs are "causing most of the problems," said Hood, who blames the groups for driving up the cost of campaigns. Though corporate donations are capped, they can contribute as much as they want to PACS, who then divvy out money to candidates, Hood said, equating the practice used by some Republican-backed PACs to money laundering.

Critics say Hood's assertions are hypocritical, though, as he has been the beneficiary of PAC money, too.

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Texamigo wrote:

A few observations: 1) The feds don't want Hood within miles of this investigation; 2) Hood wouldn't recognize an appearance of impropriety if it slapped him in the face; 3) Hood could not competently investigate a sophisticated criminal enterprise if his life depended on it; and 4) if Hood's lips are movin', well, you know...

2/19/2008 5:03:06 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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slickdawg wrote:

Perhaps the title of the article should read "AG fears indictments in bribery scandal". As much money as he's been given by certain people, well, you always follow the money.....

2/19/2008 4:27:30 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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nrobertson56 wrote:

I say that this is probably happening now since "birds of a feather flock together."

2/19/2008 3:54:26 PM

[Recommend](#)

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toddler01 wrote:

Funny, isn't it. He had no problem sticking his nose in the Warren County case involving a state trooper last month. He is the top law enforcement officer in Mississippi. It should not matter his relationship with any of the suspects, if he can't do his job he needs to step down or aside.

2/19/2008 3:35:11 PM

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Now that is funny pardner!

2/19/2008 2:13:58 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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newtrick wrote:

"Blog Buzzards" - our new State bird!

2/19/2008 2:01:32 PM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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falcon47 wrote:

TO: jakesdad 1999 @ GMAIL CIV. 251-96-493, [depo] 251-98-1061 84 million, District Court presently Hattisburg 2:07 - cv- 343 Heads Up folks. believe it or not we all are having a great effect on the current matters. Just don't let up. Think how hard we all work for what we have and how wrong it is for someone to deny rights to the point of ruining our lives. twe all have friends this entire state is corrupted beyond belief. Mississippi is nothing more than a test bed for the devil. if these people get away with this it will infect the rest of the country. Enough is Enough. so i've read

2/19/2008 12:25:37 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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provdw wrote:

I would imagine Jim Hood would love to stay away from this conflict, Im interested to know how many MORE fine MS Lawyers and Judges will go down with this case, it should get very interesting, might have to build a new (country club) prison for all of them, send them to Parchment that is exactly what they deserve.

2/19/2008 12:02:57 PM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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Bellzabubba wrote:

Let the Justice Department do their work. If there are charges the state needs to bring in this case the AG will bring those charges and they will be procecuted. It's sad that the AG would tell the editorial board @ CL that PAC money is like money laundering. Still I don't think the AG will fail to procecute anyone based on the political affiliations.

2/19/2008 11:40:50 AM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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LibertyRdeath wrote:

As I said before the feds need help because..... Dickie and the Scruggs nation are all going to jail apparently with a lot of Judges, politicians from both parties and a few other soundrels. They have done a magnificent job that has amazed everone in the legal profession thus far. I know ever one in impatient to see the indictment list with its 50-100 names or whatever it is now wait and let them do their jobs first before you clamer for state involvement. They seem to be do just fine so far by themselves.

2/19/2008 11:07:37 AM

[Recommend \(8\)](#)

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humptydumpty wrote:

"...ruin the federal investigation..." ???????? Ruin it?

2/19/2008 11:02:38 AM

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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Paulywalnuts wrote:

Yes lets ruin the federal investigation to satisfy the idiots that want to make Jim Hood look bad. Great idea guys.

2/19/2008 10:53:29 AM

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

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shasar wrote:

My comment is in disagreement with donnyboy and because of it, he calls me a political hack. This is a comment page. Everyone gets to make a comment, should they wish to do so. No need for attacking someone because their opinion is different than another.

2/19/2008 10:19:46 AM

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

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humptydumpty wrote:

Come on...is it that ridiculous of an idea for the highest ranking law enforcement officer of the State to prusue state charges against people that have admitted guilt to bribing a judge??

2/19/2008 10:18:12 AM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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humptydumpty wrote:

oblivionhaha says: "...then, when he comes out and admits that those relationships would impede his ability to effectively prosecute them, you start having puppies" oblivionhaha...I think people are a little upset by the fact he, at the very least, won't find a special prosecutor to bring state charges against those that have admitted guilt and investigate the fed indictments on a state level. Not that he's friends w/ them. That's long been obvious.

2/19/2008 10:13:33 AM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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donnyboy wrote:

shasar, I can't even begin to explain how confused you are. Please re-read my post very slowly and very carefully in the context of the C-L article. Let me know when you get back on the right page...

2/19/2008 10:10:42 AM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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shasar wrote:

donnyboy - Barbour and Lott are republicans, you don't mention their names. In fact, you seem to take a note at me being a "hacker". You must be a republican. Well sir, I am a democrat! You protect yours and I'll protect mine.

2/19/2008 10:02:02 AM

[Recommend \(6\)](#)

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theoblivionhaha wrote:

It amazes me that for the past few months people on the CL message boards have been bashing Hood over and over and over for his relationships with these attorneys... then, when he comes out and admits that those relationships would impede his ability to effectively prosecute them, you start having puppies...bafoons.

2/19/2008 9:39:46 AM

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shasar wrote:

I can't help but think of the stupidity of people when they start bashing Hood. As if he knew who his friends and colleagues had for friends. Does anyone remember the Meat processor scandal and who pushed for it and who gained "something" from it? Does anyone think about all the money Northrup Grumann received from the state and who's family worked for that company for many years? Check out Trent Lott's financing pursuit for Northrup Grumann. Hood is probably the only good happening to the state of Mississippi for decades. The bashing is to keep him out of the voter's minds. Barbour does not want Hood in a higher position because he does not want to grapple with Hood. Barbour might lose those grapples.

2/19/2008 9:28:48 AM

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POWER

AG fears conflict in bribery case

Hood says friendships, feds' case preclude his involvement

LEAH RUPP • LEAH.RUPP@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 19, 2008

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"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."

Filing a state case now could hinder the federal case that's already under way as well, Hood said.

Hood, under fire for some of the campaign contributions, also stressed the need for campaign finance reform.

"This is a no-win situation. ... (Critics) know that, and they use it," he said.

In November, a grand jury indicted wealthy Oxford attorney Dickie Scruggs, his son and several others on federal bribery charges involving a lawsuit over \$26 million in legal fees connected to litigation on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims. Scruggs has pleaded not guilty.

Attorney Joey Langston has pleaded guilty to bribery charges in a separate case in Jackson.

Hood's close ties to Langston and Scruggs have been criticized, with some wondering why he hasn't filed charges as well. - Both Langston and Scruggs have contributed thousands of dollars to the Democratic attorney general's campaigns and worked with him on high-profile cases .

Hood, when pressed, said he believed any of the attorneys who are found guilty should go to prison.



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But because of the perceived conflicts of interest, it would be better for a district attorney to prosecute if a case comes from the state, he added.

"I've talked to the U.S. attorneys... and they're doing their jobs," Hood said Monday.

Usually state and federal cases are not brought at the same time, agreed Mississippi College law professor Matt Steffey.

"If there are going to be dual cases, the federal government usually goes first" because they have more and better resources such as authority to wiretap, Steffey said.

And unless something "falls through the cracks" on the federal prosecution, there may not be a reason to bring a case by the state at all, he added.

But Hood's "appearance of impropriety" argument holds less water, Steffey said, as "there are ways to handle these situations at the attorney general's office."

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Critics say Hood's assertions are hypocritical, though, as he has been the beneficiary of PAC money, too.

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Crassus wrote:

falcon, what case is it? Cite? You can email me if you like. jakesdad1999 at gmail.
2/19/2008 9:10:17 AM

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donnyboy wrote:

Does anyone here think for a second that Hood would wait for the feds to finish if these were Republican donors? His argument that he is not prosecuting because of an "appearance of impropriety" is BS pure and simple. The AG can appoint a special prosecutor to handle any case he has an inherent conflict in. Those of you still riding The Hood's bandwagon would be well advised to tread carefully. In all likelihood you will end up eating your words. Even jerenash (liberal blogger) can

see through The Hood's charade this time. We will see what comes out in the wash after the feds finish. If you have not done so already, go to Sid Salter's blog (on this web site) and read his entry from yesterday. While you are there you may also want to read jerenash's (the red/blue blog).

2/19/2008 9:04:39 AM

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koolaid wrote:

The Federal case against the lawyers in question will work its way through the system. After it is resolved, we will see where everything stands. Let Hood do his job. At least we are hearing from him on things. I haven't heard from Barbour since the "state of the state" address back in January. Does anyone know, has Barbour moved back to Washington? Is he actually still living?

2/19/2008 8:23:23 AM

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becca45 wrote:

It is with great concern of a multi-million dollar settlement to which countless fraudulent attempts have been made to deny awards to the rightful owners thereof that we have forwarded the issues and complaint to the AG Office in care of Mr. Hood. The matter is presently pending and heavily documented before the district court who appears to be reluctant to address a matter which Judge Judy could settle in 10 minutes. This matter involves Judge Bobby DeLaughter and is presently the obvious reason a suppression of actions will allow DeLaughter to walk. This matter involves billions, how many friends could one buy with that?

2/19/2008 8:17:52 AM

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falcon47 wrote:

Let me get this, straight in 1995 before Judge James Graves my family acquired an \$ 84 million dollar settlement. Then millions more were added along with fraudulent claims which failed. At this point we realize by law the entirety of awards belong to my family. Upon Judge Graves' move to Supreme Court our awards were held by Judge Tomie Green. Documents which prove these statements were submitted to Judge Green in 2005 at which time she changed CIV # and transferred the awards to the infamous Judge Bobby DeLaughter who after 2 years dismissed our claims, yet, kept the awards to divide among attorneys for claims they admittedly do not possess. Being put through hell regarding this lawsuit it's no comfort that our rights are denied by some monetary friendship what in the hell has happened to justice? We hope Jim gives this consideration.

2/19/2008 8:07:39 AM

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solutions1 wrote:

This is basically what Jim Hood said, "They donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to my campaign! Why would I want to prosecute them? I can not hire outside counsel to prosecute them either. All of my college buddies and close friends have been indicted or have plead guilty! There is no one else out there right now that I trust to pay \$14 million of the state's money to go after them!" We do need some campaign donation reform but in Mississippi I am not worried about the corporations as much as I am worried about these lawyers that pump in millions of dollars to Jim Hood and the other politicians. Cap the lawyers first then the corporations!!!

2/19/2008 7:50:49 AM

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Crassus wrote:

1. Ms. Rupp, DAGA made \$400,000 in donations to Hood. Its donations were always made within a few days of when Scruggs et al donated money in the SAME amount to DAGA. 2. Someone should've asked him how a DA can prosecute when compromised such as Hinds County since Peters backed Smith and headed his transition team.

2/19/2008 7:48:46 AM

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kolivieri wrote:

I commented over in Sid's blog last night. I'm still absolutely dumbfounded by Hood's comments. Ethics obviously mean nothing to Hood. If someone breaks the law - it shouldn't matter if they are friends or not. "Shouldn't matter" - Very sad day for the ethics of Jim Hood. As an elected official, can we get rid of him for not doing his job?

2/19/2008 7:46:28 AM

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cardinal0602 wrote:

Leah-- Correction. Langston and Scruggs have not donated thousands of dollars to DAGA....they have donated HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of dollars in total. Big difference.

2/19/2008 7:33:18 AM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Well lookie here boys we gots us a real news story. Here goes for you slow readers and right wing political hacks that are the newest members of the State Farm Lackey club. "Usually state and federal cases are not brought at the same time, agreed Mississippi College law professor Matt Steffey. "If there are going to be dual cases, the federal government usually goes first" because they have more and better resources such as authority to wiretap, Steffey said. And unless something "falls through the cracks" on the federal prosecution, there may not be a reason to bring a case by the state at all, he added." Alright pardners, tear this Cowboy apart for not joinin' your trailer park lynchin' mob. Next time learn to think for yourselves and you'll stay off the Good Neighbor primrose path. Gitty Yup.

2/19/2008 5:58:00 AM

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thestog wrote:

Let's eliminate PACs, whether pro Republican or Democrat or supposedly non-partisan, giving to candidates. Let those individuals contributing to PACs contribute direct to the candidate of their choice.

2/19/2008 5:39:33 AM

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yazoskeptic wrote:

Instead of having a DA prosecute these attorneys maybe Hood's office should hire outside counsel to do their job for them. Or is that against his policy now?

2/19/2008 5:34:06 AM

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AG: Why not remove 'appearance of conflict?'

THE CLARION-LEDGER • FEBRUARY 20, 2008

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ADVERTIS

He's powerless to do anything, it appears.

But wait a minute. That might be true for Jim Hood the person, but what about Jim Hood the state's top legal officer?

If there is an appearance of a conflict with the attorney general, does the office of the attorney general just shut down? If Hood the person is too familial to prosecute, that shouldn't prevent justice from being served on behalf of the citizens of this state.

Hood should be applauded for his honesty in admitting that he is too close to those involved to bring state charges. But that's only half the duty. The other half is to remove the potential for a conflict and let justice be done by appointing an independent counsel. By choosing someone impartial to assess and bring, if applicable, state criminal charges, the state is represented, as it should be, and it also ensures that the local district attorney is supported.

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Hood isn't powerless, after all. It's totally in his hands how the state proceeds.

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mjcIII wrote:

Hey bellesouth, thanks avoiding the issues addressed in my post to you. Helloooooo?? I'll take your off-the-point response as complete agreement with my statement. Thank you.

2/21/2008 3:34:06 PM

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HappytobeMississippian wrote:

Why not? Because he is corrupt as a get out. Half of the folks of this state are blooming idiots for putting this corrupt henchman hood in office. The folks in his hometown already know what a scumball he is, too bad the rest of the state doesn't.

2/20/2008 10:18:22 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

hey mjcII or whatever your name is, so we only accept opinions from Republicans here? Helloooooo!

2/20/2008 9:38:47 PM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

mjcIII, it's usually a citation from WIKI, so a JFP cite is kinda an improvement!

2/20/2008 4:24:21 PM

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mjcIII wrote:

Hey bellesouth, nice comment from the MS Democratic Party. I have asked many times why Hood all the sudden ended his glorious and courageous quest to make public Barbour's blind trust. Hood's quest for "sunshine" began in election season and ended promptly on election day. What does that tell you? It was all politics and

no substance. Jim Hood's own brother, the Director of the MS Ethics Commission, even said that the blind trust was valid. But whenever the Dems get in trouble (and that's a hell of a lot lately) they bring out the red herring and try change the subject or make ridiculous excuses. I'm not sure which your last comment qualifies as.....probably all of the above. Did you get that MS Democratic Mantra from the JFP (Jackson Free Press)? If you have to start quoting the JFP for ammo then you've got bigger problems than your entire Democratic party being indicted for corruption. Either start praying or keep your head in the sand.

2/20/2008 2:52:34 PM

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markF wrote:

Do you wonder why Judge Lackey went to the Feds instead of the Mississippi Attorney General, a prosecutor whom he has known for years? Because he has known him for years.

2/20/2008 1:37:18 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

The Republican Party attack on Hood is a hypocritical political stunt, Dowdy said. Rather than engaging in phony political attacks, the Mississippi Republican Party should be for sunshine on Gov. Barbour's blind trust so the people of Mississippi can know all of the facts behind (the former tobacco lobbyist's) finances when he vetoed the tobacco tax and directed hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts to clients of his firm. Though neither the ethics commissioner or the state auditor, so far, has made any effort to clear the air regarding the possible motivation behind some of Barbour's vetoes, State Auditor Phil Bryant has taken up the assault on the profitable WorldCom/MCI settlement. Bryant, who is running for lieutenant governor on a ticket to virtually marry the Senate to the governor's office under Barbour, threatened to sue Langston in Rankin County Circuit Court to force him to return the \$14 million in fees Worldcom/MCI paid his firm. -- jfp

2/20/2008 11:54:31 AM

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JustAVoter wrote:

Forgive me if Hood's self-created situation elicits no sympathy from me. As Hood was presented over and over with the evidence of the plan of outside counsel and campaign contributors vicious cycle that runs through his office (ie OUR office)... he proclaimed repeatedly that those campaign contributions had No Effect Whatsoever on him or his decisions as AG. If not for this "relationship," the outside counsel contracts and control over this elected official, what do you think Scruggs, Langston, Patterson, Balducci, etc., were purchasing with those dollars? The got what they paid for---control over Jim Hood---and the Man and the Attorney General are one in the same. Their contributions were apparently well spent, as they're getting exactly what it was intended to do---keep him from touching them. His declarations of NO INFLUENCE were quite simply lies.

2/20/2008 11:24:44 AM

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georgemarlowe wrote:

I still say old Jimmy "Boy" Hood is setting at the top of one of the biggest bonfires MS has ever seen and the smoke is pouring out all around this bonfire. I just hope the Fed's aren't sharing any information with Hood.

2/20/2008 10:44:14 AM

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[robertewing](#) wrote:

HALITOSIS The more A/G Hood talks, the more the air around him smells. There are a host of highly ethical attorneys that would serve as an independent counsel. Andy Taggart has offered to serve for free. Mr. Hood's personal problem with prosecution only adds to the perception that justice in Mississippi is up for sale. Too many lawyers and judges are in jail or headed there for the general population to believe otherwise.

2/20/2008 8:27:01 AM

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LFLandon wrote:

If Hood is using the damned if I do and damned if I don't position, anyone he might appoint would also be suspect. This independent counsel should be appointed by someone else other than Hood. I feel no sympathy for Hood. He surrounded himself and accepted donations from these people. If Hood knew them so well and was so close to them, he must have known what they were capable of doing --- relatives almost always have an insight into other family members thought processes. Applauded for his honesty? What honesty? What other excuse could he have used? He had no choice but to say what he did. Someone needs to open a window and let in some fresh air. These quarters have become rather stuffy.

2/20/2008 8:05:43 AM

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POWER

Scruggs defense: Wiretapping should not have been allowed

BY JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 20, 2008

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OXFORD — The defense for Oxford lawyer Dickie Scruggs said today wiretap and search warrants during the investigation into Scruggs should not have been allowed because the affidavit left out conflicting information.

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U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers asked the defense for a detailed list of that information before adjourning a hearing today. The hearing will continue tomorrow.

Earlier in the day, Biggers refused to dismiss judicial bribery charges against Scruggs.

This morning Timothy Balducci testified he knew he was doing something unethical that might result in the loss of his law license when he had a conversation with Circuit Judge Henry Lackey about ruling in favor of Scruggs.

Later, when asked by U.S. Assistant Attorney Bob Norman if he thought Scruggs would bribe a judge, Balducci testified about an offer made to Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Bobby DeLaughter.



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"I'd been privy to another matter in which Mr. Scruggs bribed another judge in another case," he said.

When asked if it was a monetary bribe, Balducci said DeLaughter was offered the influence of Scruggs to put him on the list for a federal judgeship.

"(Then-U.S. Sen. Trent) Lott called Mr. DeLaughter at Mr. Scruggs request," Balducci said, in return for a favorable outcome for Scruggs.

Lott, Scrugg's brother-in-law, called DeLaughter regarding the judgeship but recommended Sul Ozerden for the post.

Balducci testified he saw drafted copies of orders DeLaughter was going to enter. DeLaughter has denied taking a bribe from Scruggs.

Balducci, who already has pleaded guilty to a scheme to bribe Lackey, was questioned this morning by the prosecution. He recalled a meeting at Scruggs' law firm involving him, Scruggs, Scruggs' son, Zach, law partner Sidney Backstrom and former state Auditor Steve Patterson. At some point the conversation turned to a legal fees dispute involving a Hurricane Katrina case.

Balducci said this morning Zach Scruggs, who knew Lackey was a mentor to Balducci, suggested Balducci have an off-the-record conversation with Lackey and persuade him to rule in their favor.

After that discussion, Balducci met with Lackey on March 28. During the conversation, he said he mentioned the possibility of Lackey, who was nearing retirement, coming to work for Scruggs. He said it wasn't intended as a quid pro quo but understands how Lackey may have interpreted it that way.

"Did Judge Lackey make you commit a crime you didn't want to commit?" U.S. Assistant Attorney Bob Norman asked Balducci.

"No, sir," Balducci said.

Balducci said in a September meeting with Lackey that the judge said he was in a financial bind and needed \$40,000. Balducci said he took that to mean that Lackey wanted the money to enter an order in Scruggs' favor. Lackey already had contacted the FBI at this point.

"I said I would help him. I said it would not be a problem," Balducci said.

Balducci then contacted Backstrom, who later said, "Yes, we want to go forward, you're covered."

Scruggs' lawyers insist their client had no idea Balducci paid \$40,000 in bribes to Lackey.

Dickie and Zach Scruggs and Backstrom have pleaded not guilty to charges they schemed to bribe Lackey to rule in Scruggs' favor in a \$26 million legal fees dispute involving Hurricane Katrina victims.

Tuesday prosecutors released transcripts of taped conversation that show Dickie Scruggs edited an order from Lackey before the judge was supposed to rule in the attorney's favor, according to transcripts of taped conversations released by prosecutors.

FBI agents are continuing to investigate the unfolding judicial bribery scandal but are spending much of their energy now preparing for the March 31 trial - which defendants want moved out of Mississippi.

Prosecutors have made a Nov. 1 transcript public, detailing conversations that Balducci made while wearing a wire and cooperating with the FBI. In the transcript, Balducci told Backstrom and Zach Scruggs that he had dropped off an order from Lackey that was going to be filed in the \$26 million case until opposing counsel Grady Tollison filed a number of motions.

Lackey has "prepared another order and ... I got it," Balducci said. "Everything's still cool."

Balducci told the pair that Lackey was moving the case to arbitration. Backstrom apparently read the proposed order and remarked, "The plaintiff never requested relief by this court or any relief by this court or any other court but chose to disregard the clear language and intent of the joint venture agreement. ... That doesn't make any sense. It's not a bad thing for us, but doesn't make any sense."

Zach Scruggs complained that e-mails from the legal fees dispute case were becoming public.

Backstrom suggested that after Lackey entered the order, "We say we would like this to be sealed, because there's a bunch of s--- in here that is just inflammatory and not helpful to us."

In what prosecutors maintain is a reference to a bribe, Balducci told Zach Scruggs and Backstrom: "The other piece of the puzzle I hadn't told you yet is ... I've gotta go back for another delivery ... of sweet potatoes down there."

"Mm-hmm," Backstrom replied.

"So get it right," Balducci said. "Get it how you want it 'cause we're paying for it to get it done right."

After apparently reading the order aloud, Backstrom said, "That's good enough to me. I wouldn't change anything."

Balducci then talked with Dickie Scruggs about the \$26 million case, saying he dropped off an order for Lackey to sign. "It was gonna show up in the court file, and everything was gonna be hunky dory," Balducci said.

Before that could happen, the opposing counsel, Tollison, filed motions that landed on Lackey's desk, Balducci said. "Everything's fine. He's got it ... handled." Balducci said Lackey had drafted a new order to answer Tollison's filings.

Dickie Scruggs apparently began reading the order, critiquing it. "That last sentence is not really a sentence," he said.

Apparently reading a portion of the order out loud, he said, "The actions of the plaintiffs, contrary to the clear meaning of the contract between the parties ... I think he needs a colon there."

Balducci asked, "Is that acceptable?"

"Sure," Scruggs replied.

Prosecutors maintain Scruggs hid the bribes through payments to Balducci as a jury consultant in a different case.

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TRUTHOUTLET wrote:

PICK PICK PICK

2/20/2008 8:54:23 PM

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HappytobeMississippian wrote:

Hope this does not turn out like the OJ trial.

2/20/2008 7:27:04 PM

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Hood: The good ship 'appearance of impropriety' already sailed

SID SALTER • [SSALTER@CLARIONLEDGER.COM](mailto:ssalter@clarionledger.com) • FEBRUARY 20, 2008

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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 and 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.

Contact Perspective Editor Sid Salter at (601) 961-7084 or e-mail ssalter@clarionledger.com. Visit his blog at <http://www.clarionledger.com>.

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bellesouth wrote:

moselle, he's got your back whether you know it or not.

2/20/2008 9:32:39 PM

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redneck wrote:

how much did the lawyer who caused the clarke county supervisors to claim all the countys private roads and drives public sans the courts notice or payment pay into mr. hoods coffers,or the county prosecutor who caused citizens complaints for refusal to perform the duties of office by this bunch of outlaws to disappear or the district attorney for lauderdale and clarke county to cause this citizens complaint for obstruction of justice to also dissappear, as well as the entirety of the judicial system who could find no judicial misconduct in the illegal taking , which amounts to a conspiracy against the rights of we the people which could land the entire bunch behind federal bars for 10 or more years. this bench-bar conspiracy is obvious apparently to everyone except the clarion ledger and mr. hood.

2/20/2008 6:09:25 PM

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moselle wrote:

mr. hood has serious problems, and he tries to convince us that he is honest while anyone who questions his actions is against the "working people of mississippi", i am glad i don't have to have mr. hood for a personal attorney!!!

2/20/2008 4:14:45 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

rscool, there is nothing new here in terms of the mud slinging by his opponents. The only difference is that Scruggs and Langston have been indicted, as if he knew they were going to be. Nevertheless, this is the same ole vitriol that has been spewed at him for over a year. The people have spoken. In terms of this case, it is well understood that the state should stay out of the fray until the feds are finished with their job. Then the state can come in and see what they can do. Otherwise, it would just complicate things.

2/20/2008 3:36:17 PM

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rscool wrote:

If Hood any political aspirations in the future, he has waved goodbye to them with his hypocritical stances on PAC money and his psychotic ranting against journalists and bloggers. He could have done a much better job in explaining his situation, but he just had to take a jab at Republicans for accepting the same type of money he has accepted. And Sid, it seems any time you call Jim Hood out on anything, which is required more and more these days, you get attacked by witless and ignorant folks who will never admit there has been any impropriety with their parties elected officials. I read lots of blogs from all over and I have to say you are the most objective writer in the state. No one gets a free pass from you and credit is always given where it is due.

2/20/2008 1:18:24 PM

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longtimereader wrote:

Belle, he won his election in no small part because of the \$400,000 passed through the Democratic attorney general pac. Scruggs and his associate gave the money to the pac and they turned around and gave it to Hood for his election campaign expense. If he had any integrity he would return the \$400,000 as one of the donors has pleaded guilty to trying to bribe a judge and Scruggs is under federal indictment for the same. If he is worried about what people think about him prosecuting them, why not be concerned about the apparent conflict of keeping the money and not indicting them.

2/20/2008 10:59:49 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

Uh, Ya! And wasn't he just re-elected? Sounds like sour grapes to me.

2/20/2008 10:45:19 AM

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RightThinking wrote:

"Who's he drawing fire from Sid? Who, but you? You know Sid, you're drawing fire for creating a scandal where there is none" Who? Seriously, who? Believe me, bellesouth, there are many, many people in this state and around the country who find it unbelievable that the state's AG can boldly claim he won't prosecute his friends. It's likewise unbelievable that you would have no problem with this. Keep up the good work, Sid. Contrary to what this writer said, there are many, many

people out here who still care about our state and don't appreciate arrogant political figures using their considerable power to keep their friends and financial backers safe from being prosecuted for their criminal activity.

2/20/2008 10:35:11 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

"Hood is drawing fire for not filing state charges against his campaign finance sugar daddies." Who's he drawing fire from Sid? Who, but you? There you go again with your straw man argument. You know Sid, you're drawing fire for creating a scandal where there is none. I don't think you should be allowed to write about Hood anymore because obviously there is nothing he can do or say that would please you. You are horribly biased against him. The Clarion Ledger should not let their paper be used by you and your republican hacks to try and destroy someone's career because you don't like them.

2/20/2008 10:19:28 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Sid said, "Thank God Jim Hood didn't take any campaign cash from Edgar Ray Killen..." That statement really sums it up!!!! Well said!

2/20/2008 9:51:37 AM

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Hood: The good ship 'appearance of impropriety' already sailed

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Supercynic wrote:

Mr. Salter, I agree that Mr. Hood should either appoint special counsel or make sure the local authorities look into this. But that option wasn't part of your original post, so I couldn't tell what you wanted Mr. Hood to do. Anyway, that ship has sailed.

2/24/2008 12:53:20 AM

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bilray wrote:

as usual, the "leaders" of the state of Mississippi have become an embarrassment to the citizenry of the fine state we call home. Obviously, Jim Hood is not going to enforce the laws he pledged to follow when took the oath of office. His pledge does not state that he will prosecute only those he deems appropriate, but all who abuse and break the laws of the state. Between Jim Hood, Billy McCoy, and Rep. Blackmon from Canton, we have no reliable representation in the state government. It is the same old "good ole boy" politics that Mississippi has always been reputed to have. Seems as though nothing ever changes and we will remain on the bottom of every list, as usual.....

2/23/2008 9:57:29 AM

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PikeCounty wrote:

bellesouth is Donna Ladd. Classy.

2/23/2008 7:34:21 AM

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FarmerJim wrote:

It is obivous that Mr. Hood has lost the confidence of the majority of the people of Mississippi and should step down as Attorney General

2/22/2008 9:53:34 PM

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redneck wrote:

THE CLARION LEDGER IS MANAGED NEWS MUCH LIKE OUR MANAGED JUDICIAL SYSTEM, LETS KEEP THE PEOPLE BLIND AND STUPID TO TRUTH. ITS A SAD DAY INDEED WHEN YOU HAVE TO EDIT THE COMMENTS OF THE BLOGGERS AND REMOVE THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR OUTLAW GOVT. COMRADE SALTER IF I HAVE LOST MY RIGHTS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY DUE PROCESS AND EQUAL PROTECTION WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU OR ANYONE RETAIN THOSE RIGHTS. YOU AND YOURS ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THAT LOSS BY MAINTAINING YOUR SILENCE AND NOW ADDING INSULT TO INJURY. REMOVING WHAT YOU FIND OFFENSIVE. FROM THE BLOGS. THEREBY KEEPING THE PROPAGANDA MACHINE OILED AND THE TRUTH SILENCED

2/22/2008 5:41:55 PM

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Airwolf wrote:

Bellesouth just keep drinking that coolaid and wearing your rose colored glasses. Do you you get dear?

2/22/2008 4:39:59 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Bellesouth...Please look into the camera and say, "I am not smarter than a 5th grader."

2/22/2008 3:32:16 PM

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sidsalter wrote:

Bellesouth: Please crank your trolling motor...

2/22/2008 12:26:24 PM

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sidsalter wrote:

SUPERCYNIC: Simple. Hood can both follow the law and his profession's ethics by putting another attorney in charge of prosecuting Langston, et all, on state charges. An outside counsel, if you will, or an assistant AG. A special assistant AG. Why would that be so difficult for Mr. Hood if he had any interest whatsoever in seeing his friends face justice for their apparent crimes?

2/22/2008 12:24:54 PM

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Supercynic wrote:

Mr. Salter, you wrote, "From a legal standpoint, lawyers I trust tell me Hood's telling the God's truth about [not being able to prosecute people he's too close to.] But selling a legal precept like that to laymen is a tough sell." So, my question to you is What is the attorney general (a lawyer) supposed to do? Follow the law, which your lawyer-friends tell you he's doing by not prosecuting his friends or do what's politically expedient but unethical, which is to prosecute his friends? And if he chose the latter, would you dog him daily, claiming that he's not doing enough to prosecute them? By the way, and to add some levity to this, it's time to put to rest the "ship has sailed" phrase. I read you enough to know that you need to break out a new euphemism.

2/20/2008 10:18:30 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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"That case is under active investigation of the Public Integrity Division of the Justice Department as we speak," Dawson said.

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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

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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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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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

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(9\)](#)

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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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mjclll 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

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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mjclll 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

[Recommend \(7\)](#)

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mjclll 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

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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AG powers: Office should be able to wiretap

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Attorney General Jim Hood has been pilloried for not prosecuting state charges against trial lawyers and others who have already admitted their guilt on federal judicial bribery charges.

ADVERTISEMENT Hood argues that he's too close to those figures - from prior outside counsel contracts he awarded the attorneys and from campaign contributions he accepted from them - to be able to prosecute them. From an ethical standpoint, Hood is likely personally prohibited from prosecuting his campaign contributors and legal associates.

But the Mississippi attorney general's office is indeed not prohibited from prosecuting state judicial bribery charges against anyone - at least it shouldn't be - so the criticism of Hood for facilitating state prosecutions in the judicial bribery cases by other attorneys on his staff is indeed justified.

Yet the Mississippi House Judiciary A Committee this week voted down a bill that would have extended wiretap authority to the attorney general's office in crimes other than drug offenses. Hood sought that authority for use in white-collar crime cases like the current federal judicial bribery scandal.

Republican representatives led the charge in voting against Hood's bill by a 9-5 margin, but the committee has a 15-9 Democratic majority and is chaired by Rep. Ed Blackmon, D-Canton. The Democratic majority on the committee shares responsibility for killing the bill with the GOP for letting it die of inattention.

Hood's critics think the attorney general is refusing to prosecute his political sugar daddies on the judicial bribery case. Many of those critics are Republican legislators.

But Hood could not have placed the wiretaps that the feds are using in the Oxford judicial bribery investigation of trial lawyer Richard Scruggs and several of his associates if he had wanted to because he doesn't have the authority. The failure of the House to grant Hood or future attorney generals that authority will leave that office dependent on federal authorities to actively pursue public corruption cases.

There are two political factors at play here.

One, Hood's political critics are enjoying the fact that he's twisting in the winds while the feds prosecute his

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largest campaign contributors on charges of trying to bribe a judge.

Second, legislators know that wiretaps can be used to pursue public corruption charges against all kinds of public officials - including state legislators.

But it is hypocritical in the extreme to criticize Hood on the one hand for not being tough enough on public corruption charges and then vote or fail to vote to give him the tools he needs to successfully pursue such cases without federal assistance.

Hood won't always be attorney general. Legislators should empower the office, not the man. The office deserves the same arrows in the investigative quiver as the feds possess if Hood's actions or inactions are going to be compared to that of the feds.

in your voice

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Thousands of comedians starving on the street, and you make a joke. Like I said, comedy.

2/23/2008 10:18:37 AM

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

How he could have inititaded it pardner? Asked everyone pretty please to have an investigator present while that crook Balducci was butterin' up the judge? Eli pardner you and yer runnin' buds are pure bufoons and folks see through yer BS. Koolaid we have less than a year to go before them national republicans are pushed far into the minority and the neocon trash at the Justice Department is

curbed. Yippee Kia Yea!

2/23/2008 7:26:39 AM

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koolaid wrote:

I have now wiretapped everybody's phone. I am listening. Haley, Rosemary, MDA, Salter, I can hear all of your calls. When the Democrats win the White House back this November, I will turn all of these recordings over to the NEW DEMOCRAT US DISTRICT ATTORNEYS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2/23/2008 12:11:06 AM

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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Elibaby42 wrote:

"...would have Jim Hood ruin a federal investigation " NUFF said, you said it, I didn't! He could have initiated it. Hummm.....this is truly comical.

2/22/2008 7:38:34 PM

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Paulywalnuts wrote:

Whats funny is you idiots would have Jim Hood ruin a federal investigation simply to make him look bad. Where would he get the evidence baby? From the feds who wiretapped everyone? You guys on the Mississippi right exhibit pure genius. You are a bigger fool than Salter.

2/22/2008 7:33:58 PM

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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cardnal0602 wrote:

Cowboy: Have you fallen out of your tree??? I know it isn't a horse since only people with good sense may ride those. But I digress.... The whole reason all the trailer trash hood haters (as you are so fond of saying) are upset with the wig-hat, I mean mullett, I mean the Attorney General of the Great State of Mississippi, is that evidence of wrongdoing DID surface and he is doing nothing about it. By your own statement, he should appoint a special prosecutor. It wouldn't be a hard case. THEY'VE ALREADY ADMITTED TO THE CRIMES. The only question to these ADMITTED felons should be: and how would you like your soap today? on a rope? I'm done. Although I have a sneaky suspicion that you are writing these insane ramblings simply because you have no life and you enjoy watching the 'rednecks' get fired up. Happy Friday evening to you. I'm off to supper club.

2/22/2008 7:33:38 PM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Funny stuff! "...and two maybe he could catch some white collar criminals includin' appointing a special prosecutor if evidence of wrongdoin' surfaced among his campaign contributors." He can already appoint a special prosecutor. He just fails to do so....SHOCKING, don't cha think?? Thanks, it is about the office. Shor' is, cowboy! And the office (THE PEOPLE OF MISSISSIPPI) aren't being represented.

2/22/2008 6:50:13 PM

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Eli pardner what would he do with that power? Well one it ain't no exclusive power but rather one with judicial oversight so it would be hard two abuse and two maybe he could catch some white collar criminals includin' appointing a special prosecutor if evidence of wrongdoin' surfaced among his campaign contributors. Like the edfitorial said this about empowerin' the office not the man and your reply shows

why this is really a political issue against Jim Hood and thus complete BS. As far as Belle goes I like her just fine pardner along with Koolaid and many others. The little lady wouldn't take nicely though if me and Belle became a couple though she is happy to have us as internet friends like me and my main girl Janabelle. Thanks for stoppin' in pardner.

2/22/2008 6:35:27 PM

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Oh, forgot, cowboy, that WIRETAP technology probably only works on republican lines.

2/22/2008 6:33:32 PM

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koolaid wrote:

I want "mjclll"s phone wiretapped! I suspect an ongoing political criminal enterprise.

2/22/2008 6:23:44 PM

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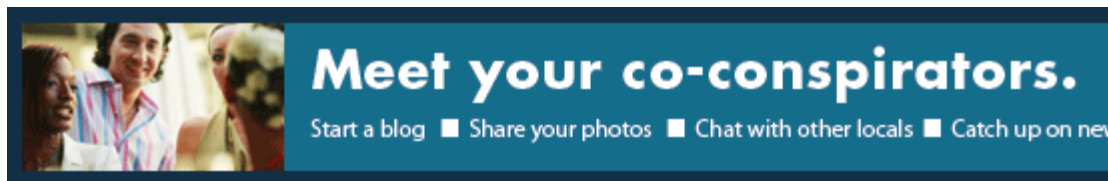
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POWER

Scruggs prosecutors want Lott testimony

Former senator needed to confirm other alleged "bad acts"

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@JACKSON.GANNETT.COM • FEBRUARY 22, 2008

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OXFORD — Former U.S. Sen. Trent Lott will testify against his brother-in-law, noted lawyer Dickie Scruggs, at his upcoming judicial bribery trial - if federal prosecutors get their wish.



And U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran could be called as a defense witness.

That's because prosecutors want to use evidence of other alleged "bad acts" by Scruggs at his March 31 trial - specifically an alleged Hinds County bribery scheme in 2006 involving Scruggs, Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter and others.

"That case is under active investigation of the Public Integrity Division of the Justice Department as we speak," Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Dawson said in a hearing Thursday.

Scruggs, son Zach Scruggs, and law partner Sidney Backstrom, all of Oxford, have pleaded not guilty to charges in connection with a \$26 million legal-fees dispute involving litigation on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims.

If convicted on all counts, each faces up to 75 years in prison and \$1.5 million in fines.

New Albany lawyer Timothy Balducci and former State Auditor Steve Patterson have pleaded guilty in the Lafayette County case and are expected to testify against the defendants.



THE PLAY
The Defer

Dickie Scruggs, state's richest federal grand jury member

Zach Scruggs indicted on bribery charges

Sidney Backstrom same charges

Pleading guilty to bribery

Timothy Balducci partners in bribery authorities \$40,000 bond

Steve Patterson office in Lafayette County

Regarding the Hinds County case, Balducci testified they schemed to influence DeLaughter to rule in Dickie Scruggs' favor. Rather than money, DeLaughter was promised he would be considered for a federal judgeship, Balducci said.

Balducci's guilty to w

He testified that Scruggs told him and Langston he had asked Lott to put DeLaughter on a list to be considered for that judgeship.

Joey Lang represente guilty to cc

Lott did call DeLaughter in what his aides have described as a "courtesy call."

Litigants A

He recommended Sul Ozerden, who was eventually nominated by President Bush and confirmed by the Senate.

Alvin Luck over attor

DeLaughter has denied taking a bribe and said if anyone had approached him, he would have reported it immediately.

William Rc sued Scru attorney fe wasn't owe had paid. '

On Thursday, The Wall Street Journal Law Blog reported that federal authorities are investigating whether Lott played a knowing role in the alleged scheme.

John Jone lawsuit Wi is suing St Katrina liti

Dawson said Lott is not a target.

Lott's aide Bret Boyles said Thursday, "Lott's office agrees with Tom Dawson's comment."

[FILE DOV Transcript](#)

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers said he should rule by Tuesday on most matters.

Booneville lawyer Joey Langston has pleaded guilty to his involvement in a scheme to get DeLaughter to rule in Scruggs' favor in a Hinds County lawsuit involving Scruggs' former law partner, William Roberts Wilson Jr., who was seeking about \$15 million in attorney fees for asbestos litigation.

[more r Alert issu](#)

In order to influence DeLaughter, Langston said he initially paid \$50,000 in cash to DeLaughter's close friend and former boss, one-time District Attorney Ed Peters.

[Suicide re 5th Circui](#)

Peters received that cash in an envelope and was told the cash wouldn't be reported to the IRS, Assistant U.S. Attorney Bob Norman said in Thursday's hearing.

[Sex offen custody](#)

Those involved in the scheme "wanted Bobby DeLaughter to ... shade the law," Norman said. "There was every reason to believe the Scruggs law firm would prevail in both cases, but that wasn't good enough. They had to have an edge."

[Clarke Cc](#)

After DeLaughter's favorable ruling for Scruggs, Langston has said he received \$3 million from Scruggs as part of a "reverse contingency fee," which he split with Patterson and Peters.

ADVERTIS

Scruggs' lawyer, John Kecker of San Francisco, suggested Thursday this scheme was something Balducci and Langston "cooked up" on their own and that Scruggs knew nothing about this.

Introducing these allegations at the March 31 trial will "swamp the case," confuse jurors and prejudice the defendants, Kecker said.

Prosecutors said testimony regarding this matter will be short and involve only a few witnesses - Lott, Langston and Balducci.

Kecker said he would call as witnesses: Sen. Cochran, Peters, DeLaughter and an unnamed lawyer who nominated DeLaughter for the federal bench.

Kecker said the facts suggest Scruggs and DeLaughter did nothing wrong. "Judge DeLaughter did an excellent job. It was a contract case," he said. "Wilson wasn't owed any more money."

Lott lacked the power to nominate DeLaughter, Kecker said. "Recommending a good judge to the federal bench is not a crime."

Lawyers for Zach Scruggs and Backstrom argued Thursday their clients will be prejudged by being tried with Dickie Scruggs. Backstrom's lawyer, Frank Trapp, waved recent copies of The Clarion-Ledger, saying defendants are battling a "tsunami of ill will" and negative publicity.

During Thursday's hearing, Biggers denied the defense's request to throw out the bribery charges and to move the trial out of Mississippi. Kecker argued that defendants can't get a fair trial here because of the

extensive negative publicity.

When the judge asked where the trial should be held, Kecker offered a suggestion.

"Let's go to New Orleans," he said. "There are a lot of distractions, and they need the business."

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

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falcon47 wrote:

Scruggs wants Lott to testify. yea, well who doesn't ? perhaps we could help with a list of others. how about David Baira, and has DeLaughter been questioned? there must be a connection here. has anyone ever check to see if the huge book sells are related to actual events or case's. John's last book sure hits close to home. Chemicals, crooks, corruption and an appeal to a higher court. before a Judge who was placed their by the Defending attorneys to stop any action within the courts. I do hope there's more to come

2/22/2008 11:54:19 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

It would make great propaganda for the defense if the trial were held in NOLA and Dickie were photographed working on a Habitat for Humanity project or some such - putting a house in shape for the poor. Heck, he could put up the money for a whole Habitat house-building project during the trial (maybe 15-20 houses). Not that I'm taking sides here - just imagining the possibilities.

2/22/2008 2:23:16 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Absolutely...when they make the sequel to The Insider, surely it will be set in NOLA.

2/22/2008 2:18:34 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

I hear you, but New Orleans really would be juicy.

2/22/2008 2:03:34 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

It would be a fascinating case! Based on the evidence made public, part of me hopes Pride & Stoopidity keep prevailing and they take it to trial. I might take a couple of days off work and go to Oxford.

2/22/2008 1:48:55 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

I understand. If reasonableness prevails, you're likely right. I'm just allowing for the power of pride and stupidity when otherwise bright people are under pressure.

2/22/2008 1:27:58 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

I think by calling Lott and Cochran for possible testimony, it only creates more attention and chaos. Keker also requested an anonymous jury...I'm not sure why he would do that; seems like that may hurt Scruggs, not benefit. But maybe there's some underlying stall tactic Keker is working. So, with Lott's questionable phone calls to prosecutor's in the Minor trial (which apparently helped Scruggs avoid charges in that case) and alleged phone calls to either some AL judges and/or US Attys to avoid a contempt trial, really doesn't make Lott look good...so if the Feds can build a case and implicate Lott, then Dickie gets a deal if he rolls. It's just hard for me to believe there will be a trial.

2/22/2008 1:21:38 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

Yes, you make sense HD, but then who would have thought a self-respecting mega-millionaire would be involved in a crackpot scheme to offer \$40,000-50,000 to a circuit judge to hand over \$26 million in fees? Dickie Scruggs is a proud man. If he's guilty but proud enough, maybe he'll treat us to a show. If such a trial were held in New Orleans, it would become a national showcase for the perversities of Mississippi politics.

2/22/2008 12:42:49 PM

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koolaid wrote:

Attention Feds, just don't expect Trent to come to town to testify on the same day that he and Phil Bryant have their hair salon appointments. That would be cruel and unusual punishment.

2/22/2008 12:40:44 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

I think if the wiretaps stand (and I think they will) - surely Scruggs won't roll the dice in a trial.

2/22/2008 11:52:53 AM

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POWER

Fairness is a standard this paper will uphold

RONNIE AGNEW • RAGNEW@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 24, 2008

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Attorney General Jim Hood took a break from installing hardwood floors at his house Monday to visit our editorial board for a discussion that, at times, reached levels of contentiousness.



He was off for President's Day. He didn't have to come in at all but he did, dressed in flannel shirt and khakis, politically savvy enough to know he would face tough questions about the Richard "Dickie" Scruggs judicial bribery scandal and why the state's top lawyer was sitting the case out.

The discussion, though pointed, never reached a level of hostility or disrespect. But at the end, Hood caught me by surprise when he asked if the newspaper would consider hiring a Democratic columnist to balance Sid Salter, our Perspective editor who has criticized the attorney general for taking campaign contributions from lawyers involved in the scandal and creating the appearance of favoritism by keeping his office out of it.

For the record, Hood said federal authorities, with legal jurisdiction, are doing their job in the case.

columns 'opinion'

The earlier inference, I suppose, is that Sid is using the column to express views contrary to Democrats. But the real question posed by Hood is one of fairness and whether fairness exists for him in our publication.

It's a common question for me and one that I address several times a week on issues that have nothing to do

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[Ronnie /](#)

with Hood or Sid, who assured the attorney general that he has penned several columns and editorials praising the AG's actions when appropriate.

Last week, a couple of days after the Hood meeting, I received a call from an elderly woman who told me I was "ruining Jackson." She berated me for front-page stories about Jackson Mayor Frank Melton and foreclosure proceedings on his house because he was in arrears.

The fairness question emerged again. How unfair it was, she said, that the mayor's personal business was on the front page for all to see. My attempt to explain our reasoning was met with "I don't want to hear anything from you" and then a click.

That same day, on a visit to the Capitol, I was questioned by several lawmakers and interested parties over my column last week on why Tougaloo College wasn't a good choice for a civil right museum. If it had any chance of succeeding, I said it should be downtown because of location and synergy with other attractions.

news 'balanced'

But the fairness question, or the essence of it, rose again. It wasn't fair to penalize Tougaloo, critics said, because I didn't know the school's history and I hadn't seen the plans now in the hands of a commission appointed by the governor.

As much as the tag of being labeled unfair stings, it serves as a constant reminder of the power of newspapers. While an effective column or editorial should reflect the person or the newspaper editorial board's opinion, our news stories that appear on section fronts such as Page 1 or Metro-State should always be balanced, void of bias or a point of view.

Sid is not being unfair when he disagrees with a position taken by our AG. Nor am I when I offer my thoughts on the location of a civil rights museum.

But our staff-written news stories are sacred and should never tread in that territory. They must be accurate. They must be timely. Above all, they must be fair.

Contact Executive Editor Ronnie Agnew at (601) 961-7175 or e-mail ragnew@clarionledger.com.

in your voice

READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY



peanutgallery wrote:

If our mullet wearing AG wants the CL to see things his way why doesn't he just get the Godfather of the Ms. legal family (and Democratic party for that matter), Mr. Scruggs to just write some million dollar checks to Sid and the gang (or their bosses). I'm sure hardwood floors would look nice in their houses too.

3/1/2008 8:08:39 AM

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CharLeeAli wrote:

CL does investigative reporting. They get the records. File suits for records here and there. They cover the statehouse well. If u deliver the info to the readers its being fair and keeping the heat on officials. If u read the CL u will get a sober and critical angle on whats going on in Miss. Salter, others, and the editor r paid for their opinions and arguments. The CL was been fair in the coverage of the Minor, Scruggs, Delaughter, Hood, et al legal stories, in my opinion. Some think its political. Its an ancient Miss. custom to loan judges money or contribute heavily to their campaigns. If they don't repay its not necessarily a bribe. Lampton was only after Democrats and its a vast right wing conspiracy.

2/29/2008 11:30:24 PM

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Sartoris wrote:

So The Clarion-Ledger represents a "vast right-wing conspiracy" to Hood? As in this Clarion-Ledger?? Such paranoia is not a good sign for Jimmy. I too have rapped certain editorials and columns in the C-L. To me, that's a good thing -- the paper showcases a diversity of viewpoints, usually informed and though-provoking ones. As for Sid, I've seen him write many, many columns both in praise of and criicizing representatives of both parties, as appropriate. As an attorney, Hood should recognize the need for a balanced, open exchange of views in the press. However, as the old cliché goes, it's hard to be objective when you're knee deep in risng swamp water, and for Jimmy it's only getting deeper. Perhaps, as on most things, he can turn to Mike Moore for some advice on handling the pressure with some grace. Meanwhile, Sid, keep calling 'em as you see 'em.

2/29/2008 7:33:23 AM

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georgemarlowe wrote:

Hey Ronnie, who does Jimbo Hood think Bill Minor party is, I have said before that the only Republican Bill Minor could vote for would have been Abe Lincoln. Hey, Ronnie why don't you hire Paul Minor, he could write articles on the life in the Slamer, where I hope we see a lots of the crooked lawyers and judges in MS end up .

2/26/2008 11:07:10 AM

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AlgerHiss wrote:

Did Scruggs pay for the flooring material?

2/26/2008 1:44:07 AM

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statedawg wrote:

Ha, I too will subscribe to your print edition when you get off your liberal soap boxes. Not just you.. the entire staff.

2/25/2008 1:35:17 PM

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oldnbald wrote:

Whenever the paper prints negative news about someone there will be charges of bias from that person and their supporters. Fairness is in the eye of the beholder. Since Ganett took over the paper, the C/L has intentionally sought diverse viewpoints from its editorial writers in effort to give the paper a "fair" voice. Look in the archives from the time when Salter first started with the C/L. I remember an editorial from then talking about how the paper hired Salter specifically to balance the more liberal voices on the editorial staff. Considering the alegations in the case, the political involvements of the people in the Scruggs scandal is news. It will be painful for Hood and others, but this sort of thing happens in politics and it's not fatal.

2/25/2008 12:25:44 PM

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TRUTHOUTLET wrote:

I love the paper. I love even more the CL website. Don't let brow beat you into being fair and balanced.

2/25/2008 11:12:19 AM

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falcon47 wrote:

We are lucky by the privileged to acquire this paper in any format. We still purchase the paper form, yet, find the ability to respond herein quite enjoyable. I think this paper has tried carefully to show both sides which at times may upset some. We in the public must deside the reasons an issue may or may not gain attention and any reason thereof. The newspaper reporting might reveil additional matters which critizism maybe affecting.

2/24/2008 9:10:03 PM

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Negotiator wrote:

In all fairness, the Clarion Ledger has the liberal bases covered.

2/24/2008 2:58:52 PM

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POWER

Judge: Efforts to sway made

But DeLaughter says rulings above board

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 24, 2008

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Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter has told federal authorities he became aware in 2006 that some people were trying to improperly influence him to rule in favor of lawyer Dickie Scruggs in a Hinds County legal-fees dispute.

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DeLaughter told authorities he didn't know whether he was influenced but says he's followed the law in all his rulings.

In 2006, DeLaughter rejected a special master's recommendations that could have paid Scruggs' former law partner, William Roberts Wilson Jr., about \$15 million in fees. DeLaughter eventually ruled that Scruggs didn't owe any more than the \$1.5 million he had belatedly paid Wilson.

Officials from the Justice Department's Public Integrity Division in Washington are investigating DeLaughter's actions in the case and spent last week in Mississippi interviewing witnesses.

DeLaughter told The Clarion-Ledger he never was approached in the case and, if he had been, he would have reported it to authorities. He has denied any wrongdoing.

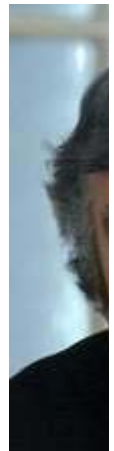
His lawyer, Cynthia Speetjens of Madison, would not comment Saturday.

The rules for Mississippi lawyers and judges require them to report any ethical violation "that raises a substantial question as to that lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects."

The Rules of Professional Conduct apply to both lawyers and judges, said Bobby Bailess, a Vicksburg lawyer and president of the Mississippi Bar Association. "If you have information that reflects an attorney has committed misconduct, you have a duty to report it to the appropriate authorities."

Informed of what DeLaughter told federal authorities, Bailess replied, "That sickens me."

U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers is expected to rule this week whether federal prosecutors can introduce



WHO'S W
THE DEFI

Dickie Scruggs
Gulf Coast
Mississippi
A federal case
involving a
litigation o



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evidence regarding this Hinds County case as proof of another alleged "bad act" against Scruggs when Scruggs goes on trial March 31 on bribery charges along with his son, Zach Scruggs, and law partner Sidney Backstrom.

All three insist they are innocent, saying authorities have created a crime.

Both New Albany lawyer Timothy Balducci and his business partner, former state Auditor Steve Patterson, have pleaded guilty in the scandal, saying they schemed to pay a \$40,000 bribe to Circuit Judge Henry Lackey to rule in Dickie Scruggs' favor in a Lafayette County legal-fees dispute. Balducci, Patterson and Lackey are all expected to testify in the trial.

In a hearing last week, Balducci testified that DeLaughter was "offered the influence of Mr. Scruggs to contact his brother-in-law, (U.S.) Sen. Trent Lott, to be put on a list for consideration for an open federal judgeship" in exchange for ruling in Scruggs' favor in the Hinds County case.

Balducci said Lott called DeLaughter at Scruggs' request.

Asked how he knew this happened, Balducci said he was told this by Scruggs and Langston before and after it took place.

Lott announced his retirement in November and left the Senate in December. Federal prosecutors say they plan to call him as a government witness.

Booneville lawyer Joey Langston, who was lead counsel for Scruggs in the Hinds County case, already has pleaded guilty to his part in a scheme that involved paying DeLaughter's close friend, Ed Peters, \$1 million to influence DeLaughter. Langston said that money came from Scruggs.

Asked in December about the allegation that Peters had been paid more than \$900,000 to influence him, DeLaughter responded that sounded "like a bunch of bullcrap to me."

He welcomed the scrutiny, he said. "If I were the prosecutor, I would do the same thing."

DeLaughter said his reaction would have been the same as that of Judge Lackey, who reported the offer of a possible bribe to federal authorities.

Lackey also stepped down at that time from hearing the case.

The Code of Judicial Conduct requires judges to step down in cases in which "their impartiality might be questioned by a reasonable person knowing all the circumstances."

DeLaughter didn't step down from the Hinds County case.

Aaron Condon, professor emeritus at the University of Mississippi School of Law, said he supposed a judge could report the matter and still continue to be impartial in a case but that it might not look that way.

In a hearing last week, Scruggs' lawyer, John Kecker of San Francisco, suggested the scheme to influence DeLaughter was something Balducci and Langston "cooked up" on their own.

"Mr. Scruggs strongly denies any corruption," Kecker said.

And as for DeLaughter, "Every decision in that case was correct on the law," Kecker said.

As for Peters' involvement in the case, Kecker said the other side already had hired Jackson lawyer Bill Kirksey, who had been a law partner with DeLaughter in the 1980s.

Scruggs' legal team wanted DeLaughter to "shade the law," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Bob Norman. "There was every reason to believe the Scruggs law firm would prevail, ... but that wasn't good enough. They had to have an edge."

Zach Scruggs indicted or

Sidney Backstrom same fede

PLEADING

Timothy Balducci partners ir authorities \$40,000 b

Steve Patterson office in 1980s Balducci's guilty to w scheme.

Joey Langston represente guilty to cc influence b in Scruggs asbestos l

THE JUDGE

Bobby DeLaughter assistant c being the l Scruggs ir litigation.

more r

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Balducci testified the Scruggs' legal team previewed a number of filings and "draft copies of orders Judge DeLaughter was going to enter."

In a May 29, 2006, e-mail obtained by federal authorities, Zach Scruggs told his father's attorney in the case, John Jones of Jackson, that "you could file briefs on a napkin right now and get it granted." Jones responded in his e-mail, "You have misconceptions about Joey and Tim that I hope ultimately do not need to be explored. ... If we win, it will be because the law says we win."

Keker responded that prosecutors were wrong in their assessment: "There was no law shaded."

While DeLaughter did rule favorably several times on Dickie Scruggs' behalf, there also were many rulings the other way, Keker said.

In terms of Public Integrity's look into possible criminal charges, Condon said he supposed DeLaughter "has some wiggle room, depending on what he told authorities."

Defense lawyers complained last week about the widespread negative publicity the case has received in Mississippi.

Citing the guilty pleas that have taken place so far, Ron Rychlak, professor at the University of Mississippi School of Law, said the case has given the state's legal system a black eye.

"The legal system, to a large extent, relies on public confidence that you believe you're going to get justice," he said. "I hope the perception is not so widespread as to reshape the public's confidence in the system."

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Crassus wrote:

I hate saying this, I really do but this whole Scruggs scandal has exposed Mitchell's limitations as a journalist. Beverly Pettigrew-Craft would've covered these stories much better and I can think of a few others who would as well. While Jerry was writing his story did he bother to even ask WHO DeLaughter thought was trying to "influence" him? Just curious.

2/24/2008 9:10:11 PM

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April50 wrote:

Highwayman, you say that "a review of his own comments tell us otherwise". What comments do you mean? As far as I am aware, he has said from the beginning that he knew nothing of the alleged bribery attempt. And, he said he had never accepted a bribe. Was there something else he said that I missed? If so, please point me to the source so I can check it out for myself. (Sorry, I have this annoying habit of having to see for myself rather than just accepting all the garbage I'm fed.) Besides, "IF" DeLaughter is so guilty, why hasn't he been indicted? The feds wasted no time indicting the others. Maybe he hasn't been indicted.. nor has he stepped down...because he hasn't done anything that would make either of these actions necessary. No....it couldn't possible be THAT now, could it?? Next thing you know, we'll hear how he bribed the feds not to indict him. Maybe that could be Jerry Mitchell next storyline.

2/24/2008 9:00:59 PM

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slickdawg wrote:

What is really going to suck the dollars out of Mississippi's coffers will be the retrial of every lawsuit that Dickie Scruggs, et. al was involved in.

2/24/2008 8:53:46 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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highwayman wrote:

Maybe PT68 you are right. Who can say why a person would want to achieve even greater status in this world. I really hope that your suport of the jurist is on solid ground, it would be best for our state. As a practical person however, the information that we, the general public, have been made aware of brings the whole legal profession, including the good judge into serious question. This is only one man's opinion and please try to see things from a laymans vantage point. Again, maybe appearances are not well founded and only time will tell.

2/24/2008 8:42:58 PM

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PTurner68 wrote:

NO I don't get it, Highwayman. First of all, why would a successful judge with an impeccable record even stoop to be "bribed". He doesn't need that help. But once again, just talking about it gives this whole thing more excitement than it deserves. It seems imprudent to make a harsh judgement without knowing the facts. They will come out.

2/24/2008 8:23:42 PM

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highwayman wrote:

Don't you get it? The appearance of impropriety is what matters. Mr. DeLaughter said that he was not approached. If it is true that he was, and that he didn't report that, then he should step down. Moreover, if "any" of these other allegations are true, that only adds to the judges' wrongful conduct. If none of the allegations have merit our state has a great jurist in DeLaughter. A review of the judges own comments tell us otherwise. Way too much smoke without any fire. The sworn testimony of each of these persons all add up to misconduct on DeLaughter's part. After all this whole investigation and criminal conduct began elsewhere but Judge DeLaughter's name keeps coming up.

2/24/2008 7:44:08 PM

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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PTurner68 wrote:

If this were a less successful person, one whom no one had heard of or cared about, it would be a NON story. The delight taken in assuming the instant guilt of the parties charged is really vile. I don't know if they'll be found guilty, but they are already seen as guilty in the public eye. Take a look at the many many stories written, not only by the imcompetent Mr. Mitchell, but by countless others. They all presume the guilt of these men. It's wrong.

2/24/2008 6:36:36 PM

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whenwillweseethetruth wrote:

There has been no proof that DeLaughter acted improperly. April50 is correct that no one knows what was said before the Grand Jury. DeLaughter testified before the Grand Jury (without a lawyer). Federal authorities have known for some time the testimony of Langston and Balducci. But there is no indictment. Judges should not have to step down over rumore and innuendo.

2/24/2008 5:53:23 PM

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Franklin wrote:

DELAUGHTER SHOULD RESIGN---April50 , Please do not misconstrue my frustration with Jery Mitchell's "journalism" as a defense of Delaughter. The issue is not whether Delaughter's rulings are weird , right or wrong.---- As you say, he is smart enough to write a legal opinion that would sound plausible whichever side he ruled for; most legal issues can reasonably enough come out either way. -----The issue is whether he acted ethically in handling the case. It appears almost certain he acted unethically. As to Jerry Mitchell---well he is simply not a reporter; maybe he would be a good bank teller.

2/24/2008 5:48:47 PM

[Recommend \(5\)](#)

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RUs25601 wrote:

Enforcement of ethical conduct in Mississippi??? You have to be kidding. When was that ever the case? I went to sixty Mississippi attorneys to find a lawyer to file against another Mississippi lawyer. The offending scumbag embezzled over \$200,000 of my settlement, then used it to bribe a judge to rule against me. I had evidence of the theft and the bribery. No way they all said, reporting on another lawyer, especially a rich Mississippi lawyer, would be "professional suicide." Even if a complaint is filed, these guys have it in the bag. Their relatives, law partners, and buddies sit on the ethical commissions and tribunals. If you think ethical rules are being enforced in Mississippi, you are in the wrong state. They are not worth the paper they are written on.

2/24/2008 5:19:13 PM

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Judge: Efforts to sway made

But DeLaughter says rulings above board

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 24, 2008

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Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter has told federal authorities he became aware in 2006 that some people were trying to improperly influence him to rule in favor of lawyer Dickie Scruggs in a Hinds County legal-fees dispute.



DeLaughter told authorities he didn't know whether he was influenced but says he's followed the law in all his rulings.

In 2006, DeLaughter rejected a special master's recommendations that could have paid Scruggs' former law partner, William Roberts Wilson Jr., about \$15 million in fees. DeLaughter eventually ruled that Scruggs didn't owe any more than the \$1.5 million he had belatedly paid Wilson.

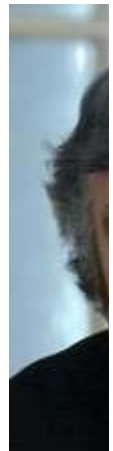
Officials from the Justice Department's Public Integrity Division in Washington are investigating DeLaughter's actions in the case and spent last week in Mississippi interviewing witnesses.

DeLaughter told The Clarion-Ledger he never was approached in the case and, if he had been, he would have reported it to authorities. He has denied any wrongdoing.

His lawyer, Cynthia Speetjens of Madison, would not comment Saturday.

The rules for Mississippi lawyers and judges require them to report any ethical violation "that raises a substantial question as to that lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects."

The Rules of Professional Conduct apply to both lawyers and judges, said Bobby Bailless, a Vicksburg lawyer and president of the Mississippi Bar Association. "If you have information that reflects an attorney has committed



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Balducci said Lott called DeLaughter at Scruggs' request.

Asked how he knew this happened, Balducci said he was told this by Scruggs and Langston before and after it took place.

Lott announced his retirement in November and left the Senate in December. Federal prosecutors say they plan to call him as a government witness.

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Asked in December about the allegation that Peters had been paid more than \$900,000 to influence him, DeLaughter responded that sounded "like a bunch of bullcrap to me."

He welcomed the scrutiny, he said. "If I were the prosecutor, I would do the same thing."

DeLaughter said his reaction would have been the same as that of Judge Lackey, who reported the offer of a possible bribe to federal authorities.

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

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April50 wrote:

Jerry Mitchell is not privy to Bobby DeLaughter's grand jury testimony. How could he possibly know what was said? He only knows what somebody told him somebody said he said. I can assure you that DeLaughter never said "I dunno" when he was asked if he was influenced. The man is not dumb! He would have said either "yes" or "no". He has publically stated that he had not accepted a bribe and that he had no knowledge of a bribe being extended to him. Until such time as HE says different, or anybody proves otherwise, I will take his word over that of someone whose "knowledge" is admittedly second-hand (Balducci). Furthermore,, anybody with internet service can read the transcripts of the Wison Vs Scruggs case and decide from himself whether the rulings by DeLaughter were "weird". Simply put, Wilson was out-lawyered. Before you hang DeLaughter out to dry, get the facts for yourself. Don't rely on the worlds WORST journalist to feed you his version of the story.

2/24/2008 5:11:56 PM

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Franklin wrote:

JERRY MITCHELL IS AWFUL ---Ok mitchell. When did Delaghter say this to "federal authorities" and how do you know? You cite no source and do not use quotations. Who; what ; when; why and how I thought were basics for journalism. Please; please; please---have some one help you with your articles---they are poorly written; and frustratingly confusing. We are left to know that "something" happened but who can tell what --or what to make of it--except to "trust" you---I'd rather not.

2/24/2008 3:12:18 PM

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DeltaDad wrote:

Just another case for not electing lawyers to political office. If they are not able to buy what they want ,they just pass a bill that allows them to do whatever suits their needs or should I say their wants. They can pass pay raises for a part time job,but will not pass laws that will help the taxpayers of Ms. namely "illeagle aliens". So when the next election rolls around I hope that the taxpayers will remember what your elected officials have done for you oops, I meant done for themselves!

2/24/2008 2:32:15 PM

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fondrenb wrote:

How long can it be before other names and cases pop up like "Mike Moore and Tobacco Settlement?" That set a national president with some of these same charaters and billions of dollars are in play. These cases were a measly few million bucks...

2/24/2008 12:25:48 PM

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Begood wrote:

I would think the Judge knows what he has to do. He can't convince the public he was not bribed ,and or, influenced and at the same time not lie to the Fed's. Those hairs are to too thin to split. He now stands to face additional perjury or obstruction charges if he doesn't come clean and cooperate with the with the Govt.. Boy, Oh Boy, everyone was in high cotton until Dickie et al bit the dust. The dominos will probably keep on falling down.

2/24/2008 12:04:52 PM

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falcon47 wrote:

The Judge appears to be a bit confused. Maybe it's all those out of court Deals that have him searching his recall. Let's see if this helps. In 1996 our claims were brought before circuit Judge James Graves in behalf of my family, our home was destroyed and it was thought our exposure to toxin's was going to kill us. In 1999 after an 84, million settlement and Judge Grave's asend to Surpreme Court Judge Tomie Green held and denied us demanded relief In 2005 as well denied us a hearing. In 2006 the awards were moved from 251-98-1061 into 251-96-493 yet, accepted those awards and after years, simply dismissed us after using our claims for awards. We must of course report this. In our view regarding the amounts settled and present allegations against Judge DeLaughter I would describe as small potatoes. 251-98-1061 had acheived billions.

2/24/2008 10:27:06 AM

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georgemarlowe wrote:

Now our great judge finally remembers he was apporched in 2006. What a sorry excuse for a judge in MS. I just wonder how many more of these DeLaughters we have setting in our courtrooms

2/24/2008 10:18:58 AM

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dquixote wrote:

Bobby Burt DeLaughter is a judge, over and above being a lawyer and an officer of the court; he IS the court. In his role as such, Delaughter has acted improperly showing no respect for the law or to those who appear before him looking for justice based on the merits of the case. This one judge and his behavior have

plunged the Mississippi Judiciary as a whole into disrepute. Those of us who really know him, now can be certain that every move that he has made heretofore in his legal career has been a farce, motivated by greed and his grandiose deires. Judge DeLaughter, for once do the "right " thing simply because it is best for our state. Step down and go home. you have done enough damage.

2/24/2008 10:18:03 AM

[Recommend \(9\)](#)

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shasar wrote:

And, let's not forget the phone call by Lott. He is a part of this lawsuit and for good reason! Just a witness? I don't believe that for a second. He made the phone call when requested to do so. His brother in law Scruggs, made that request of him.

2/24/2008 9:35:47 AM

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slickdawg wrote:

Bobby DeLaughter, if you were a real man and not a wooly mammoth, you would resign tomorrow morning. You said repeatedly that you never took a bribe. By definition a bribe is "money or any other valuable consideration given or promised with a view to corrupting the behavior of a person, esp. in that person's performance as an athlete, public official, etc". Being knowingly considered for a federal judge position by ruling in Scruggs' favor is taking a bribe, as defined. If you really were the good honest man you proclaim to be, you would have done exactly like Judge Lackey did when you were first approached. You have said that is what you would do if approached, however, your actions speak clearly - you are a liar and are not worthy of a judgeship. Maybe you should go back to defending the fine criminals of the world, such as Wayne Williams, whom you did defend. If not, get yourself some Grecian's for men and move to Alaska, you could double for Sasquatch.

2/24/2008 8:54:57 AM

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But DeLaughter says rulings above board

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • FEBRUARY 24, 2008

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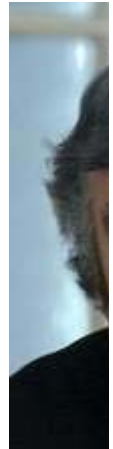
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AlgerHiss wrote:

DeLaughter has told federal authorities he became aware in 2006 that some people were trying to improperly influence him. So, DeLaughter was aware, in 2006, of being improperly influenced, yet he did not report it? Brilliant: Just brilliant. I am convinced that a solid third of the judiciary in this country is comprised of screwballs, punks and thugs.

2/24/2008 8:07:33 AM

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Tyler12 wrote:

If De-Laughter doesn't know if he "was influenced," then he was. According to Balducci, he passed numerous orders to the Scruggs legal team before they were entered. According to Zack Scruggs he would sign a paper napkin - He told CL that he wasn't approached, if he was, he would do as Judge Lackey did - and that Peters, 900,000 was a "bunch of bullcrap." He was approached, he was promised a name on a short list of fed judge nominations, and he was influenced because of the passing of the orders. He has lied to the public, to himself, to his friends. He has disgraced the robe that he wears - He needs to resign for the good of the public perception of the judiciary in Mississippi, and pray he is not indicted and put in jail.

2/24/2008 7:35:49 AM

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POWER

Split sought in Scruggs case

Son Zach asks to be tried separately from his father, Dickie, on corruption charges

CHRIS TALBOTT • THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • FEBRUARY 26, 2008

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

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As a partner in his father 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.

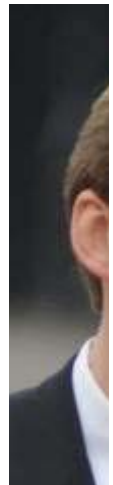
Now that he faces trial with his father and an associate on charges of conspiring to bribe a Mississippi judge, however, Zach Scruggs is in the unusual position of having to distance himself from his father.

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.



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"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 would not 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 whom 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."

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Stick61 wrote:

It does sound like the strategy will be to dump it all on dad.

2/26/2008 1:49:47 PM

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georgemarlowe wrote:

They .all should be tried together, they were all in this together I thought for a time that the father was going to try to make a deal with the Feds for him to plead guilty and try and get his son off the hook in this matter.

2/26/2008 11:48:00 AM

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MJones wrote:

Zach is as guilty as Dick is. It's a shame someone so young has been so corrupted ... by is own father.

2/26/2008 11:24:32 AM

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joedink1 wrote:

They are "Hes a LAWYER ,THIEVES, LIARS, get it !!??

2/26/2008 9:20:05 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

"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." Sounds like Zach's atty thinks Zach and Dick are guilty of something.

2/26/2008 9:04:32 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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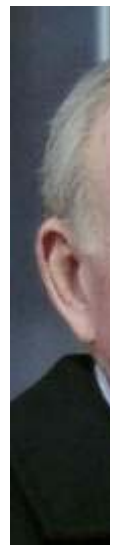
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Hood had a long standing relationship. Dickie Scruggs offered to pay (the New Albany law firm) Patterson Balducci \$500,000 if they could get Hood to relent on indicting State Farm."

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

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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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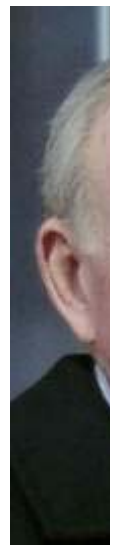
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Stick61 wrote:

"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

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

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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

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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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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AG pulled into Scruggs fray

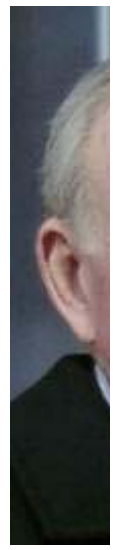
Balducci says he was promised \$500K to convince Hood not to indict State Farm

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

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humptydumpty wrote:

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

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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

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tjh11964 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

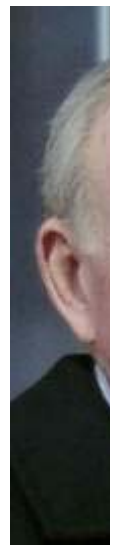
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humptydumpty wrote:

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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AG pulled into Scruggs fray

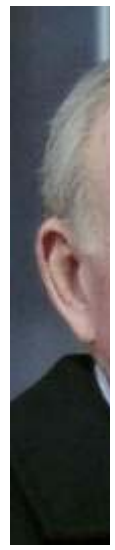
Balducci says he was promised \$500K to convince Hood not to indict State Farm

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

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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."

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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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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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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...



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Court asked to disbar Langston, Balducci

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • FEBRUARY 27, 2008

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The Mississippi Supreme Court has been asked to accept the termination of the law licenses of Joey Langston and Timothy Balducci, both tied to federal investigations of powerful plaintiffs attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs.

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The Mississippi Bar petitioned the Supreme Court in January to accept the disciplinary action against the two men. The petitions were included on the Supreme Court's March-April docket.

Neither Langston nor Balducci are opposing the Bar's petition.

Langston, who once represented Scruggs in the judicial bribery case, pleaded guilty in federal court in January to conspiring with Scruggs in a scheme to influence Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in a separate dispute over attorneys' fees. His sentencing is pending.

Prosecutors said Langston conspired with others to get a favorable ruling for Scruggs in the 1994 case by offering to help

what's on your plate?

DeLaughter get appointed to the federal bench.

DeLaughter has denied any wrongdoing.

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Balducci pleaded guilty in December to conspiracy to bribe a judge and has cooperated with federal investigators. His sentencing is pending.

According to court records, Balducci was accused of delivering \$40,000 to a judge at the behest of Scruggs for a favorable ruling in a dispute between Scruggs and other lawyers over \$26.5 million in fees from a mass settlement of lawsuits that homeowners filed against State Farm Insurance Cos. after Hurricane Katrina.

In other cases involving attorneys, the Supreme Court will hear:

- Azki Shah's request for reinstatement to the practice of law. Shah was suspended in 2007 by the Mississippi Supreme Court for three years.

It was the seventh time in less than eight years that Shah has been accused of misconduct. Shah had previously been suspended from the practice of law on two occasions, once for two years and again for six months. Shah had received three private reprimands and one informal admonition.

In the most recent incident, Shah was suspended for failing to file a complaint on behalf of a client and follow up with that client on the status of the complaint.

- The Bar's petition calling for the indefinite suspension of the license of lawyer Robert Arledge of Vicksburg, while Arledge appeals his 2007 conviction related to an investigation of false diet drug settlement claims in Mississippi.

Arledge was convicted in federal court of seven counts of conspiracy and wire fraud in a scam bilking the drug company Wyeth out of more than \$6.7 million. He was sentenced to 6-1/2 years in prison.

Arledge had been charged with knowingly allowing clients to make fen-phen claims of about \$250,000 each even though they had no legitimate reason.

Fen-Phen was a prescription diet drug pulled from the market in 1997 after research revealed it could cause heart problems.

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Stick61 wrote:

Baloney. This smoke and fire cliché is becoming a sure sign that the person using it needs to be forced to stand in a corner and repeat "innocent until proven guilty" until it sinks in. If you produce the evidence, I don't care if you nail Hood's law license on your kitchen wall. Until then, you're all hat and no cattle (to employ another overused line).

2/27/2008 12:12:54 PM

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RitMo wrote:

Go ahead and throw Hood's law license in there while you are at it. He can deny Balducci and Patterson influenced him on the State Farm matter if he wants to.....but where there is smoke there is fire!

2/27/2008 12:00:01 PM

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falcon47 wrote:

Oh yea' when it comes to harmful things and the public attorneys should be pulled

from the market as well. The class action is so sought for that little in the way of Justice ever reaches those really effected. Just another thought of scam of a tradition that laywers and doctors have always had money. it seems to me that the Doctor have lost out as the coldest of the cold prevail. Huh' attorneys today your state tomorrow the world. [stay the coarse U.S V. SCRUGGS NATION et. al.]

2/27/2008 11:20:09 AM

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becca45 wrote:

Dickie Scruggs, his son Zack and Backstrom should have their lincense pulled as well. They are all quilty of the fact.

2/27/2008 11:06:12 AM

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Stick61 wrote:

Yes, remove the names of Balducci and Langston from the rolls. Also, since Mr. Shah has been accused of misconduct seven times in eight years and suspended twice previously, he should at least be required to serve out the full three-year suspension he received. Shah is clearly a poor excuse for a lawyer. The Supreme Court should give the public a rest from his foolishness for as long as possible.

2/27/2008 10:29:50 AM

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sidsalter's page

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Male, Age: 49, Forest

About Me: Sidney L. (Sid) Salter is Perspective Editor of The Clarion-Ledger and serves as a r the newspaper's editorial board. He is a member of the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of F is a native of Philadelphia, Miss. He earned a BA degree at Mississippi State University where r C. Stennis Scholar in Political Science. A former associate professor and Cook Chair in Journali: University of Mississippi faculty, Salter was named the 2004 National Alumnus of the Year at M He and his wife, Leilani, have four grown children and one grandson. They are members of For Methodist Church.

You're most likely to see me around town at: The State Capitol Building, Bass Pro, Comm a Braves game.

On the weekends I love to: hunt, travel, go to ball games and spend time with my family

The high school, college or pro sports teams I root for are: Mississippi State University, School, Green Bay Packers, Boston Red Sox

If I'm watching a movie or listening to music, it's probably: An old movie, Sinatra or co

I am passionate about: My family, Mississippi State University and the Neshoba County Fair

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Sid Salter

Mississippi government, politics and the people who make it happen

Hood: What's Balducci REALLY said about Hood on Page 49...

Posted 2/27/2008 12:03 PM CST

In his statement denying being influenced by Tim Balducci and Steve Patterson in his failure to indict State Farm, Hood cited Balducci's statement on Page 49 of a Nov. 1 FBI-wiretapped conversation between Balducci and Dickie Scruggs' law partner Sid Backstrom. Hood cited Balducci as saying: "He (Hood) ain't gonna dance with the one who brought him to, to the dance."

What Hood left out was the previous utterance by Balducci on the transcript. In that conversation, **Balducci tells Backstrom: "I haven seen or talked to Hood in months. Months, you know, I think he's for, you know, firmly attached at Joey's (Joey Langston) hip and, you know, when everything broke up, you know, he stuck his flag over in Joey's corner and, I mean, I**

haven't heard from him."

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bellesouth wrote:

You might think it is silly but that is the way it is. Sorry to bust your bubble.

2/28/2008 1:55 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

Bellesouth---As I say.....silly

2/28/2008 1:52 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Franklin, what planet are you from? Lawyers work either by retainer and/or contingency fee basis. You can retain a lawyer for so much an hour. You get billed for every phone call, e-mail, letter, stamp, copy charges and time. People retain lawyers to handle legal issues involving them -- divorce, corporations, etc. If someone comes to them and wants to SUE somebody for money they are going to ask for a contingency fee of the money recovered. It runs normally at 30-40% plus expense. No ticky, no washy.

2/28/2008 12:27 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

Bellesouth---Since you are now arguing that you cannot hire a lawyer for money , I'll take that silly argument as your admission that I am correct (but you are simply unable to admit it). Welcome to my side.

2/28/2008 11:09 AM CST

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hazel75 wrote:

Very good point, JDBerry.

2/28/2008 9:37 AM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Franklin, yes you can, but if your lawyer is recovering money for you he is not going to work on that basis, so good luck hiring that lawyer when you need one.

2/28/2008 7:59 AM CST

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JDBerry wrote:

hazel75 - the key being that Dick Scruggs paid Steve Patterson to lobby the legislature to enact a law that would allow he and Mike Moore to use this model to go after the tobacco companies. This "robber baron" law wouldn't have been in place unless they cooked up the scheme that made all of those attorneys multi-millionaires.

2/27/2008 11:12 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

Bellesouth---Is your point that these major campaign contributor/ contingency fee lawyers actually "earned" the (still hypothetical) \$5M? You must be on THEIR payroll. Good grief you can hire the absolute best lawyers in the whole country for \$1,000 an hour---at say 2,000 hours a year--which is steady working everyday 9-10 hours a day for a slap year--would be \$2M. You can hire the best lawyers in Miss. for about \$300 an hour, which has them working for you full time for 3 slap years for only \$1.8 M.

2/27/2008 10:08 PM CST

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cardinal0602 wrote:

Fortyseven. I really need to teach my two year old that one. But that's probably the same principle for ole Belle, too.

2/27/2008 9:43 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

OK Franklin. And how much experience do you have? If it so easy, go for it.

2/27/2008 9:23 PM CST

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sidsalter's page

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Male, Age: 49, Forest

About Me: Sidney L. (Sid) Salter is Perspective Editor of The Clarion-Ledger and serves as a r the newspaper's editorial board. He is a member of the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of F is a native of Philadelphia, Miss. He earned a BA degree at Mississippi State University where r C. Stennis Scholar in Political Science. A former associate professor and Cook Chair in Journali: University of Mississippi faculty, Salter was named the 2004 National Alumnus of the Year at M He and his wife, Leilani, have four grown children and one grandson. They are members of For Methodist Church.

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Sid Salter

Mississippi government, politics and the people who make it happen

Hood: What's Balducci REALLY said about Hood on Page 49...

Posted 2/27/2008 12:03 PM CST

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haven't heard from him."

[Comments \(34\)](#) | [Permanent Link](#)

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Franklin wrote:

UH...sorry I brought up the \$14M --I did not realize it would raise the zombies from their graves ---- the point was simply that with the amount of money paid in contingency fee contracts (let's make it \$5M hypothetically) you can buy raft of brilliant lawyers on a full time highly paid annual salary and still have money left over to fund other litigation.

2/27/2008 9:18 PM CST

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OccamsRazor wrote:

Written By: David Rossmiller
On February 27, 2008 1:40 PM

Bellesouth, I will let you post comments but you are on probation. Part of the deal is no overt shilling for Hood, the comments have to add some value. Now, I have addressed this question of yours probably something like, let me count, fortyeleven times. Read the post earlier today about the Bama prosecution, it says it again. I know you and some others don't want to believe it, but you have to argue against my evidence with better evidence, not just say it can't be true.

2/27/2008 8:35 PM CST

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OccamsRazor wrote:

Sid, take heart my friend, you are in good company. David Rossmiller has a mutual friend with you in ole belle.

Written By: bellesouth
On February 27, 2008 1:35 PM

Checking in to see if you have decided to let me post. Why would Scruggs give the documents to Hood. Wasn't there an exception to release the documents to law enforcement. Hood had started a criminal investigation. Couldn't this action be to preserve evidence that otherwise could have lost the sight of day?

2/27/2008 8:34 PM CST

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hazel75 wrote:

If I remember correctly, it's not the Constitution that gives the AG that right. It's a statute passed by our wonderful legislature back in the mid-late 1990's. That same legislature *could* take away that right, and, in fact, there is a bill which has passed the Senate placing some limits on the AG's power.

2/27/2008 5:41 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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HopeinMS wrote:

Q: Who paid the \$14 million to Langston & Co.? A: MCI/Worldcom. Q: What gives the Attorney General the right to hire outside council on a contingency fee basis? A: The Constitution of the State of Mississippi. Correct me if I'm wrong on either.

2/27/2008 4:59 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

Oh we're playing that game again and again and again. Get over it. Hood/Langston/Quin got one hundred million dollars! The judge awarded Langston/Quin \$14 mil. Get over it.

2/27/2008 4:34 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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plblake50m wrote:

That Bellesouth guy seems to be pushing your buttons almost as much as you push his. I didn't think you guys let the nut cases get under your skin. Nice to know that you are human though. First the Animal House references and now this. When they indict Mr. Hood you'll really be looking human. Now we'll get Bellesouth's obligatory conspiracy comment:

2/27/2008 4:08 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

Sid--and another thought as to funding. If the State even kept half --even 10 %--of the \$14M paid on a contingency basis in the MCI case it could hire 5 full time lawyers for a year (at \$100, 000 a year salary) and still have a pool of money left over to fund yet other litigation--precluding the necessity of contingency fee contracts. Again--it is not "outside counsel" contracts which should be banned as against public policy, but contingency fee percentage contracts.

2/27/2008 3:57 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

Sid--"The state would have been hard pressed to fund..."---I suppose it is this premise I do not accept. The state funds major and expensive litigation all the time--the Ayers desegregation case for example. Even a complex kidnapping or child molestation case can require experts and be quite expensive. Heck, Hood's investigation and criminal suit against State Farm. The property asbestos suit filed by the state was a no brainer--and could easily have been funded by the state. Why give ANY lawyer 40%, or even 10% . Maybe you reporter-types can look into this "funding " issue and see the budget is; what expenses the state has incurred in the past; what is available if needed. I still think partnering with lawyers, or anyone else, on a percentage basis to recover state money is not good policy.

2/27/2008 2:31 PM CST

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humptydumpty wrote:

Bellesouth, you're a genius.

2/27/2008 2:28 PM CST

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2/27/2008 5:06:35 AM
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sidsalter's page

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Male, Age: 49, Forest

About Me: Sidney L. (Sid) Salter is Perspective Editor of The Clarion-Ledger and serves as a r the newspaper's editorial board. He is a member of the Mississippi Press Association's Hall of F is a native of Philadelphia, Miss. He earned a BA degree at Mississippi State University where r C. Stennis Scholar in Political Science. A former associate professor and Cook Chair in Journali: University of Mississippi faculty, Salter was named the 2004 National Alumnus of the Year at M He and his wife, Leilani, have four grown children and one grandson. They are members of For Methodist Church.

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Sid Salter

Mississippi government, politics and the people who make it happen

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Posted 2/27/2008 12:03 PM CST

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haven't heard from him."

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

One other things folks. Trent Lott has been slandered on some of these here blogs on ole Sid's blogroll (and one that ain't) that hang on every word Anita Lee writes about Jim Hood and company but her interview with Trent Lott that made the front page of yesterday's Sun Herald must be the product of my lyin' eyes or a figment of this Cowboy's imagination. You can tell more about the axes these blogger hide behind their backs by what they don't write folks. I guess ole Trent being a witness instead of a target is more reality than some folks can handle.

2/27/2008 2:21 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Remember the whole case in Natchez was that Scruggs and Hood were conspiring against SF because Hood had started a new investigation? When in reality SF and Scruggs were conspiring to get Hood not to investigate.

2/27/2008 2:12 PM CST

[Recommend \(3\)](#)

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CoastalCowboy wrote:

Welp plblake pardner I can agree with not trustin' any of these folks but then again this Cowboy has never trusted politicians, lawyers or big business. Not that my endorsement means anything 'cause I was accused of workin' for Hood 'cause I didn't sign on with the trailer park lynchin' mob but you got Belle read wrong. She just offers a different point of view that at times is insightful. One thing I haven't seen mentioned while the blogger rush to lynch ole Hood is that State Farm asked him about that meeting in Natchez weeks ago. How do you reckon they came by that information that the rest of us are just now gettin' from that internal FBI memo?

2/27/2008 2:12 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

Scruggs pays \$500k to influence Hood. Hood says no. State Farm and Scruggs settle Nov. 2006. Scruggs gets \$26 mil. Hood meanwhile is still investigating SF until Jan. 2007. He decides not to prosecute. State Farm and Hood agree that he will not prosecute. SF walks away from Judge Senter's agreement. As of the Natchez hearing, I would bet SF has to go back to that agreement.

2/27/2008 2:08 PM CST

[Recommend \(4\)](#)

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plblake50m wrote:

As someone that voted for Jim Hood and generally disagrees with Mr. Salter, let me say that I truly believe that Mr. Salter is right on this. I now feel that I was wrong to vote for Jim Hood. I've read his replies in the Natchez hearing earlier this month and if he's not guilty of something heinous, then he's just a really, really, really bad witness. From what I've read so far I don't think there's an innocent person involved, from State Farm, to the AG's office, to Scruggs & Friends or the federal government. And I'm starting to think that Bellesouth is an employee of the AG's office. I think the only losers in these cases are the taxpayers and stockholders/policyholders footing most of the bills.

2/27/2008 1:46 PM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

Franklin: The state would have been hard pressed to fund the tobacco litigation, the asbestos litigation and other major cases. Outside counsel contracts have a place, but there should be oversight and it should not be a direct transaction between any attorney general and his campaign contributors. It should be an arm's length transaction. Had Hood done this, had Mike Moore done this, much of the suspicion about the AG-contributor relationships wouldn't exist.

2/27/2008 1:44 PM CST

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sidsalter wrote:

Bellesouth: Did Hood indict State Farm? No. Then Hood and State Farm executed a sealed settlement. And you'll pardon me if I need slightly stronger authority than yours that Hood is or isn't involved in the Scruggs/Langston affairs. I'm sorry, but I don't presume to read the mind of Scruggs. I do read the FBI confidential source reports when I can get them and I pass it along to the readers. I'll keep on doing that until the string plays out, too. If that's a problem for you, then troll someone else's blog.

2/27/2008 1:41 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

Langston is not involved with Scruggsmania either except that Balducci ratted him out for trying to bribe a judge in another case. He pled guilty. It is not Hood's fault. You are implicated in all of this as much as Jim Hood is.

2/27/2008 1:35 PM CST

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Franklin wrote:

Sid---I've been thinking. Why shouldn't the state just ban any contingent fee contract altogether with any attorney for any reason. The State can fund any lawsuit necessary; it does so all the time with both civil suits and criminal suits. If the suit is "risky" then maybe the state just should not pursue it---again the state and the AG makes this sort of judgment all the time. And as to the "intellectual property" argument for the "novel legal idea" a) that is rare to non-existent and b) shouldn't a lawyer or any good citizen advise his state if the state has been wronged. I do not beleive that too altruistic . Besides the flat prohibition is good policy overriding any other countervailing suit that might be "missed".

2/27/2008 1:34 PM CST

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bellesouth wrote:

So what Sid, so what? Scruggs had to bribe Balducci and Patterson to influence Hood and it didn't work. The settlement they got \$26 million for was settled before Hood dropped the charges in the first week of November. Hood didn't drop the charges until Jan.23rd. Hood is not involved in this Scruggsmania. If Scruggs and Hood BFF then why did he need to pay Balducci and Patterson \$500,000 when he could've just called his BFF?

2/27/2008 1:31 PM CST

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haven't heard from him."

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sidsalter wrote:

Bellesouth: Actually, it will enhance your Hood Worship Series. What it means is that Balducci and Backstrom are discussing what a lot of Mississippians are discussing — that Hood and Langston's political relationship is one worthy of scrutiny. What it means is that Balducci knew better than most that Langston has been Hood's biggest and most reliable political sugar daddy.

Any other questions, Belle? Now, come back with another of your famous diversionary posts about Wicker or Barbour or some other Republican rabbit you want to chase rather than talk about Jimbo's self-described political "relatives."

2/27/2008 1:08 PM CST

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JustAVoter wrote:

What a difference a little context makes.

2/27/2008 12:24 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

Well gee, Belle, I dunno. I thought it would enhance My Hate Hood series.

2/27/2008 12:22 PM CST

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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bellesouth wrote:

Ooh, Sid! Great catch! What do you think THAT means?

2/27/2008 12:21 PM CST

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If Hood won't prosecute, time for him to step down

THE CLARION-LEDGER • FEBRUARY 27, 2008

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If Attorney General Jim Hood is too close to the defendants in the high-profile bribery cases involving Dickie Scruggs and others to prosecute Mississippi's cases, then perhaps he should resign his office.



He recently suggested that he could not pursue charges because "It would be like prosecuting my relatives" ("Hood says filing charges in bribery scandal would be conflict of interest," Feb. 18). A district attorney should pursue charges. Is this the best advice, or is his family like relationship clouding his counsel?

Last year, Hood told a U.S. attorney in Alabama that Scruggs was a "confidential informant" working for his office and was protected by Mississippi law. Was Jim Hood doing Mississippi's business?

The accusation of bribing a judge is huge and the very individual who has been elected to prosecute such cases - in which some have already confessed - says he's too close to them.

Enough is enough. The lines are way too blurred

and it is time for Hood to step down.

Heyward Hodges

Jackson

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penreese wrote:

I agree. If Hood contemplates the position he's put himself in, he will realize he has become an ineffective prosecutor and all his prosecutorial actions become suspect. Admittedly he allowed himself personally and therefore professionally to come "too close" to the defendants in a very serious matter to investigate them. In his sworn testimony State Farm vs. Hood, he testified he was never influenced by Balducci / Patterson to drop the investigation of State Farm. Balducci / Patterson however testified Scruggs sent them to Hood. Of course we all know Hood dropped the investigation. Hood claims he decided to drop the investigation pretty much on his own after conferring with his team. Balducci and Patterson have little left to lose. Why would they tell such a story unless there's truth to it? If proven to be true, I'm guessing Hood would be charged with perjury. Things don't look too good for him now.

2/27/2008 1:17:31 PM

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m2jtown wrote:

Do us all a favor Jim Hood and step down now. You and your office lacks all credibility and respect at this point. Al Hopkins was right...

2/27/2008 11:12:54 AM

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Key players in the bribery case

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the defendants

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Dickie Scruggs: Based in Oxford and formerly on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the trial lawyer is among the wealthiest in Mississippi, making millions off asbestos and tobacco litigation. A federal grand jury has indicted him on judicial bribery charges involving a lawsuit over \$26 million in legal fees connected to litigation on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims.

Zach Scruggs: Dickie Scruggs' son and law partner. He's been indicted on the same charges as his father.

Sidney Backstrom: The Scruggs' law partner also is facing the same federal bribery charges.

pleading guilty

Timothy Balducci: A New Albany lawyer indicted with the partners in the Scruggs law firm, he has pleaded guilty. He told authorities he gave the judge in the Katrina legal fees lawsuit a \$40,000 bribe to rule in Scruggs' favor.

Steve Patterson: A former state auditor forced to resign from office in 1996 over a misdemeanor charge, he was part of Balducci's law firm, although he's not a lawyer. He has pleaded guilty to what prosecutors called a "minor role" in the bribery scheme.

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Joey Langston: A Booneville lawyer whose firm briefly represented Dickie Scruggs in the bribery case, he has pleaded guilty to corruption charges. He admitted that he tried to influence Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter to rule in Scruggs' favor in a lawsuit over attorney fees related to asbestos litigation.

additional players

Ed Peters: A former longtime Hinds County district attorney, he is mentioned in court documents as allegedly having been involved in an attempt to bribe DeLaughter to rule in Scruggs' favor. He allegedly split \$3 million with Langston and Patterson. He has not been charged.

P.L. Blake: A longtime Mississippi political operative, he is mentioned in court documents as a behind-the-scenes figure in the judicial bribery scandal. He has not been indicted. He earned \$50 million from the state's tobacco settlement by clipping newspapers and assessing political activity for Scruggs. In 1988, he pleaded no contest to a federal charge that he offered bribes to Mississippi Bank officials in exchange for preferential treatment in securing loans. Patterson was a bank vice president at the time.

litigants against scruggs

Alvin Luckey: A former Scruggs law partner who sued Scruggs over attorney fees in litigation against asbestos manufacturers. In 2005, a federal judge ordered Scruggs to pay Luckey more than \$17 million.

William Roberts Wilson Jr.: A former Scruggs law partner who sued Scruggs in Hinds County Circuit Court for \$15 million over attorney fees in asbestos litigation. Judge DeLaughter ruled he wasn't owed anything beyond the \$1.5 million Scruggs already had paid. The two sides settled.

John Jones: The Jackson attorney represented Scruggs in the lawsuit William Roberts Wilson Jr. filed against Scruggs. He now is suing Scruggs in Lafayette County Circuit Court over \$26 million in legal fees connected to Katrina litigation.

the judge

Henry Lackey: A Lafayette County circuit judge, he was presiding over the Katrina litigation legal fees case when he was approached about a bribe. He notified federal authorities.

courtroom players

Michael Mills: The U.S. District Court judge presiding over the federal judicial bribery case.

Thomas Dawson: An assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District who is prosecuting the defendants in the judicial bribery case.

John Keker: Dickie Scruggs' San Francisco-based attorney.

Tony Farese: The Ashland attorney for Booneville lawyer Joey Langston.

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committee to look at utility-hike bill

A House bill that could eventually allow utility companies to raise rates before construction begins on additional plants will not be heard on the House floor.

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House Public Utilities Committee Chairman Tyrone Ellis, D-Starkville, said his committee will instead tighten a Senate version so that it will offer more protection for ratepayers.

Entergy is considering building an additional nuclear plant next to the Grand Gulf Nuclear Plant at Port Gibson. Mississippi Power wants to build a \$1.8 billion coal plant in Kemper County.

Entergy officials have said incremental rate hikes over an eight-year period of planning and building the nuclear plant would prevent a huge rate hike thereafter. But consumer advocacy groups, legislators and public service commissioners worry that ratepayers could be stuck with the tab if construction plans fall through.

house backs stiff bribery penalties

bribing judges.

The House has voted to impose stiff penalties for

House Bill 1108 that passed 122-0 Tuesday says someone found guilty of the felony could be punished by five to 20 years in prison and a fine of at least \$25,000 or three times the amount of the bribe.

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The bill moves to the Senate for more work.

House Judiciary A Committee Chairman Ed Blackmon Jr., D-Canton, says the bill was inspired by current events.

Trial lawyer Dickie Scruggs and others are set to go on trial in late March on federal charges of attempting to bribe a state court judge.

senate approves judicial changes

Candidates for Justice Court judge would have to run without party affiliation and, if elected, be required to pass a minimum competency exam under a bill that cleared the Senate on Tuesday.

Senate Bill 2571 was drafted based on recommendations from a task force formed to review the Justice Court system. The salaries of many of the judges would be increased under the bill.

charter-school plan advances

School districts with more than 500 students would be able to establish a charter school geared toward helping underperforming students under a bill passed by a voice vote in the Senate on Tuesday.

But Senate Bill 2721 would limit the number of charter schools that could be established by one or multiple school districts to five in the state. The legislation also would require approval from the local school board and the state Department of Education.

Supporters say the bill will help at-risk students, but critics say it would be redundant of responsibilities public schools already have and fear it could allow districts to cherry pick students.

The bill now advances to the House for consideration.

bill addresses blind-trust issues

A bill that would establish regulations for blind trusts cleared the House floor Tuesday.

House Bill 795, passed on a 116 to 2 vote, addresses trusts established after July 1. It would not apply to a trust created by GOP Gov. Haley Barbour when he took office in 2004.

Blind trusts are sometimes created by politicians to shield themselves from conflicts of interest. State law mandates that public officials disclose sources of private income of more than \$2,500. But the law does not address blind trusts.

The Senate recently passed an omnibus ethics reform bill that contains blind-trust provisions.

senators support curbside voting

A bill that would allow curbside voting for some disabled residents, require more training for poll workers and place tighter restrictions on the handling of absentee ballots passed the Senate on Tuesday evening.

After nearly two hours of debate, Senate Bill 2910, backed by Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann, cleared the floor on a vote of 27-20.

Amendments to the original legislation eliminated two of the most controversial components. Senators voted not to include reregistering all Mississippi voters or allow early voting.

The bill now moves to the House for consideration.

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MrBluez wrote:

"..... I wasn't crazy about being attorney general anyway," Hood said
HAHAHAHAHAHA !!!!! Well, I'm not crazy about him being Attorney General
either maybe we're not that different after all.

2/28/2008 1:19:34 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

I didn't say decade Humpty. But this meeting was around Christmas. The dinner was in early November as far as I can tell. Unless you know differently, what made you think the meeting and the dinner were on the same day? You go around and make all these accusations based on assumptions and you want to know the answer to your unfounded questions. No wonder Hood can't win with guys like you.

2/28/2008 12:46:14 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Ok. I'm sorry. I'm using too much common sense to link your "two" meetings w/in the same decade. I'll stop applying that to my thought process. I apologize for making you play so much defense on this issue...but I'm now totally convinced James is "A-Ok" regarding this Balducci/Patterson situation. I'm sure nothing will come of it. Thank you for your precision.

2/28/2008 12:23:57 PM

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bellesouth wrote:

"Mr. Hood, before Scruggs settled with State Farm -- and by "Scruggs" I mean Dickie Scruggs and the SKG, Scruggs Katrina Group. Before they settled the case with 640 plaintiffs, which generated a fee in excess of \$20 million for Mr. Scruggs and his partners, did they dispatch Mr. Balducci and Mr. Patterson to have dinner with you in a restaurant in Jackson to talk about that?" That case was settled in early November.

2/28/2008 11:49:17 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

Excuse me. Why do you assume it was hours before the dinner? What makes you think it was the same day or the same week or the same month?

2/28/2008 11:42:50 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Absolutely not - I would never ask that much. Just the "two" meetings we're talking about. I have to assume they happened just hours apart. ("The Office" and "The Dinner") He recalled they didn't eat at Crechale's - he recalled what they talked about (and what they didn't talk about)...so why would it be that difficult to recall the "The Office meeting" just before dinner? Come on BS. I'll give you another shot at that answer.

2/28/2008 11:28:55 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

HD all of a sudden he is supposed to remember every meeting he has ever had with those guys? Talk about splitting hairs.

2/28/2008 11:21:19 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

I'm not worried about the address of the dinner - I know he denied the "threat" that Scruggs was going to support another candidate...I guess I didn't know that we needed to separate the 'meeting in the office' from the 'meeting over dinner'... Thank you for splitting that hair and clearing up any questions re "common sense" (or lack thereof) I would expect our AG to have. I would have thought with his level of integrity/intelligence he would have included "both" meetings to clear the air...instead he just dug a deeper hole he'll need to get out of.

2/28/2008 11:18:13 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

HD, I guess he was just thinking about that dinner. The question was whether they had told him that Scruggs was going to support another candidate. So, 1) they didn't have dinner at chrecales, 2) they didn't tell him that Scruggs was going to support another candidate 3) he did have dinner with them and they talked about Balducci's firm 4) He didn't know that at that meeting in his office they were being paid by Scruggs to influence his decision so he didn't think to bring it up in Natchez.

2/28/2008 11:05:03 AM

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provdw wrote:

yea right, people are going down over this and hopefully all of them will

2/28/2008 11:02:16 AM

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Crassus wrote:

when you lay down with dogs you get fleas and Jim is having to scratch alot even if he is not guilty.

2/28/2008 10:29:13 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

BS - understanding all of that...but while Hood was under oath in Natchez, he said the dinner/meeting was simply about Balducci or Patterson (one of two) leaving their current law firm. This article seems to imply it was more than that..."If I knew they were getting paid that much, I would have told them to get out of the office..." and "It was like they were fishing for information more than anything.". Those quotes seem to indicate to me that they talked a little further than Patterson/Balducci leaving a law firm.

2/28/2008 10:25:45 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

HD, he was asked about a dinner set up by Scruggs at Crechales. That threw him for a loop since he hadn't been to Crechales, so he says, okay I haven't been to Crechales but I did go to dinner with them and they said blah blah blah. So, then is he suppose to say, You know there was this other time they came to my office and I thought they were fishing for information but I don't know what was up with that. He had made it clear to Scruggs and State Farm and now to all Mississippians that he was not going to be influenced by anyone. He was going to do his job as he saw fit. Evidently, that is why Scruggs had to pay Balducci and Patterson \$500k to try. Later, he decided not to pursue criminal charges against State Farm regarding Katrina policy claims. But then later on, last year he opened an new inquiry based on some information that came in April 07. SF blew a gasket and sued him in Federal Court. It was dismissed.

2/28/2008 10:07:30 AM

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mewin2000 wrote:

I am definitely not a republican or haley groupie. My question is why is hood agreeing to make comments to the news paper anyway? No money was allegedly offered to hood but he is making himself look suspicious with his unnecessary comments.

2/28/2008 10:02:23 AM

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shasar wrote:

What bunch of idiots are there that seem to think they don't have to read the article to bash Jim Hood. The \$500,000 wasn't going to Jim Hood, it was going to the person who was going to try to persuade Jim Hood to do their bidding. I read the comments and realize that all these people are Barbour groupies. Barbour doesn't want Jim Hood to win the election because Jim Hood will put a stop to most of the corruption in our administrations offices, including legislators and senators ! Barbour groupies is what you Jim Hood bashers are !

2/28/2008 9:55:33 AM

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canardnoir wrote:

Com' On Mississippi! Give him a break! He's said all during the campaign that he just wanted to "fix things."

2/28/2008 9:55:20 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

Yazooskeptic. He said he didn't know about their being paid to influence him and had he known he would have thrown them out of his office. It definitely is a thankless job.

2/28/2008 9:50:28 AM

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mjclll wrote:

"I didn't care who (Scruggs) supported. I wasn't crazy about being attorney general anyway,' Hood said, adding that he preferred being a district attorney." What??? Did he really say that??? I don't believe he said that. No way. If true, I would like to nominate this statement as "Quote of the Year."

2/28/2008 9:20:42 AM

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beec243 wrote:

I tried to give a cop a bag of boiled peanuts one day after gettin pulled over for speeding. I guess if I would have offered 500.000 he would have shot me on the spot.Glad I did't offer him one of my donuts

2/28/2008 9:09:36 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

...and he said in sworn testimony in Natchez that the meeting with Patterson and Balducci was to discuss that one of them was leaving their current law firm...he never indicated it had anything to do with Sate Farm - until now ("It was like they were fishing for information more than anything,"...)

2/28/2008 8:58:31 AM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Hood: "If I knew they were getting paid that much, I would have told them to get out of the office..." Maybe he should have chosen another way to say that...like not giving the impression that a little less than \$500,000 would have been hunky dorey...

2/28/2008 8:37:49 AM

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Begood wrote:

Mr. Hood adds to, or changes his story as the facts are revealed. These two people, Patterson and Balduci, were his personal friends. Now he says he had the feeling they were fishing for information. I don't buy it and believe he discussed anything they wanted. He may not have taken cash himself but was being rewarded by campaign contributions. I'm sure now that after several of his closest co-harts have been arrested or convicted he wishes he was not the A.G. They all had power and were in high cotton until the bottom fell out.

2/28/2008 8:33:00 AM

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benjamin wrote:

Hood just admitted he would rather work somewhere else. A simple letter from Hood to the Governor could give him his wish.

2/28/2008 8:13:41 AM

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yazookskeptic wrote:

So \$500,000 wouldn't smell right to Mr Hood. Wonder just how much would pass his "smell test" ? Oh, and at this point most Mississippians likely would rather he was district attorney than attorney general also. He may get his wish next time around.

2/28/2008 7:28:04 AM

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JanetbGood wrote:

Fantastic. Me, Richard, Ken, Andy and the rest of the group have something else to write today on Folo. Thanks to all for helping me write my book.

2/28/2008 6:15:16 AM

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jimbo9911 wrote:

And what else would you have expected Mr. Hood to say?????

2/28/2008 3:33:39 AM

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Request to disbar made

Guilty pleas tied to Scruggs probe

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • FEBRUARY 28, 2008

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The Mississippi Supreme Court has been asked to terminate the law licenses of Joey Langston and Timothy Balducci, both tied to federal investigations of powerful plaintiffs attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs.

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The Mississippi Bar petitioned the Supreme Court in January to accept the disciplinary action against the two men. The petitions were included on the Supreme Court's March-April docket.

Neither Langston nor Balducci is opposing the Bar's petition.

Langston, who once represented Scruggs in the judicial bribery case, pleaded guilty in federal court in January to conspiring with Scruggs in a scheme to influence Hinds County Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter in a separate dispute over attorneys' fees. His sentencing is pending.

Prosecutors said Langston conspired with others to get a favorable ruling for Scruggs in the 1994 case by offering to help DeLaughter get appointed to the federal bench.

DeLaughter has denied any wrongdoing.

Balducci pleaded guilty in December to conspiracy to bribe a judge and has cooperated with federal investigators. His sentencing is pending.

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According to court records, Balducci was accused of delivering \$40,000 to a judge at the behest of Scruggs for a favorable ruling in a dispute between Scruggs and other lawyers over \$26.5 million in fees from a mass settlement of lawsuits that homeowners filed against State Farm Insurance Cos. after Hurricane Katrina.

In other cases, the Supreme Court will hear:

- Azki Shah's request for reinstatement to the practice of law. Shah was suspended in 2007 by the Mississippi Supreme Court for three years.

It was the seventh time in less than eight years that Shah has been accused of misconduct. Shah previously had been suspended from the practice of law on two occasions, once for two years and again for six months. Shah had received three private reprimands and one informal admonition. In the most recent incident, Shah was suspended for failing to file a complaint on behalf of a client and follow up with that client on the status of the complaint.

- The Bar's petition calling for the indefinite suspension of the license of lawyer Robert Arledge of Vicksburg, while Arledge appeals his 2007 conviction related to an investigation of false diet drug settlement claims in Mississippi.

Arledge was convicted in federal court of seven counts of conspiracy and wire fraud in a scam bilking the drug company Wyeth out of more than \$6.7 million. He was sentenced to 6 1/2 years in prison.

Arledge had been charged with knowingly allowing clients to make fen-phen claims of about \$250,000 each, even though they had no legitimate reason.

Fen-Phen was a prescription diet drug pulled from the market in 1997 after research revealed it could cause heart problems.

in your voice

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shasar wrote:

And...make them pay for any and all damages brought on by their professional misconduct. And ... their license should be revoked not for six months or three years, it should be for life !

2/28/2008 10:04:47 AM

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shasar wrote:

Yes, yes, yes. Remove the license to practice law from any and all lawyers who practice "outside the law and ethics" set before them.

2/28/2008 10:01:51 AM

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POWER

Scruggs contempt charge dropped

Victory for attorney, but it doesn't affect Mississippi bribery case

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS • MARCH 1, 2008

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BIRMINGHAM — A federal judge dismissed a criminal contempt charge against Mississippi attorney Dickie Scruggs on Friday, giving the prominent lawyer one less case to worry about as he fights a more serious bribery indictment.

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U.S. District Judge Roger Vinson ruled 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 is a clear victory for Scruggs, but it doesn't affect the bribery case in Mississippi, where Scruggs is accused of conspiring to bribe a judge over \$26 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 Alabama-based E.A. Renfroe and Co. Inc., which adjusted claims for State Farm insurance after Katrina.



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ADVERTIS

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 would not prosecute Scruggs, so Acker appointed special prosecutors who moved forward with the case. Vinson, from Pensacola, 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 attorney general.

in your voice

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falcon47 wrote:

The concern anyone would have over the handling of these matters is clearly understandable. This is an incident which became known because attorneys were fighting attorneys. Had this been a cause regarding some individual seeking action from the court against an attorney it would have already been dismissed. This should get interesting. Both sides are familiar with the law and final decisions of the court would be closely monitored and although Dickie maybe put to the stake the general feeling is that the diversion will do little regarding the corruption in the state of Mississippi. Hopefully the entire country will become aware that Mississippi is nothing more than a rogue state which may allow legal remedies to occur elsewhere. CHANGE OF VENUE FOR HONEST CLAIMS?

3/1/2008 8:16:50 PM

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highwayman wrote:

DQuixote is right. Hopefully Scruggs and Co. will get what's coming to them on our side of the Alabama/Mississippi State Line, both in the Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi. Now, if only Dunn Lampton will do the right thing this time around since he has a second bite at the apple with "all" the lawyers and judges.

3/1/2008 12:28:59 PM

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LeeLee wrote:

Those documents should have been returned to the rightful owner in the first place. These supposedly intelligent people are as dumb as a box of rocks. Better still, did they all really believe that there is an 11th commandment ? "Thou Shall Not Get Caught". Seems to me they should have stuck with the 10.

3/1/2008 12:04:06 PM

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dquixote wrote:

Peanut's frustration is very understandable. In this instance however, the appellate court ruling is legally sound and righteous.

3/1/2008 10:45:49 AM

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bellesouth wrote:

Peanut, it really was quite clear that Scruggs could turn the documents over to the AG. Acker wrote the injunction and although he went all this way to get Scruggs for criminal contempt, it is his own fault for wording the injunction. But also, the injunction was for the Rigsbys and their agents and since Scruggs did not represent them in Alabama he was not working on their behalf, so the injunction did not cover him. He did not as the judge said "aid and abet" the Rigsbys in turning over the documents to the AG, but was protecting evidence in a criminal investigation.

3/1/2008 10:13:56 AM

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peanutgallery wrote:

I'm not an attorney as you apparently are but couldn't any court action attempting to right a wrong be described as vindictive? Are not the very claims of bribery themselves against Mr. Scruggs vindictive in that they are an attempt to revenge the breach of a law? Ms. is well recognized as the most politically corrupt state in the union and could not reach and cannot retain that dubious honor without a corrupt judicial system. I'm sure Mr. Scuggs' attorneys will explore every possible loophole to show the evil vindictiveness of the FBI, any judge and everyone else trying to introduce justice to our sick legal situation in Ms..

3/1/2008 8:35:42 AM

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Sop81 wrote:

Peanutgallery the reason the case was dismissed was because 1. Scruggs was not covered by the Judge Acker's injunction and 2. The injunction was complied with it fully. Scruggs didn't write the original order Judge Acker did and it appears to me this whole exercise in criminal contempt was vindictiveness on Acker's part. I highly recommend you read Judge Acker's original order as well as Judge Vinson's decision. Also not letting others do your thinking would help the level of your analysis. sop

3/1/2008 8:04:36 AM

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peanutgallery wrote:

So the reason he got off of this charge was because he turned the papers over to a person who is being looked at as a possible co-conspirator? If anyone out there really thinks this country's flawed judicial system is gonna really work with the FBI to expose one of their own for the crook that he really is (and so many in the legal profession are), you are one naive dude or dudette. Before this is over it will make OJ's trial look legit.

3/1/2008 7:53:50 AM

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POWER

Judiciary: Internal housecleaning?

THE CLARION-LEDGER • MARCH 2, 2008

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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.

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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

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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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POWER

Tendency to oversimplify Scruggs case occurs

MARC M. HARROLD / • SPECIAL TO THE CLARION-LEDGER • MARCH 2, 2008

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OXFORD — Given its adversarial nature, the American trial system makes for a good spectator experience.

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As in many areas of our lives, we attempt to maximize our exposure primarily through advances in technology. This is not a criticism of the adversarial system as zealous advocacy by both sides is the process I believe is most likely to produce a just result.

However, the instantaneous nature of trial reporting is not always a net positive. The recent case involving Richard "Dickie" Scruggs reveals aspects of the public appetite for trial coverage that can be counter-productive to the understanding of the American legal system.

In certain cases, media outlets have exaggerated the impact pretrial motions may have on the outcome of the trial itself.

While certain motions related to venue and timing may have immediate effect, the effect of other pretrial rulings is more difficult to determine. For example, on an issue such as government overreaching or alleged entrapment, the fact that the judge does not dismiss the case prior to trial due to "outrageous government conduct" does not mean that many of these same arguments may not be persuasive to a jury.

jury ultimately decides

Similarly, while a judge may deny a pretrial motion to sever certain parties from others, this does not mean that a jury may not come to the conclusion that certain defendants are guilty of actions that others, even if indicted collectively, are not. In other words, simply because the issue is not disposed of prior to trial does not mean that the argument is without merit, only that it is likely an issue that will be left to the jury.

Next, the media almost inevitably attempt to simplify the events or stages of the trial process. This is not a negative, in and of itself.

One of the major goals of any type of news reporting is to distill information into a digestible format for a broad audience. However, the Scruggs case involves multiple defendants and stems from a multi-count

more c

[Judiciary:](#)

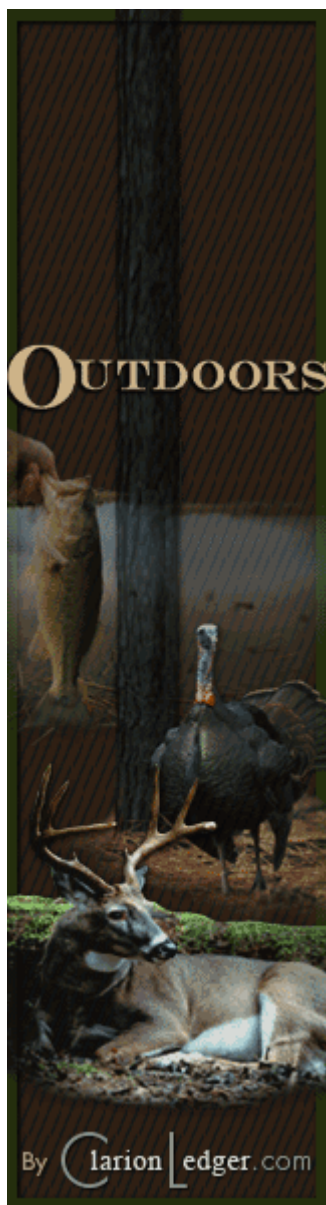
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indictment that alleges complex theories of conspiracy and inter-related criminal agency between the named defendants.

As expected, the defense attorneys in this case have embarked on what promises to be a thorough and sophisticated defense.

In most interviews, the "expert" is asked to put the legal or procedural issues "in simple terms." While explaining the law in lay terms can certainly be helpful in informing an interested general audience, oversimplifying what is not simple can act to misinform rather than educate.

speculation rampant

In certain cases, while understanding what the party filing the motion wants can be stated fairly simply - e.g., more time, suppress evidence, dismiss the charges, the trial in a different location, parties "severed" from other parties, an "anonymous" jury, etc. - the legal arguments that are made to support these motions cannot be explained "simply," because they are not simple.

The motions are often based on complex legal theories; in other words, like in math, sometimes giving the answer without "showing your work" is of little value.

Finally, and perhaps most damaging, is our desire to predict. Admittedly, this can be fun, and everyone likes to ultimately be proven correct.

In most of the interviews the legal "expert" is asked to speculate on the strategy of the prosecution or the defense. Attorneys should always be hesitant to engage in this type of speculation. Again, as in other facets of news coverage, it can, when undertaken irresponsibly, act to misinform rather than educate as the line between speculation and fact can become blurred.

As criminal defendants are charged in the name of the people, news coverage of individual trials that act to educate the public about the criminal justice system are an important part of our protected free press and a defendant's right to a public trial.

The media and attorneys should tread lightly when attempting to either oversimplify the steps or predict the outcomes in the progression of a criminal trial in an effort ensure that media coverage acts to inform rather than skew the process that collectively amounts to a criminal trial and, ideally, a just result.

Marc M. Harrold is senior counsel and visiting professor at the National Center for Justice and the Rule of Law at the University of Mississippi School of Law. He is a regular contributing columnist to The Clarion-Ledger.

in your voice

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Sop81 wrote:

Mr Harrold your remarks are spot on. The so called "new media" coverage on sites like Rossmiller's blog, Folo and Yallpolitics has furthered misconceptions instead of adding understanding. Two of those sites are located out of state and run by moderators who are in this to make a profit for themselves, not further understanding or help with solutions. We Mississippians will be stuck with the fallout from this mess while other people in states like Oregon and Florida will be counting the money they made from this case.

3/2/2008 12:28:21 PM

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davidhampton's page

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Male, Age: 54

About Me: I am David Hampton. I am the editorial director of The Clarion-Ledger. I have been for 32 years and have spent most of my career at Jackson newspapers, covering and commenting on government and politics. I am a native of Tennessee and a graduate of the University of Memphis. I live in the Fondren neighborhood in Jackson with my spouse, Peggy, and yellow lab, Cody.

You're most likely to see me around town at: The Clarion-Ledger, the Capitol, Fondren, Walgreens, or Hal & Mal's

On the weekends I love to: Hunt and fish, cook, work in the yard

The high school, college or pro sports teams I root for are: University of Memphis, St. Louis Cardinals, Mississippi Braves

If I'm watching a movie or listening to music, it's probably: Bluegrass

I am passionate about: outdoor activities, music

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David Hampton blog

Opinion

Judicial task force

Posted 3/3/2008 4:08 PM CST

The Mississippi Bar just announced creation of a task force to deal with issues of judicial integrity and confidence in the legal system. This has been sorely needed, even before the recent judicial bribery scandal in north Mississippi.

The bidding war between the business and medical community against trial lawyers in judicial races has undermined the system and damaged public perception of the courts. We need a lot of changes, including appointed judges, in my opinion.

The Bar has to take leadership on this one. This is a good start.

Here is the announcement:

With the approval of the Board of Commissioners, Mississippi Bar President Bobby Bailess of Vicksburg has appointed a "Task Force to Strengthen Confidence in the Legal System". The charge of the task force is to "examine our legal system and make recommendations to insure the honesty and integrity of the Bar and fairness and impartiality within the Judiciary." Bill Goodman of Jackson is serving as chair of the task force. Other members include: Reuben Anderson, Jackson; Patricia Bennett, Jackson; Judge Lisa Dodson, Gulfport; Don Dornan, Jr., Biloxi; Barry Ford, Jackson; Deborah Gambrell, Hattiesburg; Billie Graham, Laurel; Bill Liston, Winona; John Clark Love, Jr., Kosciusko; Judge Kent McDaniel, Brandon; Harold Mitchell, Jr., Greenville; Guy Mitchell, III, Tupelo; Colette Oldmixon, Poplarville; Judge Edward Patten, Jr., Hazlehurst; Briggs Smith, Batesville; and former Governor William Winter of Jackson.

Commenting on the task force President Bailess stated, "The work of this task force is crucial. It is critical that the public has absolute trust and confidence in our legal system." Bailess added "The importance of the task force's work and the Bar's commitment is evidenced by the unanimous acceptance of all 17 appointees."

The task force will be holding its first meeting in March and attempting to conclude its work by year end. Questions regarding the Bar's Task Force to Strengthen Confidence in the Legal System should be directed to the Bar at 601-948-4471.

#

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dolomite wrote:

The business and medical community have not "undermined the system." What has undermined the system is plaintiff lawyers bribing judges and receiving obscene amounts of money. Have any of the judges supported by the business and medical community been involved in any of this? Have any members of the business and medical community been involved? You might as well say the conflict between the criminal and the victim is undermining the system.

3/5/2008 8:39 AM CST

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JanetbGood wrote:

Hey boys and girls me, Richard, Ken and the rest of the gang are having a great time picking apart Hampton and the people on the committee. If you want to take a cheap shot and help us write our book come on over to Folo and trash the lawyers with us! Don't forget to visit our sponsors and please stop by the donation page. I lost a bunch of money in the market and my insurance in Florida has really gone up. I really don't care what happens in Mississippi as long as we make some money.

3/4/2008 9:35 AM CST

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maeleoin2002@yahoo.com wrote:

The task force is a good start, but changing the way judges are selected will require legislative and voter action. The task force, like the fourth estate, will succeed if it informs the public debate. It will not succeed if it deflates into a cosmetic effort to change public opinion without any real change to the judicial system. The qualifications of the appointees to the task force should give us all hope that real change will come. We can be thankful for these appointments, but let us pray the process does not become another experience of sound and fury signifying nothing. Prior attempts to change our constitution and our flag resulted in much heat and little light.

3/4/2008 6:39 AM CST

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POWER

Lawyer in judicial bribery case claims witness lied to grand jury

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • MARCH 3, 2008

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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.

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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 prosecutorial misconduct.

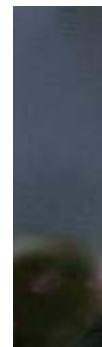
Scruggs' lawyers claim grand jurors heard false and misleading testimony from an FBI agent and from former attorney Timothy Balducci, who already has pleaded guilty to conspiring with Scruggs and others to bribe state Circuit Judge Henry Lackey.

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



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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.

in your voice

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Bullpups wrote:

TURN DICKIE LOOSE, TURN DICKIE LOOSE, HE WHIPPED THE INSURANCE COMPANIES AT THEIR OWN GAME, NOW THEY ARE PI\$\$ED AND WILL DO ANYTHING & EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HURT HIM. IT STILL STICKS DEEP IN MY GUT HOW THE INSURANCE COMPANIES TRIED TO GET OUT OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS(PAYMENTS) ON THE KATRINA SETTLEMENTS. GLAD I DID NOT LIVE ON THE COAST & HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT BECAUSE I MAY BE IN JAIL FOR A CRIME BEYOND MY CONTROL. THE INSURANCE COMPANIES DEMAND THEIR PREMIUMS PAID BUT TRY A "SLICK WILLIE" WHEN IT IS TIME TO PONY UP FOR FOR THE DISASTER THAT KATRINA DID.

3/3/2008 8:29:56 PM

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JamesSavik wrote:

Mike Moore and Jim Hood deserve to be ruined. They're both up to their neck in this thing. It can't simply go away. Too many people are watching it very carefully.

3/3/2008 7:51:42 PM

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koolaid wrote:

The Republican US District Attorney's case is starting to fall apart and be exposed for what it probably really is, more trumped-up political garbage aimed at trying to ruin the future political careers of Mike Moore and Jim Hood. It will eventually, completely DISINTEGRATE!

3/3/2008 7:37:53 PM

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jbc929 wrote:

Get. Over. It. Clinton beat the congressional republicans.

3/3/2008 6:36:00 PM

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

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georgemarlowe wrote:

What a bunch of crooks. Now the Scruggs are using old Slick Willie's Clintonize language. .

3/3/2008 5:46:17 PM

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Kathie wrote:

I am guessing Scruggs will never go to jail. The word slick comes to mind. Good post Negotiator.

3/3/2008 5:27:26 PM

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Negotiator wrote:

Sure.... right...I got it....a secret code...yea, that's the ticket. It depends on what the meaning of the word "is" is.

3/3/2008 5:11:21 PM

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Scruggs defendant: Key witness lied

Attorney accused in bribery case seeks to overturn his indictment

MICHAEL KUNZELMAN • THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • MARCH 4, 2008

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

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Zach Scruggs, an Oxford-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 because of alleged government misconduct.

Scruggs' attorneys say grand jurors heard false and misleading testimony from an FBI agent and from former lawyer 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 attorneys 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 Zach Scruggs; his father, prominent plaintiffs lawyer Dickie Scruggs; and fellow Scruggs Law Firm attorney Sidney Backstrom is scheduled to start March 31 in Oxford.

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Dickie Scruggs, a brother-in-law of former Republican U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, 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.

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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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Zach Scruggs maintains the transcripts, when compared to wiretap evidence, show Balducci lied to the grand jury and mischaracterized Zach Scruggs' knowledge of and participation in the alleged conspiracy.

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Prosecutors say Balducci was acting on Dickie Scruggs' behalf when he allegedly tried to bribe Lackey for a favorable ruling in a dispute with other lawyers over \$26 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 he met with Zach Scruggs and Backstrom that day and told them Lackey wanted \$10,000 for the favorable ruling.

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georgemarlowe wrote:

As I said before what a bunch of shysters. Now the Scruggs are using old Slick Willie's Clintonize talk, wonder if old Zack's lawyer, was shacking his finger saying this is not true, I didn't lie, ha-ha

3/4/2008 4:12:18 PM

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farmer01 wrote:

I'm also concerned about these clowns beating the rap. They're lawyered up better than OJ in his prime. It will take sharp juries to see through all the smoke and mirrors.

3/4/2008 12:12:32 PM

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dixie68 wrote:

One of the saddest aspects of this whole thing is that rank and file folks I have talked to believe that on account of the corruption in Mississippi, along with the clout of the defendants, that they will all escape with nothing more than the proverbial slap of the hand. The Clarion Ledger has not helped in the situation because they have not thoroughly investigated and reported on it.

3/4/2008 12:06:10 PM

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dixiegate08 wrote:

What are the chances Zach joins Balducci and Langston and sings in Uncle Sam's choir when his motion is denied?

3/4/2008 10:39:41 AM

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Begood wrote:

"Sweet Potatos", What a complicated code for a high priced, rich lawyer to break. It's always someone else's fault. Now we are blaming the FBI and defendants who have pled guilty. I suspect a jury is smart enough to put this all together.

3/4/2008 7:56:03 AM

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beec243 wrote:

Now you know all them poor fellows were set up. Even when a lawyer is admitting to doing wrong, another one comes in and said he's lying.sounds like buzzards to me.

3/4/2008 7:38:04 AM

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Judiciary: Task force positive step for reform

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If the judicial bribery scandal in Mississippi has dealt a blow to the standing of the Magnolia State's legal profession, the Bar has now struck back with equal force.

ADVERTISEMENT This week, Mississippi Bar President Bobby Bailess of Vicksburg announced the appointment of a "Task Force to Strengthen Confidence in the Legal System." Its duty is to "examine our legal system and make recommendations" to ensure the honesty, fairness and impartiality within the judiciary.

The panel could be dismissed as an attempt to whitewash a system irredeemably tarnished by the scandals involving some of the state's best known lawyers. But this is a long-needed endeavor. It should address the increasing special-interest influence of contributions to judicial candidates, the coziness of lawyers with judges, whether judges should be elected or appointed.

Chaired by Bill Goodman of Jackson, the panel has two names that stand out: former Gov. William Winter

INTEGRITY

- The integrity of the Mississippi Bar is at stake with the ju bribery scandal, so it's fitting that some of the most respecte names of the bench and bar are on this panel.

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and former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Reuben Anderson. Both Winter and Anderson are revered for rock solid integrity and public service.

Also serving are: Patricia Bennett, Jackson; Judge Lisa Dodson, Gulfport; Don Dornan Jr., Biloxi; Barry Ford, Jackson; Deborah Gambrell, Hattiesburg; Billie Graham, Laurel; Bill Liston, Winona; John Clark Love Jr., Kosciusko; Judge Kent McDaniel, Brandon; Harold Mitchell Jr., Greenville; Guy Mitchell III, Tupelo; Colette Oldmixon, Poplarville; Judge Edward Patten Jr., Hazlehurst; and Briggs Smith, Batesville.

The panel is to give a report on possible reforms by year's end, Bailess says.

The task of strengthening confidence in the judicial system at this point is daunting.

Oxford lawyer Dickie Scruggs is tangled in a web of allegations that extends across the state.

Attorney Timothy Balducci is accused of giving \$40,000 to a Calhoun County judge at the behest of Scruggs regarding \$26.5 million in fees from Hurricane Katrina lawsuits. Balducci has pleaded guilty, along with former State Auditor Steve Patterson, to conspiracy to bribe a judge.

Scruggs, his son Zach Scruggs and Sidney Backstrom face federal conspiracy charges in connection with the alleged bribery scheme. Scruggs, his son and Backstrom have denied any wrongdoing.

Joey Langston, who once represented Scruggs, has pleaded guilty in federal court to conspiring with Scruggs in a scheme to influence a Hinds County Circuit judge.

The task force has its work cut out for it.

in your voice

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April50 wrote:

Besides, no one has yet to say that a bribe was actually PRESENTED to Delaughter. Balduci & Patterson can only testify about what they said to Peters. They don't know what Peters did or didn't do. Neither has anyone suggested that Delaughter was bribed in the Eaton case. But, if that is the what you believe then, who is doing the bribing? What is the quid-pro-quo. Absent a bribe, what was the motivation for the so-called collusion? Fact is, there is no DIRECT evidence against Delaughter, It's all hearsay. "Somebody said that somebody ELSE said that somebody "tried" to bribe him." Hearsay is not admissible in court for a reason, people!!! Furthermore there are at least 1/2 dozen ways Peters could have acquired confidential information other than from Delaughter. Nope. I'm not convinced that Delaughter is dishonest (OR stupid).

3/6/2008 5:39:59 PM

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April50 wrote:

I, for one, find it very hard to believe that Bobby Delaughter has done anything illegal or immoral or unethical. If there was ANY evidence what-so-ever that he knowingly & willingly allowed Ed Peters to become involved in any of his proceedings in which Peters had no business participating, the FBI would have already filed an indictment against him. Remember, the FBI has been working this case for 8 or 9 months now. They've had plenty of time to bring charges against him if there as any reason to do so. Neither does it make sense for anybody (even Scruggs) to attempt a bribe on a case where the law was in his favor anyway.

3/6/2008 5:15:45 PM

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dixie68 wrote:

The creation of a task force usually means that the situation has been buried and the status quo will be preserved, and William Winter is certainly not my idea of rock solid integrity.

3/6/2008 12:45:52 PM

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redneck wrote:

when and where can this citizen meet with this group purporting to be examining themselves?

3/6/2008 9:25:42 AM

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redneck wrote:

will they be revisiting the clarke county gangs handling of 5 felonies against my business who the county prosecuting attorney caused to disappear. instead of prosecuting the felons represented same in my civil complaint, in which the judge ordered the return of my property obtained thru the 5 felonies, thereby becoming accessories before and after the fact on said felonies. is this the kind of integrity we are to expect from these bench-bar hoodlums? I will be more than happy to testify and present solid evidence concerning the outlaw behavior of the entire judicial system, just in case they may honestly want to address these issues I can be contacted@bskrmett@bellsouth.net

3/6/2008 8:42:52 AM

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bummedout wrote:

CORRECTION: I mean there are many former appellate court judges who were NOT involved in the Delaughter/Peters schemes.

3/6/2008 8:04:53 AM

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bummedout wrote:

Reuben Anderson's firm, Phelps, Dunbar represents Eaton in the Eaton v. Frisby case. This is one of the cases that Peters was working with Delaughter as secret counsel for Eaton. Is it really an appropriate response for Anderson to be serving on this committee. If they wanted a former appellate court judge, there are many to choose from who were involved in the Delaughter/Peters schemes. I think, Redneck, this will be no different.

3/6/2008 8:03:47 AM

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whythis wrote:

First, they need to deal with DeLaughter and Patton. Surely you guys know who Patton is. Then again maybe not as you have utterly failed to report on the Keith SHelton matter which the JFP just put into print after FOLO broke it.

3/6/2008 7:45:38 AM

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redneck wrote:

does this mean they will revisit the actions of the courthouse gang of clarke county who took the entire countys prive roads and drives sans the courts,notice hearing or compensation? who then caused criminal complaints concerning the illegal

seizure to dissappear? even though this conspiracy against these rights are punishable by up to 10 years in the federal correctional system the commission on judicial performance or the state bar could find no judicial misconduct. will this new probe be any different?

3/6/2008 6:35:56 AM

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Sanctions sought against Scruggs

BY JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • MARCH 5, 2008

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Attorneys for a former law partner for Dickie Scruggs are seeking sanctions against Scruggs and others because of an alleged bribery scheme to influence the trial judge.

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In taking the first step toward those sanctions, lawyers for William Roberts Wilson Jr. are seeking a new judge in the case.

Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter heard the case before, and Wilson's attorneys are asking that he and all other Hinds County judges step down from hearing the case.

On Jan. 4, DeLaughter stepped down from all cases related to Scruggs, but did not on this one - "a failure which was more likely than not an oversight on his part," wrote Wilson's attorney, Bill Kirksey of Jackson.

The request cited statements by Joey Langston, a Booneville lawyer who has pleaded guilty to a scheme to influence DeLaughter in the Wilson case. According to

Langston, Scruggs paid a reverse contingency fee of \$3 million to him, former State Auditor Steve Patterson and DeLaughter's former boss, then-District Attorney Ed Peters.

It also mentioned testimony by New Albany lawyer Tim Balducci, who was asked, "Was Judge Bobby DeLaughter bribed in that (Wilson) case?"



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"He was," Balducci replied.

Wilson's attorneys are asking other Hinds County judges to step down because the allegations involve a fellow judge. "According to sworn statements of at least Mr. Langston and Mr. Balducci such actions did result in corrupt influence including bribery as alleged by Mr. Langston and Mr. Balducci," Kirksey wrote.

Langston and Balducci have said DeLaughter was bribed, not with cash, but with an offer that Scruggs would get his brother-in-law, then-U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, to add DeLaughter to a list for consideration for a federal judgeship.

Lott did call DeLaughter, and the former senator is expected to be a witness against Scruggs in his March 31 trial on judicial bribery charges. Scruggs' attorney has said his client had nothing to do with this attempt to influence the judge in the case.

DeLaughter has denied taking a bribe, denied any wrongdoing and said he followed the law in all his rulings.

He told federal authorities he became aware in 2006 that some people were trying to improperly influence him to rule in favor of Scruggs in this legal-fees dispute. He also told authorities he wasn't certain if he was influenced or not.

Langston and Balducci have said DeLaughter shared his proposed orders with Peters prior to the orders being entered.

In 2006, DeLaughter rejected a special master's recommendations that could have paid Wilson about \$15 million in fees. DeLaughter eventually ruled Scruggs didn't owe any more than the \$1.5 million he had belatedly paid Wilson.

Officials from the Justice Department's Public Integrity Division in Washington are investigating DeLaughter's actions in the case and have been interviewing witnesses in Mississippi.

DeLaughter told The Clarion-Ledger he never was approached in the case and, if he had been, he would have reported it to authorities.

The rules for Mississippi lawyers and judges require them to report any ethical violation "that raises a substantial question as to that lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects."

in your voice

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TRUTHOUTLET wrote:

speakofofthetruth- I used to make snowcone of snow in the woods. I always thought some of the snow had a brown look & tasted a little funny..

3/6/2008 8:44:01 PM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

No, my dear, wrong on both. (questions).

3/6/2008 1:07:20 AM

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simplydogg wrote:

If you're asking me if I voted for DeLaughter the answer is, I don't live in Hinds County. If you're asking me who I vill vote for our president, that is irrelivent here.

3/6/2008 1:04:49 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

That's roughly 4 mos ago....ok.....

3/6/2008 1:04:22 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Oh, you're thinking about this past November, huh? Oh.

3/6/2008 1:03:27 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Uh, given that you've yet to vote, guess i don't care.

3/6/2008 1:00:42 AM

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simplydogg wrote:

Why do you care so vehemently who I voted for? And for what?

3/6/2008 12:58:42 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

OOPS.

3/6/2008 12:51:21 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

hey, simply, come on back after juice and cookies thursday...! And remember who ya voted for!!!! K!?!?? We'll chat!

3/6/2008 12:44:26 AM

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simplydogg wrote:

He looks like someone just told him that shaving razors are, indeed, legal in Mississippi.

3/6/2008 12:43:42 AM

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Sanctions sought against Scruggs

BY JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • MARCH 5, 2008

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"He was," Balducci replied.

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simplydogg wrote:

No, no...I was talking about the pic of DeLaughter.

3/6/2008 12:41:30 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

ok, 2 minutes under H2O is my max....that was fun!

3/6/2008 12:36:56 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

Took that pic myself...been there? Doubtful. And your pic is , well, underwhelming,

at best. Ok, Mr. Satire, I'll play your game.....You are so sweet, in spite of yourself.
And how will you be voting? (By-the-by).

3/6/2008 12:26:51 AM

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simplydogg wrote:

That is maybe the worst file photo of all time...

3/6/2008 12:18:40 AM

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simplydogg wrote:

Well Elibaby...It's called satire. Look into it.

3/6/2008 12:17:04 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

And yeah, I get that you are not a child , anymore.....but i bet you have children.....teach them.

3/6/2008 12:16:49 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

One more thing.... what a shame. This child, sweet and innocent. Simplydogg, just stay true to your heart; please do not get disillusioned. You can do better.

3/6/2008 12:13:16 AM

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Elibaby42 wrote:

aww...simplydogg, that's sweet....we all want Bobby to come out OK....but i fear the worst - hate this. It's gonna get bad, my friend. Hang on to your memories.

3/5/2008 11:40:41 PM

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simplydogg wrote:

Back in 1985, I played on a t-ball team named "Kirksey & DeLaughter: Attorneys at Law." (I know, alot to fit on one shirt) We played at Oak Forest Park on Flowers Drive in SoJack. Bobby was the coach, and let me tell you buddy boy....we pwned that league! SoJack FOREVER!!!!

3/5/2008 11:28:42 PM

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TRUTHOUTLET wrote:

Humpty Dickie Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dickie Dumpty had a great fall. All the HB king's horses and all the HB king's men Couldn't put Humpty Dickie together again HB - Halley Barbour

3/5/2008 9:48:41 PM

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Tavin wrote:

When this matter comes to a head.....Bobby D and Peters will go down.....

3/5/2008 9:16:32 PM

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Rufus wrote:

If Bobby D stepped down now, he would be admitting he did something wrong. If he waits until they either charge him or he pleas to them about the whole thing, he will at that time decide what to do. I don't think he will step down until then, and I think you can take that to the bank. You might remember that two people have said that Bobby D helped, but they could be lying, time will tell....

3/5/2008 8:01:30 PM

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ladysingstheblues wrote:

I will continue to stand behind Bobby D's integrity. Y'all keep blowing smoke, but in the end it will all come out in the wash. If he was wrong, he would have stepped down by now. I assure you, the posters here will not run and hide, no matter what the outcome. As for the photo, yes, I agree, it is HORRIBLE! Jerry Mitchell should be strung up by his little ones for the unprofessional reporting he does. He is dispicable the way he fishes out stories and then throws whatever inuendos he wants in for good measure reporting essentially all speculation and no facts! BUT...the fact is we keep reading this garbage AND commenting on it! Night y'all...tomorrow is a new day. You'll see.

3/5/2008 7:07:22 PM

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Rufus wrote:

Have you all noticed the picture of Bobby D in this article. It must have been taken right after the Feds told Bobby D they have him by the go nads, and sworn statements. He looks like he lost the pie he just ate. Like, what in the hell have I gotten into now.

3/5/2008 6:50:47 PM

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Rufus wrote:

AMEN Humpty, they will disappear like the ice age. I can hardly wait.

3/5/2008 6:46:33 PM

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Rufus wrote:

You said it Stick, they will not inform on one another for fear, that attorney will turn around an inform on the other one, you know what I mean, this stuff is getting to me. The doctors are far worst than any attorney.

3/5/2008 6:43:31 PM

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Rufus wrote:

Those fees are the ones that one lawyer gives to another lawyer that does what Peters did for Scruggs. That way Peters didn't get the money until the fix was in.

3/5/2008 6:39:58 PM

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Rufus wrote:

Meeka, Peters was not the DA at the time he got Bobby D to give Scruggs the favorable ruling.

3/5/2008 6:38:48 PM

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Bullpups wrote:

TURN DICKIE LOOSE, TURN DICKIE LOOSE & PUT DeLAUGHTER'S A\$\$ IN JAIL. TOO MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS THAT CAN'T BE PROVEN IN A COURT OF LAW. TOO MUCH POINTING FINGERS AT THE GUILTY PARTY. THEY WILL ALL HAVE CHEESE & WINE AND A GOOD LAUGH AT THE STATE (MS) IN THE END FOR PI\$ING OFF THE TAXPAYERS MONEY IN THIS KANGAROO COURT.

3/5/2008 6:34:00 PM

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falcon47 wrote:

being a victim of a dismissed cause which had acquired millions on an offer with further actions that gained billions in 1998 and 1999 these claims were my family's yet, were held by the Hinds County Court and first Judge James Gaves now Supreme Court Judge, an attorney David Baira now Senator and Judge DeLaughter who dismissed claims but kept the awards. the present problem is the District Court is reluctant to review this matter. I have to wonder if this is the money for which the last ten years has seen the rise of corruption. their are billions not accounted for which might explain a lot. money channeled through state powers by orgaized crime to gain control of the courts and local Gov.

3/5/2008 4:46:33 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

IPICK - We are patiently waiting. I hate that some posters here are going to immediately disappear when it all comes down because I have a bunch of questions saved up just for them.

3/5/2008 4:23:40 PM

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IPICKUR12 wrote:

Welcome to the world of the mississippi Judicial System. i often wondered when the day would come that the "Light would Shine Down". But, hold onto your hats people. This iceberg has only yet to begin breaking apart. I assure you, you will see those held in the highest of regard TOPPLE. This machine is now running and

it is hungry.

3/5/2008 4:10:51 PM

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DonNerren wrote:

DeLaughter has not been a fair judge. Maybe its time for him to go. Thanks

3/5/2008 3:59:01 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

S61 - good point...I guess the Feds are the only ones that have the brass b@lls to do something...or try anyway.

3/5/2008 3:23:56 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Meeka - I'm not an atty, but my understanding of it is this: If a contingency fee is based on how much the atty recovers. A reverse contingency fee is based on how much money the atty saves the client. I certainly would like some atty's out there to weigh in on that and further explain...assuming I'm sort of correct (but I don't like to assume too much...Bellesouth will get mad at me)

3/5/2008 3:20:56 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

Something tells me the Miss. Sup. Ct. is going to avoid all this stuff like the plague, if it can. Lawyers are about as pleasant about being second-guessed as are doctors, and members of the profession avoid hammering one another unless there's already personal blood in the water.

3/5/2008 3:19:42 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Ahhh, my voice of reason - S61 (that's a good "007"-type-spy-name for you) You know, I'm curious to know why the Supreme Ct hasn't removed DeLaughter from the bench due to all allegations/severity of allegations...just until they're cleared up or found to be true. But, then again I'm totally crazy.

3/5/2008 3:12:00 PM

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Meeka wrote:

I thought being a DA was a full time position and a DA is prohibited from doing other legal work? And what is a reverse contingency fee?

3/5/2008 3:10:24 PM

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Stick61 wrote:

You're beautiful, Baby, I can hear your machete swinging. Justice shall spill down like confetti over the horns of the Dumpty. Ma Belle should be flying in any moment, though, so make sure your Blue Tooth is firmly in place.

3/5/2008 2:54:50 PM

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humptydumpty wrote:

Stick61 - whereyat? Koolaid, Bellesouth...I'm winning the argument right now.

3/5/2008 1:42:45 PM

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Hinds judges asked to defer

Attorneys cite DeLaughter's tie to Scruggs case

JERRY MITCHELL • JMITCHELL@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • MARCH 6, 2008

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None of Hinds County's judges should hear a legal-fees-dispute case involving indicted Mississippi lawyer Dickie Scruggs and an alleged scheme to bribe Circuit Judge Bobby DeLaughter, say attorneys for a former Scruggs' law partner.

ADVERTISEMENT In taking a first step toward seeking sanctions against Scruggs because of the alleged scheme, the attorneys for William Roberts Wilson Jr. have asked all Hinds County judges to step down from hearing the case because the allegations involve a fellow judge.

Sanctions could mean a fine or a reversal of DeLaughter's ruling in the case.

On Jan. 4, DeLaughter stepped down from all cases related to Scruggs, but did not from this one - "a failure which was more likely than not an oversight on his part," wrote Wilson's attorney, Bill Kirksey of Jackson.

The case is not active. It was settled two years ago. But officials from the Justice Department's Public Integrity Division in Washington are investigating DeLaughter's actions in the case and have been interviewing witnesses in Mississippi.

The request for a new judge cited statements by Joey Langston, a Booneville lawyer who has pleaded guilty to a scheme to influence DeLaughter in the Wilson case. According to Langston, Scruggs paid a reverse contingency fee of \$3 million to him, former State Auditor Steve Patterson and DeLaughter's former boss, then-District Attorney Ed Peters.

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Zach Scru indicted or

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PLEADIN

Timothy B partners ir authorities \$40,000 b

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Lott did call DeLaughter, and the former senator is expected to be a witness against Scruggs in his March 31 trial on judicial bribery charges in an unrelated case involving litigation on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims.

Scruggs' attorney has said his client had nothing to do with this attempt to influence the judge in the case.

DeLaughter told federal authorities he became aware in 2006 that some people were trying to improperly influence him to rule in Scruggs' favor in the dispute involving attorneys' fees from asbestos litigation. He also told authorities he wasn't certain whether he was influenced.

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In 2006, DeLaughter rejected a special master's recommendations that could have paid Wilson about \$15 million in fees. DeLaughter eventually ruled Scruggs didn't owe any more than the \$1.5 million he had belatedly paid Wilson.

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

Steve Patt office in 15 Balducci's guilty to w scheme.

Joey Lang represente guilty to cc influence l in Scruggs asbestos l

ADDITION

Ed Peters: is mention involved ir favor. He : He has no

P.L. Blake mentionec the judicia \$50 millior newspape he pleader to Mississi treatment at the time

LITIGANT

Alvin Luck over attorr In 2005, a than \$17 r

William Rc sued Scru attorney fe wasn't owe had paid.

John Jone lawsuit Wi is suing Sc million in l

THE JUDC

Henry Lac presiding c approache

Bobby Del assistant c being the l Scruggs ir litigation.

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Michael M federal juc

Thomas D District wh case.

John Keke

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ladysingstheblues wrote:

It is very interesting that there is much "he said" reporting going on, but not a single QUOTE - not a quote from a transcript, not a quote from DeLaughtger, not a quote from anybody to back up these implications. I think Jerry Mitchell and the CL are playing their usual game of digging up a story with NOTHING to back it up.

3/6/2008 6:53:41 PM

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slickdawg wrote:

Judge Sasquatch, I mean DeLaughter, should be a man and resign. However, he's obviously not a man of character - "I don't know is I was influenced or not". This statement is right up there with the "depends on what your definition of 'is' is"

3/6/2008 6:53:20 PM

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Tony Fare
Langston.

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humptydumpty wrote:

I wonder why he didn't report the 2006 "influence", then said he didn't know if he was influenced and then told the CL he was never approached and would have reported it if he had been...but never reported anything in 2006. It just doesn't make sense. (I bet he's hating the fact that his boy Peters got separated from him - I'm sure he'd love to talk to him)

3/6/2008 9:24:16 AM

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JMones wrote:

I might be inclined to give DeLaughter benefit of the doubt if not for the fact that he made his decision available before he actually issued it in court. That's the kicker. In my opinion, a crooked judge is way down at the bottom of the scumbag list. I agree that he should be removed.

3/6/2008 9:12:38 AM

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becca45 wrote:

Not only should Judge Bobby DeLaughter recuse himself from hearing any other cases he should be removed from the bench and do his time. His behavior was and has been unethical. Being recommended for a federal Judgeship for ruling in favor of Dickie Scruggs is and will always be called a bribe.

3/6/2008 7:07:40 AM

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If the judicial bribery scandal in Mississippi has dealt a blow to the standing of the Magnolia State's legal profession, the Bar has now struck back with equal force.



This week, Mississippi Bar President Bobby Bailess of Vicksburg announced the appointment of a "Task Force to Strengthen Confidence in the Legal System." Its duty is to "examine our legal system and make recommendations" to ensure the honesty, fairness and impartiality within the judiciary.

The panel could be dismissed as an attempt to whitewash a system irredeemably tarnished by the scandals involving some of the state's best known lawyers. But this is a long-needed endeavor. It should address the increasing special-interest influence of contributions to judicial candidates, the coziness of lawyers with judges, whether judges should be elected or appointed.

Chaired by Bill Goodman of Jackson, the panel has two names that stand out: former Gov. William Winter and former Mississippi Supreme

Court Justice Reuben Anderson. Both Winter and Anderson are revered for rock solid integrity and public service.

Also serving are: Patricia Bennett, Jackson; Judge Lisa Dodson, Gulfport; Don Dornan Jr., Biloxi; Barry Ford, Jackson; Deborah Gambrell, Hattiesburg; Billie Graham, Laurel; Bill Liston, Winona; John Clark Love Jr., Kosciusko; Judge Kent McDaniel, Brandon; Harold Mitchell Jr., Greenville; Guy Mitchell III, Tupelo; Colette Oldmixon, Poplarville; Judge Edward Patten Jr., Hazlehurst; and Briggs Smith, Batesville.

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The panel is to give a report on possible reforms by year's end, Bailess says.

The task of strengthening confidence in the judicial system at this point is daunting.

Oxford lawyer Dickie Scruggs is tangled in a web of allegations that extends across the state.

Attorney Timothy Balducci is accused of giving \$40,000 to a Calhoun County judge at the behest of Scruggs regarding \$26.5 million in fees from Hurricane Katrina lawsuits. Balducci has pleaded guilty, along with former State Auditor Steve Patterson, to conspiracy to bribe a judge.

Scruggs, his son Zach Scruggs and Sidney Backstrom face federal conspiracy charges in connection with the alleged bribery scheme. Scruggs, his son and Backstrom have denied any wrongdoing.

Joey Langston, who once represented Scruggs, has pleaded guilty in federal court to conspiring with Scruggs in a scheme to influence a Hinds County Circuit judge.

The task force has its work cut out for it.

in your voice

READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY



April50 wrote:

Besides, no one has yet to say that a bribe was actually PRESENTED to Delaughter. Balduci & Patterson can only testify about what they said to Peters. They don't know what Peters did or didn't do . Neither has anyone suggested that Delaughter was bribed in the Eaton case. But, if that is the what you belive then, who is doing the bribing? What is the quid-pro-quo. Absent a bribe, what was the motivation for the so-called collusion? Fact is, there is no DIRECT evidence against Delaughter, It's all hearsay. "Somebody said that somebody ELSE said that somebody "tried" to bribe him." Hearsay is not admissible in court for a reason, people!!! Furthermore there are at least 1/2 dozen ways Peters could have acquired confidential information other than from Delaughter. Nope. I'm not convinced that Delaughter is dishonest (OR stupid).

3/6/2008 5:39:59 PM

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April50 wrote:

I, for one, find it very hard to believe that Bobby Delaughter has done anything illegal or immoral or unethical. If there was ANY evidence what-so-ever that he knowingly & willingly allowed Ed Peters to become involved in any of his proceedings in which Peters had no business participating, the FBI would have already filed an indictment against him. Remember, the FBI has been working this case for 8 or 9 months now. They've had plenty of time to bring charges against him if there as any reason to do so. Neither does it make sense for anybody (even Scruggs) to attempt a bribe on a case where the law was in his favor anyway.

3/6/2008 5:15:45 PM

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dixie68 wrote:

The creation of a task force usually means that the situation has been buried and the status quo will be preserved, and William Winter is certainly not my idea of rock solid integrity.

3/6/2008 12:45:52 PM

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redneck wrote:

when and where can this citizen meet with this group purporting to be examining themselves?

3/6/2008 9:25:42 AM

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redneck wrote:

will they be revisiting the clarke county gangs handling of 5 felonies against my business who the county prosecuting attorney caused to disappear. instead of prosecuting the felons represented same in my civil complaint, in which the judge ordered the return of my property obtained thru the 5 felonies, thereby becoming accessories before and after the fact on said felonies. is this the kind of integrity we are to expect from these bench-bar hoodlums? I will be more than happy to testify and and present solid evidence concerning the outlaw behavior of the entire judicial system, just in case they may honestly want to address these issues I can be contacted@bskrmett@bellsouth.net

3/6/2008 8:42:52 AM

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bummedout wrote:

CORRECTION: I mean there are many former appellate court judges who were NOT involved in the Delaughter/Peters schemes.

3/6/2008 8:04:53 AM

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bummedout wrote:

Reuben Anderson's firm, Phelps, Dunbar represents Eaton in the Eaton v. Frisby case. This is one of the cases that Peters was working with Delaughter as secret counsel for Eaton. Is it really an appropriate response for Anderson to be serving on this committee. If they wanted a former appellate court judge, there are many to choose from who were involved in the Delaughter/Peters schemes. I think, Redneck, this will be no different.

3/6/2008 8:03:47 AM

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whythis wrote:

First, they need to deal with DeLaughter and Patton. Surely you guys know who Patton is. Then again maybe not as you have utterly failed to report on the Keith SHelton matter which the JFP just put into print after FOLO broke it.

3/6/2008 7:45:38 AM

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redneck wrote:

does this mean they will revisit the actions of the courthouse gang of clarke county who took the entire countys prive roads and drives sans the courts,notice hearing or compensation? who then caused criminal complaints concerning the illegal seizure to dissappear? even though this conspiracy against these rights are punishable by up to 10 years in the federal correctional system the commission on judicial performance or the state bar could find no judicial misconduct. will this new probe be any different?

3/6/2008 6:35:56 AM

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