**INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING**

Note: This ran in late 2010 on the AP wire as a “member exchange” story and was published in papers across the country. After the story appeared, the Hall of Fame corrected Pete Hill’s plaque and held a big ceremony for his family.

**Correcting History**

*Baseball Hall of Fame may include 2nd Virginian*

By ROB HUMPHREYS

Culpeper Star-Exponent

   CULPEPER, Va. (AP) — In July 2006, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., inducted 17 deceased players who rose to stardom in the Negro Leagues.

   For one of those men, recent findings suggest the history books need to be rewritten.

   Now, researchers are working to correct inaccuracies surrounding John Preston "Pete" Hill, a lifetime .326 hitter whose career spanned numerous clubs from 1899 to 1925.

   The Hall of Fame lists Hill, whose first name appears incorrectly as Joseph on his plaque, as being born Oct. 12, 1880, in Pittsburgh, Pa., and dying Nov. 26, 1951.

   It is more likely Hill was born Oct. 12, 1882, in southern Culpeper County, and died Dec. 19, 1951.

   If the new information, much of it unearthed over the past six months by Culpeper historian Zann Nelson, is accepted by the Hall of Fame, Hill would officially become Culpeper County’s second native enshrined in Cooperstown (pitcher Eppa Rixey being the other) and just the fifth Virginian.

   While much is known about Hill’s career, Nelson has partnered with other baseball researchers across the country including Gary Ashwill, Larry Lester, Patrick Rock, Fred Worth, Tim Copeland and Jeremy Krock to develop a more accurate biography.

   Census information substantiates Hill’s name, siblings, mother, birth year, birthplace, occupation, residence and marital status. Corroborating facts are recorded in ships passenger manifests, World War I and II draft records and a Social Security application.

   Marriage records, deeds, wills, birth and death notices, oral histories, family photos and field surveys of cemeteries and home sites all confirm Hill’s roots as deeply embedded in the rural villages of Buena and Rapidan, which border the Rapidan River about 75 miles southwest of Washington, D.C.

   In an extensive three-part series published Dec. 29-31 in the Culpeper Star-Exponent, Nelson documented the case for changing a major part of Hill’s life story.

   "Sad to say, Pete Hill is the only Hall of Famer known to be incorrectly identified," said Nelson, a professional genealogical researcher and former director of the Museum of Culpeper History. "Equally disturbing is the fact that the location of his grave site remains unknown."

   A pioneer of black professional baseball, Hill began his career in 1899 as an outfielder with the Pittsburgh Keystones. He later starred on three of the best teams ever assembled: the Philadelphia Giants (1903-07), the Leland Giants (1907-10) and the Chicago American Giants (1911-18).

   Despite playing in what became known as the "dead-ball era," some baseball historians regard Hill, who batted lefty but threw righty, as one of the game’s best hitters.

   Standing 6 feet, 1 inch and weighing 215 pounds, the speedy outfielder with a rifle arm had home run power but was known for his line-drive contact. Eight times in his career, he hit better than .300 and twice topped .400.

   In 1911, his first season with the Chicago American Giants, Hill played in 116 games. He hit safely in 115.

   Cum Posey, who owned the legendary Homestead Grays, said Hill was "the most consistent hitter of his time."

   Hill could "do anything a white player can do," the Chicago Defender wrote in 1910. "He can hit, run, throw and is what is termed a wise, heady ballplayer."

   Like many black baseball players in the early 1900s, Hill spent several winters in Cuba. One of his finest seasons occurred on the island in 1910-11, when he played against visiting major league clubs, including Ty Cobb’s Detroit Tigers. That winter, Hill hit .365.

   Hill’s baseball career ended in 1925 after player/manager stints with the Detroit Stars, Milwaukee Bears and Baltimore Black Sox. Upon retiring from the game, he became a railroad porter and faded from history, living out his days in Buffalo, N.Y.

   In 2006, 55 years after Hill’s death, a panel of 12 baseball historians and Negro League experts selected him and 16 contemporaries to join the Hall of Fame, capping an honor many insiders considered long overdue.

   Despite his newfound fame, relatively little was known about Hill, even among the game’s best minds. Record-keeping in the early and pre-Negro Leagues was spotty, at best, and Hill’s vital statistics were somewhat of a mystery, even to the Hall of Fame.

   But in the summer of 2009, when Nelson received a tip about Hill’s possible connection to Culpeper County, she jumped at the chance to rewrite history.

   "There is no greater thrill for a historian than to be on the trail of a new discovery," Nelson said. "The news tip was the trigger; the demand for documentation was the challenge, and the research was the adventure. The scope of Pete’s story is multifaceted and meaningful on many levels."

   Now that more is known about Hill’s identity, the question becomes: Will baseball’s most legendary institution re-examine the facts?

   "We will study this new research and work in conjunction with members of the Negro Leagues Research and Authors Group to determine if there is substantial evidence to change the historic records of Mr. Hill," said Brad Horn, the Hall of Fame’s senior director of communications and education.

   According to Horn, when Hill and the 16 other Negro League players were inducted in 2006, the Hall of Fame had to rely on "the best information available at that time." He explained that obtaining complete family histories often proved difficult because of limited resources.

   "The fact that this study has already encouraged further research is exciting," Horn said, "and it helps validate the topic of Negro league baseball as a study of worthwhile pursuit. This subject can help teach us more about the history of American culture and the important role that sport can play in society."

**Compton case details revealed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note: This story is from a lengthy series that won first place for investigative reporting by the Virginia Press Association. Here are the judge’s comments:  |  |
|  |  |
| **Comments:** Exhaustive reporting over a seven-month period left no details unexplained in the case of a sheriff's deputy accused of inappropriate contact with an underage girl. This story was complicated by a charged political atmosphere, but the reporters patiently sorted through the intrigue to keep readers informed about an important situation. |  |

**Culpeper Star-Exponent (VA)** - Thursday, March 27, 2008

***Author:*** *Rob Humphreys / Culpeper Star Exponent*

Facing public criticism for a controversial plea deal to a former Culpeper County sheriff's corporal, special prosecutor Diana Wheeler spoke this week with the Star-Exponent, shedding light on why Jason Brad Compton received a misdemeanor adultery conviction after a state investigation into whether he had sex with an underage girl in his care.

Wheeler, who was pushing for a felony trial, explained the difficulties she faced while probing allegations that Compton, 32, and the girl - a student in the Explorers youth law enforcement program - had a sexual relationship from late 2002 until her 18th birthday on May 25, 2004.

Primarily, Wheeler said, her investigation discovered a wealth of circumstantial evidence; but no one would testify that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, he or she witnessed Compton and the girl engaging in sex. That includes officers and Compton's ex-wife.

"I know there are all these allegations," Wheeler said, "but when we went back and asked, no officer saw anything that could have definitely pinned anything on him. The people who saw things were civilians who could not identify the girl."

Wheeler refused to identify the civilians.

According to accusations brought forth by Scott Jenkins, a former investigator with the CCSO who lost last year's sheriff's election to Jim Branch, on at least two occasions deputies witnessed Compton and the girl having sex in a patrol car. In addition, in Compton's plea bargain Wheeler writes about "admissions of sexual infidelity by the defendant to his then-wife in the presence of other witnesses."

Wheeler's role in the Compton inquiry began in August when Jenkins brought the matter to the Virginia Attorney General's Office. Upon authorization, Special Agent J. Richard Holt then conducted an investigation for the State Police. In January, he turned over his results to Wheeler, the commonwealth's attorney in Orange County who was specially appointed by a Circuit Court judge.

Compton, who has repeatedly refused public comment, resigned from the CCSO in February. Branch has refused to reveal whether the former corporal was forced to leave or departed on his own will.

The Star-Exponent requested results of Holt's investigation, but Wheeler and the State Police refused, citing an exemption to the state's Freedom of Information Act.

In her interview, however, Wheeler did address many aspects of the investigation. Here are her responses to questions posed by the Star-Exponent:

\*\*\*

CSE: Did an internal investigation take place when Jenkins brought the Compton matter to then-Sheriff H. Lee Hart in May 2004-

Wheeler: "There was an internal investigation, according to the people who were interviewed. (Former CCSO Internal Affairs Investigator Bob) Canosa was interviewed, but my understanding is he was not there" at the time the allegations surfaced.

Editor's note: The Star-Exponent submitted a FOIA request to Sheriff Branch seeking Canosa's start date at the CCSO. Canosa, who now works for the Orange County Sheriff's Office, has not returned phone calls seeking comment. Jenkins has claimed that he and Canosa were told by Hart and Branch not to pursue the case. Wheeler did not investigate those allegations. Branch has not commented on details of the Compton case, saying "it's time that Culpeper as a community go ahead and put this to rest." He did, however, address aspects of the case in a letter in this week's Culpeper Times but did not respond to phone calls and e-mails from the Star-Exponent, writing in his letter that he has been troubled by this newspaper's coverage.

\*\*\*

CSE: Did your investigation find evidence of a cover-up by the CCSO administration-

Wheeler: "My investigation had nothing to do with the Sheriff's Office. I have no jurisdiction at all in Culpeper, only the jurisdiction that the judge gave me, which was only to look into Jason Compton. … Paul Ebert is the one you need to talk to."

Editor's note: Ebert, commonwealth's attorney in Prince William County, conducted a broader, yet limited, investigation last year into former Sheriff Hart but found no "evidence of criminal conduct." One of the six areas of Ebert's inquiry - which also had its genesis in Jenkins' accusations - focused on the Compton matter. In a previous article, Ebert said he found "no credible information that the sheriff condoned any such relationship" and that Ebert's duty "was to see whether or not the sheriff had any criminal conduct in that act, whether it occurred."

\*\*\*

CSE: Was Compton alone with the girl (identified only as S.W. in the plea agreement) in a patrol car-

Wheeler: "He was certainly alone with someone."

\*\*\*

CSE: The plea agreement states that the girl is now in a long-term relationship with Compton and was uncooperative with the investigation. Why not put her on the stand, then try her for perjury if she lies-

Wheeler: "I can't impeach my own witness. … Perjury's very difficult to prove because you have to be able to prove truth. And that's very hard."

\*\*\*

CSE: What about the part of Compton's plea agreement that cites "excessive phone contact (up to 68 contacts in a 24-hour period)"-

Wheeler: "She's making the phone calls, he's answering his phone. We don't have the messages, we just have the number of calls. I don't know what they talked about."

\*\*\*

CSE: Describe your interaction with Sheriff Branch during the investigation.

Wheeler: "I found him 100-percent cooperative … wanting to do the right thing. I found him very upstanding."

Editor's note: Wheeler said she never interviewed former Sheriff Hart. He no longer lives in Virginia and has not responded to this newspaper's request - submitted in an e-mail to Sheriff Branch - seeking comment.

\*\*\*

CSE: Did you know that Compton's mother was the No. 2 contributor to Branch's campaign-

Wheeler: "I didn't know that until I read that in the paper."

\*\*\*

CSE: The plea agreement spells out a lot of reasons you offered the misdemeanor adultery charge, but could you expand on the reasoning for not going to trial-

Wheeler: "I did not want him to walk away with a clean bill of health saying 'I've been cleared.' This is clearly a compromise that he could live with and the commonwealth got something out of. … I have a population that I know has been fully saturated and has an opinion. If he demands a jury, we have to do a change of venue and bring in a new jury, and that's very expensive for the taxpayer. So I had to look at that too."

\*\*\*

CSE: You have established that your investigation was limited in its scope and that you could not look into "periphery" areas of interest, such as whether Hart or Branch (in his former role as major) took any disciplinary action against Compton or whether they conducted a thorough internal investigation. Why is that-

Wheeler: "We have federal investigators and special prosecutors and … they start with one thing and end up with something else. In the state, we limit what our prosecutors can do. I'm not going to say that's good or bad, but … we do not want a special prosecutor going crazy."

\*\*\*

CSE: What about people who say the results of your investigation merit action by a higher authority, such as the FBI, into the actions of the CCSO administration-

Wheeler: "I guess, theoretically, if (Culpeper County Commonwealth's Attorney Gary Close) wanted to ask the attorney general to look into it, they could. But my feeling is, this has been looked into exhaustively."

Editor's note: Close, who recused himself from the Compton case and never had any involvement in the investigation, said he has no plans to pursue the matter.

Rob Humphreys can be reached at (540) 825-0771 ext. 128 or rhumphreys@starexponent.com.

**Suspect in manhunt: I wasn’t even in Culpeper**

**Culpeper Star-Exponent (VA)** - Thursday, August 27, 2009

***Author:*** *Rob Humphreys, rhumphreys@starexponent.com, (540) 825-0771 ext. 128*

Gregory Lee Wallace, one of two suspects in Monday's violent home invasion and ensuing manhunt in Brandy Station, proclaimed his innocence Wednesday, saying he was in Orange and had nothing to do with the crime.

Meanwhile, the Culpeper County Sheriff's Office is remaining tight-lipped about the investigation, refusing to say why Wallace — the subject of an extensive, highly publicized search by several police agencies — was not charged after his arrest Tuesday morning at IHOP.

In fact, the 27-year-old Remington resident faces only two unrelated offenses — obstruction of justice and cocaine possession— filed by town police.

Out of jail on $10,000 bond shortly after his arrest (a story in Wednesday's Star-Exponent incorrectly stated he was still in custody), Wallace spoke about his plight.

"They got me marked as armed and dangerous and got a reward on my head," he said from a cell phone Wednesday afternoon in Culpeper, "and I was a million miles away and had nothing to do with it."

Wallace and his girlfriend, Jennifer Thomas, claim they were in the town of Orange during the home invasion (which occurred around 1:40 p.m. Monday, immediately followed by the police chase and manhunt).

Wallace said they were at Amerisist, taking lunch to the mother of his 1-year-old son and delivering money so eyeglasses could be purchased for the boy, who suffers from an optic nerve disease.

From there, Wallace said, he and Thomas drove to Culpeper's Pawn Mart and remained at the shop until about 4 p.m., putting a radio in her car.

An official at Amerisist refused to comment on Wallace's claim, and a phone call to Pawn Mart was not immediately returned.

The only person charged in connection with Monday's incident is Wallace's cousin, 18-year-old Darryl Wallace of Washington, D.C. Darryl Wallace remains in jail on felony charges of breaking and entering, robbery, abduction by force, malicious wounding and using a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Background

On Monday, police shut down northbound traffic on U.S. 29 at Alanthus Road after a sheriff's vehicle rammed a white Cadillac.

The car had been linked to a violent home invasion only minutes before in the 21000 block of Mount Pony Road. According to the CCSO, the victim was forced to drive the car at gunpoint and required stitches to his head.

After the collision, which occurred on Brandy Road at about 1:50 p.m., two suspects fled on foot. The CCSO said they quickly caught Darryl Wallace, but the other suspect — a man they repeatedly identified as Gregory Wallace — was on the loose and possibly armed, fleeing to the other side of U.S. 29.

All this time, Gregory Wallace said, he knew nothing of the incident until friends later told him he was "on the news." During the evening hours Monday, he said, he was at his sister's house on Virginia Avenue.

Around 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, he and Thomas went to eat at IHOP. That's when police acted on a tip and arrested him, reportedly finding him in possession of cocaine.

When asked why he didn't contact authorities during the manhunt, Gregory Wallace said he's scared of the police and has a history of being accused of crimes he didn't commit.

"They know that I didn't have nothing to do with it," he said, "but they're still trying to put me with it."

Gregory Wallace said he has no idea why his cousin, who showed up in town a few days ago, was in the Cadillac and does not know if Darryl Wallace committed the crime.

Gregory Wallace added that he has cell phone records and text messages proving he was at a different location.

During questioning at the Sheriff's Office, Gregory Wallace said, investigators "said I had a warrant on me for threatening a witness. Then they asked me if I would talk to some detective about a home abduction. I said I didn't know nothing about it."

Shortly after, he posted bail on the two town charges but did not face charges in connection with the home invasion.

The CCSO responds

When asked about Gregory Wallace's claims of innocence, CCSO spokesman Sgt. Jim Fox replied only that "the investigation is continuing" and a press release would be coming at a later date.

Fox also refused to address why Gregory Wallace faces no charges in connection with the home invasion or car chase.

If he is not the same man deputies believe fled the scene, the Star-Exponent asked Fox, then is a potentially armed suspect still on the loose?

Again, Fox, who releases information under the authority of Sheriff Jim Branch, would not comment.

As of late Tuesday morning, however, several hours after the Sheriff's Office interviewed and decided not to bring charges against Gregory Wallace, a press release by the CCSO still referred to him as "the suspect from yesterday's incident in Culpeper County who fled from local and state authorities."

"Wallace," the press release continued, "allegedly fled the scene of a home invasion in the Mount Pony area of the county by car. He later fled the scene of an automobile accident with a Sheriff's Office vehicle on foot."

The next and final press release from the CCSO, sent at 5:34 p.m. Tuesday, does not mention that Gregory Wallace faces no charges in connection with the crime. Instead, it only mentioned Darryl Wallace's alleged involvement and referred to another unnamed "male suspect."

Reflecting on the events of the past three days, Gregory Wallace — father of four children ages 1 to 5, with another on the way — expressed frustration.

"I don't have no money, no way to take care of my kids, I'm blocked out of the economy," he said. "I'm not that person. That's my face, that's my picture. That's not what I've done. That's not who I am."

**The story behind Branch’s big ad**

**Culpeper Star-Exponent (VA)** - Wednesday, November 7, 2007

***Author:*** *Rob Humphreys and Liz Mitchell / Culpeper Star Exponent*

On the eve of the election, sheriff candidate Jim Branch's campaign submitted a full-page, paid advertisement to the Star-Exponent that accused opponent Scott Jenkins and his supporters of abusing the criminal justice system for political gain.

On Tuesday, as voters across Culpeper County headed to the polls, a bold message harkened readers on page A3: "BEFORE YOU VOTE PLEASE READ … "

Below these words, the ad reprinted an e-mail sent Monday from James O. Towey, executive director of the Virginia State Crime Commission, to Laura LaFlair, Sheriff H. Lee Hart's wife.

In it, Towey wrote, "In my years at the Office of the Attorney General … I have never witnessed such as (sic) abuse of the criminal justice system for political gain as I did from Mr. Jenkins and his supporters."

The ad sent a shockwave through the sheriff's campaign and put Towey smack dab in the middle of a bitterly fought sheriff's race, the scope of which he had yet to fully comprehend.

For Hart, LaFlair and the Branch campaign, it was the perfect last-minute push to win votes.

For the Jenkins campaign, it encapsulated Sheriff Hart's dirty style.

And for Towey, it was spontaneous payback for a published remark by Jenkins just a few days earlier. Now, though, it's a decision Towey regrets.

How it all started

In a Nov. 1 letter to the editor titled "Jenkins responds to questions from a reader," Jenkins answered another letter writer's questions regarding the state's investigation of Hart.

In the letter, Jenkins said Towey, a former assistant in the Attorney General's Office, was responsible for holding up the investigation. (Hart has since been cleared by special prosecutor Paul Ebert, who concluded that a State Police investigation - authorized by Attorney General Bob McDonnell - did not warrant criminal charges.)

Towey, who left the AG's office in March and lives in Henrico County, handled the complaints about Hart, moving them through the chain of command.

Towey took offense to Jenkins' letter and called him Monday to get an apology and even "debate him" that night. When Jenkins refused and did not back away from his statement, Towey contacted the Star-Exponent Monday and Tuesday to provide his version of events.

"When I saw that false statement attacking me personally," Towey told the Star-Exponent, "that kind of ticked me off. I said, 'I'm gonna set the record straight here.'"

Towey said he has no interest in Culpeper politics and insists the matter could have been settled if Jenkins had apologized during the phone call Monday.

But that didn't happen, and Towey gave Branch's campaign permission to use his e-mail in the full-page ad. However, Towey said, he expressly told LaFlair not to include his current title in the ad.

"I made it clear that I was not speaking in that capacity," Towey said on Election Day, after the ad was published and circulated at polling places across the county. "Today I'm not happy with the way the other side (Branch's campaign) is using this and injecting me into a campaign and using my current title. Why would I say that as the director of the State Crime Commission- I said that I'm not speaking in that capacity, and they should have understood that."

Before the ad ran, Star-Exponent Publisher Mitch Sneed said, he confirmed the e-mail over the phone with Towey and verified his title.

Reached by phone Tuesday after the election, Branch said the flap over using Towey's title is "news to me. My understanding was we used it with his permission. I'm not aware of any problems."

All of this is little consolation for Jenkins, who spoke with Towey again on Election Day and had a civil conversation that somewhat cleared the air, according to both men.

Still, the whole episode was a political nightmare for the Jenkins campaign. Of course, no one can point to the ad as the sole reason for Branch's victory, but it certainly played a huge role on Election Day.

About the e-mail

As part of Towey's attempt to "set the record straight," his e-mail recalled how the investigation into Sheriff Hart began.

Interestingly, Towey told the Star-Exponent that the first time the AG's office heard complaints about Hart was in October 2005. Those complaints, he states in the ad, were called in by Donald Rakes, a Culpeper County resident who has publicly feuded with the sheriff over the past few years, especially regarding alleged criminal activity in the county's low-water bridge area of Rixeyville.

Contradicting Towey's claim, Jenkins has said all along that the investigation began when he called the AG's office in the summer of 2004, shortly after he resigned from the Sheriff's Office. According to Jenkins, he spoke with a woman by phone at the AG's office and the woman forwarded his complaints to Towey.

However, Towey, who started at the AG's office in March 2003, said, "If there had been a request for a criminal investigation (by Jenkins in 2004), I would have been aware of it. I was director of the organized crime unit. Those (requests) would have gone through me (or a supervisor) at that time, but I would have had some knowledge."

"I do not recall receiving anything from Scott Jenkins," he added. "There wasn't even talk of an investigation in 2004."

When told of Towey's remarks, Jenkins insisted that he indeed did file complaints with the AG's office in the summer of 2004, reiterating that he spoke with a woman over the phone who forwarded his information to Towey. Jenkins says that because it was an oral conversation, he never received any paperwork confirming he had filed the complaints. Towey, Jenkins added, was his point of contact.

Jenkins and Towey both say they have spoken with each other once or twice, at most, since then. Jenkins says Towey was hard to reach and they played a lot of "phone tag."

Towey told the Star-Exponent that Rakes filed 41 allegations against Hart that centered on county residents being harassed by sheriff's deputies. Towey said he contacted Jenkins as part of the Rakes-initiated inquiry but stressed that, to his knowledge, the Hart investigation did not start with Jenkins.

In the ad, Towey details his dealings with Rakes in frank terms.

"Ultimately," Towey's e-mail said, "the allegations eventually brought forward bore no resemblance to the state of fear portrayed by Don Rakes and it became clear that he had attempted to dupe the Attorney General's Office into authorizing an investigation.

"It is my opinion," Towey continued, "that the activities of those in trying to coerce a criminal investigation were political driven and amount to an abuse of the criminal justice system."

While Towey's e-mail seems to implicate Jenkins with Rakes, Towey told the Star-Exponent that it should not be read that way.

"The bottom line is this," Towey said. "Other than Scott Jenkins' statement in his Nov. 1 letter, I know of nothing that he himself has done inappropriately. All that I can say is because of the actions of Don Rakes and a couple of other people, this is the most egregious case that I've experienced in my time at the AG's office in terms of people using the criminal justice system for political purposes."

When asked to clarify if he meant that Jenkins had abused the system, Towey again said no.

On Wednesday, the Star-Exponent contacted Rakes for his response to Towey's accusations. Rakes deferred comment to his lawyer, Whit Robinson of Warrenton.

"Mr. Rakes and I are exploring all of his legal options at this time," Robinson said, "and therefore I advised my client not to comment on any of this matter until we determined what those options are and what we will pursue."

Where to from here-

So, what does all of this mean-

For starters, the truth about how the investigation into Sheriff Hart began may never be known. The Attorney General's Office has refused to give details, and now it's a matter of whether you believe Jenkins or Towey.

As for how everything played out, Jenkins says he doesn't regret anything in his campaign. But he added that another run for sheriff probably isn't in the future. The stress has been too great on him and his family.

"I have lived my life with a great amount of faith in the system," Jenkins said, "and this has caused me to lose some of that faith. It doesn't mean we should still push it to make it right."

On the heels of a 90-day leave of absence to run his campaign, Jenkins will go back to his job as a sergeant in the Culpeper Police Department on Nov. 16.

For months, he has hinted that more litigation could be on the way against Hart, who retires Dec. 31.

In return, Hart has stated he might pursue his own case against Jenkins.

Branch, meanwhile, takes office Jan. 1 with a dark cloud hanging over a divided community. He has vowed to "continue on" and be the man Culpeper needs to lead its largest segment of law enforcement.

As for Towey - the man who "didn't anticipate any of this stuff" when he allowed Branch's camp to use his e-mail in the full-page ad - he admits the timing of his words probably seemed "pretty odd to some people" coming the day of the election. But he insists that he has never met Jim Branch or Scott Jenkins and acted solely to clear his name after a candidate's personal attack.

In the end, Towey admits about the Branch camp's last-minute ad, "If I had known how far they had gone with it, I would have stayed away with a 10-foot pole."

Rob Humphreys can be reached at rhumphreys@ starexponent.com or 825-0771 ext. 128. Contact Liz Mitchell at emitchell@starexponent.com or 825-0771 ext. 110