



United States Navy Veterans Association

1718 M St. NW #275
Washington DC 20036
202-736-1725 (DC)
202-327-5499 (Fax)
www.NavyVets.org

September 3, 2009

The Honorable Les Miller
2505 38th Ave.
Tampa, FL 33610

Dear Senator Miller,

I am writing to you as a non black male who has lived in east Tampa for well over a decade, over 25% of my adult life. I am personally a supporter of Kevin White and have been, going back to 2003 in his first race for City Council in Tampa. Mr. White in no shape or form prompted me to write this letter nor did he suggest any ideas whatsoever to be placed into this letter by myself.

I was a key interviewee in a story with which Jeff Testerman of the St. Petersburg Times did on Commissioner White, and which was published in the St. Petersburg Times on August 29, 2009¹. My impression of Mr. Testerman after numerous times talking to him, including one time where he showed up uninvited at my home in east Tampa, was that he was a white man who had an axe to grind against Commissioner White in the way he was going to write the story and that he was going to slant his story against Commissioner White to line his own pockets, line the pockets of the editors of the St. Petersburg Times; and line the pockets of the white publishers of the St. Petersburg Times by going against a black up and coming younger politician and policy maker here locally, because they had already knocked him down, tabloid fashion, on grounds of sexual accusations in their newspaper (stories which most local newspapers did not run at all, or minimally ran, because they felt the stories did not have any relevant input into Commissioner White's ability to do his job or the record of Mr. White on the City Council and on the County Commission in doing his job (see, e.g. Clinton v. Lewinsky)) (per discussion of myself with Bill March of the Tampa Tribune, and others). In his interviews with me, Mr. Testerman, according to my notes, referred to me personally as if I were a partisan advocate for Kevin White, which in fact I have never been, although I have been a supporter of Commissioner White. At one point in his first interview with me I stated accurately that I had never asked for favors of Commissioner White and that no member of the United States Navy Veterans Association, to the best of my knowledge, had done so. To which Mr. Testerman replied, "You could have fooled me." Mr. Testerman made it clear to me that he was going to try to write a story slanted against Commissioner White dealing with "fraudulent" claims that Mr. White was a U.S. Navy veteran, and further made it clear to me in the course of the interview that he was going to attempt to tie both myself personally and also the United States Navy Veterans Association into a conspiracy with Mr. White to suggest that Commissioner White was fraudulently claiming an endorsement of the United States Navy Veterans Association which did not in fact exist. Call me a novice and call me a non black male living in east Tampa, but this struck me as an approach that was out of the ordinary for a legitimate investigative reporter, constituting a pre-existing

¹ The deliberate and planned (by Testerman) (See below) slant of the article was:

- (a) White lied about his Navy service because he only served on active duty 56 days.
- (b) White and Thompson criminally conspired to create a fake Navy veterans organization to support White to buttress White's "fraud" in (a). (See below)

Both implications, existent, in my opinion, only in Testerman's mind, are categorically false.

The case was, instead merely about White's campaign innocently misentering my personal contribution as an entity contribution on his campaign forms because I enclosed a business card with my contribution, a thing that will happen 1,000 times this very day throughout America to my personal knowledge. White filed an amended report. Bill March implied to me the story was not worth writing about. I agree with that conclusion, providing we are talking about professional journalists as opposed to people who are out to "get" somebody.

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theoretical and argumentative hypothesis of multiple counts of guilt dumped on the person or persons being investigated, and also an attempt to prove that hypothesis by reason of slanting a story designed to make money and gain readers for the new tabloid image of this particular newspaper, an attempt that no comparable newspaper in Tampa Bay has gone along with in this line of story telling, other than Mr. Testerman and the St. Petersburg Times. In my official capacity with the U.S. Navy Veterans Association, over the past ten years, I have given hundreds of interviews with media reporters. I have never come across the likes of this approach by this reporter, a palpable slant of misreporting and omitting facts with the strong and clear smell of somebody out to "get" somebody else.

When I listened to the testimony of Officer Mark Fuhrman, at the OJ Simpson trial, saying that he was not working off of a hypothesis of guilt against Mr. Simpson, I disbelieved Officer Fuhrman as I believe a lot of people in America disbelieved Officer Fuhrman. It is an outrage to me as an American citizen of whatever race that somebody involved in investigatory authority, regardless of whether it be a police officer or somebody who claims to be an investigative reporter for a newspaper, believes that God died and left them in charge of sin in the local community. As someone who has been a life-long believer in the philosophy of Dr. King and also a long time believer in the philosophy of former Senator Robert Kennedy, who was murdered in June 1968, shortly after the murder of Dr. King in April of 1968 in Memphis, "The profession of politics is an honorable profession". The reason it is an honorable profession is that every single person I have ever met who was running for office or elected into office was doing so not because they wanted to take bribes or to privately inure themselves but, instead, because they believed in a policy agendas which moved their communities forward, in their own views, which they were patriotically interested in. It does not make any difference whether we agree with a person's policy agenda or if we disagree with his/her policy agenda, that is my opinion of all of them I have known, and that is what the late Senator Kennedy said, and I agree with the late Senator Kennedy. Support of people running for office, be it by the fact that you show up for the polls and vote for or against them, or the fact that you contribute to their candidacy or contribute to the candidacy of someone who is running against them that you support, shows your participation as a citizen in our electoral democracy and this process should not be permitted to be denounced by the press as "sleaze." It is not sleaze, and the participants who participate are patriots in the electoral process of this country, as one former Chair of the US Federal Elections Commission has said, and the people who are saying that it is sleaze, or who denounce it as sleaze, they are the ones who are sleaze. So say I, and so say the local members of the US Navy Veterans Association.

Mr. Testerman, who is white, seems to have a slant as I have laid out above. I am more than happy to provide other testimony as to that, as to particular facts he left out of this story with regard to the misnaming of political groups and non political groups which made endorsements of candidates where the name of the endorsers were misspelled or where there were misgivings because of confusion between non-Internal Revenue Code 527(a) tax exempt entities and Internal Revenue Code 527(a) entities, all of which information I gave to Mr. Testerman; and all of which information he refused (not neglected, refused) to even print in his story in his quest to get this particular black candidate running for elective office. Mr. Testerman also neglected to print any of the other background I gave him as to the difference between a tax exempt entity and a political arm of a tax exempt entity, which many veterans' groups, including the VFW as the most prominent example, have chosen to take advantage of. I hope you will be understanding of all this as an Air Force veteran.

Commissioner White is a Navy veteran, he did serve honorably, and in the words of former Clinton appointee Secretary of the Army Togo D. West on the Lehrer Reporter, Veterans Day, 1999, as reported on www.NavyVets.org, the "purest definition of a veteran is somebody who served wherever or whenever their country asked." (Emphasis added.) To start nitpicking about that subject, which is the whole gist of Mr. Testerman's August 29th article, is about a quest to destroy somebody's reputation after he is down, as a black man, after you have kicked him into the ground as a black man; after Testerman has denounced him and no other newspaper picked up his story, to kick him down into the dust and then to kick him again after you have already kicked him down. That strikes me, regardless of the color of my skin, as a vendetta designed to sell newspapers and put money in the pockets of the reporters, the editors and the publishers of the newspapers attempting to do that, tabloid fashion.

I would be happy to answer any other further questions about differences between 501(c)(19) organizations and 527(a) organizations any reporter wants to throw at me, but I will insist that they put that background information out to the public, regardless of how confusing it may seem, as to the first fact that they should put in their story so as to inform our public, as opposed to hiding information from our public, including hiding in this particular case of Mr. White, a glowing editorial that the St. Petersburg Times wrote about him in his first race in 2003 as to how he was the best candidate in the race including his clean, articulate, energetic and forceful record, which specifically mentioned his police and patriotic work, all of which influenced both myself and individual Navy veterans both at that time and thereafter to support Mr. White, facts which were given to Mr. Testerman and which were conveniently again dropped from his story, including other facts dropped from his story that appeared in that newspaper on the same day, buried at the bottom of the so-called "Tampa Bay Page", saying that a Pinellas County jury, the very previous day, fined the St. Petersburg Times a \$10 million figure, a figure almost unheard of in the annals of libel suits against a newspaper, for slandering a veteran who was a former officer of the VA Bay Pines facility. The St. Petersburg Times left out material facts from those stories that they knew about and appeared to be going after a veteran and veteran officers of the Veterans Administration because of a desire to maliciously misreport a story pertaining to his background in three separate articles, all of which a local jury believed was malicious and deliberate by reason of the dropped facts given to the St. Petersburg Times in advance. And they did so in that case, in my opinion, to jump on a politically driven case at the time to drive down the Bush Administration VA, when it was already having difficulties. Times Executive Editor Neil Brown's statement to the contrary is, flat out, in my personal opinion, a lie.

This is the very same day, it's the very same newspaper, and it's the very same story. "The dream is one," as Joseph says to Pharaoh.

Based on all of the above I can only conclude that as a non-black, patriotic citizen living in east Tampa that these white-bread editors and publishers and this particular reporter, Mr. Testerman, of the St. Petersburg Times, believe that this is a time to kick some dumb black candidate that they think they have on the ground already, take him into the dust, and maybe even sponsor criminal charges against him based on their reporting, the woof and warf of what they have bragged about in past stories, which the history of their newspaper shows that in many cases they fabricate, misreport, and do not investigate facts to assure the facts are correct in advance, and slant by reason of omission and their way of writing to go against a particular subjectively determined enemy which they have identified in advance. That is my experience with this newspaper, not as to every story, but as to many.

They brag openly, for example, that one of their major sleazy sources for the case they are building against White. is a convicted felon and liar, Matthew Cox.

What Testerman does to White today, he will do to you tomorrow.

I think personally that it is time for the black community in east Tampa to coalesce for whatever the reason around Commissioner White. You may disagree with him as to policy, you may disagree with him as to whether he has admirably or unadmirably represented Hillsborough County. That is no longer the issue. The issue now is to coalesce around a man that the evidence shows is an up and coming black candidate who is running for this political office again and who intends to serve honorably, articulately, forcefully and intelligently the people of all of Hillsborough County, without any private inurement or benefit to himself.

Many people in the community I live in may desire to seek political office later on, and many opportunities will probably offer themselves to those people and undoubtedly will. This is a time, I think, for our black leaders, and especially our black leaders of a certain age, to coalesce around somebody who is being attacked by a process which has more than the mere wisp of racism in the air.

In his three or four uninvited interviews with me, Testerman implied and said to me that he was also going to attack me because I was Choctaw and involved in promoting Choctaw gaming. I am 1/15th Choctaw, and many Choctaw have mixed race - white, black, Indian - backgrounds.

I think he is (perhaps deliberately) misidentifying me with a close relative of mine who has been associated with, or worked for, Choctaw gaming facilities, and the National Veterans Foundation which promotes two of their sponsors, the Seminole Indian Tribe of Florida (which in turn sponsors the Seminole Indian Casino in Hillsborough County and Seminole gaming facilities) and the native-American based Bicycle Casino. I have never personally been affiliated with or worked for, any of the above. I told Mr. Testerman he was misidentifying me, and that his sources for identification were probably illegal, and also shady on their face. My statements stand.

Very Truly Yours,


Commander Bohls Thompson (personally)
Director of Development
US Navy Veterans Association

For the Association (by endorsement of content):


Brian Reagan
Secretary
US Navy Veteran Association

cc: St. Petersburg Times, Letters to the Editor
Bill March, Senior Reporter, Tampa Tribune
Joyce Cotton, Gifts Manager, WEDU-TV
Others