

Our unaccountable city marshal – a timeline **(<http://theind.com/articles.sec-75-1-INDReporter.html>)**

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City Marshal Brian Pope, center, is flanked by deputy marshals while delivering a political attack on then-candidate for sheriff Mark Garber last October. The episode set off a public records dispute that's had The IND and the marshal in and out of court for the past several months.

Photo by Robin May

In The IND's vigor to provide detailed blow by blow of our public records dispute with the city marshal, we've neglected to consider the uninitiated of our readership. We submit to your perusal this easy-to-follow timeline. If you want to go deeper, see the links provided for stories we've written since this began last October.

Oct. 7 - Pope holds a press conference attacking sheriff candidate Mark Garber. (<http://theind.com/article-21933-city-marshal-attacks-garber-in-bizarre-presser.html>) Based on Pope's clunky delivery, his known friendship with Garber's opponent Chad Leger and the political overtone of the conference, The IND suspects collaboration with the Leger campaign.

Oct. 8 - The IND files its first public records request (<http://theind.com/article-21941-City-marshal's-emails-requested.html>) asking for emails from the marshal's official bpoppe@lafayettela.gov address that could demonstrate his collusion with the Leger campaign. State law requires that he respond to the request in three days. Pope subsequently denies the request citing a bogus investigation and an inapplicable Louisiana attorney general's opinion (<http://theind.com/article-21976-City-marshal-denies-request-for-emails.html>).

Oct. 15 - Pope skips town to Mexico and notifies The IND that he cannot respond to the request until his return after the October primary election. (<http://theind.com/article-22005-Marshal-Pope-finds-'sanctuary'-in-Mexico.html>) He meanwhile claims through his attorney that the only responsive documents are "email replies he received in reply to the subject

'press conference notice' he had sent out via mass distribution via third party vendor across the country." The mailing vendor in question here is a service called Campaigner.

Nov. 16 - The IND files suit seeking a court order to turn over the requested records. (<http://theind.com/article-22187-Suit-filed-in-pursuit-of-Pope-emails.html>) More than a month has passed without a response to our Oct. 8 request.

Nov. 30 - The IND files a second public records request.

Dec. 14 - Pope and The IND go to court. (<http://theind.com/article-22348-Marshall-Pope-denies-his-original-sin.html>) District Court Judge Jules Edwards orders Pope to turn over records and prohibits him from withholding documents. Under oath, Pope denies having ever used Campaigner and claims that his office wrote press materials connected to the October press conference. His attorney speculates that Pope's email address may have been "spoofed" – i.e. co-opted without his permission.

Dec. 17 - At the court's suggestion, Pope hires an IT consultant to help him produce a response to The IND's requests. He delivers a stack of 588 pages. (<http://theind.com/article-22407-Pope's-bull.html>) Many of the docs show that Pope was well aware of the use of Campaigner by his office to publicize the conference.

Dec. 24 - The IND receives a stash of documents via mirror request of Lafayette Consolidated Government which contains 79 pages deleted from Pope's computer and not produced in Pope's Dec. 17 response. (<http://theind.com/article-22407-Pope's-bull.html>) The response contains emails from Leger campaign manager Joe Castille to Pope with the script for his press conference and the Campaigner-distributed advisory attached. Email records confirm Leger's campaign had authored the Oct. 8 press conference after all. Also included is an authorization email from Campaigner that allowed the Leger campaign to use Pope's official email address to distribute the press materials.

Dec. 28 - Pope lies under oath in a video deposition (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2P8F-Ntgv8>), once again claiming to have never used Campaigner and that his office authored the press conference materials. He's confronted with the LCG documents and walks back portions of his claim.

Jan. 4 - In light of Pope's defiance of court orders, the Court finds Pope's responses "woefully inadequate" and his failure to comply "arbitrary and unreasonable." (<http://theind.com/article-22457-Judge-Marshall-Pope's-response-still-'woefully-inadequate'.html>) District Judge Jules Edwards awards fees and costs to The IND and assesses penalties of \$200 per day - \$100 per outstanding request - for each day that the marshal fails to satisfy the requests.

March 22 - The parties reconvene for a contempt hearing. Expert testimony shows definitively that Pope deleted the emails missing from his Dec. 22 production (<http://theind.com/article-22901-IT-expert-shows-definitively-Pope-tried-to-cover-his-tracks.html>), and that he is the only person who could have authorized the use of his email by Campaigner. The IND's attorneys tally 173 days without a responsive request. Penalties and fees combine exceed \$90,000.

March 24 - The court finds Pope in contempt of court, sentencing the marshal to 30 days house arrest, all but 7 suspended, two years probation, 173 hours of litter abatement and 168 hours of community service in the form of presentations on public records law. Pope subsequently challenges the rulings and avoids incarceration for the duration of his appeal. (<http://theind.com/article-22937-Marshall-to-bond-out-during-his-appeal.html>)

April 5 - A public records request filed by The IND reveals that Pope has spent tens of thousands of public dollars on his legal defense, which ballooned to three attorneys to handle his appeal (<http://theind.com/article-22994-The-high-cost-of-the-marshal's-cover-up.html>).

April 7 - Lafayette District Attorney Keith Stutes begins a criminal investigation of Pope in connection with potential charges of malfeasance, abuse of office and perjury. (<http://theind.com/article-23008-District-Attorney-Stutes-investigating-Marshall-Pope.html>)

April 18 - IND attorney Gary McGoffin attempts to depose Joe Castille, only to be blocked on camera by Castille's attorney Clayton Burgess. (<http://theind.com/article-23052-Political-operative-Joe-Castille%E2%80%99s-deposition-blocked-by-his-attorney.html>) Burgess claims that he and his client had no time to prepare for the deposition. McGoffin produces at the deposition a February letter from Pope's counsel to Burgess in which the attorneys refer to our attorney as "McGoof" and discuss launching an "offensive" on the sheriff's office. The letter had been accidentally filed by Pope's attorneys into the court record.

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