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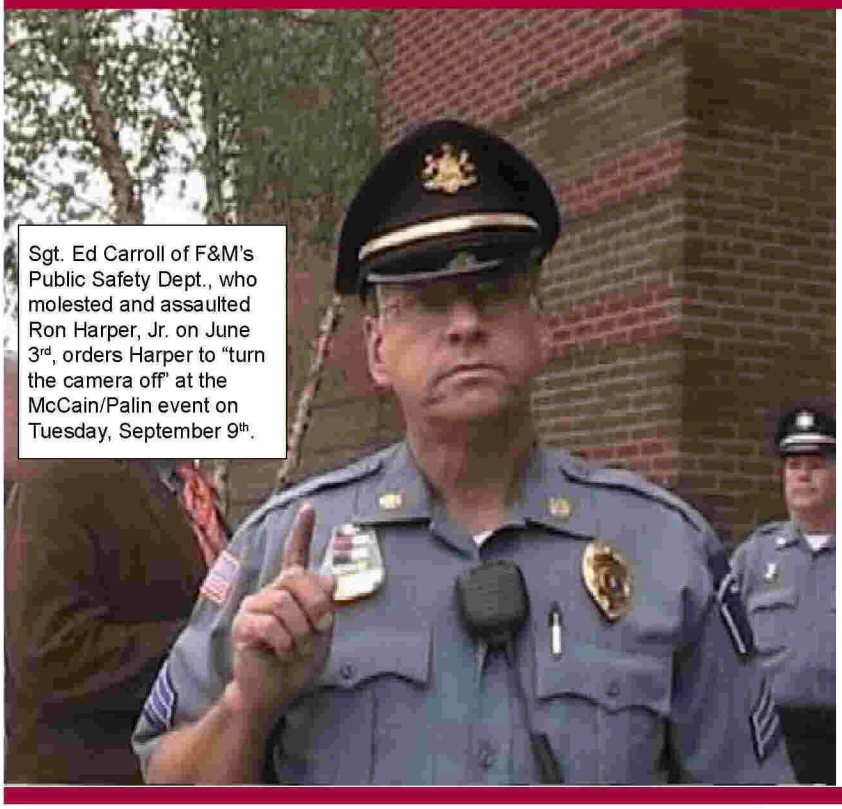
Free! *

LANCASTER POST

nothing but the truth...



Sgt. Ed Carroll of F&M's Public Safety Dept., who molested and assaulted Ron Harper, Jr. on June 3rd, orders Harper to "turn the camera off" at the McCain/Palin event on Tuesday, September 9th.

SET UP!

F&M Bars *Post* from McCain Event

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by Ron Harper, Jr., *Lancaster Post*

Set Up! How Franklin & Marshall College violated my Constitutional rights... again!

"I am asking you to leave, Mr. Harper. Leave F&M property."

This was said to me on September 9, 2008, at the big John McCain campaign event at Franklin & Marshall College. The words were spoken by a police officer of the city of Lancaster. It was implied that I would be arrested if I didn't heed the cop's order. So I left.

Here's how it all began...

Because of the history of the *Post* and Franklin & Marshall College (both co-Publisher, Chris Hart Nibbrig, and I were illegally arrested by F&M police in June, and I was physically assaulted), I thought it necessary to get official clearance to cover the event.

I contacted the College's law firm, Barley Snyder, and was connected with one of F&M's counselors, Kendra McGuire, Esq. I had a very pleasant conversation with Ms. McGuire, during which she assured me, very graciously, that I was welcome to cover the event.

She asked if I would like the assurance in writing, and I said I did. The letter is dated September 8, 2008, and Ms. McGuire copied Maureen Kelly, Director/ Chief, Department Public Safety for Franklin & Marshall College.

The Barley Snyder letter reads, in part: "I can assure you that the College will make no effort to block or deter your attendance [at the McCain/Palin event]." That is pretty clear.

I also contacted the McCain campaign and asked what credentials I needed to show to cover the event. I was told a media identification and a picture ID. I brought both along, in addition to copies of the *Post*, and the letter from Ms. McGuire, just to be sure.

When I arrived at the entrance, F&M Public Safety Officer, Sgt. Ed Carroll was there to greet me. Carroll is one of the F&M cops who threw me to the ground in June, and molested me as I was handcuffed.

I could hear Lancaster County Commissioner, Scott Martin, a local McCain campaign leader, over the loud speaker inside, shouting an introduction, "The chairman of the Lancaster County Republican Party, Dave Dumeyer!" I was missing this!

I had my camera on, of course, and it was rolling when the uniformed Carroll approached me. "Turn the camera off," he commanded. It was the same thing he ordered in June before confiscating my camera, handcuffing and assaulting me.

"Get away from me," I cried. "You are an assaulter and a molester!" Carroll backed away, but wasn't letting me inside.

I showed the Barley Snyder letter to the cop standing there. He read it, or at least he pretended to. That's when he told me to leave. All of this was recorded.

The Post should have been covering a major presidential candidate – who had already been featured in our newspaper in issue one – instead, I was publicly humiliated and forced off the premises an hour before Sen. McCain and Gov. Sarah Palin arrived. So much for a free press, huh?

Who set me up?

The decision to block me from this event happened long before I arrived, and the choreographed events that followed demonstrate that fact. Right after I was kicked off the campus, I called Chairman of the County Commissioners, Dennis Stuckey, who was on the McCain/Palin stage at that very moment. I told him what happened. Stuckey called back a few minutes later and said that Martin told him, "It wasn't McCain's people, it was F&M. "

The next day I received a tip that the Secret Service approached two Lancaster County Assistant District Attorneys, and asked "Who's Ron Harper, Jr.?"

I emailed District Attorney Craig Stedman, who denied that occurred, but advised that "...no one from my office would have identified you as a security threat." But why would Secret Service asked about me at all?

The answer came in a two-page fax from F&M lawyer McGuire the day after the event. Despite assurances about not doing anything to "...deter [my] attendance," The college went out of its way to make certain that the United States Secret Service, the Pennsylvania State Police, and McCain campaign knew that F&M "agreed to amend its defiant trespass restriction against" me.

Can you imagine a law enforcement officer going into a community and you hear from these uniformed F&M Public Safety that someone has been given a "defiant trespass restriction"? What would a normal person conclude? The college had no valid reason to give the "defiant trespass restriction" to me . Yet all those hearing that would likely have a negative viewpoint toward me because of it. Talk about 'poisoning the well.'



Lancaster City Police read Mr. Harper's letter from F&M's attorney.

The college refused to acknowledge its role in defaming and slandering me to those out-of-towners, which most certainly had to affect their opinion of me. F&M insisted through its lawyer that "the decision to refuse acceptance of your press credentials is unfortunate and regrettable and was not an outcome sought by the College."

Are they kidding?

For his part, Lancaster City Police Chief Keith Sadler was apologetic, and acknowledged that they had not handled their part correctly. "I can assure you that between now and the election when these candidates come back into town that I personally will be there to make certain that incidents like this do no happen again," Sadler said.

Clearly the man who was responsible for my assault on June 3rd was prepared to do anything to me. Carroll's voice "turn the camera off!" still rings in my ear. With all the security people helping with the event, why did F&M assign the man who assaulted me to follow me and yell orders at me if they were doing nothing to "deter" my attendance?

If F&M didn't want to "deter" my attendance, why didn't they simply tell its staff and the city police instead of broadcasting their legally actionable lies to world?

The *Post* will continue to ask questions and hold accountable public officials who have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution, but can't seem to bring themselves to actually do it.