

Opinion

Circumstantial evidence points to Robeson's drug problems

It seems that every news reporter and columnist writing about the Feb. 1, 1988, takeover of The Robesonian newspaper by Eddie Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs feels compelled to say that the allegations made by the two Native Americans concerning corruption, drug trafficking and law enforcement complicity have yet to be substantiated. Unfortunately, this stance by the print media only serves to corroborate these same claims made by state and local officials themselves — from the state attorney general's office on down — who bear the responsibility for such rampant criminality.

The media demands "direct proof" of a relationship between drug traffickers and Robeson authorities. In other words, nothing less than the "smoking gun" — perhaps a photograph of the culprits caught in the act or a major "confession" by a significant personality.

But real life criminal justice doesn't work that way and both the media and state and local officials know this. The duty to investigate and present evidence is on law enforcement officials who have resources, witness protection capabilities, and the power to grant immunity to force low-level criminals to testify against major offenders. The burden is certainly not on the victims or the witnesses who are forced to live in an atmosphere

Lewis Pitts
Guest Writer

of terror and uncertainty while public officials do nothing. Every day in this country, individuals are sent to prison based upon cumulative circumstantial evidence presented in state and federal courts. Circumstantial evidence is competent and admissible in court and sufficient to justify conviction. In other words, direct proof or the smoking gun is more the norm for television than real-life investigations and prosecutions.

Let's look briefly at some circumstantial evidence that has already been documented. Evidence that is clearly sufficient for the attorney general and the State Bureau of Investigation to mount a rigorous probe:

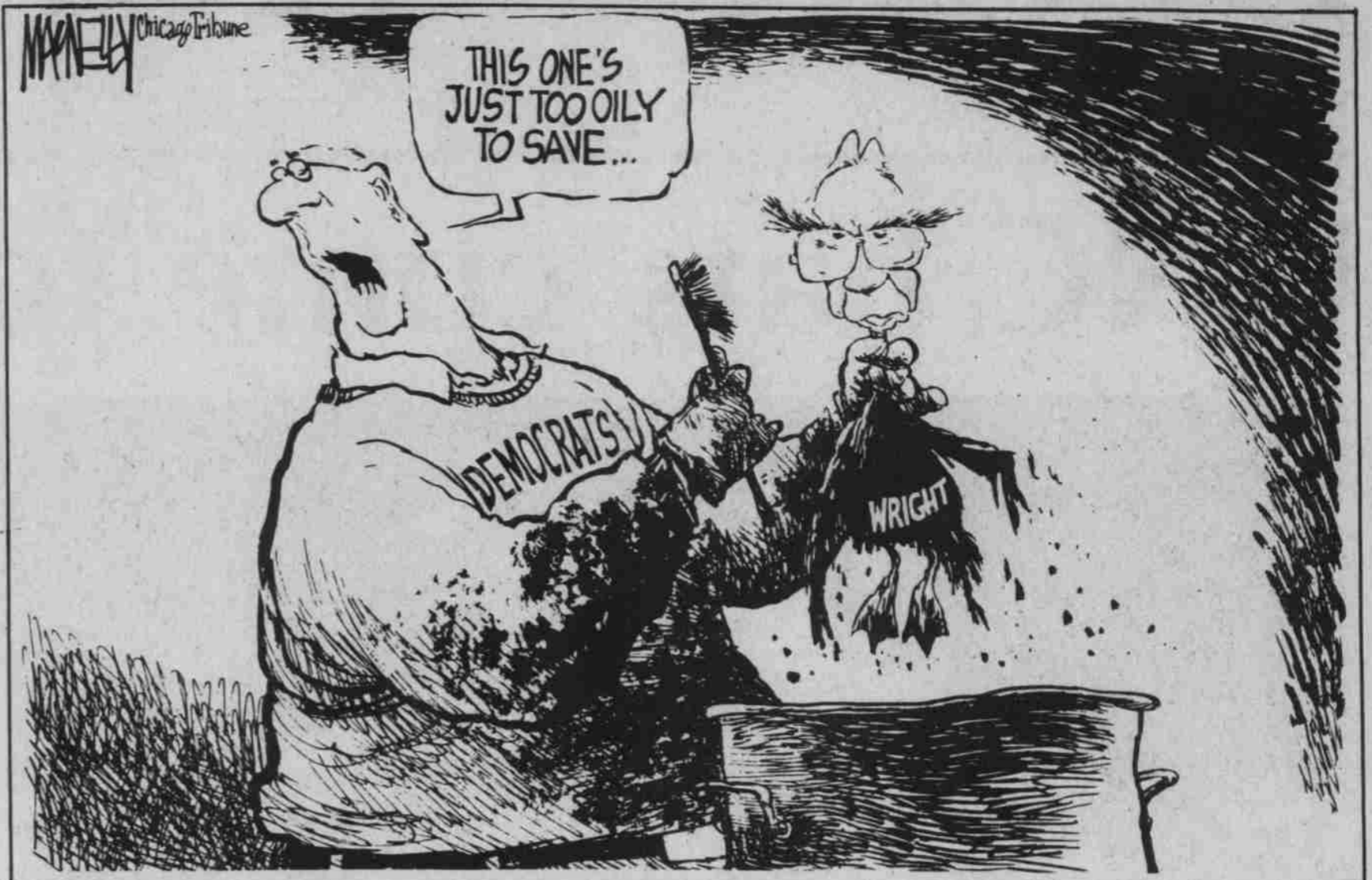
In 1986 former Deputy Sheriff Mitch Stevens was acquitted of charges of stealing cocaine from the Robeson County Sheriff's Department evidence locker after proving that other deputies had keys, including Deputy Sheriff Kevin Stone, son of Sheriff Hubert Stone. During Stevens' trial, two SBI agents testified that they were told by Hoke County deputies that other Robeson county

deputies were involved in the drug theft.

Just a month or so later, Kevin Stone shot and killed Native American Jimmy Earl Cummings. Independent investigators and the Cummings family believe he was selling the stolen drugs for Stone. The coroner's inquest into Cummings' death was branded an "apparent whitewash" by Robesonian editor Bob Horne.

Maurice Geiger, a 30-year veteran in the field of criminal justice and former attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice said under oath after having spent more than 150 days investigating the criminal justice system in Robeson County: "... [My] extensive field work in Robeson County leads me to conclude that there are members of the Robeson County Sheriff's Department who are engaged in extensive drug trafficking. Furthermore, I have no doubt that some members of that department have killed people in the county in connection with drug trafficking."

There are sworn affidavits of respected ministers in Robeson County, the Rev. Bob Mangum and the Rev. Jerry Lowry, which state that individuals confided in them about their direct involvement in or witness to drug trafficking in Robeson County and law enforcement complicity in such trafficking.



Finally, the Rev. and state Rep. Sidney Locks (D-Robeson) has sworn that he believes deputies are attempting to fabricate testimony linking him to drug trafficking as a way of discrediting his criticism of conditions in the county; and the Rev. and former state Rep. Joy Johnson has sworn that after two decades of civil rights struggles, state and local officials have yet "to initiate any meaningful actions to investigate" killings of Indians and blacks or law enforcement complicity in narcotics.

In this limited forum, we have only skimmed the surface of the factors and circumstances that underlie the unrest and injustices in Robeson County. As a lawyer with more than 15 years of experience, I can emphatically say that the evidence available warrants immediate and objective investigation. Meanwhile, the so-called responsible public officials waste tax dollars on the bad faith prosecution of Eddie Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs and a campaign to discredit Christic Institute-South

with allegations that we are communists. Such a campaign is only more proof to us that the facts are strong and compelling. Indeed, if nothing continues to be done, the cumulative evidence points to the possibility of an even greater explosion in Robeson County.

Lewis Pitts is the director of the Christic Institute-South. He served as Timothy Jacobs' attorney when Jacobs was acquitted of hostage-taking charges in 1988.

Awareness first step to ending problem of courtship violence

When Susan enrolled at State University she seemed the model student. She was attractive, had lots of friends, a close relationship with her parents and good grades. She even had the self-confidence to run for a student government office.

Then Susan began dating Rob. Slowly her parents and friends noticed a change.

Worried, her parents questioned her about a possible drug or alcohol problem. Susan assured them she did not have such a problem.

Finally, after she and Rob had been dating for over a year, Susan called in tears.

"Dad, can you please drive in and get me?"

"What is wrong, Susan? Are you sick?"

"No, Dad, I just want to come home."

When pressed by her mother Susan said she and Rob had just "gotten into a little fight."

Two years later, she revealed the extent of the "fights."

During one particularly violent episode, Rob had threatened her with a chair raised over his head, then a knife. The neighbors, alarmed by sounds of crying, screaming, and objects being thrown, called the police.

Rob had seemed to be in a semi-conscious and drunken state for several hours, but he suddenly sobered up and spoke in a very friendly and relaxed manner to the police. To Susan's horror he denied knowledge of any sort of a disturbance.

Susan is not alone in her problem.

D'Ann Pletcher
Guest Writer

A recent study of a Michigan high school in a middle-class university community revealed that one out of every 10 students had experience with dating violence. These same researchers reported that two out of every 10 college students experience courtship violence. Other studies done at universities and high schools nationwide report similar statistics.

Most people are aware of child abuse and the battering of women. But information about violent dating relationships has been left to collect dust in academic corners.

Health educators who have read about dating violence in academic journals aren't actively engaged in solving the problem, because they don't feel that there is one. As Janice Ryan, a Student Health Services counselor says, "Students just aren't reporting that many incidents."

The Student Health Services, which passes out a routine questionnaire to patients asking them about eating disorders, date-rape, incest, drug usage and family violence, doesn't ask about dating violence. Ryan says staff members just "don't feel it's a big issue. When we feel it's important, we'll add it."

Like Ryan, Elinor Williams of Duke University Counseling and Psychological Services doesn't feel that Duke students live up to the statistics found by researchers.

Do the reports of our local health counselors mean that the statistics

found by researchers are wrong? Possibly — but more likely we have a Catch-22 situation. From the point of view of counselors, students very rarely report courtship violence, and education and active prevention will not be started until the problem takes on visible proportions. But students may not report violence in their relationships until educational programs provide information on the classification of the subject and methods of dealing with it.

Health counselors may not see dating violence as a big problem, but students do.

Leslie Foster, residence director for Cobb and Joyner residence halls believes "a lot of students keep it to themselves, but it is going on."

Foster knew a student at a university in South Carolina who had an abusive boyfriend and feels that her situation was not uncommon. She would like to see relationship violence programming on campus and in residence halls. She feels that it is just as important as information on date rape and alcohol abuse.

Nor is Foster the only individual receiving word-of-mouth information about dating violence. The same researchers reporting one in 10 high school students and two in 10 college students experiencing violence found that three in 10 high school students knew someone who had the problem and six in 10 college students had personal knowledge.

While the word-of-mouth problem has not reached the ears of counselors, it has reached the ears of Peggy James, the community educator for the Orange/Durham Coalition for Battered Women. James believes that

"courtship violence is a serious problem locally."

Due to a federal grant from June 1987 through June 1988, the coalition was able to visit Orange County high schools and hold educational seminars. They also put up posters warning, "It started with just a slap."

Says one staff member, "The posters were really great; they really hit home with the kids."

The response from the high schoolers continues to be very strong; many are making contact with the battered women's shelter's hotline. Karen Solomon, shelter director, says, "At least two high school age women have called into the shelter in the past two weeks."

The coalition also plans to visit area high schools to show a special video entitled, "When Good Times Go Bad." The film is directed toward educating high school age men and women about the dangers of dating violence.

Though James and the coalition have done a lot of educational programming on the high school level, almost nothing has been done at the collegiate level. Part of this problem is that the coalition doesn't offer their services without being asked.

They have been asked by various academic groups studying human behavior and a few private organizations — fraternities and sororities — but no public seminars have been held because no residence hall or campus programmers have made contact with the shelter.

Despite the fact that courtship violence hasn't gotten the coverage of date rape, drug abuse or alcoholism,

statistics show its prevalence rates are equal to, if not higher than, these problems.

The education of young men and women about courtship violence is especially crucial in light of recent research suggesting that "the occurrence of violence during courtship may be widespread and serve as a training ground for later domestic violence."

This theory, proposed in a study of a Michigan battered women's shelter, is supported by the fact that 51 percent of the women at the shelter had experienced abuse during dating while only 29 percent were abused children.

Many women also reported previous violent dating relationships with men other than their spouse. This suggests that relationship violence may be something that the women learned to accept as normal.

Statistics at our local battered women's shelter confirm that many of the women housed there experienced dating violence prior to marital violence.

Until recently, prior experience with family violence was assumed to be the most significant factor in subsequent spousal abuse. Today, researchers are suggesting patterns of abuse that begin during dating situations and continue over into marital and familial relationships.

It took people a long time to admit that domestic violence is not a "private problem" that should be "left alone." In fact, people are still shocked when they hear that the wives of university professors, policemen and doctors have often taken refuge at the shelter.

But the shelter's 100 volunteers and recent \$160,000-plus fundraising campaign prove that the community as a whole is able to transcend shock and move into action.

The first step is awareness.

When Rob first yelled at Susan after accusing her of flirting with his best friend, it seemed like a display of affection. But his jealousy got worse. And his harassment was almost always intensified by alcohol and would last until the early hours of the morning.

There was nothing Susan could do to stop the screaming and threats of physical harm both to her and himself. She spent these frightening evenings alternating between crouching in a corner or locking herself in the bathroom, waiting for his fury to finally spend itself.

When Rob refused to let her break up — threatened to kill himself, to kill any man she dated, to damage her property and embarrass her in front of friends — and paradoxically, when he cried a lot and told her how much he needed her, she decided the best thing was to stay with him a little longer.

Because she didn't have the advantage of good information and counseling resources, she wasn't able to make the best decision for herself and Rob.

It took her two years of mental stress before, finally, she broke loose from him.

Let's hope there won't be more Susans in the future.

D'Ann Pletcher is a graduate student in English literature from Dallas, Texas.

Both sexes ignore responsibility

I am writing in a general response to the whole issue of abortion and the subsequent poles that have formed around it. I do not claim to be either pro-life or pro-choice, simply because in taking such a stance, one loses one's individuality and becomes a mere foot soldier in this no-win war. I do, however, subscribe to some of the views presented by each side. In my own experience and research, both of which are neither limited nor vast, I have developed some very strong gut reactions about this whole confused mess. These reactions I wish to share in hopes of fostering any line of communication or understanding of which might calm the issue to a rational, reasonable level.

My initial reaction to abortion, once I learned the different methods by which it is performed and what it does to those involved, was one of horror, realizing that it is an extremely cold and selfish thing — which it is, regardless of the situation (pro-choicers, please don't get your dander up). The vast majority of abortions in America (approximately 97 percent) are what are termed social abortions, and it is to these abortions that this letter is addressed. Social abortions are performed simply to allow the female a way to escape the consequences of actions she chose to commit freely. In this aspect I support pro-life — I feel that it is wrong to engage in sexual activity and, regardless of precau-

Jake Washburn
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tions taken (no birth control is 100 percent effective), not be willing to accept the responsibilities of those actions. Women must be responsible for their actions. On the same note, men must be even more responsible, because they aren't the ones that will have to carry "the bomb," and aren't forced by nature to pay the consequences. Women do not have the choice that men do. Because of the biology involved, the choice of whether or not they want to be responsible isn't open to them. Mother Nature made it that way. This brings me to my second gut reaction.

The pro-choice movement, to me, does not seem to be actually centered on the issue of abortion. I don't think, no, I know that no one in their right mind would fight for such a gruesome, horrible, and alarmingly dangerous "privilege" because they wanted to have one. The true issue rather is the fight for women's liberation. In this aspect I support the pro-choicers — but abortion is a battle in that war that pro-choicers cannot win. The pro-choice movement is basically, to my perceptions, about women being mad as hell that men can have sexual intercourse and not pay the biological consequences (though there are some women

who think it's a wonderful thing to be able to bear children — imagine that!). Ideally, for most, sexual intercourse occurs in a loving relationship between two people committed to each other, in which case the men share the burden and provide support. Our culture, however, has fostered the idea that sex is "just for fun," and that the man has no responsibilities in regards to the consequences. This is why pro-choicers are fighting for their "freedom." As I said, I support women's liberation to the nth degree, equal pay for equal work and all that, but when it comes to the issue of abortion women want to be just as irresponsible as our culture has allowed men to be. Well, this isn't possible. God didn't make us that way.

So, disregarding all of the propaganda and the infinitely arguable points used by both sides, my final gut reaction to abortion is that it is a sad sign that our society lacks the love to care even for its own children. Abortion is shirking responsibility, by both the male and the female. There are many factors, most of which I have not mentioned, in this sad issue and there is no one solution. The only guideline that we have, and I feel no one would argue this if they thought about it, is that we must all act responsibly and be cognizant of our actions and their consequences. It's about time we grew up.

Jake Washburn is a freshman speech communications major from Burlington.

Cuts, crowds and creepy-crawlies

"Any cut of this magnitude will have serious negative consequences for the University and has the potential to affect all aspects of our program." — Garland Hershey, vice chancellor for health affairs, speaking about the \$3 million cut from non-personnel state funding at UNC. The budget cuts are a 5 percent across-the-board withholding of budgeted appropriations for all state institutions and agencies.

"One of the strategies for changing racism is to be able to talk about it. It's easier to understand cultural differences than to change race relations." — Valerie Batts in a speech Thursday that was presented as part of Race Relations Week.

"We need to make a lot of improvements, such as little creepy-crawlies and things like that. We can take care of some of the maintenance concerns as well. We will at least be able to handle the minor problems." — Collin Rustin, associate director of University Housing, explaining why Craige Residence Hall will be closed down over the summer.

"For my good name, which is the legacy I intend to leave my children and my grandchildren, I will fight to

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the last ounce of conviction and energy that I possess. . . . My wife is a good, decent, caring, thoroughly honorable person. I'll damned well fight to protect her honor and her integrity against any challenge by any source, whatever the cost." — House Speaker Jim Wright, defending himself and his wife against charges that their private finances broke the rules of Congressional conduct. The House ethics committee is said to have completed its report saying that Wright did violate the rules.

"She's a model student. We didn't have any problems with her, no tempers and no sulking or anything weird. I just cannot believe it unless I hear Sara say it happened." — Marvene Wallace, a physical education instructor at Texas Southmost College, where Sara Maria Andrete majored in physical education. Andrete is being sought as the "witch" of a drug-smuggling and ritual-murder cult in Mexico after 13 bodies were dug up at a remote ranch last week.

"It was crazy outside the ground before the kickoff. There was complete madness and somehow the

doors were opened. There were just too many people in the section and I saw some people crushed against the barrier." — Gary Stanley, a 20-year-old Liverpool fan at the British soccer game in Sheffield, England, where more than 100 people were killed and 180 injured Saturday when fans pushed forward through a barrier fence, crushing the people at the front of the crowd.

"Back in 1960, I didn't know of any housing problems or the homeless. In fact, the only homeless problem I can think of was when the Mayflower landed on North America. They probably had a housing problem then." — N.C. Sen. Terry Sanford in a speech last Sunday at UNC, saying students need to combat new problems such as the homeless situation.

"Whenever English falls asleep and needs a new writer, an Irishman comes along to wake it up. But Spanish has been asleep with no one to wake it." — Carlos Fuentes, a leading Mexican intellectual and writer, speaking to a full Memorial Hall about why he writes in Spanish, even though he grew up speaking English in Washington, D.C.

Compiled by editor Sharon Keschull.