

Sheriff Don Hunter

Sheriff Hunter Statement On "Coverup" Allegation

Please accept some counterpoint on the news story about charges being dropped in a Collier County Sheriff's Office investigation as reported in the Sept. 7 edition of the Naples Daily News.

To begin, and I believe most importantly, there was and is no "coverup" as flippantly speculated by a defense attorney formerly retained then dismissed by the Hendricks family.

A "coverup" would involve direction to the investigator to reject or alter evidence in the case or direct a case to a predetermined conclusion. This did not occur and would be a violation of our policies.

I reject any notion that any member of the Agency interfered with this case. I have been provided no evidence that any member other than our investigator had any interest in this case until AFTER Mr. Padowitz made inquiry through the State Attorney's Office for the interview of additional witnesses.

The victims in this case have been adamant that the originally arrested suspects were the persons who committed the alleged crime. Those arrested were taken into custody on the night of the alleged crime immediately after the incident occurred and after specific identification was made by the victims.

The victims identified their alleged attackers in this case as part of a "show-up," where the victims were brought to the suspects' location to identify those involved. The victims have stated under oath that they knew the attackers personally for four to five years from school. Three times on different occasions the victims have reaffirmed their belief that these four arrested subjects were those who attacked them.

I am told that at no time has Jeff Storrar been identified as a suspect in this case nor has he been arrested for any crime.

This case was and has remained the exclusive responsibility of the investigator and an assistant state attorney and no one else. It was not until the news media made the letter available to CCSO on Aug. 22 that anyone in the investigator's chain of command began a review of the case status.

Although we cannot comment further on an ongoing investigation, the public should know that reckless, unwarranted and unsupported statements by the former defense counsel are precisely that. They do not favor truth nor our understanding of what happened in this case.

I am now reviewing the letter and defense counsels' apparently specious speculation about the case and will make a conclusion based on evidence not conjecture.

