THE E-MAIL TRAIL TO EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER
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EXCLUSIVE: 'The Blade' Hires Investigator to Probe Pulitzer Complaint

By Joe Strupp

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NEW YORK Ron Royhab, the editor of The Blade of Toledo, Ohio, has revealed that the newspaper has hired investigator to track down who sent an anonymous letter to the Pulitzer Board accusing the Bl
to its 'Coingate' series, which was a finalist for a Pulitzer this year but did not win.

"We are trying to get to the bottom of something we find to be quite di
"Wouldn't you want to know if someone is trying to injure your re

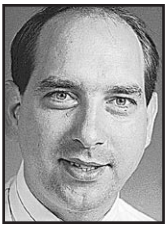
E&P has obtained a copy of the eight-page letter
Coverup Taint Award-Winning Coingate
Gissler, and Royhab's ten-page

Meanwhile, the
that "There, the

In the summer of 2005, Blade reporter George Tanber was pushing hard for Joe Strupp, senior editor of Editor & Publisher, a journalism trade publication in New York, to write about former Blade politics writer Fritz Wenzel and The Blade. Mr. Tanber created a fake name, Nick Faroh, to correspond with Mr. Strupp, who last week refused to say if he knew he was dealing with Mr. Tanber.

Nick Faroh to Joe Strupp
July 5, 2005, at 12:50 p.m.

"I think Sallah told you about the Lucas County Democratic Party's Weasel Watch [on their web site] Significant because it mentions some of the non-Noe stuff I mentioned to you + reinforces the point that Wenzel committed unethical acts for Block and Royhab because that's what he believed they wanted..."



Fritz Wenzel

Joe Strupp to Nick Faroh
July 5, 2005

"Thanks, will keep on it, but having trouble pinning down. Either people will not talk on the record, or say they do not know what Wenzel knew."

Nick Faroh to Joe Strupp
July 5, 2005, at 1:24 p.m.

"Yeah, I know it's tough to crack. And it will get tougher as they try to stop it. It's a unique story — a groundbreaking story — that no one has dared write before..."

Nick Faroh to Joe Strupp
July 8, 2005, at 9:50 a.m.

"Some meat:... Phillip 'P.J.' Wenzel is and has been on the state GOP payroll... His wife, Katie, works for Strategic Public Partners, a Columbus GOP lobbying firm with ties to Bob Bennett, the state's GOP chief... Key to getting the Fritz/Noe stuff pinned down — other than from the Feds, which you can't get — is Sue Metzger, Noe's executive assistant... She's very afraid, but the Wenzel stuff is a different story. Worth a try..."

Joe Strupp to Nick Faroh
July 8, 2005, at 10:03 a.m.

"... talked to Paula Ross, she had speculation, but no proof Wenzel knew, still hunting, be in touch."

Mr. Strupp's story was published on Editor & Publisher's on-line edition on Aug. 1, 2005. Here are excerpts:

"The Blade of Toledo, Ohio, is on top of the newspaper world, thanks to its 'Coingate' reports... But while the paper is rightly thumping its chest with each new revelation, it's also coming under some scrutiny — not for what it has printed, but for what it may not have. Rumors swirl around a veteran Blade scribe, former political reporter Fritz Wenzel. Nothing at all is proven, but it's worth recalling the dangers — even if it's just public perception — of jumping from political campaigning to political reporting and back again..."

"Wenzel's career change also renewed rumors, so far, unsubstantiated, that his ties to Noe and the GOP may help explain why he not only failed to uncover Coingate but also a related Noe scandal involving alleged illegal funneling of contributions to President Bush's 2004 campaign."

SOURCE: George Tanber's Blade laptop computer and Editor & Publisher

THE BLADE