

# LETTER TO THE PULITZER BOARD



George Tanber

March 28, 2006

## DECEPTION AND COVERUP TAINT AWARD-WINNING COINGATE SERIES

Ten months before the 2004 presidential election – and 15 months before The Blade published its first Coingate story – the paper’s then politics reporter Fritz Wenzel was tipped off about Tom Noe’s alleged campaign contribution scam in support of the Bush campaign and about problems with Noe’s coin investments for the state. Wenzel, with close ties to Noe, sat on the story and did not tell Blade editors what he knew. Wenzel already was on probation for a previous ethics violation dating from 2002, but when Blade editors learned about his actions relating to Coingate, they did nothing. After Editor & Publisher, Salon.com and [Cincinnati] CityBeat reporters began investigating the Wenzel affair, Blade editors, fearful of having their prize investigation discredited, conspired to cover up what they knew and hid. Two articles published by Coingate were delayed or delayed else...

Several e-mails were discovered on George Tanber’s Blade laptop computer for the period leading up to his decision on March 28 to send the eight-page anonymous letter to the Pulitzer Board attacking The Blade’s Coingate Pulitzer entry.

Mr. Tanber uses the fake name Nick Faroh when corresponding with Joe Strupp of Editor & Publisher. He misspells his last name, “Tanbur,” when he writes Bill Frogameni. Frogameni is a Toledo freelance writer who has written about The Blade for Salon.com.

**Nick Faroh to Joe Strupp**  
March 10 at 12:03 p.m.

“Public Service: The Blade of Toledo... Joe: You ready to cover the train wreck that’s about to ensue? G”

**George “Tanbur” to Bill Frogameni**  
March 14 at 6:23 p.m.

“Sallah called yesterday + late in the conversation I told him it might be showing up in NY. He didn’t say don’t do it. Haven’t decided yet whether I need it. I put together most of it today. When you see the whole thing together... it’s as clear as hell + makes you sick. Sending it

to the dean of the graduate school, who sits on the P board + a copy to the board chair, as backup. Oh, and get this: Royhab is a judge this year for investigative reporting. That should be interesting...”

**George “Tanbur” to Bill Frogameni**  
March 19 at 5:02 p.m.

“This is beautiful, Frog. The stars are alligning (sic) perfectly for the kill.”

**Bill Frogameni to George “Tanbur”**  
March 19 at 7:06 p.m.

“[Sallah] urged caution and

told me to stay ‘strong and honorable.’ He said his position is ‘to always rise above’ and that the Blade bad guys are ‘polishing the silver on the Titanic.’ ”

**George “Tanbur” to Bill Frogameni**  
March 24 at 12:39 p.m.

“... My D-Day is Tuesday.”

**George “Tanbur” to Bill Frogameni**  
March 28 at 4:14 p.m.

“Two packages mailed today. Comprehensive. Lethal...”