

July 11, 2012

Sheriff Mike Raines  
1025 Independence Blvd.  
Charlotte, MI 48813

*Open Letter to Eaton County Sheriff's Office*

RE: Hannah Coy

Dear Sheriff Raines:

I was very troubled by hearing Eaton County Sheriff's Department recently hired Hannah Coy. I do not believe Ms. Coy has the character or judgment to be so employed and hope you will be so kind as to consider my thoughts.

Last year I was saddened to read on various media websites about the arrest of Michael Terpening in Barry County on charges of sexually abusing four boys connected with a group home Terpening founded and operated in Assyria Township. Early this year, Terpening was arrested for sexually abusing another young man more than 10 years ago. As I began reading comments on the stories, I was outraged to see people identifying themselves as family and friends of the defendant leaving comments accusing law enforcement of corruption in arresting Terpening while also publishing information obviously humiliating to the victims while naming the victims on the media websites.

In the case of one victim the defendant gave interviews where he was quoted as accusing one of his alleged victims of being a sex offender. Terpening provided the interviewer, Laura Adams of Battle Creek, a blogger calling herself, "the Village Thinker" with the young man's first, middle and last name. The stories by Adams readily appeared in a Google search with the defendant's accusations about the teen.

For me the most shocking work of Mr. Terpening, his family and friends was a recant appearing on Kalamazoo's WWMT and later an 11 minute video on Youtube of another alleged victim in the case. Both were widely publicized on media websites and Facebook. The recant was wildly bizarre in that it was obviously scripted, but also seemed to lead viewers to information not then publicly known about the case while actually incriminating Terpening. Barry County Prosecutor, Tom Evans responding to questions from WWMT said it best as he said, "I don't know if this helps or hurts our case."

I knew the good women and men in law enforcement working this case did not need my help, our system of justice works just fine. What frosted me was seeing names put out in public obviously seeking to intimidate them into silence. So I put together a website called MichaelTerpening.com.

MichaelTerpening.com is dedicated to openly, rationally and civilly exploring the 3 criminal cases and 1 neglect case pending against Mr. Terpening in Barry County. The site does not take a position on Terpening's guilt, as this is a matter for the four juries to decide should these matters go to trial. We allow comments from the public and have even had people we've identified as Terpening Followers comment.

The website has published documents received through Freedom of Information Act requests, information from interviews with former Terpening Followers and a myriad of other sources. While not taking a position on Terpening's guilt, the position on naming victims is clear. It's wrong, the media does not do it and these kids have every right to tell their story to a jury free of intimidation.

Hannah Coy began commenting publicly on websites in February with a stunning attack on the work we are doing with the website. Hannah begins by letting readers know she knows my birth date and full name, apparently gleaned from Freedom of Information requests received from Barry County Sheriff's Department after four Terpening family members and friends filed complaints about the website. (*see Exhibit 1*) The website later profiled Hannah as a Terpening Follower and Coy published a number of comments on WWMT's website saying, "2359 seems to have a lot of hidden truths..I have you now Rxxx." The numbers refer to the address the Terpening Followers thought was mine in Wyoming, Michigan. It was actually a previous address. (*see Exhibit 2*) Coy goes on to congratulate Terpening after he posts the Wyoming address online, himself, saying, "Thanks for letting everyone know" adding more strange allegations in what is undeniably an effort to silence me for speaking out. (*see Exhibit 3*)

I do not write a complaint about Coy's efforts to silence me. In fact, much of the personal invective Terpening and his associates publish about me I re-publish on the michaelterpening.com website, giving it far more attention than it receives within their limited circle. Our website generates a lot of traffic and their words show their character.

More recently Coy engaged me on my little-used business Facebook page. (*Exhibits 4-1 to 4-7*) My comments are polite and ask questions designed to encourage Coy to rethink her positions in light of facts like court transcripts, first-person material. I attempt to engage Coy to discuss what most would consider common values, for example not publishing the names of victims.

Coy is not bound by the gag order in any of Terpening's three criminal cases the judge issued in February. Coy questions the website's publishing information obtained pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act under what appears to be furthering the Terpening Followers' position that the michaelterpening.com website is in cahoots with the prosecution.

Coy published a statement on the so called, Justice for Michael Terpening Facebook page information suggesting she knew Rob was served with a subpoena less than twenty four hours after he received the subpoena, suggesting Terpening or someone close to the defense gave her this information (*see Exhibit 5*) in violation of the Gag Order. (*see Exhibits 6-1 and 6-2*) While Coy criticizes the website for publishing information she believes is subject to the gag order, Coy knowingly publishes information she only could have received from the defendant or his defense team. The subpoena was not returned to the court at the time Coy publishes her comment and could not possibly have been known to anyone other than those gagged and close to the defense.

Coy publishes comments on the WWMT website in February through Facebook making thinly veiled references to the corruption theme Michael Terpening and his associates pushed for since his troubles began with a young man placed at the group home Terpening operated reported Terpening was sexually abusing him. In her comments Coy says, "I have known Michael for 18 years. I know a lot of things about him but what Barry County is saying is not anything that is true." Coy later tells readers on the WWMT page, "The more I hear the more that I believe that Barry County is an uncontrolled rampage to destroy him and his family. I hope the prosecution is held accountable for what they have done." (*see Exhibit 7*)

Later we see Coy (see *Exhibit 7*) state, "Their plan was to use you and other family members against him" responding to Terpening's maternal aunt having been arrested for insurance fraud in an investigation started months before the allegations of sexual abuse were made by the current group of victims. Coy's comment is interesting as it may suggest a greater lack of ability, or possibly intention, to collect facts leading to reasoned conclusion, instead. Does Coy believe she knows what, "their plan" is? For me a greater question exists, does Coy possess the knowledge to accept conclusions she finds painful, or do unsound and arguably paranoid conclusions provide the adequate substitute?

The soundness of Coy's ability to reason conclusion from a set of facts sets up more questions for this elected member of the Bellevue Village Council. Does Hannah Coy have insight into how her questionable public stated impact her own interests and does she learn from the strong, thoughtful and public criticism her public statements continue to invite from the michaelterpening.com website?

While one must doubt we can arrive at definitive answers for these questions perhaps we can infer plausible conclusions from Coy's public statements. Coy tells us she has known Terpening for 18 years. (see *Exhibit 7*) Ms. Coy even tells us, "I will support Mike and his family until the day I die!!!! I will stand behind them always." One can measure the public statements of fealty against Coy's tendency to delete comments within days of being questioned by stories on michaelterpening.com. Coy also tends to appear for short periods of time, tends to be vociferous in her defense, and then disappears.

One may conclude Hannah Coy understands her public statements for Terpening are at odds with her own interests. Coy regularly removes offensive comments, sometimes even demanding the website operator do the same. (see *Exhibits 10 and 11*) One can conclude Coy possesses late insight into how others could reasonably perceive her support for an accused child molester. Oddly, Coy continues to appear intermittently to impulsively act out only to later regret her choices.

One of Coy's most obvious despicable choices was publicly publishing information about the operator of the michaelterpening.com website's parents. Coy announced on a Facebook comment appearing on WWMT the website operator's mother's name while asking if the website operator's father, a retired police officer, was a "crooked police officer." Coy went on to give the website operator's birthday and how old he would be on his next birthday making it difficult to conclude she was doing anything but trying to intimidate the website operator or humiliate him into silence. (see *Exhibit 8*) The judgment that went into publishing the comments raises concerns about Coy's character and judgment, but perhaps more disturbing is the amount of research Coy and/or her associates must have done to obtain information about a police officer retired for nearly two decades.

July 10, 2012, Hannah publishes comments about me, a subpoenaed witness in the case in advance of a court hearing. (see *Exhibit 13*)

Finally we have a comment appearing on Hannah Coy's own Facebook page not yet removed as of this writing. It may have more meaning to the folks in your department who interviewed Ms. Coy. She tells her friends on Facebook, "I dazzled them with my brilliance" and later in response to a friend's comment, "I heard you bazzled (sic) them w/bullshit" Coy answers, "...maybe a little." (see *Exhibit 12*). This comment appeared on June 11, 2012 and one hopes Coy was not interviewed the same day and was referring to an interview, or that she was only joking.

The website michaelterpening.com aggressively reports on Mr. Terpening and his Terpening Followers, of this there must be no doubt. At the same time, clear boundaries are observed in the reporting, for example no one is reported by name on the site who has not publicly abused others involved in this case. This includes people as close to Terpening as his wife and mother. The website is scrupulously civil and

has not even promoted a conclusion as to Terpening's guilt. This is not a case of one bad actor playing against another, the website has not ceded that position, ever.

In covering Hannah Coy it was difficult to bring her working for your office to the public and it took a great deal of soul searching, I've not published employment information about any of the Terpening Followers. My judgment is there was a duty to make this information public, just as it is important to bring Coy's activities to your attention. Hannah Coy working with any law enforcement agency when she so quickly buys into the corruption theory of your neighboring colleagues is offensive. Her close and public collaboration with Michael Terpening and his team who've abused his alleged victims in an effort to punish them for speaking out is despicable. Hannah Coy has not just quietly supported a friend who faces an awful moment in his life.

If you have questions, I can be reached at (616) 425-9321.

Sincerely yours,

*Rob Dewey*

Robert Dewey