



Jim Spearing

Jim Spearing has gone national.

That's right! Mr. Spearing made an appearance on ABC's Primetime Crime during a nationally televised in-depth look at how a police officer's actions captured on video can be twisted by the media. As is often the case, the media edits footage to highlight only the most shocking portions of a police video without providing any of the necessary details in order to shock and enrage the public. Footage from the Lisa Tanner incident in the Flagler County Jail is not only a perfect example, but was the main focus of the Primetime segment.

Jim was a featured interview during the story and he highlighted the number of inconsistencies between the few clips used to portray Lisa as a victim of brutality with her actual actions (also captured on video, but amazingly not reported). Once all the footage was aired, Ms. Tanner looked more like a B-movie actress than victim. True to form, Jim deadpanned the best zinger of the segment by calling Ms. Tanner's actions, "an academy award winning performance."

We applaud Jim for a job well done.

Matt Puckett
Deputy Executive Director
Florida PBA

PBA In Action With Your **Political Consultant**

State Attorney Tanner's Abuse Of Power Attracts National Attention

For over a year now, the PBA has been locked in a desperate struggle to reveal the truth about the arrest and incarceration of **Lisa Tanner**, the daughter of **State Attorney John Tanner** and to clear the name of the innocent officers involved. Now this battle has reached national proportions.

Lisa Tanner was arrested by Flagler Beach Police (not her first rodeo) for disorderly intoxication and resisting arrest. She had to be carried to the patrol car. At the jail, she became abusive to corrections officers, clogged the cell toilet with her shoes and urinated on the floor. At this point, corrections officers placed her in a restraint chair and, for their own protection, videotaped the incident. The tape was promptly turned in to management and subsequently released to the press.

The tape caused quite a furor and, taken out of context, looked bad for our guys. However, an initial investigation concluded no wrongdoing on the part of the corrections officers and the case should have ended there. It didn't.

State Attorney John Tanner unleashed the full powers of his office to persecute the arresting officer and the corrections officers at the jail. First, he launched his own investigation of the Flagler County Jail issuing "hip pocket" subpoenas and threatening to jail any officer who wouldn't knuckle under. He then jury shopped his daughter's case to find a grand jury willing to indict the officers who restrained her. State Attorney Tanner then turned on the arresting officer in an effort to destroy his law enforcement career. He even went so far as to send a letter to criminal defense lawyers vowing to not prosecute any case involving the arresting officer. Can you imagine a state's attorney willing to troll the criminal community to reopen and dismiss cases as payback?

"State Attorney John Tanner unleashed the full powers of his office..."

All these abuses resulted in **Governor Bush** appointing a special prosecutor to review the entire mess and guess what... John Tanner became the center of the investigation, not our corrections officer. So what is a powerful state's attorney to do? Why, spend over \$200,00 in taxpayer money to suppress the results of the independent investigation.

I suppose it was inevitable that such shocking behavior would eventually attract the attention of the national media. (see box)

Initially, PBA was slow to respond to these outrages preferring to battle the issue in court. State Attorney Tanner seized the initiative by going on every talk show he could to vilify law enforcement.

PBA struck back with everything we had, radio, full page ads and multiple press events. Our efforts resulted in widespread media attention and a more honest and truthful recounting of events related to the arrest and jailing of Lisa Tanner. Now, State Attorney Tanner is on the defensive, circling his legal wagons at taxpayer expense.

I'd like to share a couple of lessons for labor leaders from this sad incident.

- Never let the lawyers run your campaign. Lawyers serve a vital purpose but they live in a world where there are rules, fairness and due process. We live in a world of politics, perception and, when it comes to law enforcement officers, a presumption of guilt, not innocence.
- Never let a shot go unanswered. We allowed State Attorney Tanner and his daughter to seize the public stage and dominate the debate for an



Cops Busted by Their Own Cameras

Police Benevolent Association spokesman **Jim Spearing** said the public wants police to protect them, but they don't want to see what it takes to do that.

"It's an unpleasant, and often dangerous, sometimes fatal, job. And it's not pretty to look at — it's never pretty to look at," Spearing said. "The truth is, it's a dangerous and difficult game. And the definition of success? Find trouble and get the biggest, baddest trouble you can get into — and get into it."

unconscionable period of time. We need to strike back instantly when our officers are under attack.

- Remind the public who the bad guys are and how difficult and dangerous law enforcement can be. Our campaign reminded folks on why Lisa Tanner was in the jail in the first place and the fact that prison is not Club Med... we don't put mints on your pillow. Had Lisa Tanner conducted herself with dignity by complying with law enforcement, she would not have been arrested and jailed.
- Stand up for your members. Perhaps the most sacred trust placed in PBA hands is the duty to fight, to the bitter end, to defend the rights and honor of our members. They need to know we have their back.
- Keep the pressure on and never, ever give up. I'm certain John Tanner, in hindsight, rues the day he decided to tangle with PBA. His actions have resulted in disgrace and embarrassment for him politically and his family. We will continue the fight until our officers are exonerated and state attorneys across this state learn the lesson that there are consequences for abusing their powers.

We'll keep you posted as further events unfold. Till then, stay safe out there. ●

Editor's Note: If you would like to view the video interview of Jim Spearing, you will find it on the internet at the Florida PBA website:
www.flpba.org