



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 1, 2014

Breaking Thad: Cochran Campaign Accused of Illegal Vote-buying

In the wake of revelations that Senator Thad Cochran's June 24 primary runoff victory over Chris McDaniel was cemented with [vicious race-baiting radio ads and illegal Democrat cross-over voting](#) comes another shocking allegation:



A black reverend claims that he was part of a Cochran campaign operation to illegally buy the votes of black Mississippians.

Writes Charles C. Johnson at [GotNews.com](#):

Reverend Stevie Fielder, associate pastor at historic First Union Missionary Baptist Church and former official at Meridian's redevelopment agency, says he delivered "hundreds or even thousands," of blacks to the polls after being offered money and being assured by a Cochran campaign operative that Chris McDaniel was a racist. "They [the Cochran campaign] told me to offer blacks fifteen dollars each and to vote for Thad."

... At the direction of the Cochran campaign, Reverend Fielder went "door to door, different places, mostly impoverished neighborhoods, to the housing authorities and stuff like that," telling fellow blacks that McDaniel was a racist and promising them \$15 per vote. "They sold me on the fact that he was a racist and that the right thing to do was to keep him out of office," Fielder says.

... It is illegal under several provisions of Mississippi law and federal law for campaign officials to bribe voters with cash and punishable [by] up to five years in jail.

Fielder, a Democrat, reports that the Cochran campaign told him they would need about 10,000 black votes; "That was the target," said Fielder. As it turned out, Cochran squeaked by in the June 24 contest by only 6700 votes — a 1.8 percent margin.

Fielder says that he communicated with several Cochran staffers about the vote-buying matter, including Cochran's campaign manager Kirk Sims and a woman named "Amanda." But he seemed to have interacted most with a black political operative named Saleem Baird, who said he was "with Thad Cochran's campaign." Fielder also said that Baird offered him \$16,000 for his services, but reneged on the agreement. He then was paid for his story by GotNews.com proprietor Charles C. Johnson, a fact that some might use to cast doubt on his claims. As Breitbart [wrote](#), however:

Johnson defended paying for the story in an email, saying, "Why wouldn't I pay for an awesome story?"

"Gawker, the Daily Mail, TMZ all pay for information (and they pay poorly, by the way). There's also a long history of 'checkbook journalism' in America. I'm bringing it back. Indeed, every press baron in American history has relied on it. Pulitzer, Hearst, Luce, and, yes, Oprah are all supporters of it. David Frost paid for the Nixon tapes, goodness sake."

For Fielder's part, he claims he's motivated not by the money but the character assassination of which



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he now realizes McDaniel was a victim. As Breitbart wrote, “‘He’s been done wrong,’ Fielder said of McDaniel. ‘He’s not what they said that he is.... Definitely the election should not be allowed to stand.’”

But we don’t have to rely on Fielder’s word alone. He also provided Johnson with four text messages from Baird — sent from official Cochran campaign e-mail address Saleem@ThadForMs.com — that relate to the vote-buying operation (they can be viewed at [GotNews.com](#)). Fielder also reports that Baird had asked him to delete the texts, in an apparent attempt to cover up the scheme.

Furthermore, Fielder says that he’s not alone, that others were given envelopes of cash to distribute to black Mississippians as bribes to vote for Cochran.

The reverend also explains that Baird’s race lent him credibility, that he would not have been as likely to believe a white person making the same claims about McDaniel. And these false claims were damning — and damaging. As the UK *Daily Mail*’s David Martosko [wrote](#) just days ago:

A series of three racially charged radio ads that ran in rural Mississippi on Election Day played a role in driving black Democrats to vote in a Republican primary run-off election. MailOnline has exclusively obtained audio of the ads.

... They claimed that supporters of conservative McDaniel had connections to the Ku Klux Klan and that McDaniel had a “racist agenda.” They also warned that black Democrats “could lose food stamps, housing assistance, student loans, early breakfast and lunch programs and disaster assistance” if he were to become the Republican U.S. Senate nominee.

“Vote against the tea party. Vote Thad Cochran,” one ad said. “If the tea party, with their racist ideas, win, we will be sent back to the ‘50s and ‘60s.”

Such tactics helped rally black Democrats to vote in the GOP runoff election; for instance, turnout was up 40 percent in the heavily black Mississippi Delta region.

Note that it is legal in the Magnolia State for Democrats to vote in Republican primaries — assuming they hadn’t already voted in the Democrat primary. Yet evidence of this also has surfaced. As *The New American* reported on Sunday, it appears that thousands of improper “cross-over” ballots were cast in perhaps 10 Mississippi counties. Moreover, as I [wrote](#) in that piece:

[Gateway Pundit’s Jim Hoft] also accuses the Cochran campaign of pressuring counties to delay certification of the vote until the last minute so that the McDaniel campaign will have a very narrow window in which to audit the poll books and mount a possible legal challenge. To make matters worse, Gateway Pundit is [reporting](#) that Cochran’s operatives are now preventing McDaniel’s supporters from reviewing the voter rolls in nine counties — in violation of Mississippi law.

But some critics might wonder if the law, and the lawless, matter at all to the Cochran campaign. As for the lawless, Cochran has more than one political bedfellow with a checkered past. Saleem Baird was once arrested “because a club he was the manager of allegedly featured a strip show and allegedly did not have a license to feature women stripping,” [wrote](#) Breitbart. And then there’s an openly lesbian, longtime black Democrat operative named Mitzi Bickers. Groups associated with her, such as the Bickers Group, were [paid](#) \$44,000 by Cochran partisans for “phone services” — which included “robocalls” that used much of the same language as the scurrilous race-baiting radio ads. Bickers’ résumé includes having had to resign in disgrace in 2013 from a job in the Atlanta mayor’s office for filing false financial disclosures.



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So was the Cochran/McDaniel election turned with lies? Many critics think so. Now they're wondering if the truth will be enough to overturn it.

Photo of Sen. Thad Cochran: AP Images



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