

## Episode 8 - Video Podcast - The Whitpain Files - Whitpain Township Legal Issues

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Today, we're diving into a really complex and messy story coming out of Whitpain Township, Pennsylvania. What we have here is this tangled web of allegations, lawsuits, and some pretty intense digital activism. It's all pitting a group of citizens against their own local government, and it's a fascinating look at what happens when that public trust just completely shatters.

At its core, this whole situation really boils down to that classic question, right? What happens when regular citizens feel like they've been pushed into a corner and have no choice but to fight City Hall? I mean, look at this sign. This was displayed right outside the township building itself, and it pretty much symbolizes this deeply bitter battle. So in this explainer, we're going to unpack the string of allegations that led to this very moment.

And just so we're clear, we're drawing everything you're about to hear entirely from the materials published by the citizen activist groups. So their websites, their social media, their podcasts, to really understand their side of the story. So where did all of this start? Well, according to these citizen sources, this entire public firestorm was sparked by a single unsolved crime.

We're talking about a home invasion robbery that led to over \$30,000 in stolen property and damages. So you can see the stakes for the victims were incredibly high right from the very beginning. Okay, let's walk through the timeline as the sources lay it out.

It starts on September 19th, 2024. A robbery happens, and they claim the suspects were caught on video. They even go so far as to name two people, Brent Bowers and a Dr. Douglas George Kassara.

But here's the core of their complaint. They allege that the White Payne police flat out refused to pursue felony charges. And then months go by, and they claim they still can't get their hands on the official police report, even after filing multiple open records requests.

And this is where the story really starts to widen. The activists argue that this alleged failure to act in the robbery case, that wasn't just a one-off. They believe it's part of a much larger and far more troubling pattern.

To try and prove their case for these systemic issues, the sources point to a whole series of other deeply disturbing events. They bring up the uninvestigated death of a Black veteran named Dante Perez-Jones, a discrimination lawsuit filed by a former Black police officer, another home invasion, this one targeting a Black family, where again, they allege suspects weren't charged, and even claims of documented abuse of a handicapped child and his father. Now the case of Dante Perez-Jones is absolutely central to their entire argument.

He was a 35-year-old Black Army veteran who was found dead in a local park. The police quickly ruled it a suicide. But his family, along with private investigators they hired, they just don't buy it.

They believe the whole scene was staged and, horribly, that he was lynched. And what makes this just so heartbreaking is this quote from Dante's mother, Latina Dean. She remembers her son telling her, Mom, if anyone ever tells you I committed suicide, don't believe them.

I love life and my family too much. So as you can imagine, the victims of the robbery and other citizens started pushing harder for information, for records, for anything. And they claim that's when the conflict really escalated.

What started as just asking for action, they say, turned into a full-blown legal confrontation. And this really brings the legal fight into sharp focus. On one side, you have the victims, who filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the township.

And then, on the other side, the township files its own lawsuit, an injunction against the victims. The sources are crystal clear on how they see this move, calling it bogus and retaliatory, basically a way to shut them up. And if that wasn't enough, the sources then drop another absolutely explosive allegation on top of everything else.

They claim that a bribe was paid by one of the suspect's fathers directly to the Whitpain Police Department, specifically to make sure no felony charges were ever filed. As this all grew bigger and bigger, the citizen activists started turning their focus directly onto the public officials at the center of this whole controversy. They started digging.

All right, so first, let's take a look at the official biography for the chair of the Board of Supervisors, a man named Scott Badami. Right there on the township website, it says he is a partner at the law firm Fox Rothschild LLP. But then, you hop over to the activist website, CrookedWhitpain.com, and you get this direct contradiction.

It claims he was reportedly fired years ago. His bio has long since disappeared from Fox Rothschild LLP's site. The point they're making here is a huge one, that the township's official information is, in their view, totally misleading.

And their scrutiny didn't just stop with Badami. The sources also claim that the vice chair, Kimberly Cook, quietly removed a board membership from her bio right after they started asking questions about it. They also directly named police chief Ken Lawson in lawsuits, and go so far as to accuse the district attorney, Kevin Steele, of covering up for Whitpain Township.

So this all brings us to the bigger picture here. How has this campaign been fueled? How have they gotten their message out? Well, these activists have used a really savvy, multi-platform digital strategy. You know, their digital footprint is pretty extensive.

They have the website CrookedWhitpain.com, which is like their central library for all the

documents. On Reddit, they claim they got over 800,000 views on these topics in just one week. They also have a podcast that details all their allegations.

And they're even using TikTok to create these short, viral videos about the lawsuits. It's a full-on digital assault. So when you put it all together, the story that these sources are telling, this narrative of citizens using websites, public records, social media, in this relentless fight for answers, it leaves us with a really crucial question for our time.

In this digital age, what is the citizens' role, and what are the right tools for holding power to account?

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