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Best Plan Is No Plan

Former Arkansas State Rep. Micah Neal pled guilty last week to a felony charge of conspiring “with an Arkansas state senator to use their official positions to appropriate government money to certain nonprofits in exchange for bribes.”

Neal, who embraced graft his first month in office, received \$38,000 in “legislating-around” money between 2013, when he entered the House, and 2015.

Court documents mention a number of seasoned conspirators, though not by name. There’s mysterious Senator A, who took Rep. Neal under his crooked wing.



Their scheme, reported *Arkansas Business*, “direct[ed] \$600,000 in state GIF funds to the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, which then distributed it to two nonprofit entities.” Those two outfits — Entities A and B — then kicked back dough to Rep. Neal and Senator A through bagmen.*

Arkansas Business sorted out “the alphabet soup of unindicted people and entities.” It turns out Senator A, the ringleader, is someone we’ve encountered before: former State Senator Jon Woods.

Remember Issue 3, the dishonestly-worded 2014 constitutional amendment that weakened term limits (while telling voters it “established term limits”), imposed a gift ban so “tough” that now all legislators can get free meals from lobbyists anytime, and created an “Independent Citizens Commission” (a majority appointed by legislators) that gave legislators a 148 percent pay raise?

That was Woods’s.

His indictment appears imminent.

Meanwhile, Neal’s attorney extends to us his client’s wish that “this case does not overshadow all the good he did while serving as [a] representative.”

What good? The term limits scam.

Neal’s corruption doesn’t overshadow all he did as a legislator — it illuminates it.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

* Three additional conspirators were engaged in delivering the bribe money to Rep. Neal and Sen. Woods. In court papers, these bagmen were referred to as Person A (a lobbyist for Entity A), Person B (“the president of Entity B and a friend of Senator A”) and Person C (“a friend of Senator A and Person B”).

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