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Edward Bullock files: Former Warren Acres employee noticed 'odd' behavior from former sheriff

Ed Bullock

Former Warren County Sheriff Edward Bullock looks to his attorney after entering the courtroom for his hearing March 12, 2014, at the Warren County Court House. (*Express-Times File Photo | BILL ADAMS*)

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Second of three parts

Inside the **Warren County** Courthouse, rumors and rumblings of Sheriff **Edward Bullock's** interest in young boys circulated well before he resigned from office in 1991, according to two former sheriff's officers.

But suspicions of Bullock's behavior extended beyond Belvidere.

A former secretary at Warren Acres, the former shelter and detention center for juvenile offenders in Oxford Township, told a private investigator recently she had heard rumors and noticed unusual behavior by Bullock there.

"I started hearing stories pretty much when I was working at Warren Acres, just like little remarks," the secretary said in an interview transcript obtained by The Express-Times.

"I think I was naïve and didn't quite understand everything but I would hear remarks about, you know, when certain boys would be picked up by Mr. Bullock alone and the comments that were coming from (others) when we would go out"

The Express-Times is withholding the identity of the former secretary because the statement was given to a private detective with the understanding it would not become public. Despite multiple

attempts, the secretary could not be reached for comment.

The 86-year-old Bullock, who now lives in Ocean County, New Jersey, was **indicted in February** on three counts each of aggravated sexual assault and sexual assault. Prosecutors say he began sexually abusing a 10-year-old Warren Acres boy in December 1986 while he was sheriff and the abuse continued for more than a year.

Unaccompanied transfers

Bullock, who has **pleaded not guilty** to the charges, has also been named in a **civil lawsuit** filed by the victim in the case. Warren County is also named as a defendant.

A secretary for Bullock's attorney, Brian White, declined comment on the lawyer's behalf and Jerald Howarth, the attorney representing Warren County in the civil litigation, did not return a phone message.

In the first of a three-part series published Tuesday in The Express-Times, former Warren County officials told the newspaper they had suspicions about Bullock dating to the 1980s and a former freeholder raised concerns Bullock might expose the county to liability.

The interview with the former Warren Acres secretary was conducted recently by an investigator hired by the plaintiff's attorney.

The secretary, who began working at the facility in 1985, told the investigator that sheriff's officers would typically come to pick up juvenile detainees in pairs and travel in a marked vehicle. Bullock, however, would often arrive alone, in an unmarked town car.

Each of the boys Bullock transported, the secretary said, had similar physical features: blond hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion. Two former sheriff's officers said in similar statements to a plaintiff's investigator that Bullock took an interest in boys with such features.

"I remember he put the kid in the front seat, I don't remember who that was, but I remember the kid got in the front seat, not in the back seat, which I kind of thought was odd that you were transporting somebody from juvenile detention that way," the former secretary said in the transcript.

Questions arise

According to the secretary, members of the Warren County Prosecutor's Office showed up at Warren Acres sometime before Bullock was arrested in 1991 on a charge of official misconduct, requesting the files of certain boys.

A New Jersey State Police detective also contacted the secretary as part of an investigation and mentioned she was having a difficult time nailing down any proof of a crime, according to the transcript.

The detective said that "nobody seems to want to help me with this investigation," according to the former secretary's interview transcript. "We have a couple of leads ... or accusations that you know, people are, are saying, but nobody seems to have proof or nobody wants to say anything, everybody seems to clam up," she said.

Bullock ultimately left the sheriff's office in disgrace.

He resigned in 1991 amid charges he tried to curry sexual favors from an undercover New Jersey State Police trooper at the Phillipsburg Mall.

Bullock pleaded guilty to a charge of official misconduct and served nine months in the Hunterdon County Jail.

He faded from the public eye until 2012, when allegations of **sexual abuse were made in a tort claim**, a legal notice generally filed leading up to a civil lawsuit. The lawsuit followed in April 2013.

COMING THURSDAY: *A retired Warren County Probation Department worker recalls Edward Bullock taking boys on outings and transporting them alone.*

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