

# The Florida Times-Union

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**Sunday**  
 APRIL 16, 2017  
 \$3



**FLORIDA COASTAL HOSTS CITIZENSHIP DAY**  
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**NFL next for Bartram Trail's Peterman**

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**CRENSHAW LEADING CHARGE AGAINST 'SCARY' DISEASE THAT STRUCK DAUGHTER**  
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## UNF's Delaney listed as Brown defense witness

3 members of Congress also included

By Steve Patterson  
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Former U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown's attorney has named University of North Florida President John Delaney and three members of Congress as potential de-

fense witnesses for Brown's upcoming fraud trial. The witness list, filed Friday evening with Jacksonville's federal court, reinforces a theme of community service Brown has emphasized while insisting on her innocence.



Jury selection for former U.S. Rep. **Corrine Brown's** trial begins April 24.

U.S. Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas; Bennie Thompson, D-Mississippi; and Marcia Fudge, D-Ohio; are expected to be asked

about Brown's involvement with a series of causes she addressed in Congress. Also on Brown's witness list are civil rights activists Martin Luther King III, who accompanied Brown to a court hearing in February, and Jesse Jackson. Brown is accused of enriching herself with money her supporters gave to One

Door for Education, a self-described scholarship fund that prosecutors said collected \$800,000 but awarded just \$1,200 in scholarships. Her former chief of staff, Ronnie Simmons, and the president of One Door, Carla Wiley, have already pleaded guilty to fraud conspiracy charges and are

expected to testify against Brown. Jury selection for Brown's trial starts April 24, with opening arguments scheduled April 26. Brown's attorney, James W. Smith III, has previously said the 12-term Democratic congresswoman, who lost re-election after

**BROWN** continues on A-3

# 22 SECONDS

In videos of Hemming Park clashes between police and protesters, 7 moments seem to contradict elements of Sheriff's Office reports



**1.** Gary Snow, David Schneider and Connell Crooms stand on the stage at Hemming Park. **2.** Crooms positions himself between Trump supporter Snow and the masked man who had just grabbed Snow's microphone cord. **3.** After an officer separated Snow and anti-war protester Crooms, Snow reaches around the officer to put his middle finger in Crooms' face. **4.** Crooms struggled on the ground with officers. **5.** William Wilder grabbed a hold of the officer near to him. Another officer separated the two, and the officer Wilder had grabbed punches the man in the face multiple times. **6.** An officer took Thomas Beckham to the ground. **7.** Schneider is detained by police for his role in organizing the protest.

By Tessa Duvall & Andrew Pantazi  
 The Times-Union

It took just 22 seconds to turn an unremarkable anti-war protest at Hemming Park into a violent fracas after which five demonstrators were arrested. Those 22 seconds began with one protester grabbing a microphone cord from a man who had worked his way onto the protesters' stage. They ended with a police officer taking down another protester, who was swarmed by six officers. One of them punched him repeatedly. A stun gun

was used, and the protester appeared to lose consciousness as he was dragged away. None of those details appeared in the five police reports filed by the seven officers involved. They came instead through two-dozen videos taken of the incident by people on both sides of the dispute. Those videos, reviewed frame by frame over the last week, present a more complicated and nuanced picture of the events of April 7. In several respects that differ from the matter-of-fact reports from the officers. Their reports don't provide

**MORE INSIDE**  
 Taunts, no violence in Saturday demonstration over Trump at Hemming Park. Story, B-8

essential context as to what provoked the violence, describe to what extent protesters interfered with officers in the performance of their duties, or detail the level of force police used in making their arrests. On Monday, The Florida Times-Union asked the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office a dozen-and-a-half questions about the incident. Five days later, the Sheriff's Office hadn't re-

sponded. But the Sheriff's Office has been far from silent. In the past week, Sheriff Mike Williams has said more protesters could face arrest, the officers' use of force will be investigated, and that tactics and policies on policing public demonstrations will be reviewed. Seven key moments define the melee that was followed a day later by a protest that drew an estimated 200 people to the Duval County Courthouse. There are the first harsh

**PROTEST** continues on A-3



Mayor **Lenny Curry** has a new ad to tell residents to back his pension proposal.

## New Curry ads: Tell council to OK reform

In twist, mayor uses political committee to appeal to residents

By David Bauerlein  
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Jacksonville residents might experience flashbacks to last summer when they once again see Mayor Lenny Curry speaking to them about addressing the city's pension crisis in a final volley of ads that bring an unusual twist to how a mayor makes his case to the City Council. Unlike last year's ads that successfully made the case for voter approval of a half-cent sales tax for pension costs, the newest round of ads urge residents to pick up the phone and tell City Council members to support Curry's pension reform legislation. By Jacksonville political standards, it's rare for a mayor to use a political committee to appeal for constituents to weigh in with the council on specific legislation. Build Something That Lasts, a political committee aligned with Curry, expects to spend in the "low six figures" on the ads, which will run on air and in digital format as the council approaches an April 24 vote. The political committee recently raised \$241,000 from deep-pocketed contributors who also bankrolled last year's "Yes for Jacksonville" campaign. "I promised bold solutions to problems," Curry says in the new ad. "This pension reform package keeps that promise. It's good for taxpayers and it's

**CURRY** continues on A-3

**WATCH THE AD**  
 To see the video, go to [https://youtu.be/38\\_D-Ufkmhi](https://youtu.be/38_D-Ufkmhi)

**Weather**  
 Sunny  
 Forecast on A-2

81 Today's high  
 64 Monday morning's low

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## CURRY

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good for our city. Call the City Council today and tell them to vote yes for pension reform, yes for the future of Jacksonville.”

City Council member Tommy Hazouri, who has been immersed in the city's political scene for more than four decades, said it's the first time he can recall a mayor appearing in an ad paid for by a political committee.

Hazouri, a former mayor, chalked it up to Curry “leaving no stone unturned.” Hazouri said based on comments so far from council members, he doesn't think the ads are needed because members have appeared supportive and Curry's top administrators have been answer-

ing their questions.

Hazouri said for council members, the biggest attention-getter regarding Curry's proposal will be when the Council Auditor's Office delivers its much-awaited assessment at a Wednesday workshop.

“Unless they provide us with a tsunami (of concerns), I don't think there's any question that it's going to pass,” Hazouri said, adding it's possible there would be tweaks.

Build Something that Lasts isn't the first committee in Jacksonville history to make a mayor's case by directly asking residents to call council members about specific legislation.

Back in 1993, a committee supporting Mayor Ed Austin's proposed River

City Renaissance paid for a full-page newspaper ad that listed phone numbers for all 19 City Council members. Austin didn't appear in that ad.

Brian Hughes, spokesman for Build Something that Lasts, noted that when Alvin Brown was mayor, he did a video in which he talked about the merits of his pension plan. Brown's video, which was posted on YouTube, asked people to “keep an open mind” on his proposal.

“It's certainly not unprecedented for a mayor to take to video to make the case,” Hughes said.

He said in this case, “We have a better reform package and we're going to have a better use of video to make sure people understand it (council's vote) is the final step, and worthy of affirmation.”

Build Something that Lasts, which was founded around the same time Curry became mayor in summer 2015, raised \$241,000 in contributions from January through March, led by the Jacksonville Kennel Club with a \$50,000 donation, and the Jacksonville Jaguars and team owner Shad Khan with \$35,000. Other large donations were \$25,000 apiece from Jacksonville real estate developer Peter Rummell, businessman Gary Chartrand, J.B. Coxwell Contracting, ICI Homes Residential Holdings and Florida Blue.

At the state level, Gov. Rick Scott has hit the airwaves in ads paid for by the Let's Get to Work political committee, saying “politicians in Tallahassee don't get it” as he blasts state lawmakers who favor elim-

inating Enterprise Florida and cutting money for Visit Florida.

Build Something That Lasts features Curry talking about how his reform package will put all future city employees into 401(k)-style retirement accounts “like those in the private sector. This ensures we won't have a pension crisis again.”

The ad says “budget savings from our plan will allow major investments in the city,” and give pay raises to police and firefighters for the first time in a decade. The ad doesn't specify what the major investments will be, which is a question some council members have raised.

Councilman Aaron Bowman wasn't aware of Curry's new ads, although he said it could be help-

ful if it encourages residents to weigh in on the issue.

“I think on any issue, hearing from community leaders and constituents, and business leaders is always a value because they bring experiences to the table I may not have,” Bowman said.

Councilman John Crescimbeni said he doesn't think the ads are necessary for Curry's case. “I think he's done a pretty good job of presenting all the facts,” Crescimbeni said of meetings with Curry's top administrators.

Hughes said it's not possible to predict whether Build Something that Lasts will run similar ads in the future because that will depend on what the issues are.

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## PROTEST

Continued from A-1

words between the protesters and counter-demonstrator Gary Snow, the first physical contact between Snow and protester Connell Crooms, the officers' move to intervene, and the arrests.

This story attempts to compare the police accounts of those seven moments with the publicly available videos taken of them in an effort to add context and clarity to what happened.

### 1. PROTESTERS' FIRST INTERACTIONS WITH SNOW

Officers C.D. Plaugher, F.G. Wise and B.J. Langston all wrote that they arrived at Hemming Park around 6 p.m. to monitor the protests. Langston said when he arrived, he saw an “unlawful assembly” formed there.

Plaugher said he saw David Schneider using a megaphone to rehearse chants and organize the crowd. Meanwhile, Plaugher wrote, a man was waving a Donald Trump flag. Though the reports don't name him, this was Gary Snow, a Trump supporter who has been attending protests like these since moving to Jacksonville last year.

Plaugher said the protesters “aggressed” Snow, getting in his face and recording him with cellphones. Snow “would walk away,” Plaugher wrote, “but the protesters would aggressively follow him and continue their behavior.”

After Schneider and another organizer led the crowd, Connell Crooms took over. Crooms, the officers wrote, “changed the dynamic of the crowd.” He talked about racial profiling by police, and he shouted a slur against police. According to Plaugher, “the protesters followed his lead.”

Then Snow and other counter-protesters yelled pro-police statements on their own megaphone. Plaugher wrote, “That was when Mr. Crooms became violent.”

### IN THE VIDEOS

From the beginning, Snow had profanity-laden exchanges with Schneider and Crooms.

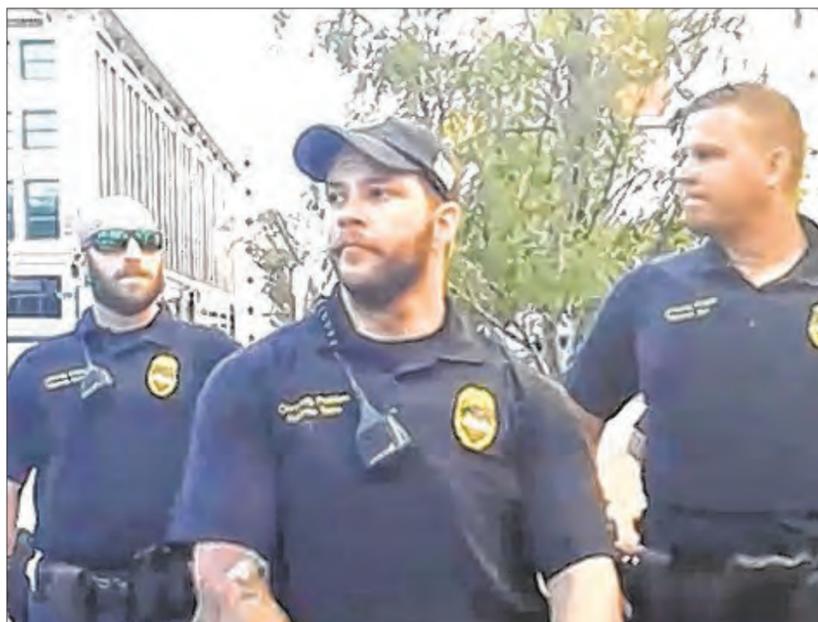
From Snow's own videos, he can be seen closely filming Schneider and Crooms with his cellphone, getting very close to their faces while others film him in return as he moved around the protest. Crooms angrily told Snow to get his phone out of his face.

“What you gonna do, brother?” Snow asked. The two went back and forth like this, and Crooms finally said, “I'm gonna take that phone.”

“Take my phone,” Snow said. “Please, take my phone.”

Officers gave at least three warnings to protesters about their use of a megaphone, but they refused to stop. Crooms gestured to Snow and yelled at police to “remove the distraction.”

Schneider continued, “We're not breaking the rules because we want to. We're breaking the rules because we've asked them to remove this man, disrupting a peaceful protest, and they've refused to do this. My contention is, we're well within our rights at this point because they've refused to enforce



Officers keep protesters back after the violence erupted in Hemming Park.

the rules on this man.”

A smiling Snow, still on ground level with his phone held overhead, yelled that he wasn't going to stop.

Soon after, Snow walked on stage, waving the Trump flag. Crooms, louder and more forcefully than Schneider, shouted into the megaphone, at least two times, the slur against the police, and a handful of people cheered.

Snow waved the Trump flag and yelled, “We're going to continue to support our police officers,” as protesters tried to drown him out.

Crooms responded, “We must continue to stand in solidarity with the people of the world, all over. We need to stop joining the military and killing black and brown and yellow people that have done nothing to us.”

### 2. FIRST PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN SNOW AND CROOMS

A key element of the incident is missing from all of the police reports. Officers describe Crooms shouting into a megaphone, and then Snow shouting in response. The police reports then say the protest turned violent. The reports don't describe the moment Snow's microphone cord was grabbed by a protester and Snow was pulled off the stage with Crooms following.

### IN THE VIDEOS

As Snow shouted into his microphone, a man masked in a bandanna grabbed the cord connecting it to a speaker and walked away with it. Snow was yanked back but held on. Crooms stood between Snow and the masked protester, his arms stretched out.

Snow then dropped his flag and pushed his forearm across Crooms' chest as he untangled the cord. One of Snow's fellow counter-protesters grabbed the microphone and walked across the stage to pick up the flag.

### 3. VIOLENCE ERUPTS, OFFICERS INTERVENE

Officer Plaugher reported that Crooms moved aggressively toward Snow to try to take the flag and that Snow resisted and pulled the flag back. Plaugher said he stepped in between the two men and told Crooms to remain peaceful and focused on his own protest.

“Mr. Crooms then moved past me and aggressively tried attacking the subject with the Trump flag a second time,” he wrote.

Plaugher wrote that was when he told Crooms he was under arrest, but Crooms resisted, putting his hands up at times.

### IN THE VIDEOS

The reports leave out Snow's taunting of Crooms.

After the officer intervened, Crooms retreated a few steps before turning back and gesturing. Snow then pushed up against the officer, reaching around him to shove his middle finger in Crooms' face. Crooms smacked away Snow's hand.

A half-second later, when Crooms lunged toward Snow, the officer reacted. He grabbed a flailing Crooms around the waist from behind and pulled him away.

### 4. CROOMS STRUGGLING

After Plaugher took Crooms to the ground, the officer wrote, Crooms kicked and elbowed Officers B.D. McEwan and B.L. Jester.

Officer Wise said the officers told Crooms “to stop resisting, to stop fighting, and to put his hands behind his back,” but Crooms wouldn't comply. Instead, Crooms tensed his muscles, pulled his arms away and tried to stand up. According to Officer Jester, Crooms shouted he hadn't done anything wrong.

Officer McEwan then began punching Crooms with a closed fist, two of the reports said.

Eventually, the officers got Crooms into handcuffs and into the back of a patrol car. They took him to a nearby intersection where paramedics checked on Crooms before taking him to UF Health.

### IN THE VIDEOS

While the reports mention an officer punching Crooms, they don't mention the stun gun that appears in videos or how Crooms appears to lose consciousness during the incident.

Four officers wrestled Crooms to the ground, as he rolled and screamed loudly. Protesters shouted that Crooms was deaf, and an officer punched Crooms in his side at least four times. A woman yelled, “Stop hitting him! He's not fighting you! Stop!” Another yelled, “Connell! Calm down!”

The officer who punched Crooms then jabbed his stun gun into Crooms' back as another officer pulled Crooms' legs straight.

At that point, Crooms stopped struggling. An older woman could be seen on video pleading, “He needs an interpreter.”

“Stop aggressing me!” the officer yelled at the woman. “Get back!”

Police lifted a dazed Crooms to his feet. Crooms soon went limp and officers grabbed him under

the arms and dragged him the rest of the way to the car. From there, it took officers about 45 seconds to get Crooms into the back of the police car. Two blocks away, he was taken into an ambulance. Someone shouted, “You're murderers! You murdered that man!”

### 5. WILDER PUNCHED

While Officer Plaugher and others were subduing Crooms, Officer T.C. Haire stood guard to protect Plaugher. Haire said an older protester started punching him.

William Wilder, 74, slipped his arm around Haire and held him in a “neck hold,” Haire said in a statement. Wilder also knocked Haire's walkie-talkie to the ground.

“I slipped out of the neck hold and spun around on suspect Wilder,” Haire's statement said. “I then punched Suspect Wilder several times in the face to gain compliance.”

“Due to the crowd and lack of space, I had no other alternatives to fight off Suspect Wilder,” he continued. He said he wrapped Wilder's own arm around his neck and pushed him out of the crowd to safety. When Haire handcuffed Wilder, he found a pocket knife and a small container of marijuana. Wilder told him that he punched a “rent-a-cop.”

### IN THE VIDEOS

The videos didn't show Wilder punching an officer or using a neck hold.

He did try to pull an officer off Crooms by grabbing him around the chest and shoulder. Another officer separated them.

The officer Wilder had grabbed then cocked his arm back and punched Wilder three times. The officer spun Wilder against the wall and put him in a chokehold. Wilder reached for the officer's arm. Someone yelled, “He's a veteran!” A second officer joined in order to get Wilder's arms behind his back.

### 6. BECKHAM, KITTLE ARRESTS

Officer Langston said that as Crooms was being arrested, the officer “ran toward the melee, yelling, ‘Police. Stop fighting!’” Langston said he grabbed protester Thomas Beckham and told Beckham to get on the ground. Beckham resisted.

Plaugher wrote that he saw Beckham fighting Officer Langston, so Plaugher grabbed Beckham and put Beckham on the ground.

Langston said while he was kneeling on Beckham, Christina Kittle pushed

him on the chest and yelled, “You're not taking him! He wasn't fighting!” She then punched Langston's left shoulder.

That was when Langston stood up and grabbed Kittle's arm while shouting for her to lie down, according to his report. He said she fell to the ground but kept violently thrashing and trying to hit him. He still managed to handcuff her.

### IN THE VIDEOS

While the police accounts of Beckham's arrest align with the video accounts, they do not with respect to Kittle.

In one video, Kittle did smack an officer after he elbowed her away from Beckham. But the videos also showed Langston throwing Kittle forcefully to the ground and kneeling on her as she struggling to wrest herself free. Once on the ground, she didn't appear to try and hit the officer.

### 7. SCHNEIDER'S ARREST

After the other arrests, a Lt. Wilson told Officer Plaugher to arrest Schneider, the protest organizer. The report doesn't give Wilson's first name or initials.

When Schneider saw Plaugher looking at him, he crossed the street and tried to leave, even as Plaugher began yelling at him to stop, according to Plaugher's statement.

Plaugher said he ran after Schneider and eventually grabbed him and told him he was being detained.

### IN THE VIDEOS

The reports indicated Schneider was trying to ignore them before his arrest, but the videos showed that once officers called out to him, Schneider asked if he was being detained and complied with them.

Earlier, Schneider had followed an officer and repeatedly insulted him, even implying he was a rapist. That officer, Langston, gave his name and badge number and told Schneider to hand over his phone. “We're going to be taking it as evidence.”

“No, no, you're not,” Schneider said as he walked away.

In Schneider's Facebook Live video and in another video from a different angle, Schneider can be seen walking back to the crowd and rallying the protesters to again demonstrate, this time at the jail.

He then looked into his phone's camera. “This is bad. I've never seen anything like this.”

That was when one of the other protesters started shouting to him. “Go, go, go, go. He just said are we interested in arresting the provoker? Go!”

“Come here, buddy,” the officer said.

“I didn't do anything,” Schneider responded.

“You're coming with me,” the officer said.

“I didn't do anything,” Schneider responded.

“I'm asking you to stop,” the officer said.

“Am I being detained?” Schneider asked.

“Be an adult,” the officer said.

“Am I being detained?” Schneider repeated.

“Yes, you're being detained.”

The officer then patted Schneider down and led him to a police car.

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## BROWN

Continued from A-1

being indicted last year, was absorbed in her work and simply didn't notice anyone around her hatching a crooked scheme.

The witness choices apparently took some people by surprise.

“Nobody's talked to me about it,” Delaney said Saturday when a reporter asked him about testifying.

Delaney, a Republican, was Jacksonville's mayor for eight years before joining UNF in 2003, and has talked warmly about Brown's work in Congress to further the city's goals.

“Even though we strongly disagree on national policy, we have a wonderful relationship,” he said. “She was one of the hardest-working members of Congress around.”

Delaney said he has never been interviewed about One Door by federal agents or Brown's attorneys and knows nothing about the organization's finances or actions.

Some names on Brown's 33-person list overlap with prosecutors' picks. Simmons, for example is on both, as is Clara White Mission President Ju'Coby Pittman.

Brown's daughter, Shantrel, a Washington lobbyist, was listed only by prosecutors, but Brown's choices include Hector Alcalde, founder of the company where Shantrel Brown is a partner.

Other names on Brown's list include former Edward Waters College President Jimmy R. Jenkins; attorney Ava Parker, a former Jacksonville Transportation Authority chairwoman; and Sanford Mayor Jeff Triplett. Brown credited Triplett for public openness after Trayvon Martin, an unarmed teenager, was shot and killed by a neighborhood watch volunteer in a racially charged incident that focused national attention on the Central Florida town Brown once represented.

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