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Dibble for grand jury, special prosecutor

By ANGELYN RIZZO and JOHN NORBERG

Corruption in Tippecanoe County includes gambling, prostitution, links between the criminal community and law enforcement officers, and there is evidence of "public officials being involved in criminal acts," according to the former chief deputy prosecuting attorney, John Dibble.

Dibble this morning called for an outside unit to come into the county to investigate corruption not limited to one political party and said he would make himself available to that investigation.

He also called for the appointment of a special prosecutor and the convening of a special grand jury.

"At the time I was fired, . . . I had for some months been working on an investigation into corruption and large-scale crime in Tippecanoe County," Dibble said today.

He said his efforts finally were getting results in the form of charges filed and that persons with first-hand knowledge of corruption were coming forward to speak to him in confidence about those matters.

DIBBLE'S STATEMENTS were made today following a press conference at which Prosecutor James Kizer said he fired Dibble because he was "uncooperative and insubordinate."

Kizer also charged that Dibble had left 40 felony cases on his desk which had not yet been refiled in a

higher court, as required.

Dibble this morning denied he was uncooperative and said that Kizer and Tippecanoe County Democratic Chairman Richard T. Heide "are committed to a course of besmirching my character" to take away attention from calls for an outside investigation into alleged corruption here.

That charge was in turn denied by Heide, who also is city attorney, who said Dibble's charges of corruption were reminiscent of the Sen. Joseph McCarthy era in that "Dibble is making generalized accusations without any specifics."

"If there is something going on," Heide said, "name it."

The series of charges and counter-charges began this morning at the hour-long press conference conducted by Kizer at which he outlined for the first time his reasons for firing Dibble the morning of Oct. 11.

KIZER SAID he was "displeased" with what he called Dibble's "failure to keep me informed about criminal investigations."

He said when he questioned his chief deputy on specific cases, Dibble had told him he had "no intention of giving me any such information."

Dibble said he had kept Kizer "fully informed" and the only things he hadn't told him about investigations were "confidential communications" as to who told him the facts. He said when names were not held in confidence, he told Kizer the names. And when statements were made in confidence he did withhold those statements from Kizer.

"I do not break confidences," Dibble said. "I would hope he (Kizer) would not either."

DIBBLE ADMITTED there were about 40 felony cases awaiting refileing by him and that he was getting started on them the day he was fired.

He said he had tried three felony cases in the three weeks previous to his firing and did not have time to get to the others. He said each of the jury trials took two and three days.

Kizer had remained silent until today on police charges of corruption in Tippecanoe County made at a meeting Thursday night.

Kizer said today he had no information about corruption here, that police have not come to him and given him any facts. He said he would call for a grand jury and an investigation if police come to him and if "they have something fairly reasonable."

"Kizer has all the information I had with the exception of those confidential communications," Dibble said. "And there are enough facts available to start an investigation."

TWO OTHER DEPUTY prosecutors, Marcel Katz and David Haniford, today issued a statement concerning Dibble's dismissal saying they believe he was a "competent and hard-working chief deputy."

"We are not at this time aware of instances of corruption or improper political influence in the prosecution of cases by this office," the statement read.

However, Haniford said he and Katz do not generally handle felony cases and they're only in the prosecutor's office one afternoon a week because their main duties involve mornings in Lafayette City Court.

At his press conference, Kizer said Katz and Haniford had received complaints from City Court Judge Lewis T. Wireman concerning delays and refileing of felony charges.

Saturday, Wireman said he had "no comment" on charges of corruption here because he was not aware of the specifics of the charges. Asked about Dibble's dismissal, Wireman said "I take care of my own department."

At a special meeting of the four local Fraternal Order of Police lodges Thursday night, 64 policemen attending told FOP presidents to contact Indiana State Police Supt. Robert DeBard to request a special investigation here or to find out what is needed to be done to get that investigation.

Col. James Dillman, chief of the Indiana State Police investigation unit in Indianapolis, confirmed today that Supt. DeBard had been con-

tacted by one of the FOP presidents and said DeBard "will listen to them." Dillman said no exact meeting date had been set.

Kizer, in addition to stating his reasons for firing Dibble, also answered some of the charges that had been leveled against him.

He said he had "never" discussed Dibble's dismissal with anyone prior to his action, that no one had recommended it to him and that the only person he conferred with concerning his statement today was his wife.

Dibble charged Thursday that Heide had "suggested" his firing to Kizer.

KIZER ALSO ANSWERED Dibble's charge that he was not spending enough time in the office by saying "that's absolutely ridiculous."

In his statement Kizer said: "There were serious failings on the part of my former chief deputy which could not be tolerated. . . . At the time I employed my former chief deputy I fully informed him that I would give him a great deal of responsibility and independence to carry out his duties, but that he must keep me informed at all times about the cases and investigations which he was working on. He agreed to do this and said he fully understood how this kind of system worked. After several months of my (term) had gone by he slowly began to be less and less informative and finally there was no communication at all."

Kizer charged Dibble had told prosecutor office investigator Charles Dietrich not to tell Kizer some information he had gathered about a criminal investigation.

Dibble said that involved one instance in which information was being given to the two in strict confidence.

"Since my decision," Kizer said, "was solely made by myself for reasons I think were reasonable and necessary, I certainly have nothing to hide, and anyone who wishes to investigate further, may go right ahead and do so, but they will not find any other reasons than those I have stated."

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