

CONFIDENTIAL/EVIDENTIARY DOSSIER

FINAL EVIDENTIARY DOSSIER

Systemic Financial Fraud, Institutional Forgery, and Executive Cover-Up

COMPLAINANTS: Michael Dale Sipes Jr. & Garrett Lee Harris (Treasurer, NFB of WV)

PRIMARY SUBJECTS: Ahmad Shafi (Acting President, NFB of WV) & Mark Riccobono (National President, NFB)

COMPLICIT OFFICERS: Pam Allen (1st VP, NFB), Everette Bacon (2nd VP, NFB), Michelle McKeller (1st VP, NFB of WV)

DATE PREPARED: August 11, 2026

PART I: THE HYPOCRISY OF LEADERSHIP (PUBLIC DECLARATIONS VS. PRIVATE ACTIONS)

On July 6, 2026, President Mark Riccobono stood at the podium during the NFB National Convention in Austin, Texas, and delivered his 2026 Presidential Report. During this address, he projected an image of unyielding integrity, telling the delegation:

"For more than eighty-five years, we, the blind, have been building the bonds that have propelled a movement across generations... When discrimination threatens to divide us, when low expectations deny us equal opportunity and equal treatment, we find strength in the bonds we share. The bonds we share are our strength. We are the National Federation of the Blind."

The reality behind closed doors stands in catastrophic contrast to this public posturing. While President Riccobono preached about transparency and "the bonds we share," a high-ranking affiliate leader was actively engaging in severe harassment, hate speech, and the misappropriation of tax-exempt funds at that exact same convention. Instead of accountability, Riccobono weaponized these "bonds" as a network of complicity, using the strength of the organization to close ranks around an abuser, silence whistleblowers, and orchestrate an institutional cover-up that resulted in the fabrication of digital records.

PART II: THE PREDICATE OFFENSES BY AHMAD SHAFI

The genesis of this crisis involves the severe and documented misconduct of Ahmad Shafi, Acting President of the NFB of WV and graduate of the NFB's heavily funded Kenneth Jernigan Leaders in Service program. Shafi engaged in exhaustive violations:

- **Multi-Year Federal HUD Fraud:** Shafi explicitly admitted on an audio recording to committing multi-year financial fraud against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to illegally secure housing benefits. He has been committing this fraud since approximately 2024 at his fraudulent housing address (4992 Richland Drive, Apartment B, South Charleston, WV 25309), while actually residing at his mother's home (501 Fort Hill Drive, Charleston, WV 25314).
- **501(c)(3) Financial Misappropriation:** Shafi unlawfully charged \$80.36 for personal alcohol consumption to the tax-exempt 501(c)(3) affiliate credit card during the Austin convention.

- **Harassment and Endangerment:** Fueled by ongoing substance abuse—including documented marijuana use at the Jernigan Institute in May 2025 and an alcohol-fueled outburst in the Downtown Marriott lobby on July 2, 2026—Shafi created a toxic and dangerous environment. He repeatedly utilized hate speech (the N-word) and subjected a female NFB member, trauma survivor Miranda Lacy, to severe psychological distress requiring medication. He also subjected delegation member Harold Rogers to physical distress involving a flea-infested guide dog.
- **Evidence Fabrication:** Shafi was captured on audio explicitly admitting to manufacturing text messages on July 3 and July 11 to retroactively deny his verbal authorization of a \$1,167.28 medical room accommodation.

PART III: AFFILIATE COLLUSION AND THE SUPPRESSION OF WHISTLEBLOWERS

Upon returning from Austin, immediate efforts were made to report these violations. Instead of transparency, Michael Dale Sipes Jr. and Garrett Harris faced coordinated interference at the state level.

First Vice President of the WV affiliate, Michelle McKeller, engaged in a targeted campaign of collusion and intimidation. She explicitly messaged Treasurer Garrett Harris to "keep it at the affiliate level," instructing him to stand down in an attempt to quietly cover up the infractions behind closed doors.

PART IV: PRESIDENT MARK RICCOBONO'S COVER-UP AND CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Because the state board was irredeemably compromised, Michael Dale Sipes Jr. and Garrett Harris escalated the matter directly to NFB National President Mark Riccobono and the national Code of Conduct office. Michael Dale Sipes Jr. personally submitted two formal emails and two official Code of Conduct complaints (one serving as an addendum with updated evidence, not a duplicate as falsely claimed by Norma Crosby).

President Riccobono completely ignored these direct communications. Fully aware that the West Virginia affiliate was actively colluding to stop the investigation, Riccobono chose to protect Ahmad Shafi. To protect the financial investment in the Jernigan Leaders program and his own public reputation, Riccobono orchestrated a cover-up from Day 1, directly violating multiple sections of his own Code of Conduct:

- **Violation of Impartiality (Section XI):** Instead of establishing an unbiased national review, Riccobono remanded the case to a corrupt, compromised affiliate board comprised of Shafi's personal friends. The Code mandates that an investigatory panel "shall be comprised of persons not directly involved in the matters being raised and who can be unbiased, impartial, and fair."
- **Gross Conflict of Interest (Section VII):** Riccobono prioritized organizational optics and financial investments over accountability, failing to recuse himself. The policy states a conflict arises when "personal or professional interests interfere, or even just appear to interfere with the interests of the Federation."
- **Breach of Fiduciary Duty (Section VII):** Riccobono willfully ignored the receipts of the 501(c)(3) alcohol purchases and the audio of HUD fraud, violating his duty to "protect the Federation from misappropriation or mismanagement of Federation funds."
- **Whistleblower Retaliation (Sections IV & XI):** Riccobono demanded an accounting ledger restricted exclusively to written records, fully knowing Shafi had fraudulently fabricated the written text messages, intentionally structuring the inquiry to exclude the audio evidence of tampering.

PART V: THE SHAM INVESTIGATION AND DIGITAL FORGERY

When a formal grievance was filed against President Riccobono for this cover-up, 2nd VP Everette Bacon was appointed to an investigative panel. Garrett Harris was only alerted after the fact that an investigation into Mark Riccobono had already been closed. As chair of the board, Pam Allen notified Garrett Lee Harris of the findings and forwarded him fabricated emails to justify closing the investigation, falsely claiming they had tried to contact him weeks prior.

A comprehensive digital forensic analysis using the MxToolbox RFC822 server parser definitively proved these emails were simulated text blocks. The analysis revealed a complete absence of RFC 822 nested structures and zero cryptographic signatures or server routing hops (References and In-Reply-To headers), which are automatically generated by authentic forwarded emails.

When confronted with this forgery, Everette Bacon doubled down. Feigning naïveté about email technology, he hurriedly manufactured a second set of fake emails that were even worse than Allen's. His hasty copy-pasting resulted in catastrophic structural collisions, with his sign-off "Best," crashing directly into the pasted greeting "Hello Mr. harris," irrefutable proof of real-time human tampering.

During the recorded Zoom investigation meeting on August 10, 2026, Everette Bacon immediately attempted to limit the conversation strictly to Riccobono, explicitly stating they were not there to discuss Ahmad Shafi—despite the fact that Riccobono was being investigated specifically for covering up Shafi's crimes.

PART VI: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF NFB INSTITUTIONAL COVER-UPS (PUBLIC RECORD)

President Riccobono's actions in this matter mirror a documented, historical pattern of institutional self-preservation and the suppression of whistleblower reports at the highest levels of the NFB. An examination of the public record regarding the NFB reveals the following:

- **Decades of Hushed Misconduct:** In late 2020, former students and supporters published an open letter stating that misconduct within the NFB and its affiliated training centers (including those in Colorado, Louisiana, and Minnesota) had been hushed up by leaders and allowed to fester for decades.
- **The #MarchingTogether Movement:** This open letter included hundreds of signatures from individuals describing themselves as victims, survivors, and witnesses of sexual and psychological abuse, urging action against widespread harassment and discrimination.
- **The Fred Schroeder Cover-Up:** An independent investigation found that former NFB leadership was aware of severe sexual misconduct allegations against high-ranking executive Fred Schroeder by 2002. When Riccobono took the helm in 2014, he allowed Schroeder to resign quietly for "personal reasons," hiding the misconduct and protecting the abuser's reputation over the safety of the members.
- **The Disconnect Between Public Apologies and Private Action:** In response to public pressure, President Riccobono issued an open letter of apology on December 16, 2020, stating, "I deeply regret that I have made mistakes along the way." However, an internal report released in June 2021 revealed that after Riccobono pledged reforms, 60 new complaints were filed in just a six-month period.
- **Leadership Complicity:** These 60 new complaints alleged 55 separate incidents involving the actions of 52 people. Critically, eight of these individuals were specifically accused of failing to respond adequately to sexual misconduct, and four of the complaints involved minors as victims.

- **Refusal to Remove Corrupt Leaders:** During a July 2022 interview on the Mosen at Large podcast, Riccobono was pressed on whether it was time for new directors at the NFB training centers as a mark of goodwill to survivors who felt "no one in leadership has been held to account." Riccobono deflected the demand for leadership removal, protecting his political allies by responding: "Well, that's a complicated question."

The current cover-up of Ahmad Shafi's HUD fraud and 501(c)(3) violations is a direct continuation of this systemic institutional crisis. President Riccobono is once again protecting the organization's elite, prioritizing optics and financial assets over integrity, the law, and the safety of the NFB's members.

PART VII: FINAL DECLARATION AND EXTERNAL ESCALATION

The internal effort is finished. The NFB is suffering from a cancer of corruption that is spreading from the top down. The internal grievance system is nothing more than a tool weaponized to protect the image of the NFB and Mark Riccobono.

These documented violations, audio recordings, and forensic proofs of forgery have been officially escalated to the highest external authorities, including:

- The Internal Revenue Service (TE/GE Division)
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Inspector General
- U.S. Senator Jim Justice
- The Maryland Office of the Attorney General (Charities Division)
- The West Virginia Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection & Charities Division)
- Major Charity Watchdogs (Give.org, Charity Watch, Candid, Charity Navigator)
- Investigative Desks at ProPublica and The Chronicle of Philanthropy

The external reckoning is coming. Justice will be served. Integrity and transparency will not just be empty words uttered from a podium by President Riccobono; he shall be forced to lead by example. An example is exactly what is going to be made of him and those who actively helped him protect the accused. Now is the time for those of true integrity to expel Mark Riccobono from his position as president and from the NFB for violating his own code of conduct repeatedly and abusing the power of his position. The blind deserve better. They deserve true leadership and accountability, not just lip service.

I, Michael Dale Sipes Jr., will do whatever is necessary to hold everyone accountable in this matter regardless of who they are.

PART VIII: DECLARATION OF PROTECTED DISCLOSURE AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

This evidentiary dossier, alongside all accompanying audio recordings and digital forensics, is submitted as a formal, protected disclosure under state and federal whistleblower protection statutes. These laws expressly safeguard the rights of individuals who, in good faith, report direct evidence of financial fraud, gross mismanagement, the abuse of authority, and violations of law. Any attempt by the National Federation of the Blind, its executive officers, or its affiliates to retaliate, intimidate, silence, or pursue punitive action against the complainants for reporting these crimes will be met with immediate and aggressive legal recourse.

Furthermore, the transmission and publication of these facts constitute a fundamental exercise of my unalienable rights protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. As a United States Army veteran, I swore a sacred oath to defend that Constitution, and I stood willing to lay down my life to protect the very freedom of speech I exercise today. The right to speak the truth without fear of institutional tyranny or suppression is a freedom paid for in blood.

Therefore, it is not only my constitutional right but my enduring moral and civic duty to expose this corruption, protect the vulnerable blind community from exploitation, and report the undeniable facts exactly as I know them.

I, Michael Dale Sipes Jr., submit this record with unyielding resolve. I will do whatever is necessary to hold everyone accountable in this matter, regardless of their title, their power, or who they are.