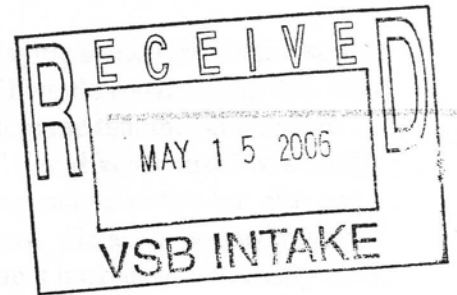


Memorandum



To: File

From: Shirley Forrester, V-STOP

Tazewell County Commonwealth Attorney's Office

Date: 05/10/06

Re: Wade Compton, Esq.

On or about January 3, 2006, I received a telephone call from a victim's mother. she told me of concerns regarding her daughter's attorney with Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society. I knew from working with this victim and speaking many times with legal aid regarding her case that her attorney was Wade Compton. I told victim's mother I would meet with her to discuss her fears. We met one morning the following week in the Walmart Parking Lot. The victim's aunt was also present. They proceeded to tell me that the victim had told them Mr. Compton liked her. She told them that she could have a professional and educated man who was interested in her. She said she could have a nice life and home like other people. There was an incident on October 13, 2005 when Mr. Compton wanted to drive over to Amanota, Virginia (in Tazewell County) to see the crime scene and area where victim had lived with her husband. Victim's mother and aunt said she left the house alone with Mr. Compton. They said she was dressed nicely with her hair done and make up on. When she returned later her hair was messy as well as her makeup. She told her mother and aunt that she had given Mr. Compton "a blow job."

I was obviously disturbed over what I had heard. I had worked with the victim's mother and the victim for almost a year. The case involved assault and battery, protective order, violation of an emergency protective order, and shooting in an occupied dwelling. I had not found them to be dishonest with me in the past and felt the disclosure to be credible. I decided to approach Mr. Compton. I left a message on his answering machine several days later stating that I wanted to talk with him. The following week I saw him in court. We met later in the day in one of the witness rooms on the third floor.

I opened the conversation by telling him that I had become aware of some disturbing information regarding his relationship with a domestic violence victim/client. I told him that I was aware that he had been sexually inappropriate with a victim I had been working with. He looked down and then at me nodding his head and said, yes, he knew

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he had. Then he followed by saying he appreciated my saying something to him so that he would stop—that he needed that. He then asked me if I would mind telling him who it was. I told him. He then told me that he wanted to assure me that the relationship was “never consummated, but not for my lack of trying.” I told Wade that I was really alarmed by his behavior of having sexual relations with not only a victim but also one that was a drug user and involved with the criminal element. He again nodded his head, and told me yes, he knew. He agreed, yes, that this woman’s husband could easily come after him, his wife, or his children. He also agreed, yes, that he could lose everything—his family, his job, and his ability to practice law. We talked for about 20 minutes during which time I told him I wanted his word that he would get counseling as I considered this to be a dangerous situation and dangerous behavior. Wade told me that he would not get counseling. I told him several times that I believed he really needed to. He finally said he had a couple of friends he could talk with. He thanked me at least three times for confronting him, again saying he needed someone to do that so that he would stop.

When we ended the conversation, I was not satisfied or reassured. I continued to think over the next few weeks about the situation. One court day around the end of February, Wade approached me as I sat in J&DR court. He sat down beside me and once again told me that he appreciated me talking to him. He said it had helped and, “he had been good for a month.” I now was certainly not reassured or satisfied.

I was in Richmond March 15-17 for my Department of Criminal Justice training in Richmond. While there, I purposely attended the workshop entitled; “Ethics for Victim Service Providers” presented by Melissa Hook, Deputy Director of the Victims’ Assistance Legal Organization. After the presentation, I approached Ms. Hook and told her the situation without using names. She said that something should be done and I was correct in my concern and someone should speak with the attorney’s superior. I returned to my office on Monday, March 20. I called Mr. Larry Harley at Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society in Marion the next day. I told Mr. Harley that I needed to talk with him about a very sensitive matter that could not be discussed over the telephone. We set a meeting for the next morning at 10:30 a.m. I drove to Marion, VA on March 22 and met with Mr. Harley for 2 hours.

This was a very difficult situation. However, I felt that I had unknowingly assisted in a betrayal and re-victimization of my client by my referral to Mr. Compton. I was no longer comfortable in making referrals to Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society, whose help I had previously valued so highly.

