



News Roundup

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On Tuesday, President Donald Trump nominated Judge Brett Kavanaugh to fill Justice Anthony Kennedy's seat on the United States Supreme Court. Kavanaugh has served on the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit since 2006 and once was a clerk for Justice Kennedy. As the New York Times [reports](#), before serving on the D.C. Circuit Kavanaugh worked for independent counsel Kenneth Starr and later worked for President George W. Bush. Going back further, Kavanaugh and Justice Gorsuch, also a former Kennedy clerk, went to high school together. Keep reading for more news.

Jaywalking Indictment. WLOS [reports](#) that Christopher Hickman, the former Asheville police officer involved in the violent jaywalking stop that was captured on bodycam video, was indicted this week on several state charges arising from the incident. As the News Roundup noted [last week](#), Hickman will not face federal criminal civil rights charges.

Moonshot, Woodstock, Watergate, Punk Rock. Volunteer firefighters in Robeson County have been busy dealing with an unusual number of fires in wooded areas and abandoned structures over the past two years. Though they tried to fight it, investigators allege that the firefighters deviated from typical firefighting and adult contemporary pop music practice in that they did, in fact, light it. As WRAL [reports](#), ten firefighters were arrested earlier this week and charged with arson-related offenses arising from their alleged participation in a conspiracy to intentionally set fires around the county. Many of [those charged](#) are teenagers, one is a Department of Corrections officer, and another is a former police officer.

California Here He Comes. [WRAL](#) has another story out of Robeson County involving a recent break in a rape and murder cold case. Kevin Thomas Ford was charged this week with first-degree murder after a fingerprint match connected him to a 1987 rape and murder of a woman in San Diego. The WRAL report says that Robeson County Deputy John Blount took an unusual step and fingerprinted Ford after serving him with a communicating threats warrant. When his fingerprint matched one found at the murder scene, a DNA sample was obtained that also ended up matching evidence from the California case. Ford is now awaiting extradition to California.

Injured Lawyer Recovering. The Winston Salem Journal [reports](#) that attorney Doug Meis is back at work after suffering serious injuries in a hit-and-run bicycle crash. Meis was hit by a vehicle from behind during a recent group ride and spent eleven days in the hospital, three in the ICU. There's a cash reward for any information that leads to the arrest of the driver.

Ranchers Pardoned. This week, President Trump [pardoned](#) Dwight Hammond and his son Steven Hammond, Oregon cattle ranchers whose 2012 convictions for arson on public lands and later resentencing on those convictions served as the [catalyst](#) for the armed occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in early 2016. When the Hammonds originally were sentenced, the sentencing judge departed from a mandatory minimum five-year sentence, but they were later resentenced. Dwight Hammond has served approximately three years in prison and Steven has served approximately four.

Dirty Dancing. ABC News [reports](#) that Stormy Daniels was arrested Wednesday during a performance at a strip club in Columbus, Ohio, after she allegedly pressed an undercover police officer's head into her bare chest, an apparent violation of Ohio law. The story notes a curious criminal law technicality regarding sexually oriented businesses in

Ohio: performers may not knowingly touch a patron *unless the patron is a member of the employee's immediate family*. The charges against Daniels were dismissed yesterday, seemingly on the basis of another technicality – the law applies only to performers who “regularly appear” at a particular establishment and Daniels had never previously performed at the club.

Blog Award. Last year, we humbly announced that the North Carolina Criminal Law blog possibly was at least the 17th best criminal law blog on the internet. Anyone who is reading this while standing up probably should sit down because here comes some big news – this year we’ve cracked the top 15, according to [RSS reader company Feedspot](#). Thanks again to our readers for engaging with the blog and for your work in the state’s justice system.