

Aunt Martha's Next Can of Worms?

A Guest Column

The chalked and (water-soluble) shoe-polished “Impeach Saunders” graffiti that the USM family awoke to on the morning of 29-October-2010 is dominating campus chatter. Just about every Saunders supporter on the list, from USM police chief [Bob Hopkins](#), USM vice president for student affairs [Joe Paul](#), and SGA president [Kasey Mitchell](#) all the way to College of Health dean [Michael Forster](#), are referring to the “three males” suspected of the political art as vandals, and to their actions as “vandalism.” Some go further, including a USM administration that is referring to the episode as a possible felony, and that is now offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the identities of the three males (which [early on were described](#) simply as “white”). It seems to those of us who remain calm and collected about this episode that in establishing a bounty of \$1,000, and referring to the scribbling of water-soluble political messages as felonious acts, the Saunders administration is opening up a can of worms that it might ultimately wish it hadn't opened. If a bad outcome results, putting the proverbial toothpaste back into the proverbial tube will not be an option, which will simply be one big shame given that the chalking quickly taken care of with soap and water (hoses).

What are these potential bad outcomes? Well, the Saunders administration is now in the position of having to produce three male suspects, or else look *even more* incapable and incompetent. With so little now known about their identities – the best lead Hopkins appears to have is that some white males were seen chalking near the front of campus – finding these alleged felons may be next to impossible. Facing long odds, Saunders is destined to look like a failure here. Even more disturbing may be the potential outcomes that include *capture* of these graffiti vandals. Let's assume, for a moment at least, that the three males are sir-named Davis, Zipp, and Hrapmann, and they are as pictured below.



Davis



Zipp



Hrapmann

Of course, Eagles fans will recognize those above as USM's rising star quarterback, its all-conference center, and its potential all-American placekicker. Though I'm *not* saying these young men would do such a thing (as the graffiti) in *reality*, having captured these guys in my hypothetical, and for an act that most think is essentially harmless, even though Paul, Forster, Mitchell et al. are speaking about the episode in felonious terms, [new USM attorney](#) Jon Mark Weathers will be expected to assist government prosecutors in pursuing felony charges against them. Would USM head football coach Larry Fedora sit by and watch such a travesty unfold? Of course not, and neither would hordes of Eagles fans across the South, as they shouldn't. Surely,

if this scenario were to play out in such a fashion, Saunders' worst nightmare would arise. U-Haul trucks would shortly thereafter be found on her driveway on Jamestown Road. Whether or not additional fallout would extend to Hopkins, Paul, and Forster would remain to be seen, at least in such a hypothetical world. Let's be clear – Davis, Zip, and Hrapmann are fine young men, and outstanding football players. There is absolutely no reason to believe they would be involved in the graffiti episode. They are simply used as an example of how Saunders' prosecution of this whole silly episode could quickly backfire. There are many other hypothetical stories one could draw up that don't involve football, and the outcomes would be just as bad, if not worse, than that of my hypothetical. The moral of the hypothetical is that sometimes we get what we ask for, and on some of these occasions, we're ultimately sorry about that. Who knows what will happen in this case? All we can do now is hope no one is ultimately sorry about it, *including* the person who gets the ill-advised \$1,000 bounty for their participation.