

# 'Hounds' Sniff At Fletcher



by  
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Three detectives have already made the rounds tracing the history of Pasco's Art Fletcher.

At Washburn University in Topeka, Kan., officials say they've had so many inquiries into his background since he filed for lieutenant governor that they no longer put his folder back in the file.

A Seattle newspaper is rumored to be preparing an expose of the East Pasco Self Help Co-operative, which Fletcher used in his campaign and which really is still more of a goal than an achievement.

Only the other day, I received a call from someone who wouldn't give his name asking if it were true Fletcher had been arrested on several felony charges.

The rumors are again doing the rounds.

It's like turning the clock back to 1965 when Fletcher stayed on after the Higher Horizons Project and his \$13,000-a-year paychecks dried up. He stayed for eight months without pay, trying to get the East Pasco Co-op off the ground.

When he went to the business leaders of the area for help, rumors started to fly. It was said he'd never played pro football, that he'd left debts behind, and that he'd been arrested for every conceivable crime.

The rumor has been laid at the feet of some Democratic leaders who saw Fletcher as a threat to their traditional hold in east Pasco.

Fletcher urged the business leaders to check him out. He was even fingerprinted and an FBI check run on him. He came out of it brighter than white. However, Fletcher claims the rumors had done their job. The flow of money slowed.

His attempt to capture the lieutenant governorship is sure to revive the charges made almost from the time Fletcher hit town: that he'd milk the Negro community for all he could get, then vanish.

Without east Pasco and the exposure he's been able to obtain here in the Tri-Cities Fletcher wouldn't today be the Republican choice for lieutenant governor. It's also true Fletcher did stay in the Tri-Cities for four years through some pretty thin times.

During the eight months he was without a paycheck he was virtually assured of an appointment to fill a vacancy on the State Prison and Parole Board at \$17,500 a year. However, it meant moving to Olympia. He feared this would cause the co-op to fold. So he rejected it. His wife thought he was mad. He began to think she was right a couple of months later when things hadn't progressed as fast as he'd like and he faced the choice of taking a \$14,500-a-year job fighting poverty in Utah, or joining the ranks of the impoverished.

Hanford contractors came up with a \$12,000-a-year job which tided him over.