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Hill v. Medford  
No. 389A03  
(Filed 5 December 2003)

**Employer and Employee-termination of deputy sheriff-at-will  
employee-public policy violation-breach of contract**

The decision of the Court of Appeals in this case is reversed for the reason stated in the dissenting opinion that an at-will employee (a deputy sheriff) who alleges wrongful discharge by his employer (the sheriff) for reasons that violate public policy does not have a claim for breach of contract against the employer on that basis. The deputy sheriff may only maintain a tort claim against the sheriff limited to the amount of the sheriff's bond.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. 389A03

FILED: 5 DECEMBER 2003

THOMAS WILLIAM HILL

v.

BOBBY MEDFORD, Individually and as Sheriff of Buncombe County;  
and WESTERN SURETY COMPANY

Appeal pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 7A-30(2) from the  
decision of a divided panel of the Court of Appeals, \_\_\_ N.C.  
App. \_\_\_, 582 S.E.2d 325 (2003), affirming an order entered 8 May  
2002 by Judge James Baker, Jr., in Superior Court, Buncombe  
County. Heard in the Supreme Court 18 November 2003.

*Long, Parker, Warren & Jones, P.A., by Robert B. Long,  
Jr., and W. Scott Jones, for defendant-appellants.*

*Carter & Kropelnicki, P.A., by Steven Kropelnicki, Jr.,  
for plaintiff-appellee.*

*Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, P.L.L.C., by Mark A.  
Davis, for amicus curiae North Carolina Association of  
County Commissioners.*

PER CURIAM.

For the reasons stated in the dissenting opinion, the  
decision of the Court of Appeals is reversed.

REVERSED.