

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY
LONDON DIVISION
*Electronically Filed***

BOBBY ELLISON)	Civil Action No. 6:26-CV-062-REW
Plaintiff)	
)	
-vs-)	
)	
RANDALL WEDDLE)	
In his personal and official)	Complaint at Law
capacity as Mayor of London, KY)	
Serve:)	
501 South Main Street)	
London, KY 40741)	
)	
and)	JURY DEMAND
)	
THE CITY OF LONDON, KENTUCKY)	
Serve:)	
501 South Main Street)	
London, KY 40741)	
Defendants)	

COMPLAINT AT LAW

NOW COMES the Plaintiff, Bobby Ellison (hereinafter, “Mr. Ellison” or “Plaintiff”) by and through counsel, and for his Complaint against the Defendants, Randall Weddle in his personal and official capacity as Mayor of London, Kentucky (hereinafter “Defendant Weddle”) and The City of London, Kentucky (hereinafter “London”) (collectively referred to herein as the “Defendants”) and hereby states as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This Court has jurisdiction over federal questions pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1343; 42 U.S.C. §§1983, 1988, and supplemental jurisdiction over state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

2. Venue is proper in this Court under U.S.C. §1391(a) because all Defendants reside in the State of Kentucky and at least one of the Defendants resides in the Eastern District of Kentucky.

3. Venue is proper in this Court under U.S.C. §1391(b) because all incidents, events, and occurrences giving rise to this action occurred in London, Kentucky which is in the Eastern District of Kentucky.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Bobby Ellison, is a natural person residing at 101 Meadowlane Road, London, Kentucky 40744-9128. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiff was a resident and citizen of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, City of London, County of Laurel.

5. Defendant Randall Weddle is, and was at all relevant times hereto, Mayor of The City of London, Kentucky. He is a natural person believed to have been a resident of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, City of London, County of Laurel at all relevant times hereto.

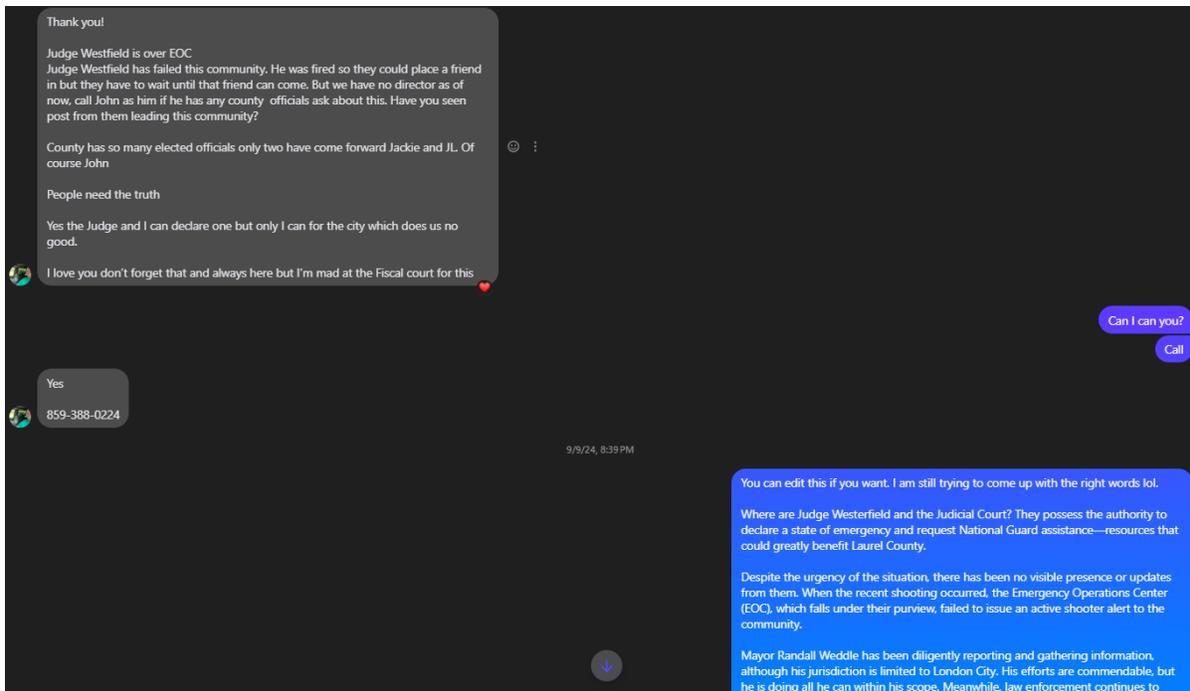
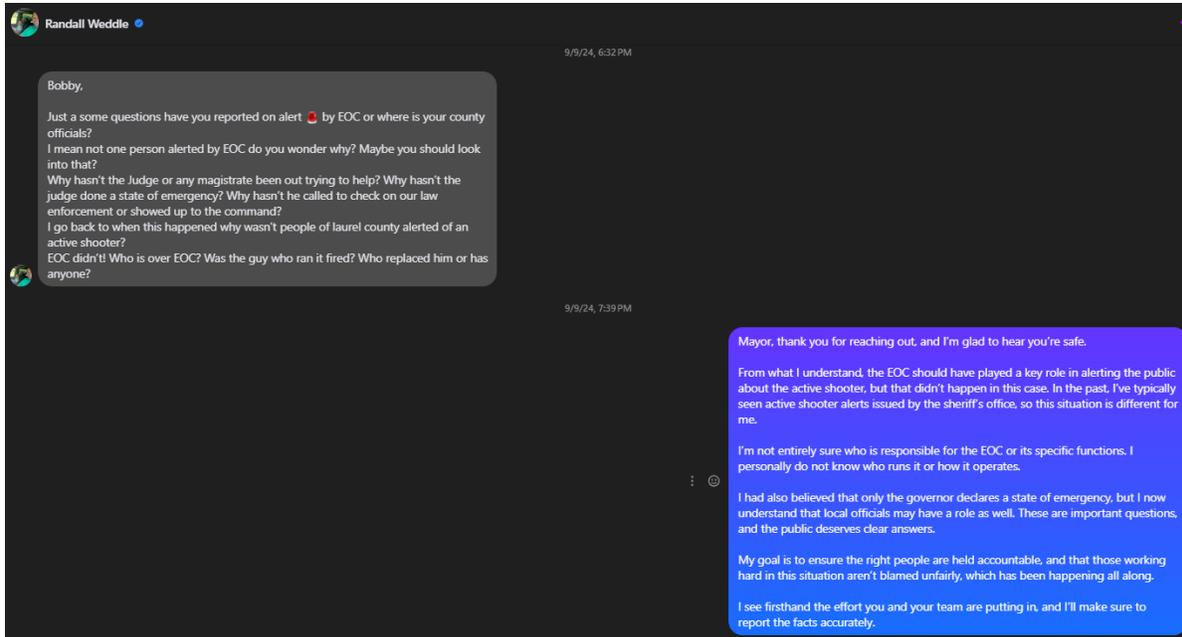
6. Defendant The City of London, Kentucky, is a municipality organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

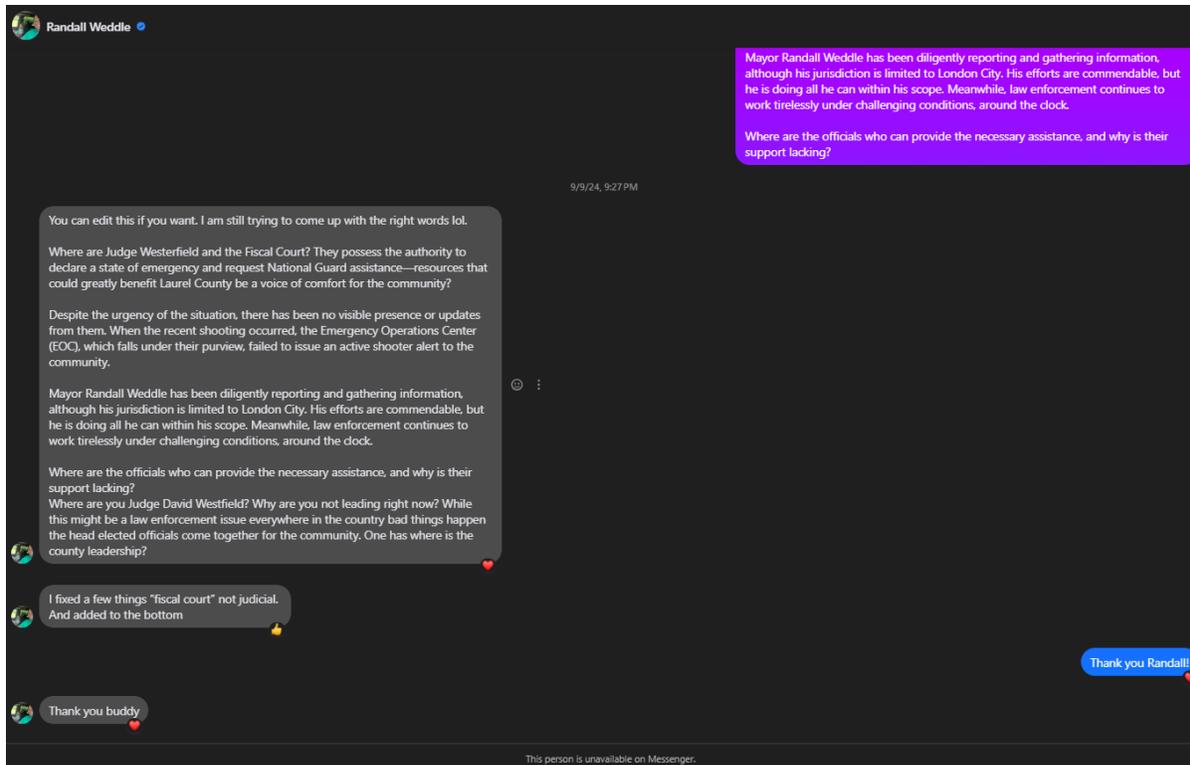
STATEMENT OF FACTS

Mr. Ellison's Reporting on Joseph Couch Being Shot

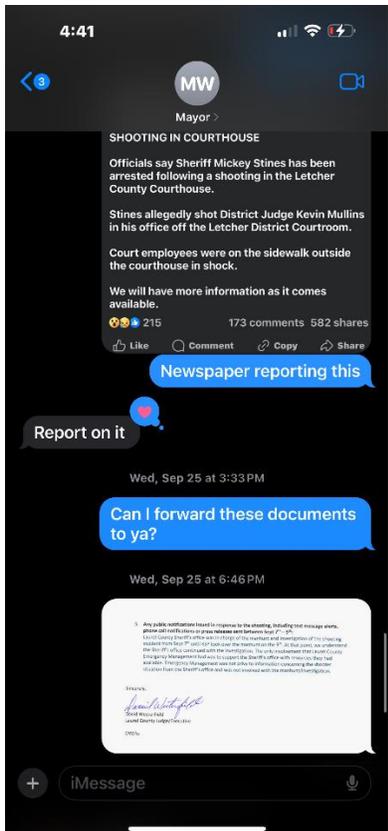
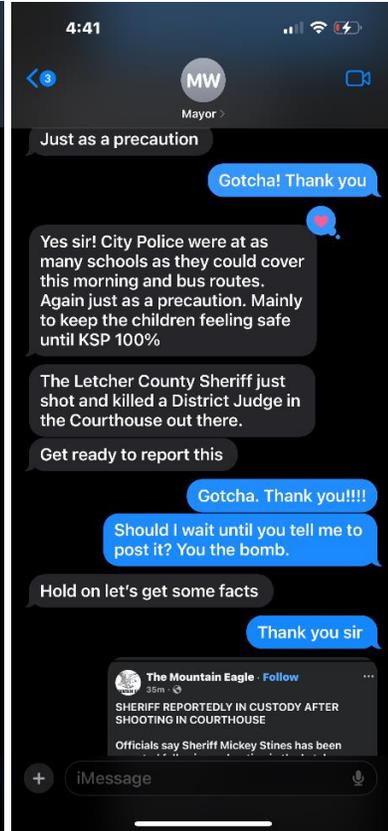
7. Mr. Ellison is a self-employed independent journalist that reports primarily on crime with a focus on London, Kentucky.

8. On September 9, 2024, Mr. Ellison received a text message from Defendant Mayor Weddle requesting that Mr. Ellison report on Joseph Couch being shot. The text message is attached:





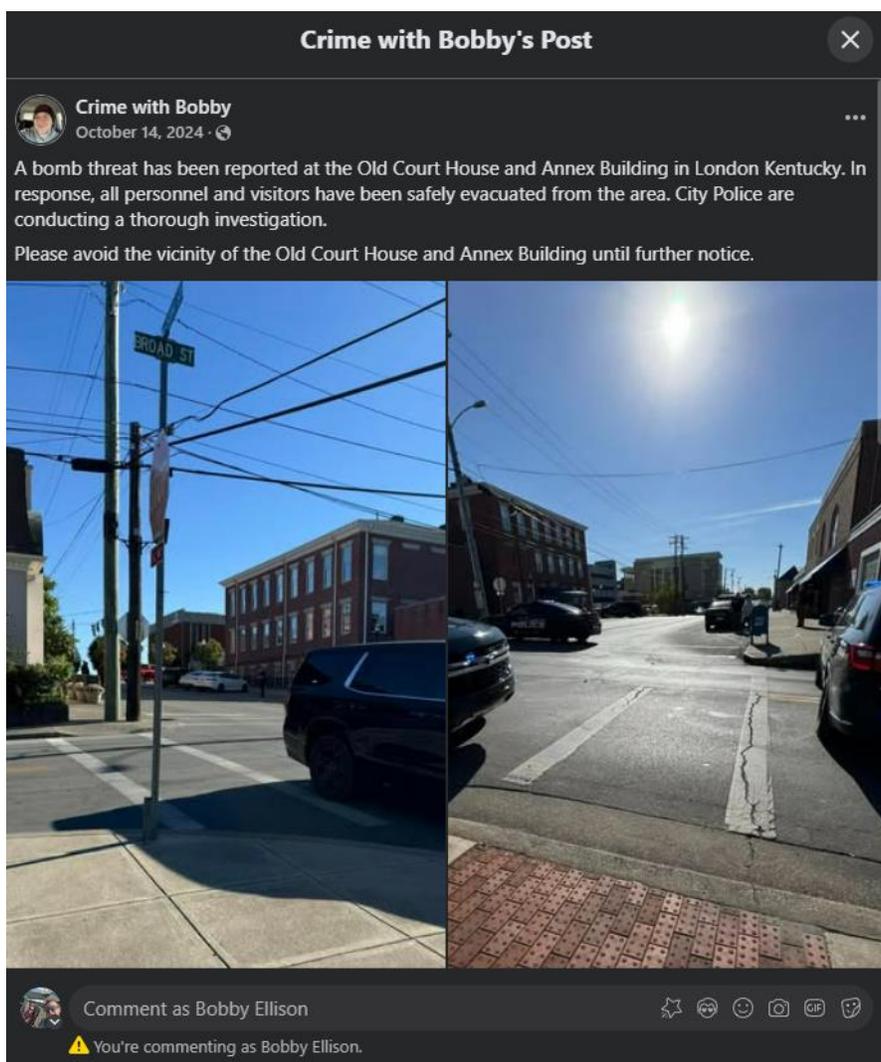
9. On September 10, 2024, and until September 25, 2024, Mr. Ellison and Defendant Weddle exchanged further text messages regarding the alleged shooting in which Joseph Couch was involved:

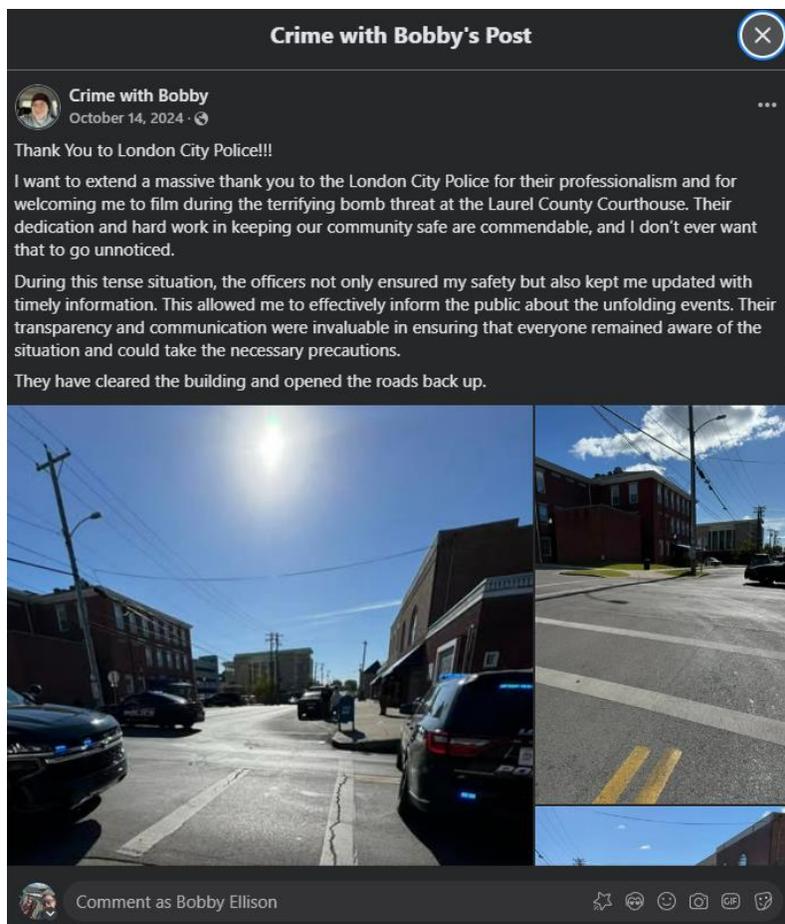


10. This topic was one among many that developed an initially good relationship between Plaintiff and Defendant Weddle.

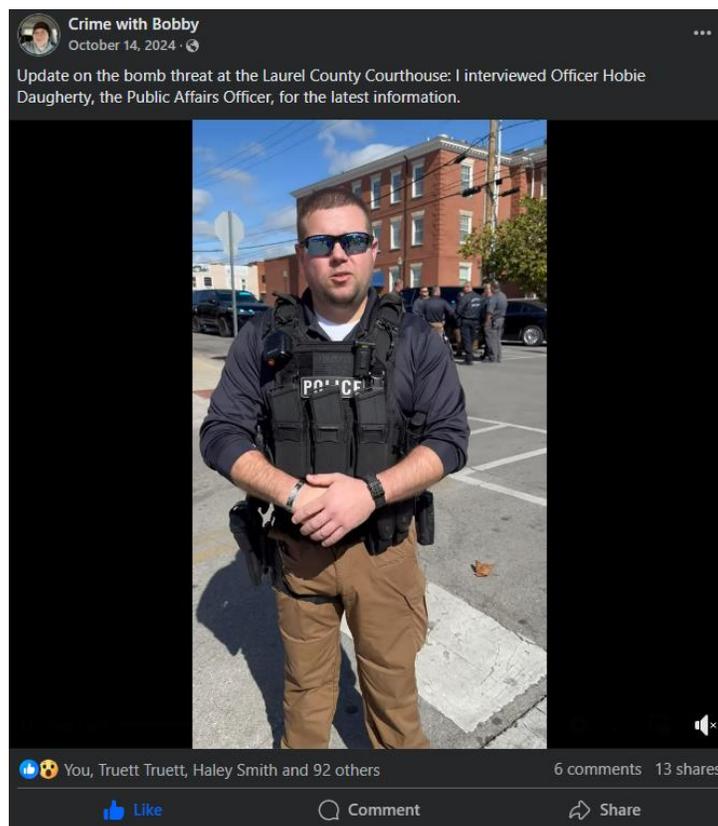
Mr. Ellison's Reporting on London City Police Bomb Threat

11. On October 14, 2024, a bomb threat had been reported at the Old Court House and Annex Building in London, Kentucky. Mr. Ellison reported on this matter:





12. In conjunction with his reporting on this incident, Mr. Ellison was given an opportunity to interview Defendant Weddle in his capacity as Mayor of The City of London and Hobie Daugherty (“Mr. Daugherty”) as the Public Affairs Officer.



The Media Distribution List

13. After successfully reporting on several large stories, such as the bomb threat in London, Kentucky, Mr. Ellison requested access to London, Kentucky’s media distribution list, so that he could better perform his job.

The screenshot displays an email interface with the following content:

- Request for Press Release Notifications** (Inbox x)
- Bobby Ellison** <crimewithbobby@gmail.com> to scottie.pennington
Tue, Oct 15, 2024, 9:41 AM
Hi Trooper Pennington,
My name is Bobby Ellison, and I am a reporter managing two pages: "Crime with Bobby," which focuses on larger crime stories, and "Southeast KY News," where I cover a broad range of news in our community.
I would like to request to be added to your press release distribution list to stay informed about important announcements and news from the Kentucky State Police. Keeping up with your updates will help me provide accurate and timely coverage for my audience.
Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.
Best regards,
Bobby Ellison
crimewithbobby@gmail.com
- Pennington, Scottie L (KSP)** to Bobby Ellison
Tue, Oct 15, 2024, 4:32 PM
Hey Bobby, you need to contact Headquarters and ask for Sherry Bray or SGT. Matt Sudduth. They can add you to go delivery.!! Get Outlook for iOS From: Bobby Ell
- Bobby Ellison** to Pennington, Scottie L (KSP)
Tue, Oct 15, 2024, 4:45 PM
Thank you for responding and for everything you do sir!
- Pennington, Scottie L (KSP)** <Scottie.Pennington@ky.gov> to me
Tue, Oct 15, 2024, 7:30 PM
Thank you
[Get Outlook for iOS](#)
- Request for Press Release Notifications**
- Bobby Ellison** <crimewithbobby@gmail.com> to g.acciardo
Tue, Oct 15, 2024, 9:38 AM
Hi Gilbert Acciardo,
My name is Bobby Ellison, and I am a reporter managing two pages: "Crime with Bobby," which focuses on larger crime stories, and "Southeast KY News," where I cover a broad range of news in our community.
I would like to request to be added to your press release distribution list to stay informed about important announcements and news from your department. Staying updated will help me provide accurate and timely coverage to my audience.
Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.
Best regards,
Bobby Ellison
crimewithbobby@gmail.com

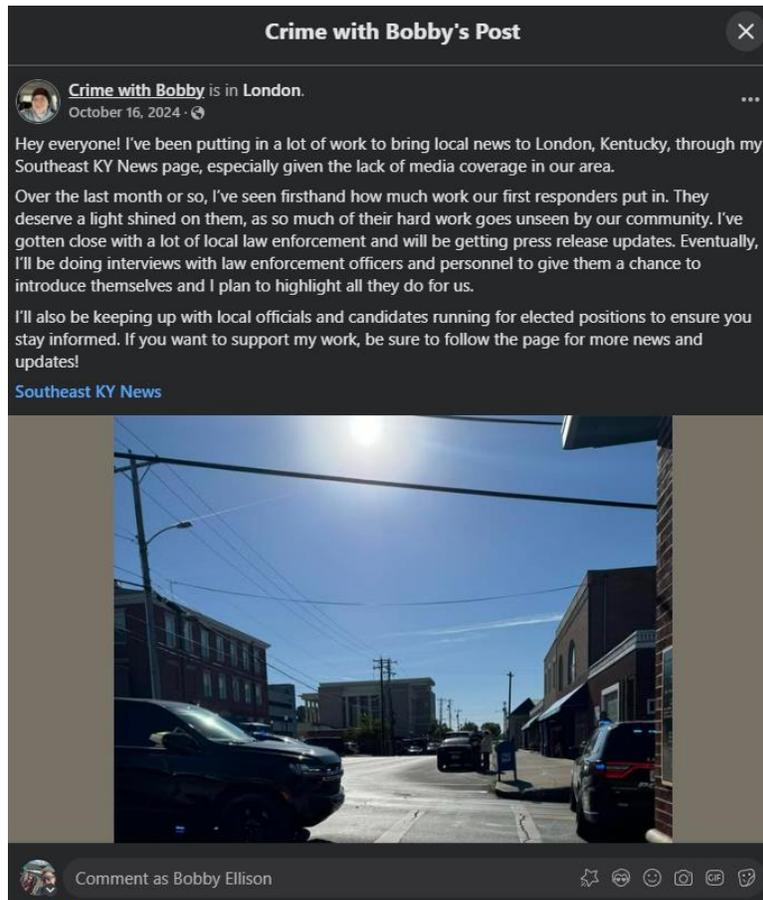
At the bottom of the screenshot, there are buttons for "Reply", "Forward", and a "Globe" icon.

14. Shortly after making his request, Mr. Ellison was added to the media distribution list on October 16, 2024.

15. The media distribution list includes over thirty organizations and/or individuals to whom Defendants issue updates regarding London, Kentucky.

16. In the Commonwealth, municipalities are not required to maintain a media distribution list.

17. The City of London, Kentucky deciding to maintain such a list means it cannot exclude an individual/organization absent a legitimate, content-neutral justification.



18. After receiving access to the media distribution list, Mr. Ellison was initially on good terms with both Defendant Weddle and the London Police force.

Bobby Ellison ▸ Southeast KY News
October 19, 2024 · 🌐

Big thanks to everyone involved for making tonight's gospel concert in London such a special event!
It's amazing to see our community come together in faith and fellowship. Events like these remind us of the strength and unity we have here in Southeast Kentucky.



[View insights](#) 2.1K post reach >

[View in group](#)

Bobby Ellison ▸ Southeast KY News
October 23, 2024 · 🌐

Today, I visited the London Police Department, KY, Laurel County Sheriff's Office, London - Laurel Rescue Squad, London City Fire Department, & Ambulance Inc. Of Laurel County.

I want to take a moment to highlight the incredible work these men and women do for us every day. Their bravery goes beyond risking their lives for our safety; they also support us in countless ways that often go unseen.

I'm excited to announce that I'm working on setting up some meet-and-greet opportunities with some of these amazing individuals. Through one-on-one introductions, we'll get a closer look at the dedicated professionals behind the uniforms and the vital roles they play in our community.

In addition to their roles during emergencies, I want to shine a light on the many ways they give back to the community. From outreach programs to local events, their commitment to improving our community is truly inspiring.

I also plan to do more interviews with other agencies and departments to continue showcasing the incredible work being done throughout our community.

Let's come together as a community to recognize and appreciate all they do for us, not just in times of crisis but every single day!
Stay tuned for more details!



The Killing of Doug Harless

19. Context of the current matter requires insight into the shooting of Doug Harless (hereinafter “Mr. Harless”), which occurred on December 23, 2024.

20. On December 23, 2024, police officers from the London Police Department, an agency of The City of London, Kentucky, executed a search warrant for the address of 489 Vanzant Road.

21. The officers instead executed the search warrant at 511 Vanzant Road, a mobile home owned by the 63-year-old Mr. Harless.

22. The executing officers fatally shot and killed Mr. Harless after Mr. Harless allegedly brandished his own firearm at the officers, likely because he was unaware of who would be breaking into his home near midnight.

23. At the time of the killing, the London police officers were not wearing body cameras, so the entirety of the incident was left unrecorded.

24. This killing was the result of an outdated property valuation administrator and 911 system which misidentified Mr. Harless’ home as 489 Vanzant Road instead of 511 Vanzant Road.

25. This incident has been widely reported on, including by independent journalists, such as Mr. Ellison.

Mr. Ellison’s Reporting on Doug Harless

26. Plaintiff owns and operates a YouTube account (and other similarly associated social media accounts) by the name of “Crime with Bobby,” whereby he reports on crime with a focus on Laurel County, Kentucky.

27. In addition to many others, Plaintiff reported on the killing of Mr. Harless.

28. On December 28, 2024, on YouTube, the account titled “Crime with Bobby,” posted a video titled, “Kentucky State Police investigation officer-involved shooting in Laurel County,” which sums up the killing of Mr. Harless.

29. On January 26, 2025, “Crime with Bobby” posted a video to YouTube titled, “Justice for Doug’ protest held for man killed in KY police shooting.” The video depicts, without sound, a protest for Mr. Harless, in which some signs held by protestors call for the resignation of Defendant Mayor Weddle.

30. On March 3, 2025, “Crime with Bobby” posted a video to YouTube titled, “Doug Harless’s Sister Speaks Out: ‘We Just Want Justice,’” in which Plaintiff interviews Mr. Harless’ sister as she gives her thoughts on the killing of her brother.

31. Plaintiff also controls a TikTok account titled “@crimewithbobby” which has reported on the killing of Mr. Harless, as well as backlash against Defendant Weddle related to the killing.

32. Plaintiff additionally controls a Facebook account titled “Crime with Bobby” which has reported on the killing of Mr. Harless and questioned why there have been no answers delivered to the public.

33. On February 17, 2025, Mr. Ellison sent an e-mail to Defendant Weddle, inquiring into whether London Police Officers would begin using body cameras following the killing of Mr. Harless:



Bobby Ellison <crimewithbobby@gmail.com>

Follow-Up on London Police Department Body Camera Usage

2 messages

Bobby Ellison <crimewithbobby@gmail.com>
To: randall@londonky.gov

Mon, Feb 17, 2025 at 1:41 PM

Dear Mayor Weddle,

I hope you're doing well. I'm following up on your February 5 statement regarding the London Police Department's body cameras. At that time, you mentioned officers would begin using them as early as the following week.

Can you confirm whether the body cameras are currently in use? Additionally, has the city implemented any policies regarding their activation and storage of footage?

I appreciate your time and any updates you can provide.

Bobby Ellison
Crime With Bobby

Bobby Ellison <crimewithbobby@gmail.com>
To: randall@londonky.gov

Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 7:50 AM

Dear Mayor Weddle,

I wanted to follow up on my February 17 email regarding the London Police Department's body cameras. In your February 5 statement, you mentioned that officers would begin using them as early as the following week.

Can you confirm:

- Are the body cameras currently in use?
- What policies have been implemented regarding activation and footage storage?

I understand you may be busy, but as this is a matter of public interest, I would appreciate a response at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your response.

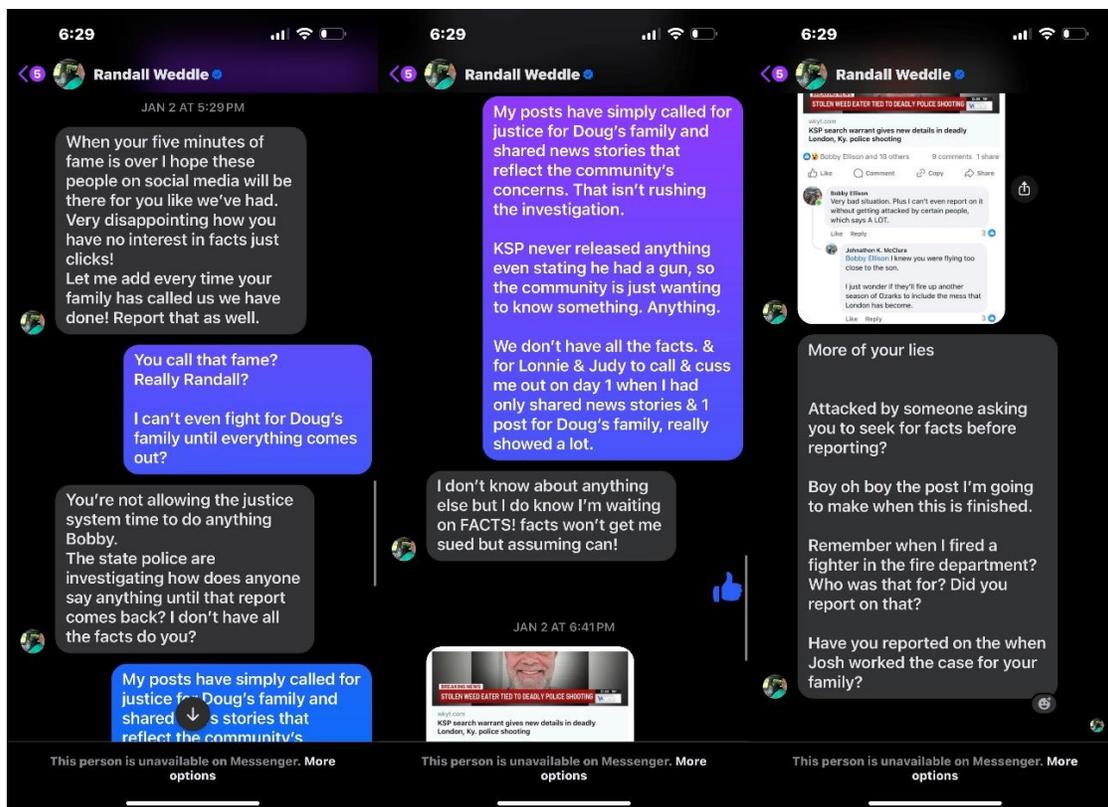
[Quoted text hidden]

34. This same inquiry was sent to Mr. Daughtery via e-mail and text message later this same day.

35. Mr. Ellison never received any responses to these emails.

London's Retaliation

36. On January 2, 2025, and in response to Mr. Ellison's reporting on the situation with Mr. Harless, he received a series of text messages from Defendant Weddle:



37. On January 11, 2025, Mr. Ellison received an e-mail from londonkentucky8@gmail.com. The e-mail reads:

“Why didn’t you report or comment on the Lexington Herald-Leader article about the address? It’s interesting that you shared it but didn’t provide any commentary, unlike everything else you post. I wonder why that is. It seems like your only mission is to make this community look bad – just like the Phelps family does. The rest of us have to live here, and people like you aren’t helping to improve things. You’re pushing an agenda without any real facts, even if it means tarnishing the reputation of this entire area. You should be ashamed that the only people cheering you on are those who thrive on chaos.”

38. Upon information and belief, this e-mail account is controlled by Defendant Weddle and/or Defendant The City of London.

39. On February 6, 2025, Mr. Ellison contacted Mr. Daugherty, inquiring into whether he was still on the media distribution list and, if he was removed, the reasons for why.

40. Five days later, on February 11, 2025, Mr. Ellison had still not received a response from Mr. Daugherty or the London Police Department and sent a follow-up email inquiring into whether he was still on the media distribution list and, if not, the reasons for why.

41. Still without response, Mr. Ellison wrote an e-mail on February 12, 2025, directly to Defendant Mayor Weddle, requesting clarification on whether he was still on the media distribution list.

42. Another e-mail was sent on February 14, 2025, to Defendant Mayor Weddle as well as the London City Council Members and Mr. Daugherty, inquiring whether Mr. Ellison was still able to receive media access.

43. Later that day, on February 14, 2025, Mr. Ellison received an e-mail from Mr. Daugherty, which contained the official seal of the London Police Department, alerting him that he had been removed from the London Police Department's media distribution list. The email reads as follows:

“In response to your inquiry, you have been removed from the London Police Departments [sic] media distribution list. The London Police Department is under no legal obligation to add anyone to our media distribution list or to allow media to remain on that list; the media distribution is a privilege, not a right. We are not required by law to even have a media distribution list for releases from our office.”

44. Defendant Mayor Weddle held a press conference at London City Hall on February 27, 2025. Mr. Ellison reached out to Defendant Weddle and to the London City Council regarding invitations. That communication is attached:



Bobby Ellison <crimewithbobby@gmail.com>

Concerns Regarding Press Access to Mayor Weddle's Press Conference

2 messages

Bobby Ellison <crimewithbobby@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 3:18 PM

To: randall@londonky.gov
Cc: anthony.ortega@londonky.gov, kelly.greene@londonky.gov, stacy.benge@londonky.gov, holly.ittie@londonky.gov, justin.young@londonky.gov, "judd.weaver@londonky.gov" <judd.weaver@londonky.gov>

Dear London City Officials,

I am reaching out to express concern regarding Mayor Randall Weddle's upcoming press conference at London City Hall on Thursday, February 27. When I contacted City Hall to inquire about attending as an independent journalist, I was informed that the event is invite-only and that invitations are being controlled by the Mayor's personal attorney, not City Hall.

After originally being told the event was closed to the public, I followed up to ask whether credentialed journalists would be permitted. The response I received was:

"If the attorney didn't send you an invitation, then you cannot attend."

This raises serious questions about transparency and press access to a government event involving a public official and matters of public interest. Press conferences held at City Hall are typically open to the media, and it is concerning that access to this one is being selectively restricted by a private attorney rather than city officials.

I am reaching out to ask for clarification on the following:

- Who determined that the press conference would be invite-only?
- Why is the Mayor's personal attorney controlling media access to an event at City Hall?
- Were certain news outlets granted access while others were denied? If so, what criteria were used?

I believe it is in the public's best interest for this event to be open to all journalists, not just those hand-selected by legal counsel. I appreciate your time in addressing these concerns and look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Bobby Ellison

Crime With Bobby

45. Mr. Ellison followed up later that same day with another e-mail:

Bobby Ellison <crimewithbobby@gmail.com>
To: randall@londonky.gov

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 5:39 PM

Dear Mayor Weddle and London City Council Members,

I am following up on my previous inquiry regarding press access to Mayor Weddle's upcoming invite-only press conference at London City Hall.

Since my last communication, I have learned that the only media outlet granted access to cover this event is "Laurel County News Plus." This raises serious concerns about transparency and fairness in media access, especially given the following facts:

- Laurel County News Plus was previously a sports page called "Big Blue Connection" and has no long-standing record of covering government news.
- Tim Branstetter, who operates Laurel County News Plus, also works at Bryant Law PLLC—the same law firm representing Mayor Weddle.
- Laurel County News Plus previously released a 911 call recording without following standard Open Records Request procedures, raising concerns about preferential access to sensitive information.

Given these facts, I would like to ask for immediate clarification on the following:

1. Who made the decision to limit press access to only one outlet, and why was Laurel County News Plus chosen?
2. Why were other legitimate journalists and independent media not given equal opportunity to attend?
3. What criteria were used to determine press access to a government press conference held in a public building?
4. Will there be an opportunity for independent journalists to ask questions, or will only pre-selected media be allowed?

As this press conference is taking place at London City Hall, a government building funded by taxpayers, the public deserves full transparency regarding why press access is being controlled in such a selective manner. If this event is truly about addressing public concerns, then all journalists—not just one with ties to the mayor's legal team—should be allowed to attend.

I look forward to your prompt response and clarification on this matter.

[Quoted text hidden]

46. On March 6, 2025, Mr. Ellison received an e-mail from Mr. Daugherty, which contained the official seal of the London Police Department, alerting him that he had been removed from the London Police Department's media distribution list. The email reads as follows:

“In response to your inquiry, you have been removed from the London Police Departments [sic] media distribution list. The London Police Department is under no legal obligation to add anyone to our media distribution list or to allow media to remain on that list; the media distribution is a privilege, not a right. We are not required by law to even have a media distribution list for releases from our office.”

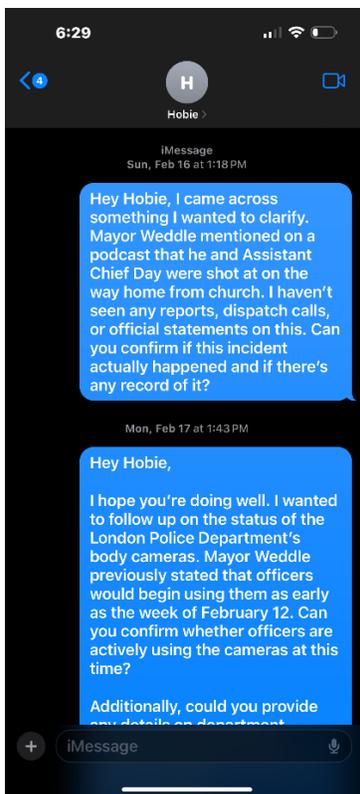
Plaintiff’s Reporting Attempts After Doug Harless Reporting

47. Before reporting on the Doug Harless shooting, as demonstrated herein, Plaintiff was on good terms with Defendant Weddle and would readily receive responses and information necessary to make accurate reportings.

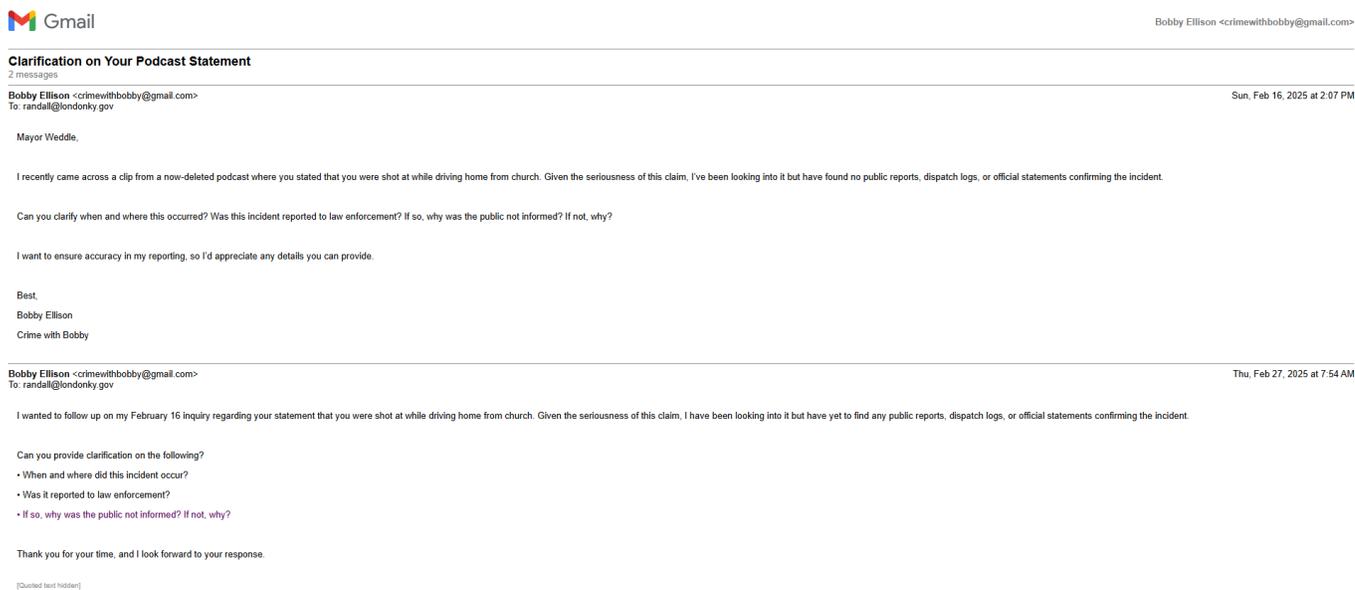
48. This information, however, appears to have been conditioned upon Plaintiff’s reporting strictly showing Defendants in a positive light.

49. In early 2025, Defendant Weddle claimed to have been involved in an incident where he was nearly shot. Plaintiff attempted to report on the incident and verify the truthfulness of Defendant Weddle’s claims.

50. On February 16, 2025, at 1:18 P.M., Mr. Ellison sent a text message to Hobie Daugherty. The message is attached:



51. On February 16, 2025, at 2:07 P.M., Mr. Ellison sent an e-mail to Defendant Weddle. The e-mail is attached:



52. Mr. Ellison never received any responses to these inquiries, leaving unconfirmed whether Defendant Weddle was ever truly shot.

53. This exchange demonstrates the callousness of Defendants. Immediately following Plaintiff's criticisms of the Doug Harless shooting, Defendants began ignoring Plaintiff, effectively removing him from accurately reporting and criticizing Defendants.

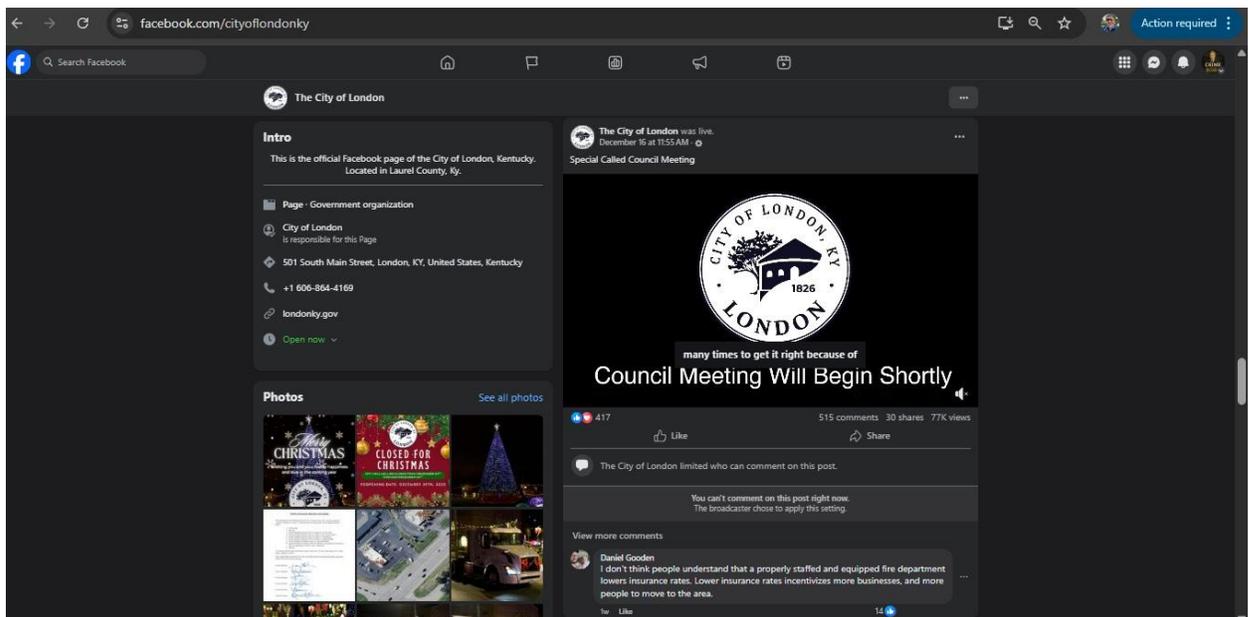
Current First Amendment Violations – London's Facebook Page

54. Moreover, the City of London, Kentucky has maintained an official and public Facebook page titled "The City of London" and whose biography reads "This is the official Facebook page of the City of London, Kentucky. Located in Laurel County, Ky."

55. As recently as December of 2025, the City of London Kentucky has disallowed individuals from commenting on its public and official Facebook page unless those individuals are permitted access by the City.

56. Before, any individual could have commented on the City of London, Kentucky's public and official Facebook page.

57. What follows are screenshots from The City of London Facebook Page:



The City of London

Intro
This is the official Facebook page of the City of London, Kentucky. Located in Laurel County, Ky.

Page · Government organization

City of London is responsible for this Page

501 South Main Street, London, KY, United States, Kentucky

+1 606-864-4169

londonky.gov

Open now

Photos See all photos



Mayor Randall Weddle
October 30 · 🌐

Today, we had a wonderful visit from the 5th graders of Sublimity Elementary School! The students stopped by my office and toured several city departments. It w... See more

👍 37 2 comments 3 shares

Like Share

The City of London limited who can comment on this post.

The City of London

Intro
This is the official Facebook page of the City of London, Kentucky. Located in Laurel County, Ky.

Page · Government organization

City of London is responsible for this Page

501 South Main Street, London, KY, United States, Kentucky

+1 606-864-4169

londonky.gov

Open now

Photos See all photos



The City of London
June 28 · 🌐

The Kesey DAV Chapter 158 honor guard officially opened Red, White and Boom with a 21-gun salute and the ceremonial playing of taps.



0:20 / 2:17

👍 263 3 comments 35 shares 12K views

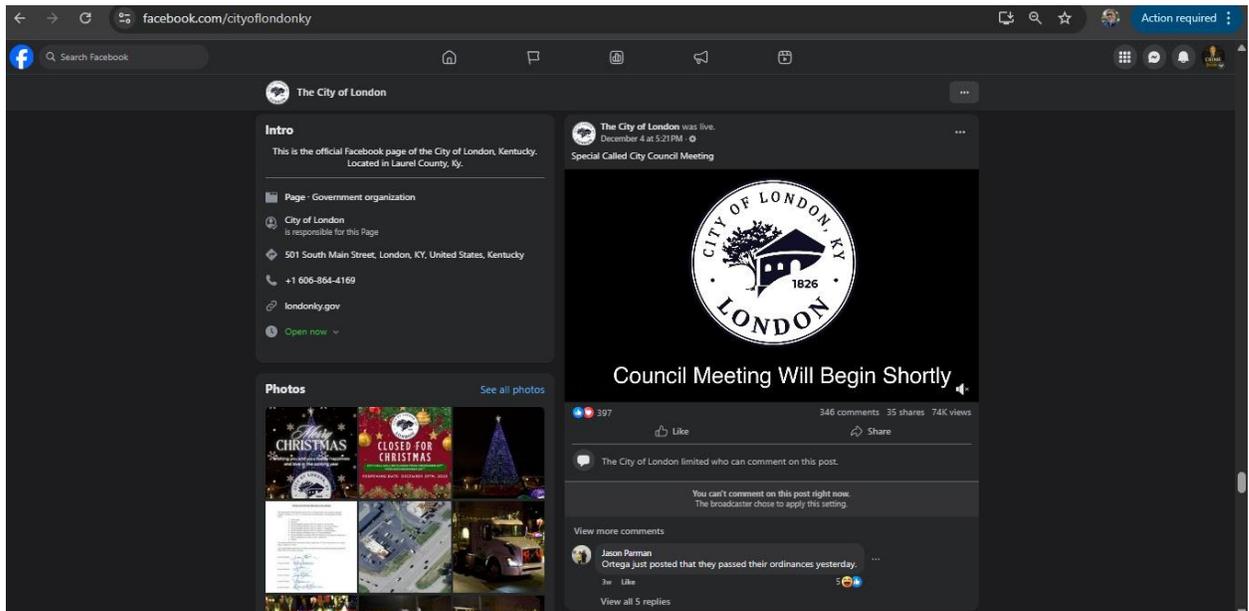
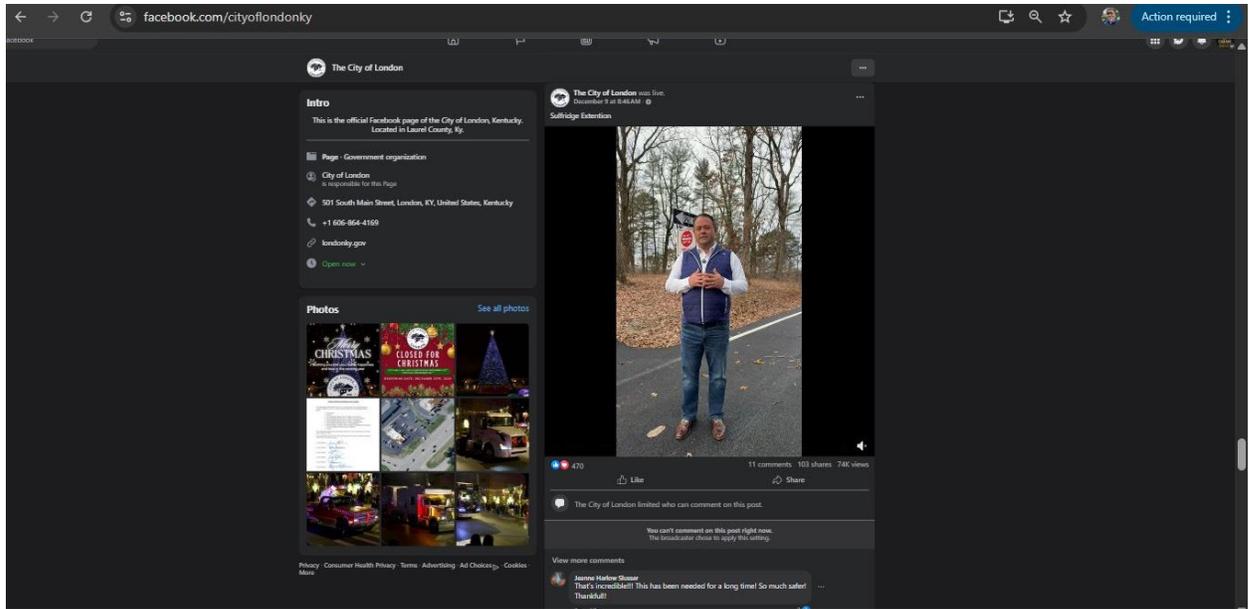
Like Share

The City of London limited who can comment on this post.

View more comments

Linda Mae Patterson Suiter
Thought July 4 was next weekend

Privacy · Consumer Health Privacy · Terms · Advertising · Ad Choices · Cookies · More



58. As demonstrated by the provided screenshots, the public is prevented from comment on each post, evidenced by Facebook’s “The City of London limited who can comment on this post.”

59. Notably, the comments permitted by London are those which are either positive towards the City and Defendant Weddle or plainly neutral.

60. Ironically, Defendant Weddle is permitted to comment on the Facebook page, which is blocked for other individuals.

61. Plaintiff is an independent journalist, and previously frequently commented on the City's Facebook page so that he could actively engage in current events, seek public opinion, and garner the thoughts City officials and its residents.

62. Although Plaintiff would like to comment on the City of London's official Facebook page, he cannot do so because he has been critical of the City in the past.

63. This Facebook page is dominated by Defendant Weddle, with a majority of the posts highlighting his interviews with other individuals, self-promoting the things he has done for the City, and, importantly, posting public City Council Meetings.

64. As London has prevented any critics from commenting on the posts, censorship and prevention of any opposition to Defendant Weddle and the City of London is apparent.

65. Critics, like the Plaintiff, have had their voices silenced in their totality. What is masquerading as a forum for public opinion is, in reality, an echo-chamber for pro-Randall advocates.

66. The actions of Defendants are unconstitutional and are actively causing damage not only to Plaintiff, but to the citizens of London, Kentucky who are being misled with regard to public opinion, and the public, who is prevented from voicing their own thoughts, feelings, and criticisms of London.

COUNT I
DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF:
VIOLATION OF DUE PROCESS OF LAW

42 U.S.C. §1983

Plaintiff v. All Defendants

67. Plaintiff hereby incorporates all preceding paragraphs by reference as if fully realleged herein.

68. Defendants' decision to indefinitely remove Plaintiff from the media distribution list, which is made available to other members of the press, violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Because Defendants have made that list available to other members of the media, they cannot constitutionally deny Plaintiff's access without due process of law, and cannot deny access so arbitrarily or for anything other than legitimate, compelling reasons.

69. Mr. Ellison's access to the media distribution list – which Defendants have indefinitely revoked – is protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Being a member of the press and reporting from the media distribution list has allowed Mr. Ellison to effectively and timely report on the affairs of The City of London, Kentucky, which is critical to an informed public. The indefinite denial of Mr. Ellison's access hinders his ability to provide timely, accurate and nonpartisan reporting on criminal events which occur in London, Kentucky and are published to thousands of followers.

70. Defendants' decision to deny Mr. Ellison access to the media distribution list was arbitrary. Mr. Ellison received no prior notice of Defendants' decision. Mr. Ellison was alerted after the decision had been made and only after several requests to Defendant Weddle and Mr. Daugherty.

71. Defendants did not provide Mr. Ellison any opportunity to challenge their decision before it took effect, nor have Defendants provided Mr. Ellison any formal opportunity to challenge it since that time. Instead, Defendants have made clear that they intend to continue barring Mr. Ellison's access indefinitely.

72. As a result of Defendants' actions, Mr. Ellison has suffered and continues to suffer irreparable harm.

COUNT II
DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF:
VIEWPOINT DISCRIMINATION – FIRST AMENDMENT VIOLATION
42 U.S.C. 1983
Plaintiff v. All Defendants

73. Plaintiff hereby incorporates all preceding paragraphs by reference as if fully realleged herein.

74. The City of London, Kentucky intentionally created its official Facebook page and opened up the same for public discourse by permitting anyone to comment on the posts of the page.

75. The London, Kentucky official Facebook page is a designated public forum.

76. The City of London, Kentucky has since restricted the ability of the public to comment on its posts, permitting only approved members of the public to comment on its page.

77. Plaintiff is an independent journalist who previously commented on the Facebook page in order to actively engage in current events and to solicit the opinions of London citizens and public officials.

78. Plaintiff is no longer permitted to comment on the City of London, Kentucky's Facebook page, as he is not one of the approved members.

79. The approved members are limited to individuals who are pro-Weddle and pro- London. Critics have effectively been silenced.

80. Because Plaintiff had been critical of London in his reporting on Doug Harless' death, he is not permitted to comment on the Facebook page.

81. As a result of the City of London, Kentucky's actions, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer irreparable harm.

82. The public also suffers harm from Defendants' actions, as it is restricted from comment as well.

83. Defendants were not required by any law or statute to maintain the Facebook page.

84. Defendants' choice to maintain such a Facebook page means they cannot exclude an individual/organization from comment absent a legitimate, content-neutral justification.

85. The reason for closing the Facebook page to all but selected individuals is a decision based on how favorable those individuals are to London and excludes critics and unfavorable comments.

86. The clear censorship by Defendants violates the Constitution of the United States of America, discriminates between the viewpoint of those prevented from commenting, and is nothing more than a self-serving ode to Defendant Weddle's actions in London while masking as a public forum.

COUNT III
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF:
FIRST AMENDMENT RETALIATION
42 U.S.C. §1983
Plaintiff v. All Defendants

87. Plaintiff hereby incorporates all preceding paragraphs by reference as if fully realleged herein.

88. Everything reported by Mr. Ellison constituted protected speech, as he was engaging in his First Amendment rights to free speech in reporting on Mr. Harless' death.

89. Nothing reported by Mr. Ellison constituted unprotected speech, as nothing published constituted obscenity, defamation, fraud, incitement to violence, criminal conduct, or fighting words. Rather, his outstanding journalistic work, even as an independent journalist, carried with it

the ethics of a professional journalist, only fairly reporting each story with the available information after conducting due diligence.

90. Defendants Weddle and The City of London took negative action against Mr. Ellison by revoking his access to the media distribution list immediately following his reporting on the killing of Mr. Harless.

91. Being deprived of access to the media distribution list constitutes a negative action taken against Mr. Ellison as he was meaningfully deprived of a benefit for exercising his First Amendment rights.

92. Reporting on the killing of Mr. Harless was a significant factor for revoking Mr. Ellison's access to the media distribution list, as demonstrated by Defendants' responses to Mr. Ellison's reporting.

93. Defendants were not required by any law or statute to maintain the media distribution list.

94. Defendants' choice to maintain such a list means they cannot exclude an individual/organization absent a legitimate, content-neutral justification.

COUNT IV
VIOLATION OF EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE
42 U.S.C. §1983
Plaintiff v. All Defendants

95. Plaintiff hereby incorporates all preceding paragraphs by reference as if fully realleged herein.

96. Plaintiff, an independent journalist, was classified by London, Kentucky and placed on the media distribution list alongside other similarly situated members.

97. Solely because Plaintiff reported negatively on the shooting of Doug Harless, he was removed from the media distribution list.

98. Defendants' reasons for removing Plaintiff have no rational basis or, in the alternative, was solely motivated by animosity towards the Plaintiff.

99. Defendants have permitted other journalists to remain on the media distribution list because they harbor no animus towards them.

100. As a result of Defendants' actions, Plaintiff has been subject to disparate treatment and suffers and will continue to suffer harm.

PRAYERS FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Bobby Ellison prays for judgment against Defendants as follows:

101. As to Count I, a money judgment against Randall Weddle and the City of London, Kentucky for all damages under law, including – but not limited to – compensatory damages and special damages; costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorney's fees under 42 U.S.C. §1988; pre-judgment and post-judgment interest as allowed by law; declaratory judgment that Plaintiff cannot be removed from the media distribution list arbitrarily; and injunctive relief reinstating Plaintiff to the media distribution list.

102. As to Count II, a money judgment against Randall Weddle and the City of London, Kentucky for all damages under law, including – but not limited to – compensatory damages and special damages; costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorney's fees under 42 U.S.C. §1988; pre-judgment and post-judgment interest as allowed by law; declaratory judgment that the London, Kentucky official Facebook page is a designated public forum and that it cannot restrict comments arbitrarily; and injunctive relief requiring the City of London, Kentucky to reopen its Facebook page to comment by all of the public.

103. As to Count III, a money judgement against Randall Weddle and the City of London, Kentucky for all damages under law, including – but not limited to – compensatory damages and special damages; costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorney’s fees under 42 U.S.C. §1988; pre- and post-judgment interest as allowed by law; and injunctive relief reinstating Plaintiff to the media distribution list.

104. As to Count IV, a money judgment against Randall Weddle and the City of London, Kentucky for all damages under law, including – but not limited to – compensatory damages and special damages; punitive damages; costs, disbursements and reasonable attorney’s fees under 42 U.S.C. §1988; pre- and post-judgment interest as allowed by law; and injunctive relief reinstating Plaintiff to the media distribution list.

105. For any other relief that this Court deems just and equitable under the laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

JURY DEMAND

106. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury as set forth in the Seventh Amendment to the United States Constitution and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38.

Dated: January 9, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Brandon N. Voelker
Brandon N. Voelker (88076)
GATLIN VOELKER, PLLC
50 E. Rivercenter Blvd., Ste. #1275
Covington, Kentucky 41011
Ph: (859) 781-9100
Email: bvoelker@gatlinvoelker.com

VERIFICATION

In accordance with 28 U.S.C.S. §1746, I, Bobby Ellison, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Executed on January 8, 2026



Bobby Ellison