

General Topics :: If you were my jury....

If you were my jury....., on: 2005/8/26 16:38

If you were the average, Texan citizen sitting on jury during my trial for preaching, what thoughts would you have to the following recording if you heard it? What reactions would you have?

Recorded Dialog with Tyler Junior College Police

During my second attempt at preaching on Tyler Junior College two officers pulled my friend Jeff and I aside from the crowd and told us that we couldn't be there. I asked "is this a private campus" to which they said it was because the students pay to go there. I said "I apologize for being here if this in a private campus. I respect private property." When I asked them where the police station was so that I could double check to make sure it was private they changed their story and said "well, technically it's a public campus and that's what they will tell you." They started mentioning arresting us and so I started mentioning a lawsuit, to which they called their superior officer.

When the Superior office arrived I remembered turned on my audio recorder and recorded 1:32min before he forced me to turn it off:

The Superior officer asking the other officers: "prior to here?"

Officer: "yes prior to here".

Superior: "how about that one? Has that one been here? Has he been issued criminal trespass?"

It's muffled but the officer said "no".

Superior: "ok, have you issued him a criminal trespass prior to this?"

Officer: "Yes"

Superior: "How long ago was this?"

Jesse Morrell: "About two and a half months ago or so"

Superior: "Ok"

Jesse Morrell: "I had been legally advised by my lawyer that since it's a college, that legally I'm allowed to come her e to preach"

Superior: "Ok"

Jesse Morrell: "And that it's actually a federal offense to violate someone's first amendments rights."

Superior: "You must understand here. You are not a student!"

Jesse Morrell: "Right"

Superior: "Ok."

Jesse Morrell: "No of coarse not."

Superior: "You are not a student!"

Jesse Morrell: "Alright, but I pay taxes."

Superior: "Oh that's a really good argument!"

Jesse Morrell: "Well it's true."

Superior: "You were issued a criminal trespass warning earlier."

Jesse Morrell: "Well they issued me a warning and then I...." (Received permission from the Administration building but I never got to say that because I was cut off)

Superior: "And what did it say!?"

Jesse Morrell: "They never gave me anything in writing."

Superior: "What did they tell you, when they issued a warning to you?"

Jesse Morrell: "That you can't preach on the campus and if I were to return it would be trespassing."

Pause from .57 – 1.08

Superior: "Ah, why don't you turn this off. Just close that. Don't worry about that. Ok."

Superior: "So what you got?!?"

Jesse Morrell: "What do I have? I have my audio recorder."

Superior: "Turn your audio recorder off!"

Jesse Morrell: "I'm not allowed to record this?"

Superior: "No. No"

Jesse Morrell: "Well can you tell me what law I am breaking?"

Superior: "Turn your audio recorder off or I'm going to...."

Total length of the audio: 1 minute and 32 seconds.

Re: If you were my jury.... - posted by ccchhrrriiss () , on: 2005/8/26 17:11

Hi Jesse...

Be encouraged -- our Defender is strong!

As a fellow Christian (and now a transplanted Texan), I would definitely think that your civil rights were violated. I concur with other believers that you may want to contact a credible Christian legal defense organization (like the American Center for Law and Justice , or the Rutherford Institute).

As a sidenote, do you check with the schools *before* you go and preach?

Three years ago, a man began preaching on our University campus. He drew huge crowds of onlookers (mostly students and staff that were bewildered). Now, this preacher was quite a bit *odd*. He was not quite accurate in what he was preaching -- often hurling judgmental accusations at students who watched and listened to him. At one point, he pointed to the women in the crowd that wore jeans and told them that they were going to Hell for their homosexual clothing. This preacher got "off topic" many times, and often reverted to pointing out sins, according to his own interpretation of what holiness and righteousness should be. Some people became visibly and verbally angry at him (even threatening to hurt him). But the University sent police officers to *protect him*.

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Nonetheless, the crowds remained quite large for several days. I don't know that there were any spiritual "results" from his quite judgmental messages -- other than it made a lot of people think about eternal and spiritual things. He did stir up quite a bit of emotion from his controversial messages (even telling some of my sincere Christian friends that they were going to Hell for wearing cargo shorts, wearing a Dallas Cowboy t-shirt and another for drinking a Diet Dr. Pepper). The preacher, however, seemed quite happy with his experience, and even recorded his own sermons on both video and audio recorders. I verbally defended his *right* to speak in front of some of the angrier people in the crowd (even though he had said I was going to Hell for owning a Visa credit card). He even sent me some emails -- showing that he does the same thing, going from campus to campus (and periodically in trouble with the law).

A week later, one of the Vice Presidents answered a few complaints and wrote an article for the school newspaper explaining the school policies for such "exercises in free speech." Our University has areas designated on campus as "free speech zones" -- places where someone can speak without having to get a permit. It is opened on a first come/first serve basis, and is located in some of the most visible and heavily traveled walking areas on campus. Some areas are "off limits" because they are designated as possible classroom or business space. The school often has businesses that sell products on campus -- both outside and inside.

One person was arrested and ticketed for violating the school policy, though. He was speaking without a permit in one of the "closed areas" on campus. He continued to preach after having been warned by three times. The University police explained that he could have avoided the hassle if he had just obtained a free permit in the first place (because no one else was using the area in question on that day). But I suppose that it could have been one of those *John Bunyan issues* where you are allowed to preach, as long as you get the paper and approval of man (or a denomination).

I was just curious as to how you go about preaching. Do you check with the school first?

:-)

Re:, on: 2005/8/26 17:22

I would go to a public campus and preach in front of the Student Union building. And if the security or anyone else stops me I'll comply with them and move to wherever they tell me to move.

Re: If you were my jury.... - posted by ellie, on: 2005/8/26 22:24

You have it well documented. Truth prevails with God. It is the lies that God does not like.

The account you give is so ordinary, so human. It's what I call 'innocence of truth'.

I hear it, as the officer being very changeable. Showing some aggression whose motive could be questioned as having a personal reason, for not liking you and your kind of faith.

It makes what you will say, in the court, to have some substance that will show that you were being treated badly by a police officer.

It is good that you have that recording because it sets the scene, for what took place after it was switched off.

God go with you.

ellie

Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2005/8/26 23:45

From the point of an impartial juror who was not biased or knowing of the situation, I would have great concern that the officer made you turn off the voice recorder.

I would have the same concern if it were a case against a Harri Krishna being arrested outside an airport.

I think that the fact that the officer forcibly turned off your voice recorder looks very bad for him and may be the best thing you have going for you.

May God bless you in this trial and you can rest assured on the promise of God that know matter what happens God will work it out for good.

Thank you brother Jesse for your bold stand for the Word of God and Truth in this dark and dieing world. Your boldness has been an inspiration to me.

Re: I agree with Christisking on 2005/8/27 4:45:39 - posted by ellie, on: 2005/8/27 22:01

I saw what you have written and agree with you, all of it.

ellie