

Missionaries Hiking Across America Assaulted and Arrested in Montana

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A 5,000-mile, cross-country missions trip was brought to an abrupt halt in rural Montana.

Jesse Michael Boyd, 46, of Full Proof Gospel Ministries was with his two children and two other missionaries, Eric Trent, 27, and Carter Phillips, 20, when they were confronted by a motorist.

The driver of a truck, later identified as Bradley Terrell, unleashed a tirade of curse words against the missionaries and also complained about blocking road access.

When Boyd apologized and the group began to leave, things took a turn for the worst.

“‘I’m sorry, we’re leaving right now.’ At that point he just lit into a rage, cursing—my son was standing right there,” Boyd told WSOC-TV. “I told them there wasn’t any need to act like that.”

This exchange led Terrell to exit his vehicle and charge toward Boyd, who pulled out his personal firearm in self-defense of the group.

“Told him, ‘we don’t want any trouble, I’m in fear for my life, can you get back in your car,’” Boyd explained.

The group claim that Terrell calmed down once he saw Boyd’s gun, but once Boyd put it away Terrell attacked Boyd and knocked him to the ground.

“He told us we weren’t welcomed in Montana,” Boyd claims. “He told us there were rifles trained on us and if we moved, we’d be shot.”

This assault led Boyd’s companions to come to his aid, hitting Terrell in an effort to defend Boyd and get the two men separated.

According to Boyd, when nearby neighbors began approaching the scene, the group began to fear for their lives.

“He said to us, ‘I know the sheriff in this county. You guys are going to jail,’” Boyd said. “He told the truth.”

When Madison County deputies arrived on the scene, the four missionaries were already up the road. The truck driver had called 9-1-1 first and gave his side of the story to the sheriff’s department.

The four missionaries, including Boyd’s 12-year-old son and 18-year-old daughter, were placed in handcuffs at gunpoint and charged with aggravated assault.

Terrell was not charged with any crime or arrested.

Judge Marc Glines proceeded to throw the proverbial book at the missionaries. He denied their requests to be released on their own recognizance and set bail at \$50,000 for each of the defendants. According to WORLD media, the judge referred felony aggravated assault charges to the Madison County District Court. These charges bring with them the possibility of a 20-year prison sentence.

Throughout the arrest and sentencing sequence, Terrell has not spoken publicly about the incident.

“I’ve been kind of instructed [by attorneys] not to say too much,” Terrell said.

When asked who started the confrontation, he said, “Let’s just

say there's four of them went to jail, and I didn't. How's that?"

The Boyd's and their fellow missionaries, all now on house arrest in North Carolina and fitted with ankle bracelets that they are fiscally responsible for due to Montana law, have found an unlikely ally in their upcoming court battle: former Libertarian candidate for Congress John Lamb.

Lamb, who is familiar with the Boyd's missionary work, said, "I stand with these guys 100%, I know their principles and I know their demeanor."

Full Proof Gospel Ministries board member Rev. Brandon Gwaltney is standing by his missionaries and their right to protect themselves from their aggressor.

"I do firmly believe that our missionaries acted out of self-defense," Gwaltney said. "When we walk across America, we do not provoke people. We are there to proclaim the gospel and move on."

Lamb backed up the missionary's lack of any history of any form of disturbance, pointing out that there was not a single incident until meeting Terrell in Montana.

When Lamb went around the area asking neighbors what could have possibly led to Terrell acting in such a way toward the missionaries, he was told that it was likely from a "strong sense of property rights."

Because of a court order, the missionaries trek across the United States is currently put on hold.

Boyd made a post addressing the situation upon his return home with his family, thanking God for His protection during these trying events.

"By God's amazing and abundant grace, we are back together again, this time at home in North Carolina where it was 60

degrees when we pulled up at sunset,” Boyd wrote. “I am a Bible-believing, God-fearing family man who loves his wife of 25 years and his children.

“I’m not a criminal or a felon. But I will defend my family and my brethren in Christ when attacked. And, if I’m the only line of defense between a monster and my kids or an innocent person, I will defend myself and so defend them. For these things, I make no apology. It is a man’s duty before God.”

While a court case still looms, the communication of county officials has been suspicious and lacking.

At the time of this article, when WORLD reached out to County Attorney Chris Christensen, Deputy County Attorney David Buchler and Madison County Justice Court administrator Kayla Bean had all left messages to their offices unanswered.

In the end, Christians can pray that justice is served, and the Boyd’s can continue their march proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in peace and safety. {eo}

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