From: Chief David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>
Sent: 1/21/2022 1:21:53 PM
To: APD Executive Staff <policeexecutivestaff@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Arrested Journalists

FYI

David J. Zack
Chief of Police
City of Asheville Police Department
Office: (828) 259-5901
Email: dzack@ashevillenc.gov

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Han Winogrond** <hangalen7@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jan 21, 2022 at 12:11 PM
Subject: Arrested Journalists
To: <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>

Hiya Chief!

I'm reaching out to you, Todd Williams, the Mayor and City Council to address the Asheville PD arrests of two working journalists on a Christmas night raid of a homeless camp.

After noting that they were recording matters of public interest from a distance they targeted each of them specifically for trespassing and arrest and confiscated one of their phones. This act goes directly against the first amendment, our freedom of the press, and is a clear attempt to operate in secret, a violation of constitutional law.

Actions like this will invariably end in a lawsuit that the city will have to pay for. The bad faith charge of trespassing against journalists actively covering a story in a public place is clearly an effort to intimidate the press and hide their actions from the public.

I know that City Council has very little control over the police force, also deeply concerning, but I wanted to make sure you were aware that citizens are very concerned. Only tyrannical governments single out journalists for arrest.

This has caught the attention of national news agencies including Radio Free, US Freedom Tracker, and, notably, the Committee to Protect Journalists, which has condemned the arrests.

Officers cannot be allowed to selectively use the threat of trespass to intimidate, harass, and arrest journalists. The bar to arrest a journalist must be set high. Any charge of trespass against a journalist should contain an intent to do something illegal. Last I checked, reporting on police in a public square in this city is not illegal? Their hearings are scheduled for March 8th.

I want to be clear, this is not a letter about the homeless situation. I am not expressing an opinion on that. I know it's a tough thing and I am sensitive to the challenges you and your officers face.

My other motive for contacting you is because I have shared this story on social media and officers have been accused of retaliatory acts in the past, including in the above arrests. I have no idea if allegations of retaliation are true. I just feel safer having you know that I've been outspoken about this.

Thank you for your time and your service,

Han Winogrond
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