

## Press Release

### **Missouri Police Chief Fired for Exercising Freedom of Speech**

Police Chief Michael Bland of Bellflower, Missouri was wrongfully fired for speaking to the media and criticizing the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney.

*“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.” –Robert F. Kennedy*

On January 23, 2013 Chief Mike Bland was interviewed on camera by KTVI Fox 2 after the Montgomery County Prosecutor refused to issue charges on several serial burglary suspects. During that interview, Chief Bland criticized the Montgomery County Prosecutor because the serial burglars who confessed were released from jail and were not charged.

In the days to follow, the Montgomery County Missouri Prosecutor, Nathan Curroz, met with city officials from Bellflower as well as the media. On February 12, 2013, the Police Chief of Bellflower was informed by Bellflower Mayor, Jeanie Martin that he was relieved of duty because he spoke to the media about the serial burglars being released from jail. Prior to speaking to the media on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, Chief Bland obtained permission from the mayor to speak to Fox News. Chief Bland has the phone records to back up his defense as well as other documentation backing up claims of cover up and corruption.

At Hunt for Justice, we defend the rights of police officers who are wrongfully accused during the course of their duties. Chief Bland’s firing comes on the heels of Montgomery County’s wrongful prosecution of several Detectives from St. Charles. We believe that Chief Bland was well within his constitutional right to speak to the media and did so with the permission of Mayor Jeanie Martin. Chief Bland has a duty to protect the citizens of his community and was doing so by exposing the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney’s lack of attention to the prosecution of serial burglars within the small community of Bellflower, Mo. Meanwhile, one of the self-admitted burglary suspects remains at large and a risk to the general public. Chief Bland is one of a list of officers who have been wronged by public officials in Montgomery County Missouri.

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