



City of Grinnell

...Jewel of the Prairie

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Michael McClelland
Chief of Police

April 14th, 2023

On April 14th, 2023, I met with Jasper County Attorney Scott Nichols and Jasper County IT employee/Reserve Deputy Sheriff Ryan Eaton at the County Attorney's Office over Michael Merritt.

I learned from Scott that Michael is a Navy Veteran who is educated. Michael is a borderline 1st Amendment Auditor. Last Scott knew, Michael and his current girlfriend Monica Speaks didn't have jobs and weren't paying rent in Newton so they were getting kicked out of apartments all the time. He would take the landlords to court though but was losing, which I'm guessing is why he moved to 306 East Street in Grinnell.

In 2019ish, Michael's ex-wife Claudia Merritt received a no contact order in California protecting her and their children. It sounds like Michael may have abused them but it's unknown if it was physical or sexual as the case documents are sealed. Claudia's mother apparently contacted Michael and claimed that the kids were going to be homeless. Michael wanted Claudia to be charged for the NCO violation, but the California PD wouldn't file charges as they deemed the contact was enticed by Claudia. Michael became very upset over this and that's when the downward spiral began.

Michael moved to Ames at some point. His brother and sister in-law live there and are professors at Iowa State University. I don't know if some of the children are with them, but he began accusing them of hiding his kids from him. He wanted Ames PD to charge them, and they declined. So, he began lawsuits and FOIA requests against everyone. (Ames PD, ISU etc.)

He then moved to Marshalltown, where he met a female in church and something took place and they broke up. He began making accusations towards other church members and when Marshalltown PD wouldn't do anything then he started up again there. While he was in Marshalltown, they had him labeled as mental health issues and armed and dangerous.

He then moved to Newton, and at some point they spoke to Marshalltown PD and they went and checked his residence. At that time, no firearms were found, and he didn't have a car. He apparently had been in everyday at Newton PD and is now trespassed from there. The Newton City Attorney Mr. Bricks is having issues with him and on the verge of wanting harassment charges. Michael began posting on Facebook the direct routes the Jasper County Attorneys were taking to and from their office and the courthouse. He was blocked from Facebook. Eaton lost his cool in a response email which set things off. Michael is wanting Eaton to be charged and Jasper County will not be doing that per Scott. He has been



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kicked out of the Jasper County Attorneys Office multiple times. He will go government buildings and record both inside/outside. If he asks for someone specific and he gets told they aren't there he will ask for a building tour so he can verify. His last FOIA request through Jasper County took 30 hours to complete and he's allegedly filing lawsuits there as well. He chased Eaton in the courthouse to a private office where he continued to bang on the door until he was finally told to leave. Scott stated that if he knew Michael had any money, he would file suit against him for defamation.

He has made comments to Jasper County that he is an asshole and psychotic. He is also dealing with the Iowa Public Information Board. He has done approximately 400 requests through them causing the director to get fed up with dealing with him and she retired. Jasper County officials are meeting with the board soon over Michael.

At around 02:00 hours, Sgt. Wray took a phone call from Michael wanting us to charge Eaton with harassment for making a false criminal complaint over his stalking issue of the Jasper County Attorneys. Sgt. Wray explained that the complaint needed to be filed in Jasper County as that is where the crime took place. Michael didn't like that answer and then ranted on Facebook posting a letter to Chief McClelland and tagging the PD.

At 16:14 hours, I was asked to speak to Michael in the front lobby as he had paperwork to give me. Everything he had talked about was involving Eaton and Jasper County. I referred him to speak to Scott first about the alleged stalking/harassment issue with Eaton and if he didn't like the way they handled it then he could always speak to the Attorney General's Office. That is when I found out that AG Bird was the Guthrie County Attorney at one point and that is where one of his children is located so he doesn't seem to care about her either. For the most part the children are older, but he has one child in Montana in foster care. That foster father allegedly is a Neo-Nazi follower. His main goal has been to try and track down these kids.

If we are called to deal with him, have a supervisor speak to him if one is working. Make sure your body cameras are on and be very cordial with him. He will be persistent and possibly try to overload you whether that is intentional or unintentional but keep your cool. If he wants to request information have him come in during business hours to speak to Wanda and explain to him that she is the one that handles all of that.

In the event, that you do deal with him please send Capt. Johnson a detailed email of your interaction with him.