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Felony Charges Dismissed Against Woman Who Supposedly Assaulted TownHall Manager with Soundwaves from Megaphone

Posted By Sam Allard on Thu, Nov 18, 2021 at 11:59 am



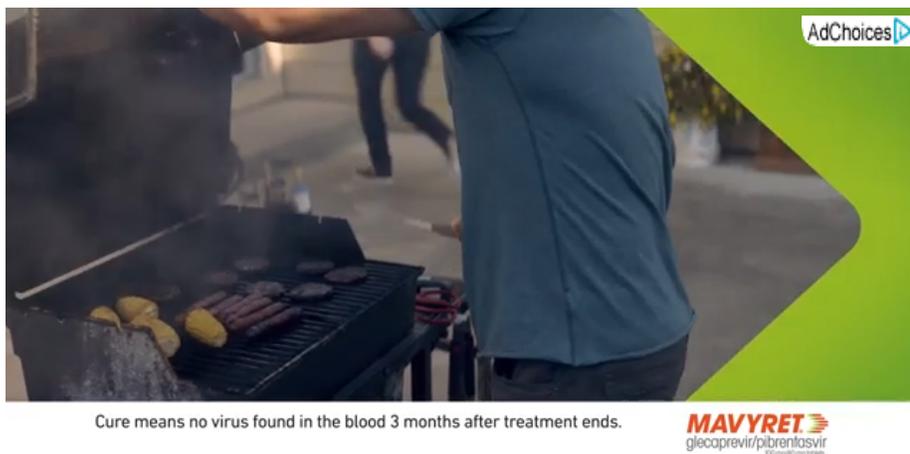
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Cuyahoga County prosecutors have, at last, dismissed **one of the more outrageous felony indictments in recent memory**. Twenty-two-year-old Sydney Yahner had been charged with felony assault and menacing for using a megaphone at a protest in July of 2020 at the TownHall eatery in Ohio City and for allegedly causing permanent hearing damage to a manager there.

Prosecutor Michael O'Malley's office dismissed the charges Tuesday before the case

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was scheduled to go to trial Wednesday. Yahner could have faced up to eight years in prison if convicted.



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Her defense attorney Peter Pattakos described the indictment as a retaliatory legal maneuver undertaken by a wealthy and politically influential family, the Georges. Bobby George, with whom Scene has had prior legal disputes, owns and operates TownHall. The manager who alleged that her hearing had been permanently damaged by Sydney Yahner's amplified voice is Jacqueline Boyd, Bobby George's first cousin.

"Every decent citizen of this state should be terrified by the fact that their government would charge protesters for committing felony assault with the soundwaves issued from megaphones, based on nothing but facially ridiculous and easily disprovable lies by politically influential multi-millionaires who admitted that they didn't like the speech that was coming through those megaphones and would do whatever was within their power to muzzle it," said Pattakos, in a statement. (Pattakos provided legal representation to Scene in its dispute with Bobby George.)

Yahner was initially indicted alongside another protester, 24-year-old Josiah Douglass, but charges were dropped against him in the weeks following the indictment. Both were members of the activist organization With Peace We Protest.

The TownHall demonstration was the third of three staged outside restaurants owned by Bobby George and/or his father, Tony George. These were organized during a summer of widespread racial justice protests in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. The WPWP event was largely in response to perceived racist and sexist behavior by the owners and managers at TownHall. Protesters were also responding to what they regarded as the restaurant's dangerous posture toward the Coronavirus pandemic.

Prosecutors dropped the charges against Yahner after two experts confirmed that Boyd suffered no permanent hearing damage. The weaponization of the megaphone had been the basis of the felony indictment.

Yahner expressed gratitude and relief in an official statement posted as part of the Pattakos Law Firm's press release.

“There are so many people trapped in the criminal justice system because they didn’t have the support and resources that I’ve had,” she said. “Without the fearless and generous efforts of my attorneys and the outpouring of support I received from my family and community, I could have easily been scared into taking a plea for a crime I didn’t commit. I will forever stand in solidarity with those who have been falsely charged of crimes and will work to advocate against the blatant abuse and misuse of public resources represented by my prosecution.”

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Tags: TownHall, Bobby George, Sydney Yahner, megaphone, bullhorn, protest, George Floyd, Image

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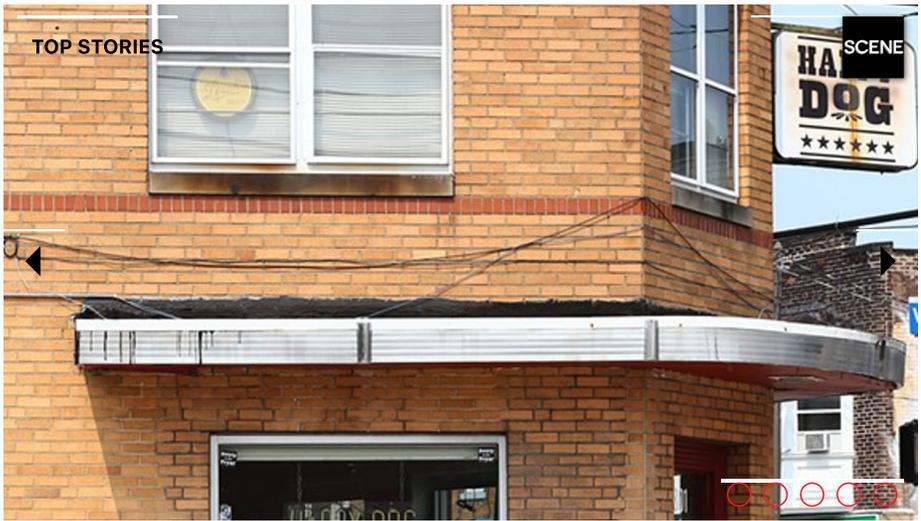
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