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TownHall owner Bobby George threatened Cleveland cop in profanity-laced tirade after police refused to immediately arrest protesters in bullhorn-assault case

Updated: Dec. 23, 2021, 7:20 p.m. | Published: Dec. 23, 2021, 5:28 p.m.

TownHall owner Bobby George calls Cleveland cop a 'little b----' and 'pie...



TownHall owner Bobby George calls Cleveland cop a 'little b----' and 'piece of s---' in phone call



By [Cory Shaffer, cleveland.com](#)

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- TownHall owner and restaurateur Bobby George threatened a Cleveland police officer in a profanity-filled phone call earlier this year as the officer was attempting to explain why police had not immediately arrested demonstrators at July 2020 protest outside the Ohio City restaurant. George's cousin had complained that the demonstrators had damaged her hearing with a loud bullhorn at the protest.

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"You're a f----- bum, and if you weren't a police officer, I'd whoop your a--, too," George told the officer, who is not named in the recording, which was released via body camera video after a public-records request.

George was upset that police officers did not arrest the protesters, later identified as Sydney Yahner and Josiah Douglas, on the spot of at the July 12, 2020, protest outside the West 25th Street restaurant. His cousin Jacqueline Boyd, who is also a manager at the restaurant, complained to police on the scene several times that the bullhorn was hurting her ear.

A grand jury later indicted Yahner and Douglas for felonious assault after a doctor diagnosed Boyd with tinnitus. The charges against both were later dropped after two independent experts determined Boyd did not suffer any long-term hearing damage attributable to the incident.

The City of Cleveland provided the video to cleveland.com in response to a public records request.



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George told cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer that he did not regret the statements, which he said were made in frustration after two of his downtown restaurants were burned and looted during the May 30, 2020, riots, and protesters targeted TownHall and made threatening comments to him and his employees.

“I do not apologize for continuing to stand up for my employees and family members, and I will continue to protect them,” he said.

Douglas, Yahner and about a dozen other protesters with the group With Peace We Protest organized several demonstrations outside TownHall in July 2020. The demonstration came after a manager at the restaurant came under fire for telling a former employee of Ukrainian descent to “go back to the country you came from” after he made posts criticizing the restaurant’s adherence to social distancing requirements. Former female employees also levied accusations of sexism against George and TownHall on social media.

Boyd was working as a hostess at the back entrance of the restaurant’s patio, and the protesters gathered across a small alleyway in the parking lot. Two Cleveland police cars were stationed on either side of the alley to monitor the protests.

Videos previously released show the group using the megaphone for several hours yelling at Boyd and the restaurant’s customers on the patio, and Yahner following Boyd as she walked up multiple times to ask police officers to stop the protesters and turning on an electronic siren feature to blare the siren toward Boyd.

The officers did not intervene in the demonstration.

The video of the call with George begins with the officer, whose name is not included in the video, telling George he wanted to “explain what happened there and how we’re gonna proceed.”

George interrupted and told the officer that he knew what happened because he was there.

“I begged you guys to protect her and you didn’t do anything, and they finally f----- blew her ear drum,” George said. “I’m suing all you mother----- and I’m not gonna be happy til you lose your job, you piece of s---.”

The officer told George that he could sue them, but again tried to explain their plan to proceed. George called him a “little b----” and asked him how he would feel if someone did that to his daughter.

“You’re not a f----- man, you’re a f----- coward, you little b----,” George said.

The detective then ended the interview.

After the demonstration, George and Boyd filed for a civil protection order against Douglas, accusing him of making derogatory comments toward Boyd during the protests. A judge granted the order. Pattakos, who declined to comment, said Douglas has appealed the granting of the order to the 8th District Court of Appeals, and the appeal is pending.

A Cleveland police detective recommended Yahner and Douglas face felony charges and Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael O’Malley’s took the case to a grand jury in January 2021, more than six months after the demonstration. The grand jury indicted the pair on a single count of felonious assault each. O’Malley’s office dropped the charge against Douglas before his first court appearance after determining that Yahner was the “main aggressor.”

Yahner’s defense attorney, Peter Pattakos, filed an expert report in July from an Ohio State University doctor and professor who is an expert in hearing loss. The expert reviewed Boyd’s medical records and found no evidence of long-term hearing damage.

O’Malley’s office then got its own expert who examined Boyd and also found that she suffered no long-term hearing damage, prosecutors said. O’Malley’s office then dropped charges against Yahner, and the case was closed.

George, who is the son of longtime Northeast Ohio businessman Tony George, is the majority owner of more than 50 companies that collectively employ 2,000 people, according to an article earlier this year in [Smart Business magazine](#). In addition to

TownHall, his businesses include the popular bars and restaurants Rebol, Barley House and multiple Harry Buffalo locations.

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George said in a statement that his comments came after vandals set fire to Rebol and looted his other downtown restaurants, and his employees had been receiving threatening comments online.

He said he and his cousin called police several times during the July 12, 2020, protest to complain that the protesters were hurting her ear and begged them to arrest them, and that police had relayed to them that they had orders not to intervene in the protest.

“The unlawful conduct and lack of protective action ultimately led to hearing loss for my cousin (who I was raised with and is like a sister to me), violence, and other destruction,” George’s statement said. “Every person has a right to protest. It’s one of the many things I love about our great country. Vigorous debate is good. But, hostile, threatening, or violent protestors cannot be tolerated, and more protective action and preventive measures should have been taken.”

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