

APR 21 2023

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN**

James W. McGrath
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
vs.)	2020 CF 407, 408
)	409 and 410
JERALD SANDAGE,)	
Defendant.)	

**PEOPLE'S OBJECTION TO CHRISTOPHER HANSEN'S REQUEST FOR
EXTENDED MEDIA COVERAGE**

Now comes the PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS by Julia R. Rietz, Champaign County State's Attorney, and hereby objects to the request made by Christopher Hansen pursuant to the Sixth Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 2013-5, Extended Media Coverage, to record proceedings in the above-entitled matter. In furtherance of our objection the People state as follows:

1. Administrative order 2013-5 allows the Court to permit recording of court proceedings under specific conditions. One of the requirements for being approved to record court proceedings is that the recording must be done by "News Media." The order defines "News Media" as "established news gathering and reporting agencies and their representatives whose function is to inform the public." Admin Order 2013-5(I)(B).
2. The Freedom of Information Act defines "News media" as "a newspaper or other periodical issued at regular intervals whether in print or electronic format, a news service whether in print or electronic format, a radio station, a television station, a television network, a community antenna television service, or a person or corporation engaged in making news reels or other motion picture news for public showing." 5 ILCS 140/2(f).
3. The Office of the Attorney General, in 2017 PAC 46249, a non-binding Public Access Counselor opinion letter, acknowledged the lack of Appellate Court precedent defining "news media." The opinion letter found cases from other jurisdictions interpreting similar statutory definitions to provide

persuasive guidance. The opinion stated that “those cases generally hold that ‘a individual or entity that self-publishes information on the Internet generally must demonstrate some adherence to recognized journalistic standards such as editorial oversight or the creation of original content similar to that of traditional media’ in order to be considered ‘news media.’” Ill Att’y Gen. PAC Req. Rev. Ltr. 2017 PAC 46249.

4. Mr. Hansen runs his own website, www.checkCU.org. He describes the purpose for his website on the “About” page as follows:

I founded Check CU due to the failures of other local news media to cover issues of importance. The Champaign-Urbana area suffers from too many incestuous relationships and that has the effect of causing issues of corruption and incompetence to go unreported, or to be reported dishonestly.

I have been deeply engaged in the issues of local governance and oversight since I was falsely arrested and prosecuted in 2015 after being accused of a robbery that never occurred. My well-connected accuser and the police and jail officers who committed abuses were never held accountable, and the local justice system demonstrated itself to be a circus of corruption. You may read my full story on that incident here: www.corruption.com.

My primary areas of interest are government transparency, public records, open meetings, government corruption, free speech, police brutality and misconduct, jail misconduct, misconduct and unethical/illegal behavior by elected officials and public employees, and all types of discrimination and bias (especially by public entities). I am very familiar with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act. On a daily basis, I increase my familiarity with the Illinois State Constitution, the Citizen Participation Act, the Local Records Act, the Urbana City Code, and the Champaign City Code.

I am a member of the Investigative Journalists and Editors (IRE) and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ).

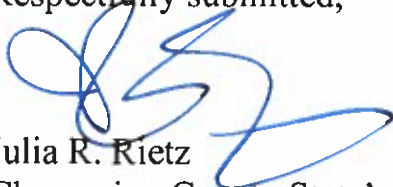
I have lived in Urbana since I came here in 2002 to study Electrical Engineering at the University of Illinois. I believe my engineering background and technical approach may provide a clearer perspective when analyzing and deciphering processes that are meant to obfuscate by design. This is important when searching for ways to instill accountability in systems that have been designed to have none.

5. Mr. Hansen's website does not meet the definition of "News Media" under the Administrative Order definition, the statutory definition provided by the FOIA Act, or the persuasive guidance provided by the Attorney General's Office Public Access Bureau and therefore he should not be allowed the privilege of recording court proceedings under the Administrative Order.
6. The lack of adherence to recognized journalistic standards such as editorial oversight is particularly important in a case such as this, in that the offenses charged here are particularly sensitive and personal. The Administrative Order on recording in courtrooms recognizes the issues particular to prosecutions for sexual abuse in paragraph II(B)(2), which prohibits extended media coverage of victim testimony and makes an objection to coverage by a testifying victim in any other forcible felony prosecution "presumed valid." That paragraph goes on to say "the judge shall exercise broad discretion in deciding whether there is cause for prohibition. This list is not exclusive. The judge may find cause in comparable situations." Here, the case is set for a hearing on the admissibility of propensity evidence. The Court may hear potential evidence about charged and uncharged victims. The Court may or may not allow that evidence to be presented at trial. Without adherence to recognized journalistic standards such as editorial oversight Mr. Hansen may post inappropriate and personal information about charged and uncharged victims on his website, further violating their privacy and potentially tainting the jury pool.
7. It is important to note that the People would be objecting to any media recording being allowed at the upcoming propensity motion

hearing, or any pretrial motion hearings, to protect against tainting the jury pool in advance of trial.

For these reasons, the People respectfully request that this Honorable Court deny Mr. Hansen's request to record proceedings in the above-entitled matter, and for such and other relief as is equitable and just.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JR', is written over the printed name.

Julia R. Rietz
Champaign County State's Attorney