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Three Evangelical Preachers, Three Same-Sex Crime Cases

by Kilian Melloy

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Shane Montgomery

The pastor of a church in Little Rock, Arkansas, has reportedly confessed to sexual contact with a 15-year-old boy he met online, while a former Minnesota youth pastor has been committed to state care as a sexual predator. In Virginia, a pastor arrested in a restroom vice sting has seen his case thrown out.

The pastor of The River Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, Shane Montgomery, was placed under arrest Dec. 10, reported [Today's THV.com](#), the Web site of local TV station KTHV, on Dec. 12. Police had obtained a search warrant for Montgomery's home; after his arrest, authorities said, Montgomery confessed to having met the boy online and to having sex with him. Montgomery told authorities that the encounter was consensual.

"After an interview of both people, we did charge him with sexual assault in the fourth degree," a police officer, Terry Hastings, told the media.

"We intend to fully cooperate with the investigation by the police as it proceeds," said the church in a statement. "Again, we express our deep sense of remorse for the situation and our commitment to assist in the help and healing process that is needed. We have nothing more to add to this statement at this time."

Montgomery was released on bail the evening of his arrest and resigned as pastor of The River Church the following day.

In a Dec. 8 article, local Northfield, Minnesota newspaper the [Northfield News](#) reported that a Third District Court judge found former youth pastor Grant Junior Grayson to be sexually dangerous and cleared his institutionalization. Grayson had been convicted of sexually abusing a 12-year-old boy during his tenure as a youth pastor at the Northfield Alliance Church, and twice violated his parole after his release from prison.

The process of committing Grayson took years, during which time evidence that Grayson had victimized other children came to light. The article said that those who are so committed are not released until such time as they can prove they no longer pose a threat.

"I'm pleased that I won't have to explain to another victim why (Grayson) is back on the streets," said Rice County Attorney Paul Beaumaster, who sought and obtained Grayson's commitment. "These are people that need help, they're being civilly committed because they can't control themselves."

The indecent exposure case against John Franklin McCarroll, the pastor of Trinity Life Center in Coeburn, Virginia, was dismissed, reported a Dec. 11 article in the [Times News](#). McCarroll was arrested last April 8 by Kingsport vice officers working undercover at a public restroom that had been the subject of complaints.

According to the officers, McCarroll had approached an officer in the restroom with his fly unzipped and told the officer that he was looking for something. When the officer asked what McCarroll was seeking, the reply he allegedly got was, "Some of that young stuff." McCarroll then proceeded to return to a urinal and place his genitals through a

hole in the partition between urinals, the officer claimed. The officer and a second undercover officer placed McCarroll under arrest, at which time, the officers agreed, McCarroll said, "I'm sorry, I knew this was wrong." Both officers also agreed that McCarroll had implored them not to allow the story to hit the papers.

McCarroll told a very different story, saying that he had looked at the officer only out of disbelief, saying that when he entered the restroom he spotted "a man standing at the commode exposing himself." McCarroll also said that he looked through a hole at the officer, thinking to himself, "Is he doing what I think he's doing?" However, McCarroll said, he exchanged no words with the officer until he stepped outside and was placed under arrest. "...I said, 'what for' and he said, 'You exposed yourself to me in there,'" McCarroll recounted.

McCarroll denied telling the officer he was looking for "Some of that young stuff," saying, "I didn't think he was that young." And rather than admitting to wrongdoing or pleading for the story to be kept from the press, McCarroll said, he simply asked the officers, "Will this be in the newspaper?"

"I have carefully studied indecent exposure," said Kingsport Sessions Judge Duane Snodgrass. "I cannot in good conscience do anything except dismiss this case."

Kilian Melloy serves as EDGE Media Network's Assistant Arts Editor, writing about film, theater, food and drink, and travel, as well as contributing a column. His professional memberships include the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association, the Boston Online Film Critics Association, the Independent Reviewers of New England (IRNE) and the Boston Theater Critics Association (Elliot Nortons).

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