

# KSP: Minister arrested on sex abuse charges

BY JAMES MAYSE  
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

A Utica man who is also a minister at an Owensboro church was arrested Monday night on charges of having a sexual relationship with a minor that lasted several years.

David A. Rodgers, 40, who had been worship pastor at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, was arrested around 7:30 p.m. Monday and charged with third-degree rape, second-degree sodomy (position of trust), first-degree sexual abuse, procuring or promoting the use of a minor by electronic means and possession of material depicting a sexual performance by a minor (victim under age 12).

Trooper Corey King, public affairs officer for Kentucky State Police in Henderson, said detectives received a complaint in early January. The alleged abuse occurred over a number of years, according to authorities.

King said the minor was about 13 years old when she

first met Rodgers. The minor's association with Rodgers "progressed to the sexual relationship," which lasted until the minor was 17- or 18 years-old, King said. Rodgers' arrest citation says detectives interviewed him, and it says: "In the interview, (Rodgers) confessed to the (various) offenses."

King said the procurement charge stems from how Rodgers communicated with the juvenile, which King said is believed to be over social media.

Second-degree sodomy and the procurement charges are both Class B felonies when the accused is in a position of authority or special trust over the victim.

Following arraignment Wednesday, Rodgers was released from the Daviess County Detention Center after posting a \$75,000 full-cash bond.



David A. Rodgers

## KENTUCKY

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will bring history to life and ask the question: "What does 250 mean in your community?"

**HOW TO PARTICIPATE**  
Kentucky Humanities invites community organizations, libraries and cultural institutions throughout the state to participate. Groups are encouraged to collaborate with partner organizations in their area and apply for these limited •availability programs.

"Our American Story: Kentucky's Voices invites neighbors to gather, listen, and rediscover the threads that bind us," said Kay

Madrick, interim executive director at Kentucky Humanities. "Kentucky's history is full of resolve, determination, creativity, and resourcefulness. Kentucky Humanities is proud to bring those stories to a national conversation that belongs to all of us."

Applications are available online on the Kentucky Humanities website.

Awards will be made on a rolling basis.

"Our American Story: Kentucky's Voices" is part of "By the People: Conversations Beyond 250 initiative," a broader series of community-driven programs created by humanities councils across the United States, its territories, and the District of Columbia in collaboration with local partners.

# Beshear says he's publishing book, 'Go and Do Likewise'

BY CHRISTOPHER LEACH  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LEXINGTON — Gov. Andy Beshear announced Wednesday he's releasing a book in September.

Titled "Go and Do Likewise," the book will go on sale Sept. 22. It is described as a "compelling and insightful" story about the Kentucky governor's faith, and how he uses it to shape his family and public life.

The book also will share how Beshear uses faith to counteract claims made by President Donald Trump and other public figures. It is available for presale on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple Books, Bookshop and Rakuten Kobo.

Beshear's book follows several other

prominent Democratic governors who have written books in recent months. Pennsylvania Gov. Joshua Shapiro's book "Where We Keep the Light" was released last month and California Gov. Gavin Newsom's memoir "Young Man in a Hurry" comes out Feb. 24. Beshear, who has long been considered a possible candidate for the Democratic nomination for president in 2028, has increased his presence in the spotlight in recent months. The book could be another element.

Beshear joined Jake Tapper on CNN's State of the Union on Sunday and said he did not plan to attend an annual bipartisan meeting and dinner with other governors at the White

House. Some Democratic governors reportedly weren't invited, and Beshear, who serves as chair of the Democratic Governors Association, said he won't show up if not everyone is invited.

"There's a time where you have to stand up against the drama of a president that's turned an annual bipartisan tradition and treating it like he's a 12-year-old and it's his birthday party," Beshear said. "Inviting and disinviting people, lashing out at others."

He recently made several rounds with television programs like "The View" and "The Daily Show," where he made statements about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that sparked a back and forth dispute between the governor and the agency.

## How HB6 could improve child care in the state

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

House lawmakers have advanced a bill that Rep. Samara Heavrin, R-Leitchfield, says will modernize the state's child care sector.

She said she sponsored the bill because Kentucky has a child care shortage and should update rules, regulations and infrastructure in public agencies tasked with overseeing and supporting the sector.

"High-quality child care is the key to unlocking our commonwealth's education and workforce potential," Heavrin said. "This legislation has the goal to bring new life to our child care centers, create pathways to reinvigorate our communities, and put in place prescriptive policies and procedures to grow our early childhood education system much like the success seen in Montana and Tennessee which have pursued similar reforms."

HB 6 would address several of the core shortfalls identified in the Chamber of Commerce's Child Care Collaborative report released in May 2025, she said.

The Kentucky Chamber created the Child Care



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**Cynthiana Baptist Church Daycare celebrated after being rated by Community Based Services as a Level-4 childcare provider in the Kentucky ALL-STARS tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in 2025.**

Collaborative to bring together a team of 40 stakeholders from across the commonwealth to identify and address foundational issues with child care and its regulatory agencies.

Across 18 months, the collaborative identified 37 issues to expand access, improve quality and modernize Kentucky's child care sector.

HB 6 would impact the child care sector in multiple ways, Heavrin said.

The measure would address the regulatory environment child care centers operate in and require third-party review of child care regulations across an

extended timeline to ensure that any regulatory reform is undergone in a prescriptive manner.

It also would modernize the ALL-STARS rating system by creating an outcomes-based rating model as opposed to the current theory-based model.

Another regulatory component of this measure would authorize micro facilities like regulations in Indiana.

The bill would help implement robust data collection related to the child care industry, Heavrin said, and require the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to track real child care capacity

as opposed to licensed capacity.

"Other provisions of this measure would require a monthly count of child care providers and establish fiscal transparency with an annual financial report from the Office of the State Budget Director," she said.

Additional provisions of this measure would modernize programs established by previous sessions of the General Assembly such as reforms to the Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership (ECCAP) and bolster the Certified Child Care Communities designation available to local governments.

"We not only want to address the child care crisis but improve the system of laws, regulations, and policies surrounding our child care centers to ensure that these centers operate at the most efficient and safe manner," Heavrin added. "HB 6 would ensure that we move our commonwealth forward in a responsible and prescriptive way."

This measure moves on to the Senate for further consideration.

## SICK

FROM PAGE A1

In 1998, Caudill attempted suicide in a detention center, the therapist said.

"He attempted to hang himself and the officers had told me when he was cut down, he was turning blue. They actually sent him to an outside hospital to get him checked out. It was pretty significant," Hinkebein said, adding that there were additional suicide attempts.

She said she diagnosed Caudill with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and recommended that he go to the Kentucky State Reformatory for its specialized psychiatric unit to receive more intensive treatment.

Hinkebein testified that Caudill sometimes failed to take prescribed medications to manage his moods while he was jailed.

"Medicine non-compliance is pretty common, especially for bipolar disorder, because when people get mad, it feels good. They don't want to medicate that because medicine will bring that down a little bit," Hinkebein said.

Dr. Sidney Binks, a neuropsychologist, testified via Zoom on Wednesday about Caudill's Bipolar Disorder Type 1 diagnosis.

After a two-day screening, Binks found that Caudill exhibited some psychosis and anxiety and found he had a genetic predisposition to the mood disorder.

"One of the first things that he said to me when I met him and started the interview was that he really wants to understand in a new way what is going on with him," he testified. "That he wanted to understand on an emotional level what his problem is, and as a part of that he wanted to be very open. As part of that, he shared some things with me that went past what he's shared before."

Caudill was suffering a psychotic break at the time the offense occurred on Oct. 30, 2024, Binks said.



KODEE BRINEGAR/The News-Enterprise

**Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Chris McCrary was one of the prosecutors to argue that double homicide suspect Dustin Caudill should receive the death penalty after he reportedly shot two others and set them on fire in Oct. 2024, months after being released from prison after he was found guilty of killing his younger brother and mother in 1994. The hearing will continue 9 a.m. Feb. 26.**



KODEE BRINEGAR/The News-Enterprise

**Dr. Jean Hinkebein, health care provider primarily located in Fort Campbell, testified Wednesday that she was one of the first doctors to treat double homicide suspect, Dustin Caudill in 1995 after he was convicted of killing his younger brother and mother in 1994. Caudill had a motion filed to remove the death penalty in his current case, where he is accused of killing and setting fire to two others in Oct. 2024.**

"He was very much having active symptoms, that it very much frightened him. He was not on medication and throughout the record when he would not be on medication the symptoms of the bipolar disorder would present themselves," he said. "There are individuals for whom they can be stable for a while without medication. Dustin demonstrates a very fast decompensation when he's not medicated."

Caudill self-medicated with methamphetamine and similar drugs, Binks testified, which exacerbated his conditions.

### ARE WE BORN EVIL?

Hardin Circuit Court Judge Larry Ashlock asked the doctor if people are born evil, or are made evil.

"I've got an individual, who at the age of 15, took a shotgun, shot his younger brother and mother. There's an indication that there was serious physical abuse, mental, sexual, including the possibility of incest, drug-induced things," the judge said. "Then I've got that same individual, gets out of a lengthy prison sentence within a few years and basically shoots a couple more people in the

head and attempts to burn up the house.

"I probably would call that evil," Ashlock said.

But Binks told the judge some who commit heinous acts like murder aren't always evil – sometimes they're sick.

"These individuals are at extreme risk of committing very serious crimes because of their loss of touch with reality and the psychosis that's a part of the illness," Binks said.

Defense and prosecution will reconvene to continue the hearing on Feb. 26.

### ABOUT CAUDILL'S CASE

At 5 a.m. on Oct. 30, 2024, Elizabethtown police and fire units were dispatched to 508 Henon Lane for a structure fire.

After the fire was extinguished, firefighters reportedly recovered the bodies of Blake France, 41, of Greenville, and Anthony Garrett, 43, of Elizabethtown.

Both had sustained gunshot wounds, according to police reports.

Caudill was later detained by police at a hotel on East Dixie Avenue for the crimes after witnesses reported seeing his truck leave the crime scene, according to police reports.

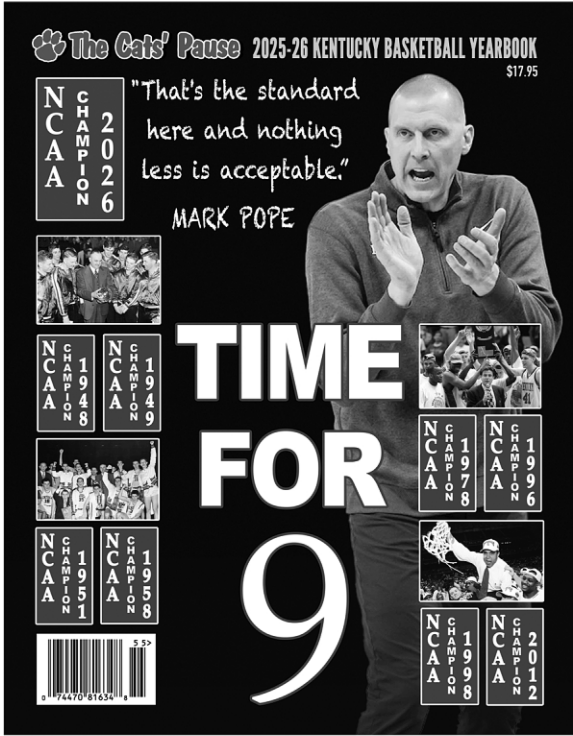
Video surveillance from the motel showed footage of Caudill exiting the truck and later discarding a handgun, police report. After searching the vehicle, belongings of France and Garrett were found inside.

At the scene of the fire, police said Caudill also discharged his weapon at a third victim.

During an interview, police said Caudill confessed to the offenses, including admitting to shooting the victims and intentionally setting fire to the home. He also reportedly admitted to stealing the victim's wallets and discarding them in a gas station trash can.

Caudill is being held in lieu of a \$1 million cash bond at the Hardin County Detention Center.

## 2025-26 KENTUCKY BASKETBALL YEARBOOK



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