

Former prosecutors call for transparency in Douglas Harless case

BY MACEE SWAFFORD
STAFF WRITER



Doug Harless

LONDON — Two former prosecutors have issued a letter calling for additional transparency and disclosure of records following the Laurel County Grand Jury's recent decision not to indict in the fatal officer-involved shooting of Douglas Harless.

In a letter released last Thursday, former Commonwealth's Attorney and Circuit Judge Danny Evans and former Commonwealth's Attorney Tom Handy addressed several state and federal officials, including U.S. Attorney Paul McCaffrey, Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman, Kentucky State Police Commissioner Phillip "PJ" Burnett Jr., and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Parman.

The letter references the Laurel County Grand Jury's recent decision in the case.

"The Laurel County Grand Jury returned no indictment on February 20, 2026, regarding the death of Douglas Harless," the letter states. "Mr. Harless was killed by the London Police Department in his home on December 23, 2024."

Evans and Handy also reference statements they say were made by local law enforcement regarding the entry into Harless' home. The former prosecutors argue that more details about the incident should be made public following the grand jury's decision.

"We believe the family of Mr. Harless and the people of Laurel County and the Commonwealth of Kentucky are entitled to know what took place the night Mr. Harless was killed by police in his own home," the letter states. "Fatal shootings involving police officers are routinely followed up with detailed information freely disseminated to the public and press alike. This has not been done in this case."

The letter outlines several

requests for information to be filed with the Laurel Circuit Court Clerk, including the search warrant affidavit, the search warrant itself and the Kentucky State Police investigative report.

It also calls for disclosure of evidence gathered prior to officers entering the home, identification of all officers involved in the investigation and entry, and statements from officers who witnessed the shooting.

Among the questions raised in the letter are where Harless was located when he was shot, whether he pointed or fired a gun at officers, and whether ballistic tests were conducted.

Evans and Handy concluded the letter by urging full disclosure of the investiga-

tion.

"Silence by those conducting an investigation of the killing of an innocent man in his own home is unacceptable," the letter states. "The absence of public disclosure causes distrust and creates loss of respect for law enforcement."

At last week's regular meeting of the London City Council, Mayor Randall Weddle provided an update to council members and those in attendance regarding the status of the city's open records request tied to the ongoing case.

According to a letter sent to the city and others who have also submitted open records requests, Kentucky State Police stated that due to the large volume of documents associated with the investigation, the agency has requested until April 15 to produce all available records.

Matthew Leveridge, the special prosecutor who initially handled the case for presentation to the Laurel County Grand Jury, was contacted for comment but had not responded as of press time.

Two lost in separate vehicular accidents

BY JANIE SLAVEN
EDITOR

LAUREL COUNTY — The community is mourning the loss of two people as a result of separate vehicle-related accidents last week.

The first loss occurred March 3 at 1:25 a.m. when John L. Frazier, 21, of London died at the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Frazier had been airlifted to UT following a single-vehicle accident that occurred the night before around 8:10 p.m. on Sinking Creek Road, according to Kentucky State Police Post 11.

Preliminary investigation by KSP Trooper Shawn Boroviak indicated that Frazier was northbound on Sinking Creek Road when his vehicle left the roadway from a curve and overturned. He was ejected from the vehicle.

Laurel County Fire Department and EMS responded to the scene and rendered first aid until a helicopter could transport Frazier, who succumbed to his injuries early the following morning.

Trp. Boroviak is leading the ongoing investigation.

In a separate case later last Wednesday afternoon, the Laurel County Sheriff's Office responded to the report of a vehicle fire just before 3 p.m. off L. Gabbard Road in East Bernstadt.

According to Sheriff John Root and Detective Sergeant Taylor McDaniel, 93-year-old Marilyn G. Ayers of East Bernstadt, apparently became trapped in her vehicle when it caught fire after becoming stuck in a ditch.

Ayers was pronounced dead at the scene by the Laurel County Coroner's Office.

The investigation is being led by Sheriff Root and Det. Sgt. Taylor. They were assisted by Sgt. John Wright, Shift Sgt. Allen Turner, Det. Tommy Houston, Det. Bryon Lawson and Deputy Ethan Brown with LCSO as well as East Bernstadt Fire and Rescue, Ambulance Inc. of Laurel County and Laurel County Emergency Management.

Funeral services for Frazier were held Monday at the House-Rawlings Funeral Home. According to Bowling Funeral Home, no local service is planned for Ayers as her surviving son resides in South Carolina.

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