

Shelby man says he has established his own 'kingdom'

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Police arrest him for an invalid driver's license because he made it himself.

By Lisa King

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Late one recent afternoon, a cadre of Kentucky State Police troopers and Shelby County Sheriff's deputies gathered in Todds Point. They donned their protective vests and planned their strategy.

Their assignment: serve a warrant to a resident charged with driving without a valid license.

Yes, KSP rallied officers from two police units as a precaution in serving this warrant.

But officers say they had their reasons to be concerned, because they weren't serving this warrant to just an ordinary scofflaw.

It is said that no man is an island, but Keith Livingway, the man without a license, has tried his best to be a man without a country.

Livingway, 43, says he has denounced his U.S. citizenship and declared his 1.7 acres on Hunters Lane near Simpsonville to be an independent nation, with himself as the head of government.

And he says it's all perfectly legal.

But when he manufactured his own driver's license, issued by himself as secretary of his own state, Livingway created a spot of trouble when he was pulled over last December.

"I had a license," he said, "but it just wasn't theirs."

Livingway was put on probation by Shelby District Judge Linda Armstrong for that offense, but he apparently did not comply with the terms of that probation.

So when that probation was revoked by officials from Kentucky Alternative Program, KSP received a bench warrant for his arrest.

So on that Monday afternoon six or more state troopers and deputies led by Trooper Hunter Martin, journeyed to Livingway's "independent nation" at 235 Hunters Lane to take him into custody for having no operator's license and driving on a suspended license.

"He was very polite; we had no trouble with him at all," Martin said.

Livingway confirmed he was pleasant to officers.

"I was trying to be nice," he said, "especially since they were essentially kidnapping a foreign dignitary from his own nation."

Livingway claims he has named his property at Todds Point the Yisra'el Nation, after his Hebrew heritage, and has dubbed his house the Independent Center.

"It's all by the book," he said. "I am exercising my right of self-determination; that's how our forefathers founded this country. The OAS [Organization of American States] in Washington, D.C., upholds the right of self-determination.

"When you send your constitution to them, and to the United Nations, you have to wait six months for any objections. No one has objected."

Livingway, who said he has “hundreds” of people waiting for him to establish his own banking system so they can join his “nation,” said the procedure is all very legal and there are many more like him throughout the U.S., although police say they have not heard of any others in Shelby County.

Why would he do this?

“The purpose of all this is that we [he says there are six others in other states who have signed his “constitution”] have a state that we have formed that can never go into debt,” he said.

Livingway says he can understand why local authorities are wary of him.

“They are freaking out, but I am going to try to make an appointment with the county judge-executive, because we have got to calm them down because they think I’m part of the sovereign citizen movement, but that’s not true,” he said, referring to a radical right network of American litigants, commentators and financial scheme promoters who believe that they are answerable only to English common law and are not subject to any statutes or proceedings at the federal, state or municipal levels.

Livingway said he has done nothing wrong.

“They have tried to put me on probation as if I were a U.S. citizen,” he said, adding that he wants to meet with Judge-Executive Rob Rothenburger to explain this to him.

“I’ve got to meet with him [Rothenburger] face to face to calm their fears because they are freaking out over nothing,” Livingway said.

Rothenburger said that when Livingway contacted him, he referred him to the county attorney’s office.

“The county attorney serves as legal counsel for the Shelby County Fiscal Court, and he [Hart Megibben] will be able to determine whether there’s any basis to this,” he said.

Megibben said he did not share Livingway’s views that he does not merit the charges against him in Shelby County.

“Obviously, I don’t agree with that,” he said.

Is Livingway dangerous?

Kentucky State Trooper Kevin Calhoun said he doesn’t think so, adding that beliefs such as this are more common in eastern Kentucky, and that he had heard of someone years ago behaving in a similar fashion in Shelby County.

“I’ve never had any problems with them in the 13 years I’ve been in the Shelby County area,” he said. “From what I understand, they do business like anybody else. They pay for their food. They pay for their gas and whatever else.

“But the thing is, each time they fill up their gas tank, they’re paying state and federal tax on that gasoline, so they’re in essence, paying into the government. They may not see it that way, but that’s the reality of it.”

Livingway said he grew up in Florida and has been living in Shelby County for 18 years, having only recently established his own nation at Todds Point.

He is out on a \$500 bond from the Shelby County Detention Center and has not yet received another court date.



Shelby County Detention Center

Keith Livingway says he has established his own kingdom.

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