



Everyone is a reporter:

Handling 'gotcha' journalism

Meg Ralph • City of Overland Park • @megmralph



*"I would trust citizen journalism
as much as I would trust citizen
surgery"*

Morley Safer, - CBS News correspondent



Agenda

- Who you are
- Who I am
- Who **they** are
 - Journalists
 - First Amendment Auditors
- How to handle an audit
 - Best of
 - Worst of
- Questions/horror stories



Who are you?

Meg Ralph

- B.S. in news and information, KU
- M.S.J. in strategic communications, KU
- Career in broadcast journalism producing news and special assignments (investigative journalism)
- Seven years with KCTV5 in Kansas City
- Digital Communications Supervisor for City of Overland Park

Auditors ≠ Journalists

- Journalist: someone who writes, gathers, or prepares **news** to be broadcast or published.
- Collaborative journalism: trained journalists working with citizen journalists to cover a **news** story.
- Community journalism: locally-oriented **news** coverage that focuses on neighborhoods or small towns.



Auditors - Who are they?

- YouTube and social media personalities
- Activism journalists
- Sovereign citizens
- Criminal backgrounds
- Declining sector of social media industry
- Somewhat negative public perception



Here to help life go right.™



BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS

The Insane New Path to YouTube Fame: Taunt Cops Film It

Will Sommer

01.24.19 5:14 AM ET



first amendment auditors



first amendment auditors

first amendment **audits youtube**

first amendment auditors **oklahoma**

first amendment **audit injured**

first amendment auditors **reddit**

first amendment auditors **are jerks**

first amendment auditors **los angeles**

first amendment auditors **arrested**

first amendment **audit shot**

first amendment **audit arrested**

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

[Report inappropriate predictions](#)

IDENTMENT · Published February 16

activists' 'First audits' -- patriotism roevocation?

ukas Mikelionis | Fox News



ot while live-streaming near LA synagogue;

The transgender YouTube personality who was shot outside a [Los Angeles](#) synagogue on Thursday is part of an online community that intentionally films law

What's the difference?

Journalist

- Identifies self and a legitimate news agency
- Minimally, undergraduate degree training
- Accountable to newsroom management, viewers/readers
- Performance requirements
- Can function as a gatekeeper

Auditor

- Refuses to identify self or agency
- No training required
- Lack of accountability for truth, bias, ethics
- Not beholden to revenue generating publication
- Can cover whatever topic they find of interest



Spot an auditor in your building

- Loiter in public places and government buildings an unusually long time
- Refuse to ID themselves
- Refuse to explain their purpose
- Constantly shooting video of their interactions, or livestreaming
- Look for 1A, 2A, 4A rights violations
- Bait for confrontation
- Call police on themselves



Spot an auditor online

Channels

- News Now Patrick
- News Now _____
- Tyrant Watcher
- HATETHESTATE
- Indiana News
- Cop Watch
- Community Watch News Network
- FURRY POTATO

Terms to watch for

- Watch
- Check
- Audit
- Freedom
- Transparency



Targets

- Law enforcement
- Municipal government
- County government
- School districts
- Health departments
- Libraries
- Transportation facilities
- Anything publicly funded is fair game

What CAN they do?

- Loiter in public areas
- Film anything plainly visible from public spaces
- Film anything in a private area visible from a public space
- Film or live stream for no apparent reason
- Swear at staff or an officer
- Insult staff or an officer
- Carry a weapon
 - Concealed carry is permitted
 - Open carry is generally permitted

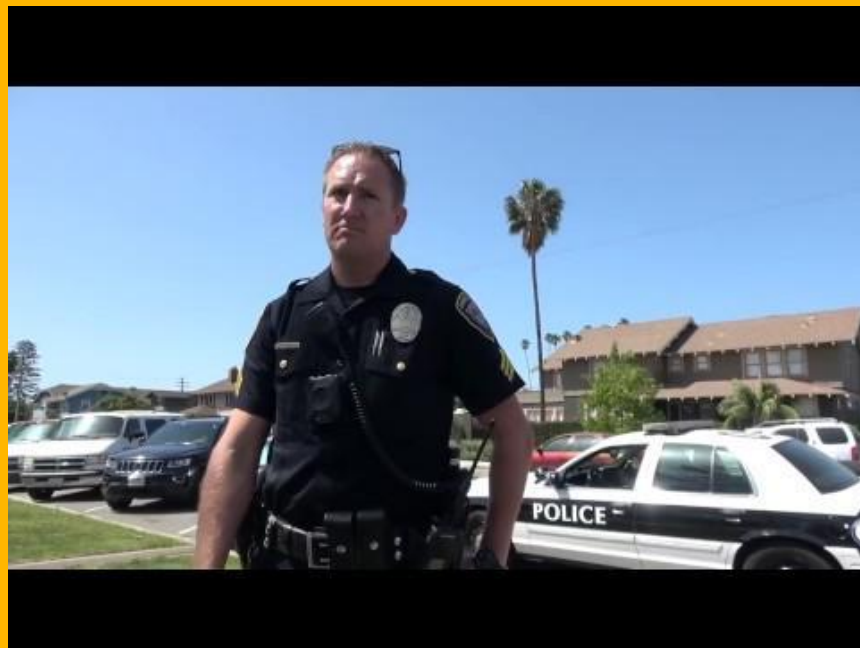
What CAN'T they do?

- Directly threaten you or another person
- Interfere with an arrest
- Interfere with official business
- Disorderly conduct or disturb the peace
- Enter designated private areas
- Shoot video or livestream in restrooms or locker rooms
- Carry a gun
 - Openly **if** signs indicate so
 - Past secure areas or checkpoints

Overland Park Police Station



Oxnard, Calif. Police Station





What to do

- Know when they're in your area and educate staff
- Be calm
- Be courteous
- Be professional
- Be aware of your tone and body language
- Treat them with the same dignity you'd treat any other member of the public
- Avoid confrontation
- IGNORE THE CAMERA



What to do

- Educate staff
- Set clear parameters on public and private spaces in your facility
 - Locked doors
 - Signage
- Take steps to secure workstations in the public view
 - Turn documents over when someone approaches
 - Close computer windows
- If necessary, invite someone back to a private area to conduct business

Little Elm, Texas City Hall



What not to do

- Don't violate their rights
- Don't tell them they can't take photos or video
- Don't try to take their camera or recording equipment
- Don't touch them
- Don't argue with them
- Don't use profanity
- Don't respond in-kind if they are aggressive
- Don't follow them
- Don't say "What are you doing here?" or "Why are you filming?"
- Don't videotape them

Wichita Airport





What to say

- “Welcome to City Hall. Can I help you with anything?”
- “Please let me know if there’s anything I can help you with.”
- “Someone called regarding your activity.”
- “You are well within your rights.”
- “You are not detained. You are free to continue with your activities. You are free to leave at any time.”



Call police if...

- You feel threatened
- They enter a clearly designated private area
- They commit a crime

Questions?
Your stories?

Resources

[KC Star - They roam public buildings, making videos. Terrorism experts say they may be dangerous](#)

[Daily Beast - The Insane New Path to YouTube Fame: Taunt Cops and Film It](#)

[3CMA - First Amendment Auditors Pop-Up presentation](#)

[NDTV - What Is 'Auditing,' And Why Did A YouTuber Get Shot For Doing It?](#)

[Fox News - Online activists' 'First Amendment audits' -- patriotism or provocation?](#)

[PoliceOne - How police should respond to 'First Amendment' audits](#)

[Securitas - Preparing for First Amendment Audits](#)

[CALRO - First Amendment Audits and How to Respond](#)

[KSA Article 62](#)

William Vennart, Overland Park police sergeant

Bob Paudert, Seymour, Mo. police chief

[Overland Park, Ks. - "TAKE a step back now! For my safety"-First Amendment Audit](#)

[OXNARD POLICE DEPT](#)

[Little Elm Texas City Hall 1st Amendment audit](#)

[Sweet walk of shame! Dwight D Eisenhower Airport Police Wichita KS 1st amendment audit!](#)



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