

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO  
WESTERN DIVISION**

AYERS RATLIFF : Case No: 3:25-cv-1635  
411 OAK STREET :  
MARION, OHIO 43302 :

And :

HEIDI RATLIFF : Judge Jeffrey J. Helmick  
411 OAK STREET :  
MARION, OHIO 43302 :

Plaintiffs, :

vs. :

RAY GROGAN : *Jury Demand Endorsed Hereon*  
100 EXECUTIVE DRIVE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor :  
MARION, OHIO 43302 :

And :

DAVID STAMOLIS : **FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT**  
100 EXECUTIVE DRIVE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor :  
MARION, OHIO 43302 :

And :

MARK WEAVER :  
TWO MIRANOVA PLACE – SUITE 700 :  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215 :

And :

JAY McDONALD, MPD, Chief of Police :  
233 WEST CENTER STREET :  
MARION, OHIO 43302 :

And :

CHRIS ADKINS, MPD  
233 WEST CENTER STREET  
MARION, OHIO 43302

And

COURTNEY RITTENOUR  
1680 MARION WALDO ROAD  
MARION, OHIO 43302

And

ISAAC WILES  
TWO MIRANOVA PLACE – SUITE 700  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

Defendants.

**FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT - 42 U.S.C. §1983**

1. This is an action for damages in excess of \$25,000.00 exclusive of costs and interest;
2. Plaintiffs are and at all times material to this Complaint were residents of Marion County, Ohio;
3. Defendant Ray Grogan, hereinafter “Grogan”, upon information and belief is a resident of Marion County, Ohio, and at all times material to this Complaint, was the Marion County Prosecutor;
4. Defendant David Stamolis, hereinafter “Stamolis,” upon information and belief is a resident of Delaware County, Ohio, and at all times material to this Complaint, was an Assistant Marion County Prosecutor;
5. Defendant Mark Weaver, hereinafter “Weaver”, upon information and belief, is a resident of Franklin County, Ohio, and at all times material to this Complaint, served as a part-time

Assistant Marion County Prosecutor, while working for Defendant ISAAC WILES, a law firm located in various jurisdictions, including Franklin County, Ohio;

6. Defendant Jay McDonald, hereinafter “McDonald” is the Chief of Police in Marion, Ohio and he resides in Marion County, Ohio;

7. Defendant Chris Adkins, hereinafter “Adkins,” is a Detective within the Marion City Police Department, and he resides within Marion County, Ohio;

8. Defendant Courtney Rittenour, hereinafter “Rittenour,” is a Victim Advocate, and upon information and belief, is employed by the Marion County Sheriff’s Department;

9. Defendant Rittenour, upon information and belief is a resident of Marion County, Ohio;

10. The Defendants are sued in their professional and individual capacities and are further sued jointly and severally;

11. Defendant ISAAC WILES is responsible for the training of its partners and associates and is responsible for acts of malpractice, negligence and intentional torts caused by their associates and or partners, such as Defendant Weaver;

12. Plaintiffs bring this action seeking damages in order to remedy the harm, damages and severe emotional distress, caused by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff’s false arrest, and malicious prosecution, and they further bring specific claims to include but not limited to slander, libel, civil conspiracy, abuse of process, failure to properly train and loss of consortium;

13. Plaintiffs bring this action seeking damages in order to remedy the harm, damages and severe emotional distress, caused by Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff’s malicious prosecution, and they further bring specific claims to include, but not limited to, slander, libel, civil conspiracy, abuse of process, failure to properly train and loss of consortium;

**FACTS RELEVANT TO ALL DEFENDANTS**

14. On or about May 20, 2024, a student, who was not a victim to any crime, reported to school officials at Grant Middle School that a fellow female student and friend had been sexually assaulted;

15. According to the reporting student, he was advised of the alleged incident the night prior;

16. As a result of the uncorroborated report by the student, another student, the alleged victim, A.R., was pulled out of class and interviewed for nearly three (3) hours with either one or two members of law enforcement present and without a parent, school administrator, and/or any adult acting in loco parentis of A.R.;

17. No other adults, including A.R.'s mother, were in the interrogation room at the time;

18. With respect to A.R.'s interview and interrogation, there was no restriction or urgency that prevented proper notification to her mother, prior to the commencement of the interview;

19. During the first half-hour of the interview, AR denied, and repeatedly denied, any and all allegations regarding any type of abuse, assault or mistreatment and/or maltreatment by anyone, including the Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

20. Rather than serve as an advocate for A.R, Defendant Rittenour used her position to help pressure A.R. into admitting to something that she had already repeatedly denied ever happening;

21. Defendant Rittenour used her position, not as an advocate for A.R. but to further assist law enforcement in their irresponsible investigation and malicious prosecution;

22. Due to the pressure from two members of law enforcement, Defendant Adkins and Defendant Rittenour, against a child, A.R. felt pressured into admitting to allegations against

Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff that A.R. knew were not true and that A.R. repeatedly told law enforcement were not true;

23. After approximately one-and-one-half (1 ½) hours of questioning and interrogation of A.R. by Defendants Adkins and Rittenour, Defendant Jay McDonald arrived at A.R.'s residence, with Marion Police Officer Wheeler, and inquired of A.R.'s mother as to whether she wanted to be present during her daughter's questioning and interview;

24. By the time Defendant McDonald inquired of A.R.'s mother, as to whether she wanted to be present for her daughter's questioning, A.R. had already been interrogated and coerced into acknowledging and admitting to her previous false accusations;

25. The interview of A.R. at Grant Middle School began at 1:21 p.m. and concluded at 4:28 p.m. Between 1:21 p.m. and 1:51 p.m. A.R. repeatedly and unequivocally denied any impropriety and or assault by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff; Defendant McDonald and MPD Officer Wheeler arrived at A.R.'s residence at 2:54 p.m., approximately an hour and a half (1 ½ ) after the interview with A.R. began, to inquire of A.R.'s mother if she wanted to be present for the interview; At approximately 2:54 p.m., approximately an hour and a half (1 ½) after the interview with A.R. began, Officer Wheeler asked A.R.'s mother if there was someone who she wanted with her daughter during the interview until she arrived;

26. During the entirety of the interview, Defendant Grogan was at the school, serving not as a prosecutor, but rather as an investigator, assisting and directing Defendant Adkins and Rittenour, in the questioning of A.R.;

27. During the interview Defendant Grogan, situated in a different room, served in a law enforcement and investigative capacity and was not working in his role as a prosecuting

attorney;

28. Defendant Grogan was submitting questions to law enforcement officers, Adkins and Rittenour, who were responsible for the interview and fact-finding process;

29. During the interview of A.R., wherein she repeatedly denied any wrongful conduct or the commission of any crime, Defendant Adkins and Defendant Rittenour, pressured A.R. continuously, until she claimed that the statements she shared with her friend were true;

30. Defendant Grogan, serving not as a prosecutor but rather as a law enforcement agent/officer, directed Marion City Police Chief Jay McDonald to contact the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, hereafter "BCI," and request assistance with the investigation of Plaintiff;

31. On May 20, 2024, BCI was called in and after arriving at Plaintiff's residence, BCI placed yellow crime tape around Plaintiff's residence;

32. Defendant Grogan was in Plaintiff's residence with BCI Agents, on May 20, 2024, directing and helping to conduct the investigation, notwithstanding A.R.'s initial and repeated denials of the existence of any crime;

33. At the time of Defendant Grogan's presence at Plaintiff's residence, Defendant Grogan was already aware that A.R. had initially repeatedly denied ever being assaulted, sexually or otherwise, by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

34. At all times material hereto, Defendants McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, were already aware that A.R. had initially repeatedly denied ever being assaulted, sexually or otherwise, by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

35. By the afternoon of May 20, 2024, Plaintiffs' residence on Oak Street, in Marion, Ohio

was cordoned off, and Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was immediately prevented from returning home as Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was arrested and incarcerated in the Multi-County Jail;

36. By the evening of May 20, 2024, people in Marion, Ohio already knew who the criminal Defendant was (Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff), who the alleged victim was, and what the accusations were;

37. The intention and purpose behind the “investigation,” after A.R. repeatedly denied any crime being committed, was to seek publicity for Defendant Grogan;

38. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff cooperated with every aspect of the investigation, provided interviews, denying any and all allegations, and voluntarily provided his DNA in order to assist in what should have been a truth-seeking process;

39. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff voluntarily submitted to a SANE exam for the collection of evidence on May 20, 2024, and without any known physical evidence at the time connecting Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff to any alleged crime, Defendant Grogan ordered the arrest of Plaintiff, notwithstanding A.R.’s repeated denials, confirming no crime was ever committed;

40. Defendant Grogan, at all times material hereto, was a Republican, President of the Marion County Republican Club, and politician running for office;

41. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff at all times material hereto was a Democrat and the Second Ward City Councilman for nearly twenty (20) years, who was outspoken and critical of City and County government;

42. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was transported from the hospital to the Multi County Correctional Center and placed on suicide watch, where he was isolated and naked in a cell with a glass wall and was denied clothing for approximately 18 hours;

43. On May 21, 2024, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was arraigned at Marion Municipal Court and bond was set at \$500,000.00;

44. Although actually innocent of any crime, and with Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver obtaining no evidence to show he was guilty of any crime, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was forced to post the \$500,000.00 bond in order to obtain his freedom;

45. At all times material to this Complaint, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knew or should have known that they had no evidence showing and/or corroborating that a crime was committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

46. From his first appearance in Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's criminal case, Defendant Weaver knew or should have known that no crime had been committed and knew or should have known that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was actually innocent;

47. Defendant Isaac Wiles, Defendant Mark Weaver's employer, is responsible for the training and continuing legal education of its partners and associates;

48. Defendant Isaac Wiles, Defendant Mark Weaver's employer, is responsible for ensuring that their associates and partners possess knowledge of the law and understand Constitutional ramifications of malicious prosecutions and wrongful convictions;

49. Defendant Isaac Wiles, Defendant Mark Weaver's employer, is responsible for the malpractice, and tortious acts of their associates and partners;

50. Defendant Isaac Wiles, Defendant Weaver's employer, touts Defendant Weaver's accolades and boasts of how Defendant Weaver is often asked to serve as a special prosecutor, and tout his knowledge of the Constitution and criminal law;

51. Defendant Grogan, in nothing other than a publicity stunt, and for the purpose of defaming,



and slandering Plaintiffs, released a video of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest, which was run by news stations, all across Ohio and beyond;

52. Defendant Grogan knew, at the time of releasing the video on May 21, 2024 of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest, that there was no actual corroborating evidence confirming the allegations against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff that he himself helped orchestrate by helping to pressure A.R.;

53. As a result of Defendant Grogan's publicity stunt, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's mugshot was broadcast with the repetitive news stories throughout Ohio and elsewhere;

54. As a result of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's false arrest and the malicious prosecution for rape, social media coverage ran rampant with stories, commentary and false information;

55. Harness Racing news outlets as far as Australia ran news stories about Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest;

56. This false information was extremely damaging to Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff as he served as the Assistant Director at the Ohio Harness Horseman's Association, which was a well-paid position;

57. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knew or should have known that the false allegations and the publication of those false allegations would cause Plaintiffs serious reputational, personal and economic harm;

58. Defendants, at all relevant times herein mentioned, acted together, in concert, and engaged in conduct that was intentional and reckless, and was for the purpose of destroying Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's stellar reputation;

59. Defendants, at all relevant times herein mentioned, acted together, in concert, and engaged in conduct that was intentional and reckless, and was for the purpose of not only destroying

Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's stellar reputation but was intentionally orchestrated to intimidate him and destroy his professional career and career as a politician;

60. A Preliminary Hearing was scheduled in Marion Municipal Court for May 24, 2024;

61. On May 22, 2024, Defendant Stamolis filed a Motion to Continue that preliminary hearing falsely claiming that the case was being presented to the Grand Jury, thereby pre-empting and supposedly negating the need for a preliminary hearing;

62. Notwithstanding Defendant Stamolis' representations to Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and the Court, that he was presenting the case to the next Grand Jury, the case was not presented;

63. Defendant Stamolis' false representations were intentional and knowingly made, and were made for the purpose of causing delay of the preliminary hearing, solely to buy the defendants additional time to try and attain evidence and/or orchestrate a narrative that Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour knew never existed and that would be false;

64. At the time Defendant Stamolis falsely advised the Court that the case was being presented to the Grand Jury, Defendant Stamolis and Defendant Grogan were aware that A.R. had already recanted her statement of any abuse, sexual or otherwise;

65. At no time, during the relevant time material to this Complaint, did Defendants McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour take steps to prevent the continuation of the prosecution against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, notwithstanding all three (3) Defendants knowing that A.R. unequivocally recanted her prior false allegations;

66. On May 30, 2024, a Preliminary Hearing was held at the Marion Municipal Court, where A.R., the alleged "victim", was present and available to testify, subject to the State of Ohio's

subpoena, that was issued by Prosecutor and Defendant Grogan;

67. Defendants Grogan and Stamolis did not have A.R. testify, even though they had her under subpoena, due to her pre-hearing refusal to even speak with Defendant Grogan;

68. At the Preliminary Hearing, Plaintiff's counsel informed the Court that A.R. had serious mental health issues. These mental health issues were already or should have already been known to Prosecutor and Defendant Grogan, and the other Defendants, from information collected by the electronic phone dump performed on A.R.'s cellular phone;

69. Notwithstanding direct statements from A.R., that no crime ever occurred, and knowing the child had been coerced into claiming the allegations were true, on May 30, 2024, Defendant Grogan and Defendant Stamolis, knowing they had no evidence to show that a crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, continued with Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's prosecution, and their effort to bind Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff over to the Court of Common Pleas;

70. Defendants Grogan and Stamolis asked for and received an Order that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was not allowed within 500 feet of his home and was not allowed within 500 feet of A.R., forcing Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff to maintain alternative residence, as he had resided with his family on Oak Street for approximately eighteen (18) years;

71. On May 30, 2024, Plaintiff was bound over to the Common Pleas Court;

72. At all times material to this Complaint, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was employed by the Ohio Harness Horseman's Association;

73. Shortly after the May 30, 2024 preliminary hearing, where Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was bound over to the Court of Common Pleas, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff received a letter from his employer notifying Plaintiff that he was suspended, without pay, and that he was not permitted

to go to “the OHHA office or any venue the OHHA conducts business.”;

74. As a result of the letter from his employer, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was forced to cancel all contracts he had, that hired him to announce at the harness races at sixteen (16) Ohio county fairs, some of which Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff had announced since 1999;

75. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, in May of 2024, was scheduled to announce at MGM Northfield Park, Northfield, Ohio, and due to the malicious prosecution, false allegations and defamatory statements and the false narrative created by the Defendants, Plaintiff was not permitted to attend or work that event;

76. Plaintiff was placed on the “stop list” by the Ohio State Racing Commission and was not allowed to be on the grounds of any horse racing venue in Ohio, a sanction that was reciprocated by all states in the United States, and Provinces in Canada, which conduct horse racing;

77. At all times material to the Complaint, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was also employed at H & R Block as a tax preparer, where he had been so employed for eleven (11) years;

78. Due to the charges, proceedings and corresponding media attention, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was terminated from his employment at H & R Block as well. This was a well-paid position and was part of the Plaintiffs losing a substantial amount of income;

79. At all times material to this Complaint, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was also employed as a substitute teacher with Marion City Schools, a position which Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff had held, and enjoyed, for the previous three (3) years;

80. As a result of the charges, prosecution and media publicity, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was terminated by Marion City Schools and was advised that he was not permitted on any school

grounds and that directive, has not been rescinded as of the filing of this Amended Complaint;

81. As a result of the charges, prosecution, false allegations and false narrative, and the resulting media publicity, notwithstanding his innocence, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's teaching license has been suspended by the Ohio Department of Education and remains suspended by the Ohio Department of Education;

82. As a result of the charges, prosecution, false allegations and false narrative, and the resulting media publicity, and notwithstanding Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's innocence, Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff was forced to shut down her child daycare business that she had successfully operated for fourteen (14) years causing her substantial financial damage and hardship;

83. During the relevant time material to this Complaint, Plaintiffs had been permanent tenants at the Indian Trails Campground, located in New London, Ohio;

84. During the relevant time material to this Complaint, Plaintiffs and their family would frequent the campground regularly between May and October of each year and, had done so since, approximately 2020;

85. Plaintiffs and their family were well known, and they enjoyed and cherished their time at the campground;

86. In 2024, after being charged with rape, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and his family were notified that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was banned from the property at the campground due to his charges and as a result, Plaintiffs were forced to sell their camper;

87. The loss of enjoyment and use of the camper and campground was proximately caused by the wrongful acts of the Defendants, as were the financial damages and losses incurred by Plaintiffs and their family;

88. On July 24, 2024, Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, convened a Grand Jury and they issued subpoenas for A.R. and Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff;

89. At the Grand Jury proceedings in July of 2024, A.R. again recanted her statements and testified that no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and further testified that she was never assaulted sexually or otherwise;

90. Subsequent to the July 2024 Grand Jury proceedings, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour were on clear notice that no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

91. Notwithstanding their possession of actual knowledge that no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, continued with the prosecution, contributed to the continuation of the prosecution, and participated in the continuation of the prosecution;

92. At the grand Jury, Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff testified that no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

93. As of July 2024, Defendants had Grand Jury sworn testimony by the alleged victim, A.R., and by Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, wife of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff never committed a crime;

94. As a result of A.R.'s testimony and that of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, no indictment was returned by the Grand Jury;

95. In an unprecedented move in Marion County, Defendants filed a motion on July 29, 2024 requesting additional time to present the case, again, to the Marion County Grand Jury;

96. At the time of filing the July 29, 2024 motion seeking additional time to indict, Defendants

Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour knew that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was actually innocent, and were further aware that there was no evidence upon which to proceed, let alone convict;

97. On August 1, 2024, prior to the convening of the Grand Jury on August 29, 2024, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's counsel forwarded a letter to Defendant Grogan, that went unanswered, stating:

"We have hired multiple experts and have received from them data, information and forensic evidence that categorically proves that the alleged rape in this case did not and could not have happened. We are requesting that we be granted permission to present this evidence to the Grand Jury or in the alternative be able to present this evidence to you so that you can provide the same to the Grand Jury and to actually show/give this evidence to the Grand Jury at the Grand Jury Hearing."

98. On August 29, 2024, Defendant Stamolis presented the case again to the Grand Jury without any of the forensic evidence mentioned in the email from Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's defense counsel that forensically proved the innocence of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and thereby obtained a three (3) count indictment against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

99. On August 29, 2024, when presenting the case to the Grand Jury, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, all knew that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was actually innocent and that no crime of any kind was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

100. Between July 24, 2024 and August 29, 2024, no additional facts were developed in the investigation against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and no additional facts were known to Defendants that would negate the recantation and the denial of criminal wrongdoing by the alleged victim, A.R. in her Grand Jury testimony;

101. Defendants Stamolis and Grogan, specifically, on August 29, 2024 and even before that date, knew that no crime had ever been committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

102. Prior to presenting the case to the Grand Jury on August 29, 2024, A.R. had specifically and directly told Defendants Grogan and Stamolis that she was not a victim of any crime, no crime had ever been perpetrated upon her, and that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff had never assaulted her sexually or otherwise;

103. Upon information and belief, Defendants Grogan and Stamolis, again notified Defendant Weaver of A.R.'s denial of any criminal wrongdoing by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff as Defendant Weaver became an integral part of the prosecution team;

104. Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, notwithstanding A.R.'s and Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff's testimony, under oath, at Grand Jury, that A.R. was not a victim of any crime, and that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff never assaulted her sexually or otherwise, chose to ignore A.R.'s sworn testimony and still pursued an indictment, while knowing that the evidence they were presenting, and the accusations upon which they sought indictment, were false. In addition, the Defendants knew that there was expert evidence that proved that no sexual assault ever occurred. Furthermore, Defendants Grogan and Stamolis knew that the defense team wanted them to present this evidence to the Grand Jury;

105. Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff was not indicted on August 29, 2024, as Defendants did not present, nor claim, that she committed any crime;

106. On September 3, 2024, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was arraigned at the Common Pleas Court for Marion County;

107. On September 30, 2024, a pretrial was held in Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's case, where the defense again raised their request for dismissal, arguing again, that no evidence supported the indictment, as the alleged victim, A.R., had recanted and testified under oath at Grand jury that



no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

108. Knowing that no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and knowing that there was no evidence to proceed to trial, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver, elected to attempt to pressure and coerce Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff into a plea by returning to the Grand Jury on December 5, 2024, and again, without any additional evidence, indicted Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff on two (2) additional charges of Abduction;

109. After the reindictment of December 5, 2024, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff stood under indictment for Rape, Gross Sexual Imposition, Unlawful Sexual Conduct with a Minor, and two (2) counts of Abduction;

110. Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis' sole purpose in pursuing additional charges, while knowing no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, was to leverage and instill fear in Plaintiffs, by fabricating and creating an indictment that represented potential punishment exceeding that represented by the first indictment;

111. Defendants McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour participated in reindicting Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and were aware at the time of that reindictment that no crime had ever been committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

112. Upon information and belief, Defendants McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, testified before the Grand Jury on December 5, 2024;

113. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver's sole intention in seeking a more punitive indictment was to coerce and pressure Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, who Defendants knew to be actually innocent, into a plea;

114. On December 9, 2024, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was again, in another highly publicized

proceeding arraigned on the new charges;

115. On December 9, 2024, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at the time Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was arraigned, were fully aware that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was actually innocent and that no evidence existed to continue with the prosecution;

116. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour knew that any additional publicity, of the type originating from such criminal proceedings, would bring additional emotional distress, humiliation, embarrassment and frustration to Plaintiffs and it was Defendants' intention to cause distress, humiliation, embarrassment and frustration to Plaintiffs, in hope that the pressure would force Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff to plead guilty;

117. Over Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's objections, Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, on January 13, 2025, filed a Motion to Continue the January 27, 2025 jury trial date, a motion which was denied by the Court;

118. Knowing that no evidence existed to convict, and knowing that no evidence existed to even proceed to trial, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver, rather than dismiss the case, on January 14, 2025 filed a second Motion to Continue, which was again denied;

119. Rather than dismiss the case, the requests for continuances were being filed in order to maintain pressure on the Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and cause him severe emotional distress, in hope that the stress would cause him to plead to a crime that was never committed;

120. At the time of filing both of the referenced continuances, Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis knew that there was no evidence to support the charges in the indictment and that the Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff had six (6) expert witnesses willing and able to testify to Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's actual innocence;

121. In addition to being advised by way of A.R.'s sworn, Grand Jury testimony, Defendants knew that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's DNA did not connect or inculcate him in any crime and that other expert forensic evidence proved that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff did not commit a crime;

122. After the January 14, 2025 Motion to Continue the trial was denied by the Court, having no evidence to support conviction or a trial, on January 21, 2025, Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, dismissed the indictment against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

123. A hearing was held upon Defendants' motion to dismiss the indictment on January 24, 2025, at which time the Court formally dismissed the case without prejudice, and at which time Defendant Weaver, notwithstanding his request for dismissal, falsely claimed in open court that he possessed more than enough evidence to convict Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

124. With the admission by Defendant Weaver, that he had more than enough evidence to convict Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, the request to dismiss should have been denied;

125. On January 21, 2025, at the time of falsely claiming that he had more than enough evidence to convict Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, Defendant Weaver made no mention of having any evidence to convict, let alone prosecute, Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff;

126. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff has served as City Councilman for approximately twenty (20) years;

127. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's petition to run again for Marion City Council was due on February 6, 2025;

128. Due to how the case was intentionally delayed by the Defendants, and then dismissed, and without sufficient time to complete the petition to run, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was prevented from running for the position which he held for the past ten (10) terms;

129. As a result of the prosecution of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's case and notwithstanding the

dismissal, on April 17, 2025, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was notified by the Ohio Harness Horseman's Association that Plaintiff, rather than being reinstated, was terminated from his employment;

130. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's termination from employment at the Ohio Harness Horseman's Association was proximately caused by the malicious and unjustifiable prosecution by the Defendants;

131. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's position carried an annual salary of \$106,000 and included retirement and benefits that were fully paid by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's employer;

132. At all times material to this Complaint, Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, were aware that knowingly prosecuting a defendant, who was actually innocent, violated the Ohio and United States Constitution;

133. Upon being notified by A.R. that no crime was ever committed, Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knew Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was actually innocent, yet elected to prosecute him anyway, subjecting him and Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff to emotional distress, ridicule, embarrassment, defamation and causing them to incur personal and financial damages;

134. All of Plaintiffs' personal and economic damages were proximately caused by the malicious and unjustifiable prosecution by the Defendants;

135. The investigation, part or all of which was directed by Defendant Grogan, and conducted by the Marion City Police Department, and the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, was at all times incompetent, reckless, malicious and in blatant disregard for the truth, and was conducted with actual malice;

136. A reasonable person in the position of Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, would know that clearly established State and Federal Law prohibited the prosecution of one who is actually innocent, and when prosecutors are on notice of that person's actual innocence;

137. As part of their OPATA training, Defendants McDonald and Adkins, received training regarding false accusations of sexual abuse and as a result of that training, Defendants McDonald and Adkins knew or should have known that the allegations against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff were false;

138. Defendant Rittenour, as part of her training as a Victim Advocate, received training regarding false accusations of sexual abuse, and as a result of that training, Defendant Rittenour knew or should have known that the allegations against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff were false;

139. Defendant ISAAC WILES, as an employer of attorneys, was at all relevant times herein mentioned, incompetent, negligent, reckless and failed to properly train Defendant Weaver, who did not understand the fundamental basics of Constitutional law, due process, probable cause or actual innocence;

140. Defendant McDonald, as Chief of Police, was, at all relevant times herein mentioned, incompetent, negligent, reckless and failed to properly train Defendant Adkins, who did not understand the fundamental basics of Constitutional law, due process, probable cause or actual innocence;

141. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, acted with actual malice, and with the intent to cause Plaintiffs physical, psychological, economic and emotional pain and harm;

142. Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis are not entitled to absolute immunity, as they have performed administrative and investigative functions, such as giving legal advice to law enforcement officers, holding a press conference, releasing video of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest, and fabricating evidence, and acted outside of the scope of their prosecutorial duties;

143. Subsequent to the January 21, 2025 dismissal of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's indictment, by Defendants, on July 17, 2025, Plaintiffs Ayers and Heidi Ratliff filed the civil action in Case No. 2025 CV 0324 in the Common Pleas Court for Marion County, Ohio, against Defendant Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver;

144. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver were duly served with the Complaint;

145. As of July 24, 2025, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver, knew that they were sued jointly and severally, by Plaintiff's Ayers and Heidi Ratliff;

146. On or about August 7, 2025, Defendants removed the case to this Court (Case No. 3:25-cv-1635);

147. Subsequent to being personally sued by Plaintiffs, on August 27, 2025, Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Rittenour and Adkins, indicted or participated in indicting, both Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff;

148. The reindictment of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and the indictment of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, on August 27, 2025, was in retaliation for Defendants having been sued by Plaintiffs;

149. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff now stands indicted for Rape, Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, Abduction, Felony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, and three (3) counts of Gross Sexual Imposition, Felonies of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree;

150. Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff now stands indicted for two (2) counts of Obstructing Justice,

Felonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, two (2) counts of Endangering Children, Misdemeanors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, and Intimidation of an Attorney, Victim or Witness in a Criminal Case, a Misdemeanor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree;

151. After Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff had been charged in Municipal Court in May of 2024, and after having to vacate the family residence, as a result of the charges, A.R., the alleged victim, remained in the custody of her mother, Heidi Ratliff;

152. After Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff had been charged in Municipal Court in May of 2024, and after having to vacate the family residence as a result of the charges, and after A.R., the alleged victim, remained in the custody of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, Marion County Children's Services made routine and frequent visits to the family home to confirm A.R.'s continued well-being;

153. At no time throughout the extensive separation period between A.R. and Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, did Marion County Children's Services express any concern regarding Heidi Ratliff's parenting, care or protection of, or over, A.R.;

154. At no time throughout the extensive separation period between A.R. and Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, did Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins or Rittenour express any concern regarding Heidi Ratliff's parenting, nor did they express any concern, or even accuse Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, of any attempts at coercion or intimidation;

155. Between May 19, 2024 and July 17, 2025, the date Plaintiffs filed suit against the Defendants, there had been no accusation against Heidi Ratliff of any wrongdoing, coercion or intimidation towards or against A.R., or anyone else;

156. At no time between May 19, 2024 and August 27, 2025, the date Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff was indicted, did Marion County Children's Services intervene to separate A.R. from Plaintiff Heidi

Ratliff;

157. Marion City Police, nor BCI (Bureau of Criminal Identification & Investigation) conducted any investigation into any wrongdoing or criminal conduct on the part of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff;

158. No law enforcement agency, nor the Defendants, Grogan, Stamolis or Weaver, had ever received a complaint about any type of coercion or intimidation by Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff towards A.R.;

159. No law enforcement agency, nor the Defendants, had ever received a complaint about any type of coercion or intimidation by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff towards A.R.;

160. The Indictment issued against Heidi Ratliff was retaliatory, issued without probable cause and issued without any complaint or accusation to support the charges contained therein;

161. Any purported evidence presented to the Grand Jury, in effort to obtain an indictment against Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, was completely fabricated by the Defendants;

162. On September 2, 2025 Plaintiffs were arraigned in the Marion County Common Pleas Court, during the arraignment, the alleged victim addressed the Honorable Judge Daniel T. Hogan in open Court and again stated that no crime has ever been committed upon her.

### **FIRST CLAIM**

#### **FALSE ARREST AND WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT**

163. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-162, each as if fully rewritten herein;

164. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest on May 20, 2024 was at all times relative to this Complaint without probable cause;

165. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's continued detention at the Multi-County Correctional Center was unlawful, and in violation of the Fourth Amendment to the Ohio and United States Constitution;



166. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest and continued detention was an unreasonable seizure as contemplated by the Fourth Amendment and *Bivens v. Six Unknown Agents of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics*, 403 U.S. 388 (1971);

167. Defendant Grogan, in consultation with Defendants Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, ordered Plaintiff's arrest in the complete absence of any criminal conduct;

168. Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, were not serving in a prosecutorial function when they acted with law enforcement to scheme Plaintiff's arrest;

169. On the date and at the time of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest, there was no functional tie to the judicial process when Defendant Grogan and Stamolis communicated with law enforcement and directed law enforcement's actions;

170. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver are not entitled to absolute immunity when giving police advice, directing any part of their investigation, or seeking to generate evidence to support arrest or when acting outside the scope of their prosecutorial duties;

171. As a result of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's false arrest and wrongful imprisonment, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

## **SECOND CLAIM MALICIOUS PROSECUTION**

172. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-171, each as if fully rewritten herein;

173. Defendants initiated the prosecution after being initially told by A.R. on May 20, 2024 that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff committed no crime and that no assault against her ever occurred;

174. Defendants continued the prosecution while knowing A.R. recanted her statement, denying

the commission of any crime on May 20, 2024, knowing that A.R. testified at Grand Jury that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff committed no crime, and that there was no physical evidence connecting Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff to any crime;

175. Defendants became aware that, at no time material to this Complaint, was there probable cause to believe that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff committed any crime, and in fact was completely innocent of any crime, yet Defendants elected to continue with prosecution;

176. On January 24, 2025, the indictment against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was dismissed;

177. On July 17, 2025 Plaintiffs sued Defendants Ray Grogan, David Stamolis, Mark Weaver, and Isaac Wiles in the Marion County Common Pleas Court. Thereafter, on August 27, 2025, Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Rittenhour and Adkins, indicted or participated in indicting both Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff;

178. The Defendants' participation in the reindictment of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and the indictment of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff on August 27, 2025, was an act of malicious prosecution for the Defendants having been sued by Plaintiffs;

179. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff now stands indicted for Rape, Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, Abduction, Felony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, and three (3) counts of Gross Sexual Imposition, Felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree;

180. Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff now stands indicted for two (2) counts of Obstructing Justice, Felonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, two (2) counts of Endangering Children, Misdemeanors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, and Intimidation of an Attorney, Victim or Witness in a Criminal case, a Misdemeanor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree;

181. Defendants became aware that, at no time material to this Complaint, was there probable

cause to believe that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff or Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff committed any crime, and in fact was completely innocent of any crime, yet Defendants elected to continue with prosecution on August 27, 2025;

182. The indictment by Defendants of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff and the reindictment of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, was malicious, intentional, with knowledge of actual innocence, and in retaliation for Defendants having been sued by Plaintiffs;

183. As a result of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's malicious prosecution, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

184. As a result of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff's malicious prosecution, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial

185. Subsequent to dismissing the indictment against Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and after being served with suit by Plaintiff's, Defendants intentionally, and with actual malice, indicted and or assisted in indicting Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff and reindicted or assisted in reindicting Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

### **THIRD CLAIM RETALIATION**

186. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-185, each as if fully rewritten herein;

187. Knowing that no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and knowing that there was no evidence to proceed to trial, Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver, elected to pressure and coerce Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff into a plea by returning to the Grand Jury on December 5, 2024, without any additional evidence, and indicting Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff on two

(2) additional charges;

188. Defendants' presentation of the case on December 5, 2024 to the Grand Jury was in retaliation for Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff not resolving the case with a guilty plea;

189. Defendants' filing of the initial Complaint, on May 20, 2024, and the continued pursuit of prosecution, after prosecutors knew the alleged victim, A.R. recanted under oath and that no crime was committed, was in retaliation for Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's service as a Democratic City Councilman, and more specifically, for his outspoken criticism of City and County government;

190. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver, acting outside the scope and bounds of prosecutorial immunity, participated in the investigation, and orchestration of the prosecution and publicly endorsed it for political purposes before judicial process commenced;

191. Defendants' retaliation, and pursuing charges that were known to be based upon false allegations, was at all times herein referenced, with actual malice;

192. After the reindictment of December 5, 2024, Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff stood under indictment for Rape, Gross Sexual Imposition, Unlawful Sexual Conduct with a Minor, and two (2) counts of Abduction;

193. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour's sole purpose in pursuing additional charges of abduction at the Grand Jury on December 5, 2024, while knowing no crime was ever committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, was to retaliate, leverage and instill fear in Plaintiffs, by fabricating and creating an indictment that represented potential punishment exceeding that represented by the first indictment;

194. On July 17, 2025 Plaintiffs sued Defendants Ray Grogan, David Stamolis, Mark Weaver, and Isaac Wiles, on August 27, 2025, Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald,

Rittenour and Adkins, indicted or participated in indicting both Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff;

195. The reindictment of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and the indictment of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff on August 27, 2025, was in retaliation for Defendants having been sued by Plaintiffs;

196. Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff now stands indicted for Rape, Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, Abduction, Felony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, and three (3) counts of Gross Sexual Imposition, Felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree;

197. Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff now stands indicted for two (2) counts of Obstructing Justice, Felonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, two (2) counts of Endangering Children, Misdemeanors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, and Intimidation of an Attorney, Victim or Witness in a Criminal case, a Misdemeanor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree;

198. The indictment by Defendants of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff and the reindictment of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, was malicious, intentional, with knowledge of actual innocence, and in retaliation for Defendants having been sued by Plaintiffs;

199. As a result of the retaliation against Plaintiffs Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

#### **FOURTH CLAIM LIBEL AND SLANDER**

200. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-199, each as if fully rewritten herein;

201. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour pursued, participated in, drafted and filed an indictment, charging Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff with crimes that Defendants knew were based upon allegations that were false, as Defendants knew that the alleged victim, A.R. recanted under oath and had indicated and specifically stated that the

allegations she made were false and repeatedly denied any wrongful conduct on the part of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

202. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour knew that the indictment would be published in written form and that the content would be disseminated in verbal form, as the indictment was a public record;

203. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knew that Plaintiffs would suffer harm to their reputation, would suffer financial and emotional damages and Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff would be labeled a “rapist,” even though Defendants knew, at the time of seeking the indictment, as well as all times thereafter, that the information they were relaying to the Grand Jury was materially false; and, Defendants intentionally withheld from the Grand Jury forensic evidence that proved Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff’s actual innocence;

204. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knowing the information they were publicizing was false, made false and defamatory statements about Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff in a video published on May 21, 2024;

205. At the time of making public statements about Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, the charges, and the indictment, Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, were acting outside the scope of any prosecutorial function;

206. Defendants, despite knowing that the alleged victim recanted under oath and had informed them that no crime had ever been committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, falsely accused Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff of Rape, and other sexually related crimes, and their statements were made with knowledge of their falsity and in blatant disregard for the facts demonstrating Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff’s actual innocence;

207. Defendants' defamatory statements as to Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff were broadly repeated and published, including in the media;

208. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour made statements of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's guilt to others, while knowing that the statements they were making were false;

209. The statements made by the Defendants, were made with actual malice, and were made with the specific intention to harm Plaintiffs, and were further made for the purpose of contaminating the jury pool by having the public learn of the false allegations that Defendants had already understood to be false;

210. Defendant Grogan repeatedly made statements to the media, and others, about Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and the charges and falsely represented that he possessed the evidence to convict Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, while ultimately dismissing the case;

211. The defamatory statements, false accusations and repetitive nature of the false statements made by each Defendant, were made with malice and with the intention of harming Plaintiffs, harming their reputations, harming Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff politically, and were all made to serve Defendant Grogan's political interests;

212. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour pursued, participated in, drafted and filed an indictment, charging Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff with crimes that Defendants knew were based upon allegations that were false, as Defendants knew that the alleged victim, A.R. recanted under oath and had indicated and specifically stated that the allegations she made were false, and repeatedly denied any wrongful conduct on the part of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

213. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour knew that Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff's indictment would be published in written form and that the content would be disseminated in verbal form, as the indictment was a public record;

214. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knew that Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff would suffer harm to her reputation, would suffer financial and emotional damages and would be publicly ridiculed based on the false charges levied upon her by Defendants, even though Defendants knew, at the time of seeking the indictment, as well as all times thereafter, that the information they were relaying to the Grand Jury was materially false;

215. Defendants intentionally withheld from the Grand Jury forensic evidence that proved Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's actual innocence and thereby withheld from the Grand Jury evidence confirming that Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff was and is actually innocent;

216. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, knowing the information they were publicizing was false, made false and defamatory statements about Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff in the August 27, 2025 indictment, statements that Defendants knew would reach the media and the public;

217. Defendants, despite knowing that the alleged victim recanted under oath and had informed them that no crime had ever been committed by Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, now falsely accused Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff of Obstructing Justice, Endangering Children and Intimidation of an Attorney, Victim or Witness in a Criminal Case;

218. Defendants Grogan, Stamolis, Weaver, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour made statements of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff's guilt to others, while knowing that the statements they were making were false;



219. The statements made by the Defendants, were made with actual malice, and were made with the specific intention to harm Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, and were further made for the purpose of contaminating the jury pool by having the public learn of the false allegations that Defendants already knew to be false;

220. The defamatory statements, false accusations and repetitive nature of the false statements made by each Defendant, were made with malice and with the intention of harming Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, harming her reputation, and were all made to serve Defendant Grogan's political interests;

221. As a result of libel and slander against Plaintiffs Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

#### **FIFTH CLAIM CONSPIRACY**

222. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-221, each as if fully rewritten herein;

223. Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, together and with others, including but not limited to Defendant McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, conspired to file charges against both Plaintiffs while having actual knowledge that neither Plaintiff ever committed a crime;

224. Defendants Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis, together and with others, including but not limited to Defendant McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, each acting with actual malice, maliciously prosecuted Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and now are maliciously prosecuting Plaintiffs Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff, and have intentionally made false and unlawful statements about each Plaintiff that were known by Defendants to be false;

225. The false statements made and published by each Defendant caused personal and economic

harm to Plaintiffs and damaged Plaintiffs' reputations;

226. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, worked in concert, together, and with the same purpose and intent to harm Plaintiffs by publishing information known to be false, falsely accusing both Plaintiffs of criminal conduct, and seeking to convict and imprison both Plaintiffs when Defendants possessed and continue to possess actual knowledge of each Plaintiff's actual innocence;

227. As a result of the Defendants' conspiracy against Plaintiffs Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

#### **SIXTH CLAIM ABUSE OF PROCESS**

228. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-227, each as if fully rewritten herein;

229. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at all times material to this Complaint, used the legal process to destroy Plaintiffs' reputations, notwithstanding each Defendant having direct knowledge that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff are actually innocent and never committed a crime;

230. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at all times material to this Complaint, knew that falsely accusing Plaintiffs and bringing forth an indictment based upon false allegations, and continuing with prosecution, would personally, emotionally and financially destroy Plaintiffs;

231. Defendants have employed the legal process in retaliation for Plaintiff's filing suit against the Defendants while possessing actual knowledge of Plaintiffs' actual innocence;

232. As a result of the abuse of process by the Defendants against Plaintiffs Ayers Ratliff and

Heidi Ratliff, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

**SEVENTH CLAIM  
VIOLATIONS OF CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER U.S.C. §1983**

233. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-232, each as if fully rewritten herein;

234. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins, Rittenour deprived Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff of his Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable seizure;

235. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at all times material to this Complaint, were acting under color of state law;

236. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at all times material to this Complaint, deprived Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff of their rights and privileges secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States;

237. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at all times material to this Complaint, exercised their power possessed by virtue of state law and were able to harm Plaintiffs and destroy their reputations, and cause Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's false arrest, only because the Defendants were clothed with the power and authority under state law;

238. Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, at all times material to this Complaint, exercised their power possessed by virtue of state law and were able to harm Plaintiffs and destroy their reputations, and cause Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff to be indicted upon allegations that Defendants knew to be patently false;

239. Having been initially advised before being pressured into making a false statement, prior to Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest on May 20, 2024, by the alleged victim, A.R., that Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff committed no crime and engaged in no impropriety, sexual or otherwise, Defendants

Grogan, Weaver and Stamolis directed and ordered Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff's arrest, while knowing Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff was actually innocent and further knowing that no probable cause existed to effectuate an arrest upon Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff;

240. Defendants, for not assisting them in their prosecution of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, indicted Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff in retaliation, notwithstanding Defendants' actual knowledge of Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff's actual innocence;

241. Defendants, for having been sued by Plaintiffs in July of 2025, on August 27, 2025 indicted Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff and reindicted Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff while having actual knowledge of Plaintiffs' actual innocence;

242. Defendants' conduct as referenced herein was at all times intentional and with actual malice;

243. As a result of the Defendants' violations of the civil rights of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff, Plaintiffs suffered severe and permanent reputational harm, severe emotional distress, and other economic and non-economic damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

#### **EIGHTH CLAIM LOSS OF CONSORTIUM**

244. Plaintiffs incorporate paragraphs 1-243, each as if fully rewritten herein;

245. As a direct and proximate result of the wrongful conduct as described herein, on the part of Defendants Grogan, Weaver, Stamolis, McDonald, Adkins and Rittenour, Plaintiff Heidi Ratliff, the lawful spouse of Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, and Plaintiff Ayers Ratliff, have suffered and will continue to suffer a loss of consortium, including but not limited to loss of society, companionship, affection, assistance, services, comfort, and marital relations, all to their detriment.

*Wherefore*, Plaintiffs Ayers Ratliff and Heidi Ratliff pray for judgment against each defendant, jointly and severally in an amount to be proven at trial and to include compensatory damages for pain, suffering, stress, humiliation, mental anguish, emotional harm, injury, damage to their reputation, and loss of consortium. Plaintiffs further request punitive damages, attorney fees, pre- and post-judgment interest, reimbursement for any negative tax consequences of a judgment, costs and any such other relief as the Court deems equitable and just.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Rocky Ratliff

**RATLIFF LAW OFFICE**

J.C. Ratliff (0027898)

Rocky Ratliff (0089781)

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*

200 West Center Street

Marion, Ohio 43302

P: (740) 383-6023 / F: (740) 383-2066

Email: attorney.ratliff@gmail.com

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that a copy of this First Amended Complaint was filed electronically on the \_\_\_\_ day of September, 2025 and is also being served upon Counsel for Defendants Grogan, Stamolis and Weaver by either facsimile transmission or Regular U.S. Mail to: 7775 Walton Parkway, Suite 200, New Albany, Ohio 43054 and/or facsimile to: 614-221-8769 and/or email transmission to: ddowney@fisheldowney.com, this same day.

/s/ Rocky Ratliff

**RATLIFF LAW OFFICE**

J.C. Ratliff (0027898)

Rocky Ratliff (0089781)

Adam Banks (98421)

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE**

To the Clerk:

Please issue a certified copy of the Complaint and Summons upon the Defendants listed below by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested.

JAY McDONALD, MPD, Chief of Police  
233 WEST CENTER STREET  
MARION, OHIO 43302

CHRIS ADKINS, MPD  
233 WEST CENTER STREET  
MARION, OHIO 43302

COURTNEY RITTENOUR  
1680 MARION WALDO ROAD  
MARION, OHIO 43302

/s/ Rocky Ratliff

**RATLIFF LAW OFFICE**

J.C. Ratliff (0027898)

Rocky Ratliff (0089781)

Adam Banks (98421)

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*