

Statement from Jennifer Lyell regarding The Daily Wire's publication on June 14, 2022

On Saturday, June 11, 2022, I learned that a writer for the website, The Daily Wire, was writing about the abuse disclosure I made four years ago. I reached out to the writer via phone after learning about the piece as well as receiving an indication that some of what was communicated to others about the piece was inaccurate. As I've stated repeatedly for the last four years, I have only spoken publicly when out of a genuine sense of moral duty, at the behest of a leader with direct authority over the substance of my disclosure, or to correct a materially false public report by a leader or media outlet. Additionally, when I have spoken publicly, I've attempted to address whatever necessitated my engagement without introducing new details that involve any party aside from those with direct legal, professional, or spiritual authority over the substance of my disclosure.

It is within this context that I spoke with Megan Basham, the writer of the piece subsequently published on the Daily Wire website on June 14, 2022. I spoke with Ms. Basham twice on Saturday, June 11. I do not recall the precise length of our two conversations, but to the best of my recollection, it was at least two hours in combined length and I afforded her as much time as she wanted. I explained my parameters for public statements on this matter as I noted in the paragraph above. While I declined to respond to various allegations from unnamed sources and requests by Ms. Basham to have details about the precise nature of the conduct I reported, I responded to Ms. Basham's misunderstandings about several specific issues related to my case. I have only read what Ms. Basham subsequently wrote once and have attempted to set it aside and ignore it. However, knowing that I have told the truth through this entire ordeal is the one enduring source of peace I have, so I am setting forth clarification on the material accusations Ms. Basham made that I recall from the article.

First, Ms. Basham stated the Louisville police department had told her there was no record of my report, leading her to conclude that I was dishonest to state I had contacted the police. To this I told her the detailed, factual account that I've consistently noted regarding when/why/how I contacted law enforcement. I first contacted the Louisville Police Department, through their Sex Victims Unit, in May 2018, after I had disclosed to the seminary. I told Ms. Basham what I had told Baptist Press in 2019, that I had gotten their voicemail, so hung up initially, but then later called back and left a message. However, I never received a return call from the unit. I noted to Ms. Basham that I had sent screenshots of my phone records to Baptist Press in March 2019 prior to the original article publication as part of the documentation I provided them. I attempted to find that email/screenshot while on the call with Ms. Basham to show to her but given the volume of records I have at this point, was unable to do so quickly. I told her to let me know if she needed it to clarify my statement regarding that contact with the police and I would find/provide the screenshot. Although not requested by her prior to the publication of the article in which she persists with the accusation that I lied about contacting the police, I was able to locate the email, which is included following this statement and is also part of BP's records as it was to the staff writer on his SBC email account. Additionally, I also explained to Ms. Basham that the report I had later filed with Louisville Metro, had been through the Jeffersontown Police Department, which is a township police department that is part of Louisville Metro, yet also distinct as a township. I told her I was not sure why the Louisville Metro contact she had was unable to find the incident report. While on the video call with her, I was able to pull up a photo of the officer's business card that I took after the meeting. From that, I showed her the actual officer's name (and spelled it for her), the precinct phone/fax, and the officer's

email address. I also gave her the date of our meeting. Since then, Ms. Basham asserted the accusation of me lying about contacting the police both in her article and in subsequent comments. As such, I reached out to the Jeffersontown Police Department today, June 24, 2022 through the same phone number I gave Ms. Basham. The dispatcher who answered the phone was unable to find the incident report, so I asked to speak with the officer to whom I had made the report. I introduced myself to him and stated I was following up on our meeting two years ago as a writer had published that the department had no record of the report. He immediately remembered me, our conversation, and the general nature of what we discussed that day. Everything he recalled to me was completely consistent with what I had stated and, in fact, he volunteered additional details that he recalled regarding the specific nature of what I reported as well as the options he and I discussed regarding the type of filing to make. I asked if he had gotten any inquiries via phone or email from a writer or journalist about me, the professor, the seminary, or anything else that could have been regarding this. He stated that no one had contacted him. Ms. Basham has also, I believe, asserted I lied when I stated (in private communication she obtained) that Dr. Mohler had also contacted the Louisville police. When I spoke with her on June 11 and she questioned me about this, I noted that I was told this by an intermediary (I am not going to publicly say who, but it is someone with direct authority over the situation) and that it is possible it was misunderstood in the midst of all that was happening at the time, but that I did not have any reason to believe it to be inaccurate and I didn't think the police station not having a record reflected it as such (particularly since I had not heard back from the Sex Crimes line, know there have been other public reports of spotty handling of such reports there, etc.).

Second, Ms. Basham questioned whether there was a basis for Guidepost to report that my allegations had been corroborated or to state the conduct as abuse. She noted that of those referenced in the report as having provided the corroboration to the Executive Committee, that two (the professor's pastor and my former boss) told her that they had not spoken with Guidepost. The inference would seem to be that Guidepost should not have stated in the report that those two individuals corroborated my allegations since neither spoke directly with Guidepost during the course of the investigation. She is correct that Guidepost did not speak with those two individuals (although they did speak at length with Dr. Mohler). However, that does not suggest the Guidepost investigation was done poorly or the report inaccurate. To the contrary, it reflects that the Guidepost investigation was conducted within the legal governing documents of the SBC and the scope of the investigation approved by the Convention. As it relates to my case, the scope fell under the mishandling of allegations of abuse and the mistreatment of victims. Baptist Press serves as the news reporting organization for the SBC. As noted in the report, established by the EC's own documentation, BP was first contacted about reporting on my disclosure by LifeWay's Communication Department. As also noted in the report, at that same time (late February/early March, 2019), the two entity leaders with direct authority over the matter as well as the pastor with authority over the accused, had all unequivocally provided statements to the EC/BP that corroborated my allegations. Additionally, as noted in the report, I provided all documentation requested by the EC. The Guidepost report is clear in its reporting that in March 2019 some EC staff and outside counsel introduced their personal viewpoints about what constituted corroborated abuse. However, it is equally clear that those individuals did not have any actual information about the specific nature of my allegations or the professor's response to them that formed the basis of their conjecture and subsequent libel. Furthermore, the Guidepost report is equally clear that while their conjecture was not rooted in any material information provided to them, all the material

provided to the SBC's news reporting agency on the matter was from individuals in positions of denominational and professional authority over the matter who had been directly involved in questioning both me and the professor. Ms. Basham purports to cast doubt on Guidepost's reporting but does so from the absence of accusations ever received by either entity involved, the EC, or Guidepost. Guidepost did not need to interview the professor's pastor or my former boss to assert in the report that those individuals had corroborated the abuse allegations to the EC because the EC's own records—and public statements—reveal it. Additionally, although she is not legally privy to the source material Guidepost had to complete the investigation, I know Ms. Basham was aware of at least some of this as my former boss, Eric Geiger, subsequently let me know he had responded to her questions and that in doing so he noted that he had directly corroborated the details to the BP team prior to the original article's publication.

Since I only read the article once and will certainly not subject myself again to it or to the commentary on it, it is possible that there are other materially false assertions made in the article that I could easily disprove. However, I will not subject myself to it again or to commentary on it (or this statement) to do so.

I will have no further comment.

-Jennifer Lyell

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jennifer Lyell** <jennifer.lyell@lifeway.com>

Date: Wed, Mar 6, 2019 at 11:50 AM

Subject: Re: story

To: David Roach <droach@sbc.net>

David,

Here's a screenshot from my phone records showing where I kept trying to call the special victims unit:

Sunday, 05/27						
05:44a	LOUISV KY	502-574-7672	SDDV	1	0.00	0.00
05:52a	LOUISV KY	502-574-7672	SDDV	1	0.00	0.00
[REDACTED]						
07:45a	LOUISV KY	502-574-7672	SDDV	1	0.00	0.00
08:26a	LOUISV KY	502-574-7672	SDDV	1	0.00	0.00
08:46a	LOUISV KY	502-574-7060	SDDV	1	0.00	0.00
08:48a	LOUISV KY	502-574-7672	SDDV	2	0.00	0.00

They are the 502.574.7672 number. The 2 minute one is when I left a message.

...

Jennifer Lyell

LifeWay Christian Resources

We serve the Church in Her mission of making disciples.