

The focus should be on the key findings of the Post-Dispatch investigation that found that people were being repeatedly arrested and jailed by mistake in St. Louis despite safeguards that could have prevented it. If new facts or information exists that informs the 100 cases we found, those should be brought forward by public officials, some of whom were aware of details of our research before it was published Oct. 27.

Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce and City Operations Director Eddie Roth are not neutral observers. They were sources for the story over many months. They knew our findings beforehand. We have vetted and responded to multiple emails from Roth since the stories ran. He didn't like our answers, so he apparently chose to post his comments on his personal Facebook page. He is a public official who works for the mayor's office.

Joyce has not provided us with any specific information showing errors in reporting. We stand ready to view records in that regard if there are any. But making unsubstantiated, vague claims to others doesn't warrant another story or correction, which we would publish if new facts warranted. Roth and Joyce had access to our data months before we published this story. They repeatedly were asked for files and comments.

Opening the more files, some of which were denied in our reporting, would be the best course. Bring in the mayor of St. Louis, the St. Louis police chief, the Missouri Highway Patrol and any other public agencies to shed light on our reporting and pertinent facts.

The St. Louis Board of Aldermen has received a request for a hearing into the wrongful arrests. The story continues, and we will continue to report any new information.

More than three months before we published our story, in an effort to ensure fairness and accuracy, the Post-Dispatch provided officials with details of these cases based on our months of comprehensive inspection and comparison of available public records.

These officials downplayed the significance of the wrongful-arrest issue as statistically insignificant, which the newspaper had first raised nearly two years earlier. They also questioned the accuracy of the newspaper's research, but declined to provide data to refute it although they said they had conducted a time-consuming review.

To this date, beyond generalities, no one in an official capacity has directly detailed any specific factual errors. Nor to our knowledge have they corrected their own public records on which our reporting was based.

All of the names of those wrongfully arrested were verified based on court-ordered fingerprint comparisons, sheriff's department records, judges, lawyers and court staff. As the story acknowledged, specific circumstances within some of those cases could not always be verified because of inconsistencies between jail and court records and the lack of cooperation from authorities.

The follow up is being handled under longstanding newsroom policies. There is no aberration in our policy. Roth has decided to crusade on Facebook that the newspaper is acting unethically. Railing against

our corrections policy is a distraction and irrelevant. Under longstanding policies, we issue corrections based on fact-based reporting and new information.

We stand ready to acknowledge and correct any factual inaccuracies in our reporting if the Mayor's Office, Circuit Attorney's Office or the St. Louis Police Department can document how the records on which our reporting was based were wrong.

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