



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 22, 2010

UK Street Preachers Vindicated After Arrests for Calling Homosexuality Sin

It appears that efforts in the UK to crack down on those who speak out publicly against homosexuality are backfiring. In two different cases, street preachers taken into custody by police after publicly declaring their Christian belief that homosexual conduct is morally wrong have been awarded monetary settlements by the courts for wrongful arrest.

In early December police in Birmingham, England, were ordered to pay local street preacher Anthony Rollins £4000 (more than \$6,000) plus legal expenses for wrongful arrest and imprisonment. According to the [Christian Institute](#), a pro-faith-and-family group in the UK, Rollins, who suffers from Asperger's syndrome (a type of autism), was arrested after a citizen complained to police about his message that homosexual conduct is sinful. Passersby who witnessed the incident said that the citizen, identified as John Edwards, shouted that Rollins was a "homophobic bigot" before summoning the police by phone.



After arriving on the scene police arrested and handcuffed Rollins before taking him into custody. He was held for three hours before finally being charged with breaking Section 5 of the Public Order Act, a controversial statute that has been highly criticized for being used to infringe on the free speech rights of UK citizens, particularly those speaking out against the normalization of homosexuality in the country. While the charges were later dropped, Rollins sued the West Midlands Police for wrongful arrest, unlawful imprisonment, assault and battery, and infringement of his human rights — winning in court on all counts.

In a similar case, in mid-December Christian street preacher Dale Mcalpine was awarded £7,000 (more than \$10,000) in damages after he sued police in Cumbria, England for wrongful arrest, unlawful imprisonment, and infringing on his human rights. Mcalpine was arrested in April after responding to a comment about homosexuality from a passerby, saying that it was listed in the Bible as a sin ([view a video of his arrest below](#)). After his arrest, Mcalpine was held for more than seven hours and ultimately charged under Section 5 of the Public Order Act with using "threatening, abusive or insulting" words "to cause harassment, alarm or distress" — charges that were later dropped.

The actions of the police in the case were so aggressive that even one prominent homosexual activist in



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the UK told newspapers that the arrest amounted to a heavy-handed attack on free speech.

Following the announcement of the settlement in his favor, Mcalpine said he forgave the police, “and I hope that this doesn’t happen to anyone else. Despite my experience I still respect the police. I will pray for them because they have a difficult and sometimes dangerous job.”

A spokesman for the Christian Institute, which helped fund Mcalpine’s case, said such arrests have become all too common in the UK. “We have defended a number of Christians wrongfully arrested under Section 5 of the Public Order Act,” said the Institute’s Mike Judge. “There is a problem with the law and it needs to be fixed.”

As in the U.S., street preaching has a long and storied history in the UK, and it is only relatively recently that it has come under increasing assault — in both nations — from those who would like to see it silenced. “Street preachers may not be everyone’s cup of tea, but it is part of our Christian heritage,” said Judge. “Most people just walk on by and ignore it. The police have no business arresting Christians for quoting the Bible.”

Photo: A Christian speaker at Speaker’s Corner of Hyde Park in London, England.



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