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Bounty Boys could face criminal complaints, Midwest City police say

A group of bounty hunters who post reality show-style videos of themselves on the Internet forced their way into the wrong house and terrorized a Midwest City man and his family, according to police.

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MIDWEST CITY — A group of bounty hunters who post reality show-style YouTube videos of themselves tracking down bail jumpers could face legal trouble of their own after forcing their way into the wrong house, authorities said Wednesday.

The Bounty Boys, who go by the names Chris Black and Les Riggs, forced their way into a Midwest City house last week and terrorized a 51-year-old man and his family for almost an hour before realizing they had the wrong person, Midwest City Police Chief Brandon Clabes said.

Black, whose real name is David Shad DeWitt, and Riggs, whose real name is Lawrence Earl Sanders, could face criminal complaints including kidnapping and pointing a firearm, Clabes said.

The Bounty Boys' attorney, Irven Box, said his clients are trying to cooperate and have scheduled a meeting with Midwest City police Monday.

“Our clients have nothing to hide, and we believe once the whole story is told we certainly hope no criminal charges will be filed,” Box said. He would not say whether his clients videotaped the incident.

Lawsuit names pair

The Bounty Boys also face a lawsuit filed July 8 in Cleveland County by Chad Istook, son of former U.S. Congressman Ernest Istook.

Chad Istook, who has had a series of legal troubles, was picked up by the bounty hunters in July 2009 at his home on several municipal warrants. They released a videotape of the arrest to media and posted it on the Internet.

Chad Istook's lawsuit claims the two men asked for permission to use the video exclusively for training purposes and said they would not use his name or face.

His lawsuit accuses them of trespassing, damaging his property and appropriating his name and likeness. The suit asks for damages of more than \$10,000.

Several law enforcement agencies have had problems with the Bounty Boys, who like to think of themselves as reality actors, Clabes said.

Unlike police, who have many rules they are required to follow, bounty hunters are virtually unregulated except by the bail bondsmen they work for, some of whom require a private investigator's license or certification from the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training.

Many bail bondsmen and bounty hunters have pushed for state legislation that would require licensing and regulation of their industry.

“This incident has raised some concerns with the law enforcement community regarding a few rogue bounty hunters,” Clabes said. “I don't want to stereotype all good people who work in this field, but we know there are some who need oversight and statutory regulation to ensure they don't violate criminal law or civil rights.”

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