

## INVESTIGATIONS

# Drug trafficking. Embezzlement. Murder. See the list of Kentucky sheriffs criminally charged

**[Josh Wood](#)**

Louisville Courier Journal

Updated Sept. 17, 2025, 10:54 a.m. ET

Since 2010, one in six of Kentucky's 120 counties has had a sheriff criminally charged or convicted over events that occurred while in office, [a Courier Journal investigation has found](#).

Some of those sheriffs remain in office.

Here's a list of counties that have had a sheriff criminally charged since 2010.

## Barren County

Former Barren County Sheriff Christopher Eaton was sentenced to 18 months in prison in 2013 on federal obstruction of justice charges. [The DOJ said Eaton directed deputies to falsify reports](#) regarding a suspect who was assaulted by deputies.

## Breckenridge County

Former Breckenridge County Sheriff Todd Pate [was arrested by Kentucky State Police in 2015](#) for terroristic threatening, DUI and other charges. [In 2019, he was arrested for a second DUI](#). He resigned in 2020.

## Bullitt County

Former Bullitt County Sheriff David Greenwell was federally charged with obstruction of justice and aiding a conspiracy to distribute marijuana in 2017. A jury found him not guilty in 2018.

## Carroll County

Former Carroll County Sheriff Jamie Kinman pleaded guilty to stealing painkillers, including from a terminal cancer patient. He took a plea deal that allowed him to avoid prison time, but required he immediately step down as sheriff.

## Graves County

Former Graves County Sheriff Dewayne Redmon was indicted in 2018 on state-level charges alleging he took a hydrocodone from a drug drop box for personal use. He won re-election despite the charges, but died in office in early 2019.

## Greenup County

Former Greenup County Sheriff Keith Cooper was sentenced to 13 months in federal prison in 2023 after entering a “no contest” plea on charges he misappropriated funds and ammunition. The DOJ said he wrongfully withdrew funds seized in drug investigations and took nearly \$30,000 of taxpayer-funded ammunition.

## Harlan County

Former Harlan County Sheriff Marvin Lipfird pleaded guilty to federal charges of misusing public funds in 2017. The DOJ said he spent the money on personal expenses like “food, alcohol, hotel rooms, and a subscription to a dating website.” He was sentenced to three months in jail and five months of home incarceration.

## Hickman County

Former Hickman County Sheriff Mark Green was indicted on a felony-level abuse of public trust charge in 2019, accused of writing himself checks using public funds. He pleaded guilty to an amended-down attempted theft charge and avoided prison time.

## LaRue County

Former LaRue County Sheriff Bobby Carlton Shoffner pleaded guilty to a federal charge of embezzling taxpayer dollars in 2017. He admitted to embezzling nearly \$22,000 in property tax receipts over 2011-12 and using a county credit card on things like “DirectTV, golf shoes, and Abercrombie & Fitch.” He was sentenced to three years of probation.

## Letcher County

Former Letcher County Sheriff Mickey Stines was charged with murder for the 2024 shooting of District Court Judge Kevin Mullins, which was captured on camera. Stines stepped down following his arrest after Gov. Andy Beshear threatened his removal. Stines is currently awaiting trial.

## Nelson County

Nelson County Sheriff Ramon Pineiroa was indicted on multiple felony charges in March 2025 related to the improper seizure of vehicles under Kentucky’s asset forfeiture law and the sales of those seized vehicles. He is scheduled to stand trial in October. His attorney has previously called the charges “baseless.”

## Nicholas County

Former Nicholas County Sheriff Dick Garrett pleaded guilty to theft and abuse of public trust charges in 2011. Prosecutors said Garrett illicitly took tens of thousands of dollars from a federal asset forfeiture account and used the money “like a personal checking account.” He avoided jail.

## Owsley County

Former Owsley County Sheriff Brent Lynch was arrested in 2021 after being accused of hitting a girl during a fight at a Perry County high school basketball game. Lynch, who was on the Owsley County team's coaching staff, was found not guilty in 2022.

## Robertson County

Robertson County Sheriff Gray was arrested for DUIs twice in a nine-month period spanning 2023-4. In one instance, he was in uniform and had been operating a department vehicle. He remains in office.

## Simpson County

Former Simpson County Sheriff Chris Cline was indicted in 2014 on 41 counts of trying to obtain a controlled substance by fraud and one count of official misconduct. A judge dismissed the case in 2023 after prosecutors declined further prosecution. Cline resigned in 2013 citing health reasons.

## Spencer County

Former Spencer County Sheriff Steve Coulter was indicted in 2011 on tampering with public records and official misconduct charges. He entered an Alford plea — a type of guilty plea where the party maintains their innocence — on an official misconduct charge and avoided jail.

## Todd County

Todd County Sheriff Tracy White is charged with misdemeanor-level harassment and menacing over a 2024 incident where he showed up at the home of a Logan County man one night wearing gloves and threatened to “get [his] a-- another way.” He is scheduled to stand trial in November.

## Trigg County

Trigg County Sheriff Aaron Acree pleaded guilty to multiple misdemeanors in 2023 and is on probation. Most charges were related to an incident where he allegedly roughed up a shackled woman at his office. He also used his position to secure a free hotel room where he engaged in an affair.

Acree's predecessor, Jason Barnes, was sentenced to 90 days of house arrest and three years of probation in 2022 over charges related to providing alcohol to a Trigg County Sheriff's Office intern who was in high school. A lawsuit from that former intern alleged Barnes and several sheriff's deputies sexually groomed her and had sex with her once she turned 18. He resigned in 2020 as the criminal investigation was ongoing.

## Webster County

Former Webster County Sheriff Donald Jones pleaded guilty to witness tampering and official misconduct in 2023. He was sentenced to [three months of home incarceration and three years of probation](#). He died in December 2024.

## Whitley County

Former Whitley County Sheriff Lawrence Hodge was [sentenced to more than 15 years in prison in 2011](#) for conspiring with drug dealers to distribute prescription pills, turning a blind eye to drug trafficking and embezzling taxpayer dollars. [He was brought down by local journalists.](#)

*Josh Wood is an investigative reporter who focuses on public safety and government. Get in touch at [jwood@courier-journal.com](mailto:jwood@courier-journal.com) or on X at [@JWoodJourn](https://twitter.com/JWoodJourn).*

