

**DE MERCURIO AND WYNN'S JOINT STATEMENT ON SETTLEMENT WITH DALLAS COUNTY**  
**01/28/2026**

After years of litigation, Dallas County has agreed to a settlement that resolves the case surrounding our wrongful arrest during an authorized security assessment at the Dallas County Courthouse.

The settlement confirms what has been true from day one: our work was authorized, professional, and performed in the public interest.

We were hired by the Iowa Judicial Branch ([Iowacourts.gov](http://Iowacourts.gov)), to conduct a red team assessment of virtual and physical assets. A red team is an adversarial simulation that is extremely effective at uncovering real-world vulnerabilities before they can be used by criminals.

Physical red teaming was authorized at five locations, including a specific request to focus on after-hours covert entry testing.

We performed the engagement successfully, gaining access to every facility (often by trivial means) and delivered a comprehensive report detailing critical vulnerabilities and practical remediation steps.

At multiple facilities, our authorization was verified without incident. During testing at the Judicial Branch Building, for example, a state trooper encountered us, verified our authorization, and the assessment continued. Our point of contact emailed us in the morning saying congratulations, after he found our business card on his desk.

At the Dallas County courthouse we encountered an unlocked door late at night. After closing it and bypassing it to document vulnerabilities, the alarm finally triggered. We remained on-site and continued testing while waiting for responders.

Six deputies and officers arrived, verified our identities and authorization, and told us we were free to go. We stayed voluntarily, answered questions, and shared security recommendations.

When the Sheriff arrived, some body cameras were turned off and the situation escalated abruptly. We were belittled and told we were going to jail, he just didn't know what for yet.

We recognize that law enforcement officers operate in difficult conditions and often make tough decisions quickly. But this case was not about a split-second decision made in the fog of uncertainty. Officers on-scene had already addressed the situation in a rational and

professional manner - and **told us we were free to go**. What happened next was a deliberate escalation—one that we firmly believe was motivated by personal pride and politics rather than public safety.

We were taken to jail in cuffs (despite the recommendation of one of the deputies that it was not necessary) and when we were arraigned in the morning it was clear the Sheriff withheld material information from the magistrate, including that we were hired by the State. We were then charged with felony offenses carrying up to seven years of prison time, and our bond was raised ten times the normal amount. The magistrate later attested that had she known, she likely would have released us.

That arrest changed our lives.

Public records, media coverage, and official statements labeled us as criminals. We faced seven years in prison, despite doing exactly what we were authorized and hired to do by the State, so that a Sheriff could leverage us against the State.

This case was never about money. It was about restoring the truth and clearing our names. This victory lets us put it behind us, but it remains troubling that the justice system was abused in such a way.

What should concern every taxpayer is not just what happened to us, but what followed. In the wake of this incident, Iowa enacted restrictions that dramatically limit proactive security testing - the only type of testing that revealed critical vulnerabilities that have likely existed for years.

This incident did not improve public safety. It undermined it. The system became focused on quieting a political storm and completely ignored the issues uncovered by our testing.

We understand the pressure to respond to public controversy. But laws written from fear and misunderstanding do not create safety - they create blind spots.

We are formally offering our time and expertise to help Iowa modernize its framework for authorized security testing so professionals can do their jobs, institutions can fix real vulnerabilities, and taxpayers can have confidence their buildings are actually secure.

In the years since the wrongful arrest, DeMercurio built [Kaiju Security](#) with Wynn recently joining, a security company with elite talent focused on adversarial simulation and real-world testing, because these vulnerabilities still exist and someone must find them before criminals do.

We appreciate everyone who supported us, stood up for the truth, and understood what was at stake - not just for two individuals, but for the integrity of security testing and public

safety as a whole. We hope this resolution becomes a turning point for us and the future of proactive public safety security testing in Iowa and beyond.

— **Gary DeMercurio & Justin Wynn**