

# **MEDIA & SECURITY PLAN**

*for*

*The Commonwealth of Virginia*

*vs.*

*James Alex Fields, Jr.*

**November 26, 2018 through December 14, 2018**

**Prepared by**

The City of Charlottesville Office of Communications

**In conjunction with**

The 16th Judicial Circuit of the Commonwealth of Virginia,  
the City of Charlottesville Sheriff's Office,  
and the City of Charlottesville Police Department

**FINAL 11/20/18**

# Table of Contents

<b>Fact Sheet.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Media Plan.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Plan Goals	
Contact Information	
<b>Standards of Conduct and Courtroom Protocol.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Prohibited Items	
Courtroom Docket and Seating	
Leaving and Entering the Courtroom During the Hearing	
<b>Courtroom Access Procedures .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Press Credential Registration	
Media Check-In	
Identification Credentials	
<b>Logistical Assistance .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Overview	
Media Liaison Office – Levy Building (1 <sup>st</sup> Floor)	
Remote Viewing Area – Levy Building (2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor)	
Media Room – Levy Building (2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor)	
Media Parking	
News Transmission Vehicle Parking Area	
“Live and Stand Up” Locations	
Press Conference/Interview Locations	
Remote Viewing Location	
Court Documentation	
Transcripts	
Utilities	
Restrooms	
Smoking	
Clean Up	
Security	
Indemnity	
<b>Court Security Plan .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Satellite Map.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Fact Sheet

**Case Name:** *The Commonwealth of Virginia vs. James Alex Fields, Jr.*

**Trial Dates:** November 26, 2018 through Friday, December 14, 2018

**Presiding Judge:** The Honorable Richard E. Moore,  
Charlottesville Circuit Court  
16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of the Commonwealth of Virginia

**Courtroom:** Charlottesville Circuit Court (only one courtroom)  
315 East High Street  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

**Defendant:** James Alex Fields, Jr.

**Prosecuting Attorneys:** Joseph Platania, Commonwealth's Attorney  
Nina-Alice Antony, Senior Assistant  
Commonwealth's Attorney

**Defense Attorneys:** Denise Lunsford, Esq.  
John Hill, Esq.

**Charge:** First Degree Murder

**Sheriff:** James E. Brown, III

**Media Coordinators:** Brian Wheeler, Director of Communications  
(434) 970-3129 (o)  
(434) 260-2433 (c)  
wheelerb@charlottesville.org

Joe Rice, Deputy Director  
of Communications  
(434) 409-8226 (c)  
(434) 970-3707 (o)  
Ricej@charlottesville.org

**Trial Documents and Updates:** [www.charlottesville.org/fields](http://www.charlottesville.org/fields)

**Internet/AV Provider:** Ting/The AV Company

**Court Reporter:** Lane's Court Reporters  
401 8<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Charlottesville, VA  
(434) 293-7423

## Media Plan

This plan contains guidelines and policies for media coverage for the trial of *James Alex Fields, Jr.* scheduled for Monday, November 26, 2018 through Friday, December 14, 2018 in the Charlottesville Circuit Court located at 315 High Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

The goals of this media plan are to ensure that:

- 1) There is a fair and equal administration of justice.
- 2) The public and the media are accommodated to the best of the Court's abilities during the trial.
- 3) Appropriate security and decorum are maintained in the Court Building and surrounding grounds and buildings.
- 4) The media have fair, timely, impartial, and equal access to information regarding the proceedings through release of information by the Court, the Charlottesville Office of Communications, the Charlottesville Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and by Lane's Court Reporters.
- 5) Disruption of normal operations and activities in and around the Circuit Court are minimized to allow citizens to conduct necessary business with the City and Court throughout the duration of the trial.
- 6) Victims and family members are afforded dignity, respect, and privacy.

Members of the media who plan to attend the trial or who have questions regarding media arrangements should contact:

Brian Wheeler  
Director of Communications  
City of Charlottesville  
605 East Main Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
(434) 970-3129  
[wheelerb@charlottesville.org](mailto:wheelerb@charlottesville.org)

***Note: The conditions and procedures specified in this media plan are subject to modification by the court at any time during the course of the proceedings. Additional annexes to the Plan covering areas such as logistical support, fees, registration, code of conduct and so forth will be issued as soon as they are completed. These annexes shall become an integral part of this Plan when they are issued. Coverage of the trial by the media indicates an agreement to abide by the terms of this Plan and any annexes.***

## Standards of Conduct and Courtroom Protocol

One of the advantages of a media plan is that it explains the ground rules which all parties are expected to follow: what the media expects from the Court, as well as what the Court expects from the media. These standards of conduct will ensure that the goals of this plan will be met. The City and Court have devoted numerous resources to provide for the needs of the media during this trial. In return, it is requested that the media abide by the rules to make the operations run as smoothly as possible.

Violators of these standards of conduct will not be allowed to return to the courtroom or viewing area during the remainder of the court proceedings and may be subject to contempt of court determined by the Presiding Judge. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### Prohibited Items

No cameras or recording devices of any kind are permitted in the Circuit Court building or the Remote Viewing Area in the Levy building.

Cell phones, tablets, or any other electronic devices will not be permitted in the courtroom. There will be no storage of electronic devices at the Circuit Courthouse (315 East High St.), these items are restricted to the Media Operations Center at the Levy building (350 Park St).

Violators will not be allowed to return to the courtroom or viewing area during the remainder of the court proceedings and may be subject to having their credentials revoked and/or being found in contempt of court.

No ornaments such as T-shirts, shirts, buttons, placards, badges, etc. may be worn which contain any written or visual commentary about this case, anyone participating in it, or are related to this case in any way.

Food and drink are not permitted.

### Courtroom Docket and Seating

The Courthouse opens at 8:30 A.M. with the active docket of the Court commencing at that time.

Because of limited seating in the Circuit Court, there will be (2) rows reserved for media representatives in the courtroom during the trial (this **does not** include jury selection days). **One representative from each registered media organization will be given access to this reserved area on a first-come, first-served basis.** This is to ensure that ample seating will be available to family and friends of the victim and defendant, witnesses for both prosecution and defense, Sheriff staff, Legal staff, Communications staff, as well as the general public. **If additional seating is available, other credentialed members of the media may have access to courtroom seating under the discretion of the Sheriff's staff.** Additional seating will also be available at the Remote Viewing Area located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Levy Building.

Reserving seats before Court opens or before the trial starts will not be permitted.

## **Leaving and Entering the Courtroom During the Trial**

In order to limit disruptions in the courtroom, it is expected that you will remain seated until the judge calls for a recess or if there is a break in the proceedings (ie., witness change). Anyone leaving the courtroom prior to a recess or break will not be allowed to reenter until the next recess or break is declared.

Reporters should be mindful that accessing the courtroom involves security checks, and ample time should be given to ensure going through this process.

## **Courtroom Access Procedures**

### **Press Credential Registration**

In order to be eligible for consideration for access to reserved media seating in the courtroom during the trial (*not applicable for jury selection days*), transmission vehicle parking, Media Operations Center, and/or assigned live shot locations, media representatives must register for press credentials with the Charlottesville Office of Communications by visiting [www.charlottesville.org/fieldtrial](http://www.charlottesville.org/fieldtrial) by **November 21, 2018**. If you choose not to register by **November 21, 2018**, you may still cover the trial, but access to designated media areas will not be guaranteed.

Media organizations will be asked, as part of the registration process, to designate a representative from their organization to liaison with the Charlottesville Office of Communications prior to and during coverage of the trial. This point of contact will manage the organization's registration paperwork and will coordinate the process from the media end.

### **Media Check-In**

Upon arrival, a representative from each media organization must report to the Media Operations Center at the Levy building at 350 Park Street (on the corner of Park and High) to pick up pre-registered press credentials for his/her media outlet. The representative must possess appropriate identification issued by their media organization before obtaining their registered credentials.

Each media organization will receive one transferrable courtroom credential (red) and multiple crew credentials (green) for all media personnel registered online as of **November 21, 2018**. If seating allows, additional members of the media may enter the courtroom under the discretion of Sheriff department staff.

### **Identification Credentials**

Media representatives (including both reporters and support/technical personnel) will be required to display approved press credentials when accessing court-related media facilities including the Charlottesville Circuit Court, the Media Operations Center and Remote Viewing Area at Levy, the transmission vehicle area on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and other areas as designated.

# Logistical Assistance

## Overview

The City of Charlottesville Office of Communications is the lead agency for coordinating media logistics for the trial. The City will make all reasonable efforts to work with the media and its logistical needs, however, priority is to maintain normal operations for the Circuit Court and City functions. Media representatives are advised to note all deadlines for service and/or location reservations. Media having special or specific needs should communicate these to the Office of Communications as early as possible so that attempts may be made to meet as many needs as possible.

## Remote Viewing Area – Levy Building

Because of limited seating available within the courtroom, a Remote Viewing Area will be established at the Levy building at 350 Park Street on the second floor. This location will have a closed-circuit video and audio feed from the courtroom during the trial (**not applicable during jury selection days**). No recording or re-broadcast, simultaneous or otherwise, will be permitted for any purpose. This rule will be strictly enforced and subject to maximum sanctions for violation.

The capacity of the viewing area is (40). Eating and drinking will not be allowed in the viewing area as it is considered an extension of courtroom. While the remote location will be considered an extension of the courtroom, media members may come and go as they please. The use of cell phones and any other electrical devices inside the room will not be permitted. Anyone entering the remote viewing area will be required to pass through a security check point.

## Media Operations Center – Levy Building

The Charlottesville Office of Communications will maintain a Media Operations Center at the Levy building located at 350 Park Street (corner of Park and High). The center will open at 8am on November 26, 2018 and will be accessible during operating hours for the duration of the trial. Operating hours will be: Open at 8 am daily/closed one hour after court adjourns.

A media room with wireless internet access will be available on the second floor adjacent to the Remote Viewing Area. This area is first-come, first-served and is limited in seating.

A Media Liaison will be available to assist with media needs. Media will be credentialed at this location (**must preregister and have organization identification**) and should direct any and all inquiries here, so as not to disrupt ongoing City business in City facilities.

## Media Parking

The Circuit Court and adjacent area businesses will be in operation for normal City business during the trial. Media representatives should refrain from parking in any spaces signed for reserved parking, or in other spaces where parking is not permitted.

Market and Water Street garages offer paid parking 24/7 (first hour free). Hourly curbside parking is also available.

At no time should vehicles be driven or parked on any grass or sidewalk area without prior permission from the Media Liaison.

### **News Transmission Vehicle Parking Area**

News transmission vehicles (SAT, Microwave, Live trucks, etc.) will have parking access on 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE between East High Street and Jefferson Street beginning Sunday, November 25, 2018 through Friday, December 14, 2018. Areas adjacent to these designated parking areas should be maintained and kept in a clean and safe condition at all times.

No assistance will be provided by City officials if trucks need to be removed within that period and are blocked by other media. **Cable ramps must be used for any cables encroaching onto public sidewalks or any other right-of-way.**

### **Media Staging Area**

**To avoid congestion and potentially unsafe or disruptive conditions, no stand-ups or other television operations may be conducted on Courthouse property.** Each media organization will have a designated staging area directly across the courthouse on High Street and at Court Square Park to conduct these operations (see map). Media organizations acquiring a space at Court Square Park may, at their expense, erect tents, scaffolding or other structures provided these conform to applicable Fire and Inspections regulations. In the case of cables running over streets with active car access, cable covers must be used. **No cables will be permitted to run across High Street to the Courthouse.** Cable covers/ramps and any other media accessories must be provided by your organization.

### **Press Conference/Interview Locations**

A press conference/interview area will be designated in front of the Courthouse steps for trial participants including attorneys and others willing to speak to the media after a verdict has been reached. The Charlottesville Office of Communications will provide a podium, microphone, multi-box and riser. A Communications Office staff member will coordinate with media and camera crew prior to the event. Public access along the sidewalk areas must be maintained at all time and may be enforced by the Charlottesville Police Department.

### **Court Documentation and Transcripts**

All publicly filed documents pertaining to the Fields case and not otherwise subject to court order are posted on the City of Charlottesville website at [www.charlottesville.org/fieldstrial](http://www.charlottesville.org/fieldstrial).

For an expedited copy of transcripts at the conclusion of the trial, contact Lane's Court Reporters at (434) 293-7427.

## **Restrooms**

Restroom facilities will be provided at the Circuit Court building and at the Levy building.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed in the Courthouse or any City building. It is requested that media outside the facilities dispose of cigarette refuse in the receptacles provided.

## **Clean Up**

Every attempt has been made to keep the Courthouse grounds clean and litter free. All attendees are asked to dispose of trash and papers in the receptacles provided.

## **Security**

Any equipment left unattended will not be secure. Unattended and unidentified items left in or near the Court building or Levy Building may be considered suspicious and moved, inspected or destroyed by security.

The Charlottesville Sheriff's Office will provide basic security for media areas on courthouse property; however, use of the area by the media constitutes agreement that the City of Charlottesville shall not be responsible for any loss or damage to any media equipment or belongings. Media representatives wishing to provide additional security for equipment and/or personal items should contact the Charlottesville Communications Department in advance.

Metal detectors will be in use at all entrances to the Court building and in the area adjacent to the courtroom. Metal detectors will be used at the entrances to the remote viewing location. Access to the Court building not mentioned previously (those areas not associated with the trial) will be subject to normal visitor-control procedures.

## **Indemnity**

All media, including but not limited to organizations, affiliated representatives, employees and individuals, covering the Commonwealth of Virginia vs. James Alex Fields, Jr. trial hereby agree to indemnify the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, its officials, employees and agents, and save them harmless from and against any and all claims, damages, liability, costs and expenses in connection with loss of life, personal injury, and/or damage to property arising from or out of any occurrence arising as a result of any activity, operation or use of municipal property granted pursuant to the Media and Security Plan.

# **Court Security Policy**

## **Access to Courtroom:**

### *A. Magnetometer and Search:*

All persons wanting to enter the building shall be searched for weapons, contraband and prohibited items prior to being admitted to the building.

### *B. Weapons Policy:*

Non-Law Enforcement persons will not be allowed to bring a firearm or any other form of weapon including but not limited to Mace/OC Spray, knives or any item deemed a weapon by security personnel onto the Court Facility property pursuant to the Court's Order.

### *C. Less-Than-Lethal Weapons Policy:*

No other form of weapons such as Mace/OC Spray, locking knife, bowie knife, switchblade knife, butterfly knife or any other type of knife with a blade longer than 1 inch, or any other item determined to be a weapon shall be permitted in the courtroom.

### *D. Electronic Devices:*

No electronic devices of any kind will be permitted in the court building or the remote viewing area. There are no facilities for storage of electronic devices or any property at the court facility. If an electronic device is found on a person in the courtroom or the remote viewing area, the device will be confiscated, the violator may be subjected to criminal charges and will be barred from court facility and/or remote viewing area property. Return of the property will be at the discretion of the Judge. Such items are restricted to the media work area.

### *E. Bags and Purses:*

Bags, purses, backpacks or any large containers will not be permitted in the court building or remote viewing facility. Exception for media at the remote viewing facility but such items are restricted to the media work area.

## **Entering and Exiting Courtroom During Testimony/Trial:**

Persons will not be allowed to enter the courtroom during testimony. If a person exits the courtroom at any time other than breaks/recess, they will not be allowed to re-enter until the Judge allows entrance. The Deputy will notify the person when they are allowed to return to the courtroom.

### **Courtroom Seating and Setting:**

Court house (315 East High): (2) rows reserved for media (16) seats – will be marked  
Levy Building (350 Park St.): There is no reserved seating. First-come, first-served seating until capacity is reached.

### **Emergency Evacuations:**

In the event of an emergency where the courtroom or Remote Viewing Area ( if provided) needs to be evacuated, persons will be ordered to leave the City Courthouse or Levy Building and proceed to Justice Park across the street. Once the situation has been resolved, the Deputies will allow people to return and they will be screened again upon entering the building per Sheriff's Office Policy.

### **Media Staging Area:**

The media will be given an area across from the Courthouse to stage (see media plan). The areas adjacent to the court that are private property are off-limits and may result in trespassing charges for those found on private property. Public sidewalks cannot be blocked.

### **Key Agency Contact List:**

**Security:** Charlottesville Sheriff's Office. Sheriff James Brown or Captain William Marshall

**Media:** City Spokesperson: Brian Wheeler

- ***This security plan, as prepared, may be changed at any time to address any other issues that may arise. Attempts will be made to notify all persons affected as soon as possible if changes are made.***



VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

ORDER

It appearing to the Court, that the case on the docket scheduled for November 26, 2018 through December 14, 2018, involve parties, witnesses, and events that are the subject of intense media coverage and public interest, the Court finds it necessary, for the orderly administration of justice and orderly and peaceable conduct of the trials, and to ensure the safety of persons present in the second floor courtroom on the property located at 350 Park Street (hereinafter referred to as "Levy Courtroom") being treated as an extension of the Charlottesville Circuit Courthouse for this trial, that this Special Order be entered,

Now therefore it is HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The City of Charlottesville Sheriff's Office, who are providing security for the Levy Courtroom shall, in consultation with other agencies, officials, or officers as it deems appropriate, determine the maximum number of individuals that may be admitted into the Levy Courtroom, consistent with order, safety and security.

2. The following rules of conduct shall be observed by all individuals in the Levy Courtroom:

(A) **Prohibited Items**—By leave of Court, some of the items listed below may be possessed by law enforcement personnel, but otherwise no individual shall, while in the Levy Courtroom, possess any of the following:

\*Any electronic device

\*Backpacks

\*Purses

\*Bags of any type

\*Firearms

\*Any other item deemed unsafe or potentially disruptive by the presiding Judge or any officer providing security for the court proceedings;

(B) **Prohibited Disruptive Conduct**—No individual may, within the Levy Courtroom, make any verbal outbursts or comments, engage in any disruptive conduct or gestures, make any unsolicited statements, or engage in any other disruptive behavior.

3. Any individual, who fails to observe the above-referenced rules of conduct will be asked to leave, may be removed by the bailiffs, and may be charged with Contempt of this Court Order.

4. The City Sheriff, Sheriff's Deputies, and City Police Officers may specifically direct compliance with this order, and require any individual to leave the Levy Courtroom if such individual fails to comply, and to take such further action as may be warranted under the circumstances to assure for maintenance of safety, peace, and order, and for the protection of all persons involved in attendance of these trial proceedings.

ENTER

Milva E. Hoop

DATE

11/14/18

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

ORDER

It appearing to the Court, that the case on the docket scheduled for November 26, 2018 through December 14, 2018, involves parties, witnesses, and events that are the subject of intense media coverage and public interest, the Court finds it necessary, for the orderly administration of justice and orderly and peaceable conduct of the trials, and to ensure the safety of persons present on the property at 315 East High Street, within the Courthouse, within the courtroom, and on the grounds outside the Courthouse (collectively, the "Courthouse Premises") that this Special Order be entered,

Now therefore it is HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The City of Charlottesville Sheriff's Office, who are providing security for the Courthouse shall, in consultation with other agencies, officials, or officers as it deems appropriate, determine the maximum number of individuals that may be admitted into the courtroom and into the Courthouse, consistent with order, safety and security. Individuals who choose to leave the courtroom or courthouse will not be allowed to reserve any seat(s) or standing area(s) and will only be re-admitted if capacity is available.
2. The following rules of conduct shall be observed by all individuals on the Premises:
  - (A) **Prohibited Items**—by leave of Court some of the items listed below may be possessed by law enforcement personnel and attorneys directly involved in the case, but otherwise no individual shall, while on the Premises, possess any of the following:
    - \*Any electronic device
    - \*Backpacks
    - \*Purses
    - \*Bags of any type
    - \*Firearms
    - \*Any other item deemed unsafe or potentially disruptive by the presiding Judge or any officer providing security for the court proceedings;
  - (B) **Prohibited Disruptive Conduct**—in order that the testimony of witnesses, arguments of counsel, directions or instructions by the bailiffs, and rulings of the court can be heard without interruption, distraction or interference, and that the jury not be distracted, intimidated, or influenced in any way: no individual may, within the courtroom, make any verbal outbursts or comments, engage in any disruptive conduct or gestures, make any unsolicited statements, or engage in any other disruptive behavior.
3. Any individual, who fails to observe the above-referenced rules of conduct will be asked to leave, may be removed by the bailiffs, and may be charged with Contempt of this Court Order.

4. The City Sheriff, Sheriff's Deputies, and City Police Officers may specifically direct compliance with this order, and require any individual to leave the Premises if such individual fails to comply, and to take such further action as may be warranted under the circumstances to assure and promote a fair trial, for maintenance of safety, peace, and order, and for the protection of all persons involved in attendance of these trial proceedings.

ENTER Julia E. Moore

DATE 10/30/18