



January 27, 2010

Authors discuss how to deal with police

*By Howard McEwen
Enquirer contributor*

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS – Too many NKU students and the general public don't know what to do when the cops come knocking, according to authors Travis and Trinity Townsend. The brothers and lawyers are also authors of the new book "When The Cops Come Knockin': An Illustrative Guidebook to Criminal Law."

The brothers will be speaking at NKU on Thursday.

"The major goals of 'When The Cops Come Knockin'" are to educate everyday people about common activities and interactions that could land them a criminal charge and conviction, to teach them how to avoid such activities and interactions, to teach citizens their rights against police abuse and misconduct and to give them instruction on how to properly interact with law enforcement," said Travis Townsend.

The authors said the book is primarily targeted to teens and young adults of low socio-economic backgrounds, but has information for readers of all ages from all walks of life.

On their Web site, the brothers state that "they flirted from time to time with the wrong side of the law, but managed to escape the traps of a criminal record – by luck. It was in law school, as they learned the ins and outs of the law, that they realized just how many mistakes they'd made unknowingly – actions that could have landed them in the same traps that ensnared many of their friends."

"A great many individuals who have been through our criminal justice system have done so simply because they were ignorant of the criminal nature of their actions and would been able to make better decisions had they only known better," said Travis Townsend.

"If ignorance of the law is no excuse, it's time to put an end to the ignorance."
The brothers start with simple advice.

"Our most common advice to people is to always remain calm, respectful and friendly when in the presence of police officers, no matter how uncomfortable the situation becomes," said Travis Townsend.

They also try to dispel myths in dealing with law enforcement.

"Oftentimes people believe that the police aren't allowed to stop them on the street, ask questions or frisk them, if they haven't done anything wrong," he said. "However, if the police have a reasonable suspicion that a crime has been committed, and a credible basis for believing you have evidence of that crime on your person, they can stop you and frisk you. This is true even if you didn't do anything.

"However, the police cannot stop you and frisk you if they do not have a reasonable suspicion that a crime has been committed and that evidence of a crime would be found on you if they questioned and frisked you.

"Therefore, in the event the police approach you on the street and attempt to question and/or frisk you, it behooves you to calmly and respectfully inquire about the reason for the stop."

The presentation will be at the NKU student union room 107A from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday.

“We learn math, science, English and numerous other subjects in school, but no attempt is made to educate people on the subject that could mean the end of that which all human beings hold most dear, freedom and in some cases life,” said Travis Townsend.
