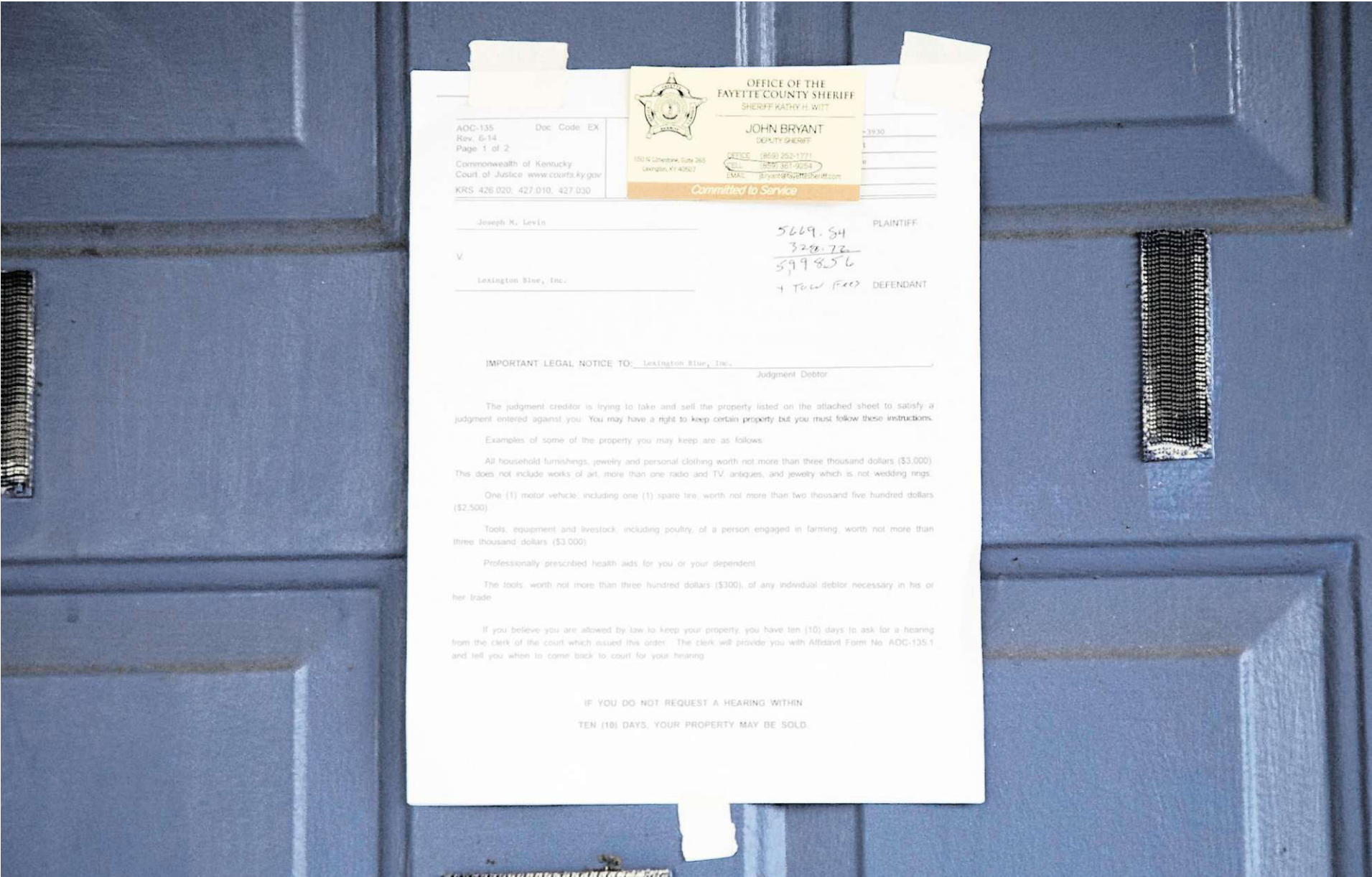


HERALD-LEADER INVESTIGATION

# ‘The whole place was built off of fear’

Lexington Blue owner operated ‘a cult’ of fraud, intimidation, employees say



Fayette County Sheriff’s deputies taped a legal notice to the front door of failed roofing company Lexington Blue on Pasadena Drive order on the seizure of two of the company’s trucks. May 16, 2025.

BY JANET PATTON  
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The owner of Lexington Blue, the roofing company accused of defrauding homeowners and insurance companies, ran his firm as a cult of personality.

Brad Pagel encouraged employees to take psychedelic drugs, lectured them for hours about his own metaphysical beliefs and cheated them out of money, say several former workers interviewed by the Herald-Leader.

He routinely berated them under the guise of encouragement and bombarded sales team leaders and managers with hundreds of intimidating texts, messages and voicemails a day.

“He’s a psychopath,” said Alex Sekulic, a former sales team leader who joined Lexington Blue in February 2024. He only lasted about three months.

“The whole place was built off of fear ... that you were going to lose your job, fear of Brad,” he said. “He would berate us constantly, say we’d be fired, say our families are not important, this job is all that’s important. “We were all terrified of Brad’s psychotic nature.”

The 42-year-old Pagel has not responded to multiple requests by the Herald-Leader for comment. Neither has his attorney, Philip Lawson of True Guarnieri Ayer in Frankfort.

The 10-year-old company and its founder, who often called himself “Rev. Dr. Brad Pagel,” claimed on the job recruiting site Indeed to have completed more than 8,500 roofing projects, with plans to expand in 2025.

But he is neither a minister nor a doctor, and instead of growing this year, the company collapsed and closed.

Lexington Blue’s demise has left potentially hundreds of customers desperate to get back thousands of dollars in deposits for roofing repairs that never happened.

Customer lawsuits are piling up, and Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman is investigating fraud complaints.

When Pagel closed Lexington Blue abruptly on April 26, he posted an online letter to customers explaining the company hoped to pass open jobs to another company.

But just five days later, in a subsequent message to



Brad Pagel in his Fayette County Detention Center mugshot after his arrest on Oct. 1, 2023. He was arrested on charges of criminal trespass, menacing and harassment after he dumped 50 pounds of coins in the office of an attorney representing the Beaumont homeowners’ association. The charge was amended down and Pagel was convicted of harassment.

customers, Pagel said the subcontractor backed out, and he was looking for someone else to take over.

Since then, Pagel has said nothing directly to customers. On his social media, he announced he’s left Lexington and blamed his staff for the business failure:

“After 5 months of unintentional business challenges, including insolvency, sabotage, and mistakes made by my staff without my full knowledge, I find myself being singled out and vilified for

the amusement of a few lost souls,” Pagel posted on Facebook on April 30.

“You are media zombies — the blind leading the blind, guided by lies and grossly exaggerated claims.”

**WHO IS BRAD PAGEL?**

Pagel is not a Kentucky native. Records indicate he was born in Arizona in October 1982. It is unclear what brought him to the Bluegrass State, but he does not appear to have gone to college

here or anywhere else.

He told Lexington Blue employees he had a difficult upbringing. In a video that he posted on his social media, Pagel said he “grew up homeless, with a hooker who was hooked on crystal meth.”

Pagel moved to Kentucky in 2005, and court records show he’s had financial and legal difficulties stretching back to 2007, including a contentious dispute over custody arrangements and child support payments for a now-adult daughter.

In November 2020, Pagel bought a four-bedroom, 4 1/2-half bath house in the Beaumont subdivision for \$619,000. In December of that year, he married Courtney Harrison, a former Lexington Blue employee, and they have a son.

Pagel and his family lived in Beaumont until January 2025, when he sold his house for more than \$900,000 after settling several liens on the property.

His only known address now is a post office box in Destin, Florida.

In a social media post made in early May, he said: “The real reason I left Lexington after 20+ years? The Ongoing Petty Hatred.”

On his lengthy author page on Amazon, where he self-publishes such books as “Roof Warrior” and “The Alchemy of Greatness” under the name Dr. Brad Pagel,

SEE LEXINGTON BLUE, 4A