



VENTURA
COUNTY
DISTRICT
ATTORNEY
TERM REPORT
2007 - 2010



GREGORY D. TOTTEEN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



COUNTY OF VENTURA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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DISTRICT ATTORNEY LOCATIONS

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office serves a culturally, socially and economically diverse population of approximately 824,000. The District Attorney's main offices are located in the Hall of Justice at the Government Center in the city of Ventura. At this site prosecutors and support staff handle the majority of criminal cases arising in the county, including homicides, gang crimes, sexual assaults, general felonies, drug crimes, and misdemeanors. The District Attorney's Hall of Justice site is also home to the Ellie Liston Crime Victims' Assistance Program, which operates to serve crime victims' needs.

A second office is located on Ralston Street in the city of Ventura. This facility houses the Special Prosecutions division, which handles more specialized cases such as major fraud, consumer and environmental violations, computer crimes, recovery of abducted children, and government fraud. A third office, located on County Square Drive, houses the Bureau of Investigation and the Fiscal, Administrative and Legislative Services Unit.

Opened in October 2008, the newest District Attorney's Office location is in the East County Courthouse. This location serves as a point of contact for east county citizen questions and concerns. In addition, the District Attorney's Office also houses a Juvenile Unit at the Juvenile Justice Complex in Oxnard and has opened its Safe Harbor Centers East (Simi Valley) and West (Ventura) locations adjacent to nearby hospitals to provide on-site multi-disciplinary interviews and other services for victims of sexual abuse.

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Left to right: Joyce Donehue, Cynthia Klante, Carrie Broggie, Angela Daniel-Gibson, Lorayne Brady, Jade Smith, Marlana Olguin, Jan Atwood

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY TERM REPORT 2007 - 2010



MISSION, VALUES, VISION

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office is to promote justice and protect the people of the County of Ventura and the State of California by aggressively and fairly prosecuting those who violate the law.

OUR VALUES

We employ individuals of character and courage who provide the highest quality legal representation for the public, steadfastly protect the rights of crime victims, and conscientiously seek to improve the criminal justice system and strengthen our community.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to enhance the quality of life in our community, to be leaders in quality prosecution, to aggressively advocate the cause of justice and, above all, to make Ventura County a safer community for everyone

A Letter from the District Attorney 2007-2010

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office has a rich tradition of excellence as a tough, no nonsense, law enforcement agency that pursues justice and safety with integrity. Indeed, I write this letter on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the first election of legendary District Attorney Woodruff J. Deem. Mr. Deem and his successors set high standards for the administration of justice here in Ventura County. Today your District Attorney's Office remains deeply committed to these core values even as we face extraordinary challenges and new crimes that were never imagined a half century ago.

Thankfully, our community is one of the safest in the nation and boasts several cities that regularly rank among America's most desirable places to live. Yet we are not untouched by crime; during the time period covered by this report, more than 30,000 crime victims walked through the doors of the District Attorney's Office seeking help and justice, and prosecutors filed more than 100,000 criminal cases against adult and juvenile offenders. We also confronted dramatic changes in technology that affected both the nature of crime and our approach to solving and prosecuting cases.

This report offers a glimpse into some of these cases and the accomplishments of this office's dedicated men and women from 2007 to 2010. During this four-year period, we achieved some remarkable milestones.

For example, in 2007, with the generous support of Community Memorial Hospital, the City of Ventura, local businesses, and a host of volunteers, we relocated our west county Safe Harbor facility from an office building to a more family friendly and considerably less costly residential setting. The hallmark of this program is a more compassionate approach to the investigation of child and adult sexual assault cases that avoids multiple victim interviews and examinations.

In 2008, we opened our first satellite office at the East County Courthouse in Simi Valley where we now provide a myriad of victim, consumer protection, and law enforcement services. A \$1.6 million federal grant and collaboration with the industry-sponsored Real Estate Fraud Advisory Team allowed us to expand our Real Estate Fraud Unit to combat the burgeoning problem of mortgage and foreclosure fraud. At the same time, our "cold case" partnership with local law enforcement and dramatic improvements in DNA technology helped solve a number of significant decades-old homicides, including a particularly brutal 1993 murder of an 87-year-old Port Hueneme woman who was deaf and mute.

Along the way, we also enhanced our ability to address the ever-changing face of crime, particularly those crimes involving technology and identity theft. Unlike traditional street crime, computer crime hides in the anonymity of cyberspace and uses highly sophisticated technology to exploit our children, steal our identities, and threaten our economic well-being. Fortunately, state and local funding enables us to operate a high tech task force where specially trained district attorney investigators, police detectives and civilians use cutting-edge technology to find and apprehend these predators. Through agreements with local police agencies, the Sheriff's Office and city governments, we have expanded the capabilities of this vital program to ensure that we are prepared to fight this most insidious crime.

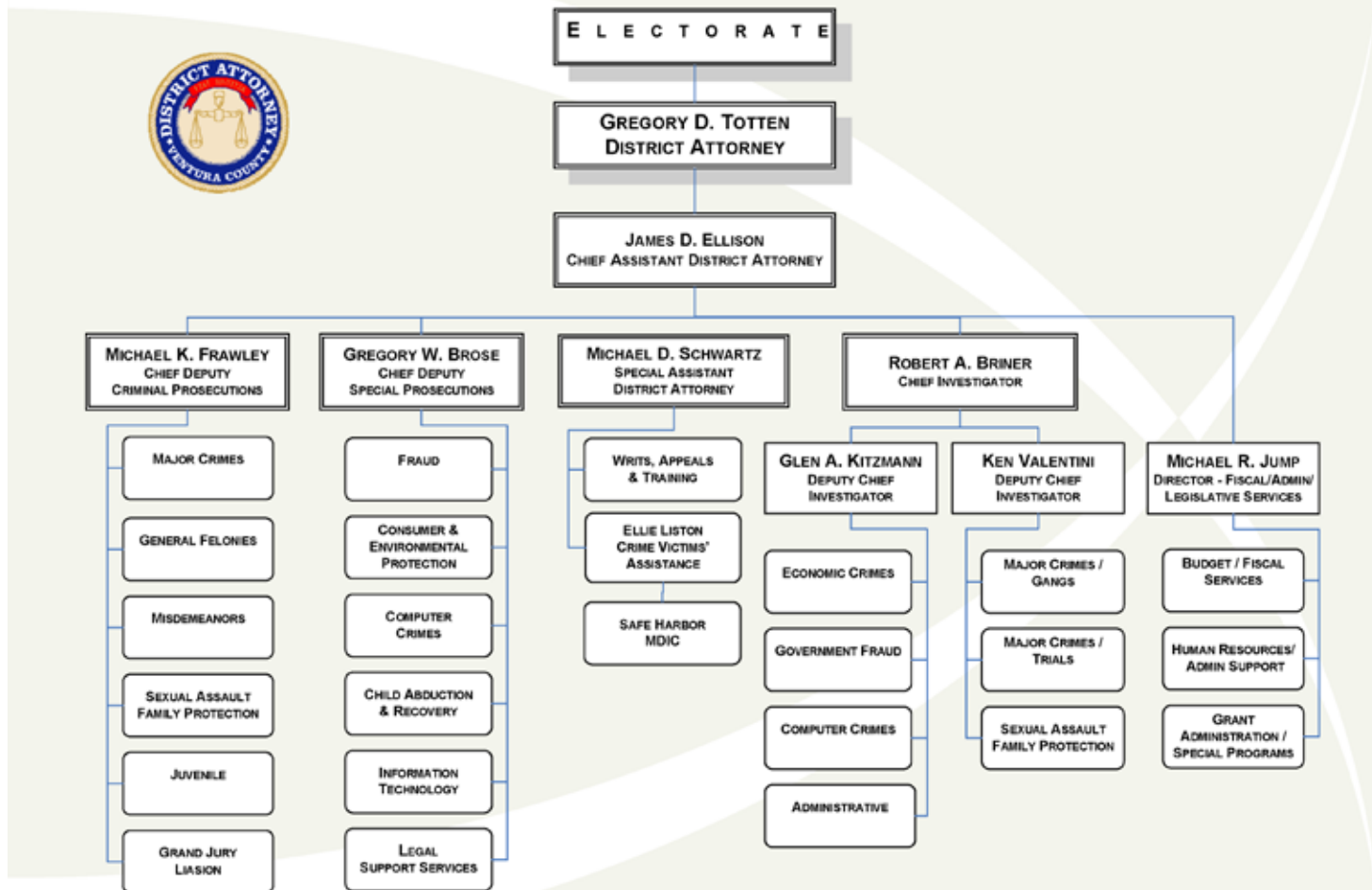
While we celebrate the dedication and commitment of the members of this office, we also gratefully acknowledge the outstanding work of local law enforcement, the financial stewardship of the Board of Supervisors, and above all, the longstanding support of the community we serve. Please know that as your District Attorney I will continue to do my very best to preserve public trust in the justice system and protect the safety of all Ventura County residents.

Very truly yours,

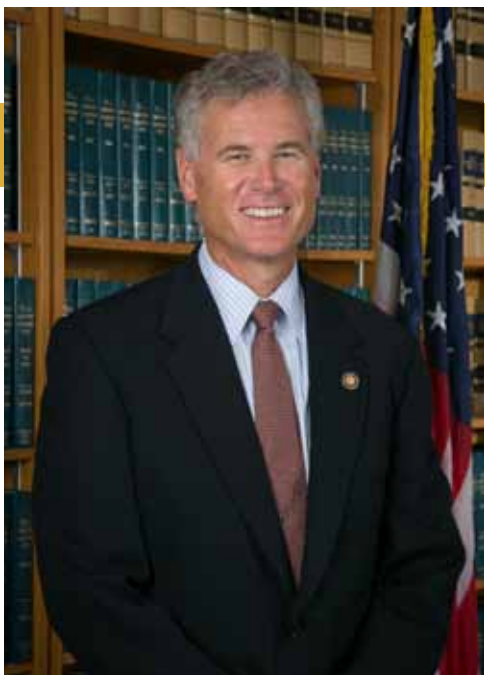


GREGORY D. TOTTON
District Attorney

Office of the District Attorney – County of Ventura



Left to right: Special Assistant District Attorney Michael Schwartz, Chief Deputy District Attorney Greg Brose, Chief Investigator Rob Briner, District Attorney Greg Totten, Chief Deputy District Attorney Mike Frawley, Chief Assistant District Attorney Jim Ellison



CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS

Criminal Prosecutions is the largest division within the District Attorney's Office and is responsible for reviewing complaints, filing charges, and prosecuting the majority of felony and misdemeanor crimes occurring within Ventura County. Criminal Prosecutions includes the Major Crimes Unit, General Felony Unit, Misdemeanor Unit, and Sexual Assault/Family Protection Unit. In 2010, the division prosecuted more than 26,000 criminal matters.

The chief deputy of the division provides direct supervision of the Major Crimes Unit, while the division's remaining units are each supervised by a supervising deputy district attorney. The chief deputy serves as liaison to the civil and criminal grand juries and addresses law enforcement and criminal justice issues on numerous other countywide committees, including the Community Commission for Ventura County and the Oxnard Alliance for Community Strength. The chief deputy also guides and directs the division with respect to critical filing decisions, trial strategy, unit assignments, three strikes, and one-strike sexual assault life sentences.

MICHAEL K. FRAWLEY
Chief Deputy District Attorney



Left to right: Senior Deputy District Attorneys Rebecca Day, Richard Simon, Maeve Fox, Chief Deputy District Attorney Mike Frawley, Senior Deputy District Attorneys Stacy Ratner, Rameen Minoui, Chrystina Jenson



Left to right: Senior Deputy District Attorneys Melissa Suttner, Derek Malan, Chief Deputy District Attorney Mike Frawley, Deputy District Attorneys Joann Roth, John Barrick

MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

The Major Crimes Unit is responsible for the prosecution of all current and cold-case homicides, as well as crimes committed by or for the benefit of Ventura County criminal street gangs. Cases prosecuted by this unit involve some of the most heinous crimes committed within Ventura County and often entail substantial follow-up investigation, trial preparation, and the use of cutting edge forensic DNA analysis and evidence. In addition, other special interest crimes are also assigned to the unit when it is determined that the complexity of the case requires the experience of a Major Crimes attorney. From 2007 to 2010, prosecutors assigned to the Major Crimes Unit filed 72 homicide cases and 247 aggravated gang cases.

The unit's prosecutors are available 24 hours a day to assist law enforcement with search warrants, crime scene response, and evaluation of officer involved shootings. Other duties of Major Crimes prosecutors include law enforcement training, assisting in selected special investigations, and appearing at California Department of Corrections parole hearings.

PEOPLE v. RANDOLPH KLING

MURDER

Prosecutor: **Cheryl Temple**
Investigator: **Daniel Thompson**
Victim Advocate: **Connie Young**

Randolph Kling was a lifelong criminal and con artist who spent most of his adult years incarcerated for 18 separate felony convictions. During his criminal endeavors, Kling created or stole more than 100 identities.

Between June 2003 and February 2004, William and Michael Budfuloski and William's dog were killed. An investigation into the killings revealed that Randolph Kling had set his sights on ownership of William Budfuloski's metal fabrication business, Budco, Inc. Kling manufactured homemade firearm silencers, researched his victims over the internet, and cased their movements before carrying out his plan. In hopes of gaining control of the business, Kling murdered William and Michael and used the internet to pursue a romantic relationship with Lori Budfuloski, William's wife, believing that he would effectively inherit the business by marrying her.

On May 7, 2009, a jury found Kling guilty of both murders, as well as the special circumstances of lying in wait and multiple murder. Kling was further found guilty of animal cruelty; unlawful possession of a silencer, firearm, and ammunition; and possession of a false driver's license. After the trial's penalty phase, the jury recommended a sentence of death, and on February 26, 2010, Kling was sentenced to death.

PEOPLE v. ERNESTO GRACIA

MURDER

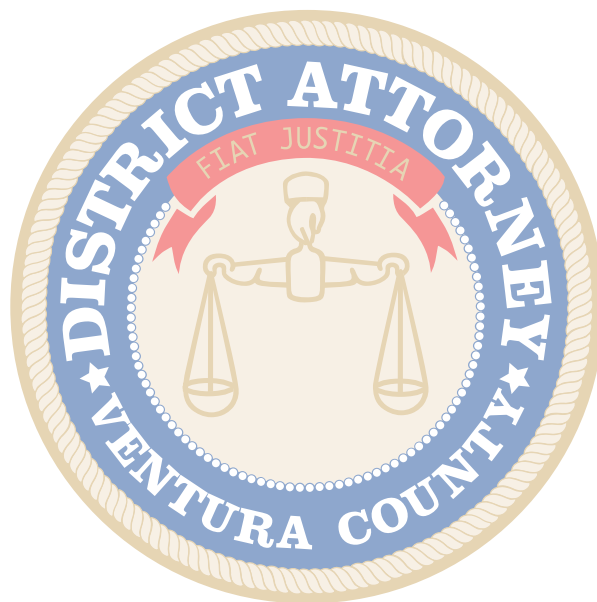
Prosecutor: **Chrystina Jensen**
Investigator: **Michael Palmieri**
Victim Advocate: **Sandra Avila**

In May 2007, gang member Ernesto Gracia stabbed Juan Zarate to death outside a liquor store in Oxnard. While inside the liquor store, the victim made a comment about the girlfriend of a gang member who was in the store. Gracia then verbally threatened the victim, claiming that the victim's comment had been "disrespectful" to the gang. The victim extended his hand toward Gracia in an attempt to apologize and defuse the situation while they were in the store. Gracia slapped away the victim's hand and challenged him to go outside and fight. While outside, the defendant and several members of his gang verbally taunted the victim. During this heated verbal exchange, the defendant pulled out a knife and stabbed Mr. Zarate through the heart. After the murder, the defendant fled the scene but was later captured hiding in a nearby home used by the gang members.

In December 2008, a jury convicted Gracia of first degree murder with the special circumstance of murder for the benefit of a gang. Gracia was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.



Senior Deputy District Attorney John West,
Deputy District Attorney Jim Eicher



PEOPLE v. IGNACIO IXTA JR.

ATTEMPTED MURDER

Prosecutor: **Joann Roth**
Investigator: **Glen Utter**
Victim Advocate: **Sandra Avila**

On the evening of December 3, 2009, as victim Michael Cortez returned to his Oxnard home, he was confronted by Ignacio Ixta, Jr., who claimed to be from the Colonia Chiques criminal street gang. Mr. Cortez asked Ixta not to start any trouble in the neighborhood. An hour later, Ixta returned to the victim's home, used a ruse to lure Cortez outside, and attempted to shoot the victim with a semi-automatic handgun. The gun misfired and when the victim tried to run back into his home, Ixta pulled the trigger again. Mr. Cortez was shot once in the back and the bullet exited his stomach, narrowly missing a child standing nearby. Mr. Cortez was severely injured as a result of the shooting.

After a jury trial, Ixta was found guilty of attempted murder, shooting at an inhabited dwelling, and assault with a deadly weapon. The jury also found true the special enhancements that Ixta personally and intentionally discharged a firearm and caused great bodily injury to the victim. On January 19, 2011, Ixta was sentenced to 25 years to life plus 9 years in prison for the shooting. The judge also found him to be in violation of his probation for a transportation of cocaine conviction and sentenced him to an additional and consecutive prison sentence of one year, eight months.

PEOPLE v. DANIEL RAMIREZ

MURDER

Prosecutor: **Maeve Fox**
Investigators: **Matt Harvill and Greg Hayes**
Victim Advocates: **Susy Rios and Maria Campos-Davies**

In December 2005, 18-year-old Daniel Ramirez was cruising with other members of Varrio Simi Valley (VSV), a local criminal street gang. Ramirez carried a loaded rifle with him. While cruising, the group encountered Jose Luevano driving a lowered automobile and suspected Luevano of being a rival gang member. After the group threatened to shoot Luevano, he called his younger brother, Angel, to help him find the gangsters. Driving into VSV territory, the brothers encountered the group. Angel Luevano walked into the street and held up his hand to stop the car that the defendant and his gang were driving. Ramirez, readied the loaded rifle and fired once into Angel Luevano's neck, killing him instantly. Jose Luevano could not identify Ramirez as the shooter.

In January 2007, Ramirez, then 21, was living in VSV territory about a block from where Angel Luevano was killed. He and other VSV members learned there was a rival gang member in the alley. Ramirez and another unidentified VSV member walked to the alley and confronted a group of young people. They focused on Westside Locos member Luis Torres and threw out the challenge, "Where you from?" When Torres responded "Locos Trece," Ramirez fatally shot Torres through the heart.

Witnesses to the 2007 shooting reluctantly identified Ramirez as the shooter. The murders were tried together and the jury convicted Ramirez of two counts of first degree murder, each with the use of a firearm. They also found true the gang special circumstance and the multiple murder special circumstance. Ramirez received consecutive life terms without the possibility of parole, plus 70 years.

PEOPLE v. ANTHONY McDANIEL**MURDER**

Prosecutor: **Rameen A. Minoui**
 Investigator: **Robert Coughlin**
 Victim Advocate: **Sandra Avila**

On August 21, 2006, Anthony McDaniel, a member of the Westside Gangster Crips gang and armed with a loaded firearm, began challenging a 14-year-old boy standing on the front porch of his own house. As the boy drew closer, McDaniel pulled out his handgun, shouted his gang name, and fired three times at the boy, fatally striking him once.

On September 3, 2006, McDaniel and a fellow gang member robbed a local bakery. During the robbery, McDaniel moved the owner and six other employees to the back of the business at gunpoint. McDaniel fired twice into the ground because the group was not moving fast enough, injuring two employees. McDaniel shot another employee four times in the back, and, while fleeing, shot a fourth employee in the arm.

Through the use of ballistics, DNA, informant testimony from McDaniel's fellow gang members, and recorded admissions from McDaniel, McDaniel was convicted of first degree murder with gang and firearms special allegations, robbery, attempted murder, assault with a firearm, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. McDaniel was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

GANG INJUNCTIONS

On June 1, 2005, a permanent injunction was granted by the Ventura County Superior Court at the request of the District Attorney's Office and the City of Oxnard against the Colonia Chiques criminal street gang. On October 23, 2006, the Superior Court granted a second permanent injunction against another Oxnard and Port Hueneme based criminal street gang, the Southside Chiques. Both injunctions prohibit members of these gangs from associating with each other in public, possessing weapons or drugs in public, and other gang-related activities. Each injunction is limited to designated geographical areas called "safety zones" and applies only to "active gang members" who have been personally served with copies of the injunction. The terms of the injunctions are designed to disrupt the organizational structure and communication of the affected gangs.

Between January 1, 2007, and December 31, 2010, the District Attorney's Office filed cases involving 764 gang injunction violations. This pro-active approach to gang crime, combined with the efforts of community groups, churches, schools, and other members of the criminal justice system have helped to fight the proliferation of gangs in our communities and has resulted in numerous individuals requesting to be de-listed from the injunction after leaving behind their gang affiliations.

PEOPLE v. ROBERT ZAMORA**MURDER**

Prosecutor: **Maeve Fox**
 Investigator: **Thomas Rigali**
 Victim Advocate: **Lisa Wright**

Defendant Robert Zamora and victim Stanley Parker were acquaintances for many years, working together at a local factory and living together briefly. On December 15, 2009, they cashed their paychecks and left their job at 4:30 p.m. in the defendant's truck.

About an hour later, Parker's brutally savaged body was found behind an industrial complex about one and a half miles from the factory. Parker had over 140 sharp force injuries to his body from head to toe, including a devastating wound to his throat. He had no wallet, no identification and no cash on his person or in his belongings. The crime scene produced bloody shoe impressions which were later matched to Zamora's shoes.

Zamora's girlfriend told investigators that after he brought her home on December 15, she and Zamora went to a laundromat where the defendant washed some clothing and shoes. She thought that going to the laundromat was odd since there was a washing machine at their apartment. She also noticed that the clothes Zamora washed changed the color of the wash water as if the clothes had been bloody.

Zamora was interviewed exhaustively, initially denying any knowledge of the crime, but later telling investigators that he had dropped Parker off in the company of a "homeless looking" guy from whom Parker had hoped to purchase crack cocaine. Zamora told investigators that when he returned minutes later, he found Parker dead. Zamora stated that he initially tried to render assistance, causing his clothes to become bloody and leaving his bloody footprints at the scene, but ultimately fled, fearing that Parker's death would be pinned on him.

A jury convicted Zamora of murder and found true the special circumstance that the murder occurred during the commission of a robbery. Zamora was sentenced to prison for life without the possibility of parole.



ANTHONY WOLD
Supervising Deputy District Attorney

Between 2007 and 2010, the Sexual Assault/Family Protection Unit filed more than 5,700 criminal complaints.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/ FAMILY PROTECTION UNIT

The Sexual Assault/Family Protection Unit is responsible for cases arising from four areas of criminal law: sexual assault, domestic violence, elder abuse and mental health. Prosecutors in the unit handle some of the most sensitive and challenging offenses occurring in Ventura County. The unit's prosecutors have proven trial experience and receive specialized training to further develop their expertise. They work closely with police, medical professionals, and victim advocates to investigate and prosecute offenses, while striving to minimize the emotional impacts on sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse victims.

Crimes handled by Sexual Assault prosecutors include child molestation, rape, kidnapping, indecent exposure, failure to register as a sex offender, and felony child abuse. Sexual Assault prosecutors are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to respond to either of the county's multi-disciplinary interview centers to observe and assist with victim interviews and law enforcement investigations. Crimes handled by Domestic Violence prosecutors include spousal battery, attempted murder, spousal rape, stalking, misdemeanor child abuse, criminal threats and similar crimes occurring within a romantic relationship or familial relationship. The Elder Abuse prosecutor handles crimes committed against the elderly, including physical and mental abuse, neglect, identity theft, and financial crimes. The Elder Abuse prosecutor also works closely with the Public Guardian's Office, Ombudsman, Adult Protective Services, and community groups working on elder issues. The Mental Health prosecutor handles sexually violent predator commitments and mentally disordered offenders seeking release into the community from court-ordered treatment in mental institutions.



*Left to right:
 Deputy District Attorneys
 Catherine Voelker,
 Tom Dunlevy,
 Senior Deputy District
 Attorney Micky Coyle,
 Deputy District Attorneys
 Maureen Byrne, Brian
 Weilbacher, Erin Meister*

PEOPLE v. LUIS G.**RAPE, ATTEMPTED RAPE, ASSAULT**

Prosecutor: **Andrea Tischler**
 Investigator: **Ralph Martinez**
 Victim Advocate: **Maria Campos-Davies**

In April 2008, Luis G. choked and brutally beat his wife, who had tried to leave him. Barely able to escape, the defendant's wife fled to her children's school, where police were summoned. During the subsequent investigation, the victim revealed numerous instances of sexual and physical abuse during their relationship. None of the previous abuse had ever been reported.

Luis G. was charged with eight counts of domestic violence and sexual assault spanning two years. A Battered Women's Syndrome expert was called at trial to explain that it is not unusual for a victim of abuse to return to the abuser. The jury returned guilty verdicts on seven of the eight counts, including rape, attempted rape, and assault by means likely to cause great bodily injury. The defendant was sentenced to five years, eight months in prison.

PEOPLE v. WILLIE CLARK**RAPE**

Prosecutor: **Gilbert Romero**
 Investigator: **John Bunch**
 Victim Advocate: **Leticia Espinosa**

In February 1996, 16-year-old Willie Clark snuck in the back door of an Oxnard laundromat that had closed for the evening. Clark hid in a closet and waited for the 66-year-old victim, who was cleaning. When the victim entered the closet, Clark bound and gagged her, and sexually assaulted her. Clark wore a mask covering his face and repeatedly told the victim not to look at him. Although DNA evidence was recovered, for years the DNA profile went unmatched in law enforcement databases.

In 2004, after a robbery conviction in another county, Clark provided a DNA sample to law enforcement and his DNA profile was matched to the DNA recovered from the laundromat assault. Clark was charged with rape, sodomy, and special allegations of burglary and tying and binding. Tried as an adult, Clark was convicted in February 2008 and sentenced to 31 years to life in prison.

PEOPLE v. EDUARDO DIAZ**SEXUAL ASSAULT, RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY**

Prosecutor: **Catherine Voelker**
 Investigator: **Paul Walsh**
 Victim Advocate: **Sandra Avila**

Eduardo Diaz attacked and sexually assaulted adult women on two separate occasions. In October 2007, Diaz went to his first victim's residence, where she was babysitting her three-year-old niece. Diaz claimed to be a representative from the WIC (Women Infants and Children) Program and told the victim that she would lose her WIC benefits if she did not submit to a physical exam. As Diaz examined the seven months pregnant woman, he began to touch her sexually. The victim resisted and Diaz literally tore her clothing off and attempted to rape her. The victim continued to resist, even after Diaz threatened to kill her, her baby, and her husband. The victim ultimately was able to escape and call for help.

In November 2007, Diaz approached his second victim as she did laundry in her apartment complex. Diaz persuaded the victim that she needed to sign up for medical services with the County of Ventura and explained that he must perform a brief exam to be sure she qualified for the county's services. In the course of the "exam," Diaz touched the woman sexually. When she called to report him to the county, she learned Diaz was not a county representative, so she called police.

Fingerprint evidence from literature Diaz gave his second victim matched Diaz's prints. DNA from the first victim's fingernails also matched Diaz's DNA profile. Both women identified Diaz in a photo lineup.

A jury returned guilty verdicts on all counts and Diaz was sentenced to 28 years, 4 months to life in prison.

PEOPLE v. PATRICK DONOHOO**CHILD MOLESTATION**

Prosecutor: **Gilbert Romero**
 Investigator: **Lori Erickson**
 Victim Advocate: **Connie Young**

From 1997 to 2006, Patrick Donohoo continuously molested three young girls in the cities of Ventura and Fillmore. Investigation revealed that Donohoo had also molested four other young girls approximately 40 years ago. Donohoo fled to Texas when he learned that some of his victims spoke to police. When he returned to California several weeks later, his wife assisted law enforcement in securing his arrest. Donohoo's molestations included at least seven victims and spanned 40 years, making him one of the most prolific child molesters ever prosecuted by the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. In January 2009, Donohoo was convicted at age 60 of numerous counts of lewd acts with a minor under 14 years of age and sentenced to 45 years to life in state prison.



CHERYL TEMPLE
Supervising Deputy District Attorney

GENERAL FELONY UNIT

The General Felony Unit prosecutes the majority of felony crimes that carry a potential state prison sentence. The unit's attorneys are veteran prosecutors who handle cases involving such crimes as residential and commercial burglary, armed robbery, grand theft, auto theft, serious assaults, felony driving-under-the-influence, vehicular manslaughter, and a host of other serious crimes. The unit's attorneys are also responsible for serving as liaison to the criminal grand jury, staffing calendar and specialty courtrooms, conducting preliminary hearings, serving as on-site liaisons at local law enforcement agencies and serving as the lead prosecutor on the Ventura County Auto Theft Task Force. From 2007 to 2010, the General Felony Unit filed more than 12,400 felony cases.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Kathy LaSalle

PEOPLE v. GERARDO VILLA

GROSS VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER WHILE INTOXICATED

Prosecutor: **Tate McCallister**
Investigator: **Mike Palmieri**
Victim Advocate: **Felicita Roy**

On September 13, 2008, Gerardo Villa was driving with five passengers in his car on Guiberson Road, between Piru and Fillmore. His blood alcohol content was approximately twice the legal limit, and he had methamphetamine in his system. Villa drifted over the center line of the two-lane road and struck a utility pole.

The pole tore through the vehicle, killing all of the passengers while leaving Villa virtually unharmed. Officers of the California Highway Patrol, Moorpark Office, conducted a thorough investigation of the crime. Villa was convicted of five counts of gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and was sentenced to 22 years in prison.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Theresa Pollara

PEOPLE v. DANIEL CROWLEY

MULTIPLE ARMED ROBBERIES

Prosecutor: **Anne Spillner**
 Investigator: **Tom Rigali**
 Advocate: **Rachel Watkins**

On July 3, 2008, a man walked into the Citibank in Thousand Oaks with a bandana covering his face. He was wearing a distinctive fisherman's hat and long-sleeved shirt. He said, "Give me the money, I have a bomb. This is no joke, hurry up!" In one hand, he was holding a duct-tape covered ball with what looked like a grenade-type pin in it. In his other hand, he was holding a knife and a black canvas bag. The robber took money from two tellers and quickly fled the bank.

On August 11, 2008, a man wearing a bandana and painter's hat entered the same Citibank. He yelled, "Here we go again!" and demanded money from the tellers. The man fled the bank, but this time a witness followed and saw him get into a green minivan. The witness saw part of the van's license plate.

The witness's observations led the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, FBI, and State Parole to search Daniel Crowley's residence and green minivan. Crowley was found hiding under a bed. Also found were duct tape, heroin, approximately \$6,000 in cash, and the distinctive hat and shirt worn during the first robbery.

A jury convicted Crowley of multiple armed robberies and found true that Crowley had four prior strike convictions in Los Angeles County. Crowley was ultimately sentenced to 116 years to life in prison.

PEOPLE v. LARRY EUGENE BARKLEY

PREMEDITATED ATTEMPTED MURDER, ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON

Prosecutor: **Brent Nibecker**
 Investigator: **Robert Coughlin**

On September 20, 2008, Anthony Ornelas entered the front passenger seat of a vehicle parked at a Ventura motel. At the same time, Larry Eugene Barkley entered the rear passenger seat behind Ornelas. The car, driven by a third individual, traveled to a residential area off Ventura Avenue. During the trip Barkley repeatedly demanded drugs from Ornelas, a known drug dealer. When Ornelas refused, Barkley grabbed Ornelas' seat belt, pinned Ornelas to his own seat, and slit Ornelas' throat with a large knife. Ornelas ran from the vehicle and Ventura Police Department (VPD) officers encountered him a short time later. Ornelas refused to identify the culprit.

VPD Detectives Bob MacInnes and Dirk Boon were able to locate the driver and other witnesses who linked Barkley to the attack on Ornelas. The detectives also secured surveillance video from the motel placing Barkley in the car. DNA evidence on Barkley's shirt linked him to the attack.

A jury convicted Barkley of premeditated attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon. Because he had been convicted in 1999 of assaulting two individuals with a firearm, Barkley was sentenced to 30 years to life in state prison.



Left to right: Deputy District Attorneys Robert Denton, Jennie Ruth, Taunya Hughes, Senior Deputy District Attorney Bill Karr, Deputy District Attorney Anthony Sabo, Senior Deputy District Attorney Kasey Sirody, Deputy District Attorneys Tate McCallister, Brent Nibecker, Jamie Holian, David Russell, My Phuong Truong, Senior Deputy District Attorney Scott Hendrickson, Deputy District Attorney Anne Spillner



MISDEMEANOR / NARCOTICS UNIT

The Misdemeanor / Narcotics Unit is responsible for the prosecution of crimes having a maximum penalty of up to one year in county jail. The unit's attorneys prosecute a range of misdemeanor violations including theft, assaults, vandalism and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. These prosecutors handle by far the department's largest volume of cases, filing more than 71,000 cases from 2007 to 2010.

The unit also includes more experienced attorneys who specialize in prosecuting felony and misdemeanor offenses involving the sale, transportation, possession, and use of narcotics. Prosecutors assigned to narcotics cases work closely with local and federal narcotics officers and are on call 24 hours a day to provide assistance to local law enforcement with search warrant, seizure and extradition issues.

CYNTHIA NGUYEN
Supervising Deputy District Attorney

PEOPLE v. MARC TUAZON

BATTERY, AGGRAVATED TRESPASS

Prosecutor: **MyPhuong Truong**
Advocate: **Connie Young**

After breaking up with his girlfriend, Marc Tuazon showed up at her home to talk and to retrieve a video game controller. The former girlfriend's brother answered the door to the home and told Tuazon that he was not welcome and he would need to leave. Tuazon refused and pushed the brother aside. A physical struggle ensued between Tuazon and the brother, during which Tuazon

head-butted the victim, causing a three-inch laceration over the victim's eye. The altercation was witnessed by various members of the victim's family. Tuazon claimed at trial that his former girlfriend had invited him over, so he was not trespassing, and that the altercation with the brother was mutual combat or self defense. The jury saw through Tuazon's claims and convicted the defendant on all counts.



Left to right: Deputy District Attorneys Erik Nasarenko, John Poore, Elisabeth Main, Lauren Skophammer, Jamie Penfield, Diane Arnold, Tom Steele, Jessica Giguere, Kristen Lucero



BRIAN RAFELSON
Supervising Deputy District Attorney

JUVENILE UNIT

The Juvenile Unit prosecutes most crimes committed by minors under the age of 18 and also works with school officials, parents, local law enforcement, and community-based organizations in juvenile crime prevention efforts. The unit handles crimes ranging from serious and violent felonies such as armed robbery and sexual assaults to misdemeanor driving under the influence and school yard assaults. With juvenile crimes increasingly linked to gang affiliation, the unit's prosecutors have become integral members of School Attendance Review Boards in an effort to keep at-risk juveniles in class rather than on the streets. Prosecutors review student attendance issues, conduct mediation, give educational presentations to parents, teachers and students, and in some cases file petitions against parents who habitually fail to ensure school attendance. Between 2007 and 2010, Juvenile Unit prosecutors conducted nearly 11,700 student hearings and filed approximately 9,700 criminal cases.

IN RE ANTONIO M.

ASSAULT WITH A FIREARM

Prosecutor: **Brandon Ross**
 Investigator: **George Morris**
 Victim Advocate: **Marisela Lopez**

In November 2006, Antonio M. was involved in an altercation near the victim's home. As Antonio M. left the area, he passed the victim and said, "When I come back somebody's gonna get it." A short time later, Antonio M. and an associate returned, walking up the street. They walked towards the victim's home, where his family was on the porch. Antonio M. drew a handgun and fired one shot into the house. He tried to fire another round but the gun jammed. The juvenile petition was sustained, with the court finding after trial that Antonio M. had committed an assault with a firearm. Antonio M. was ordered to a one-year rehabilitative stay in the Ventura County juvenile facility.

IN RE LUIS G. IN RE JOSE L.

ROBBERY

Prosecutor: **Pam Grossman**
 Victim Advocate: **Elizabeth Elizondo**

Luis G. and Jose L. committed a series of violent robberies of pizza delivery persons in the city of Oxnard. The two minors placed pizza orders and when the food was delivered they physically attacked and robbed the unsuspecting delivery persons. The two minors committed six robberies over a two-month period. After extensive investigation by the Oxnard Police Department, the minors were linked to the crimes and were eventually identified by several of their victims. Each minor was committed to the California Department of Corrections, Youth Division, for a period of seven years, six months.





GREGORY W. BROSE
Chief Deputy District Attorney

SPECIAL PROSECUTIONS

Special Prosecutions is responsible for civil and criminal enforcement of a wide variety of economic-based crimes, as well as child abduction violations, environmental offenses, and public integrity violations. The division is comprised of the Major Fraud Unit, Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, Asset Forfeiture, Non-Sufficient Funds Unit, and Child Abduction and Recovery Unit. The division's casework often involves complex litigation, large volumes of documentary evidence, and sophisticated offenders adept at financial manipulation and deceit.

Special Prosecutions is managed by a chief deputy district attorney and a supervising attorney. The chief deputy also oversees the Legal Support Services Unit and the Information Technology Unit.

Several of the prosecutor positions in Special Prosecutions are funded under specific grants from the California Department of Insurance, California State Controller's Office, and California Department of Real Estate. In addition, restitution, civil penalties, and assets seized pursuant to the Business and Professions Code and the Health and Safety Code are applied to offset costs related to consumer and environmental prosecution and other authorized expenses.



Left to right: Senior Deputy District Attorneys Howard Wise, Wendy Macfarlane, Deputy District Attorney Tom Frye, Senior Deputy District Attorneys John Vanarelli, Miles Weiss, Kevin Drescher, Deputy District Attorney Dominic Kardum, Senior Deputy District Attorney Marc Leventhal

**KEVIN DRESCHER***Supervising Deputy District Attorney*

MAJOR FRAUD UNIT

The Major Fraud Unit investigates and prosecutes some of the most complex and costly cases in the criminal justice system. The unit is comprised of several sections, including Major Fraud, Computer Crimes, Real Estate Fraud, Workers' Compensation Insurance Fraud, Auto Insurance Fraud, and Public Integrity. Cases handled by Major Fraud Unit prosecutors often require lengthy pre-filing investigations into fraudulent transactions targeting insurance companies, banking institutions, owners of real estate, and investors in corporate securities. The investigations may involve the review and indexing of thousands of documents, forensic accounting analysis, forensic computer analysis, and complex legal analysis surrounding multiple criminal jurisdictions. Victims include the spectrum from individual private citizens to the largest corporations, with cumulative losses running into the millions of dollars and often the loss of a family's life savings. The unit's prosecutors have coordinated cases with officials from the Department of Insurance, the Department of Real Estate, the Department of Corporations, the Employment Development Department, the State Franchise Tax Board, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and many others to form specialized teams, using the latest technology and asset forfeiture procedures to investigate, prosecute, and recoup millions of dollars for victims of sophisticated criminal operations.

PEOPLE v. DAVID LARRY GARDNER

ARSON, SOLICITATION OF MURDER, EXTORTION, ILLEGAL WEAPONS POSSESSION, EMBEZZLEMENT, FORGERY, COMPUTER FRAUD, TAX FRAUD

Prosecutor: **Marc Leventhal**

Investigator: **Greg Askay**

In the 1990s, David Larry Gardner, a multiple felon, settled in Ojai after parole from a Texas federal prison. Gardner effectively concealed his past and secured employment as an office manager and bookkeeper for a Ventura flooring manufacturer and installer. For five years, Gardner routinely forged company checks and embezzled \$1.5 million to pay for his home, vehicles, and luxury items.

Gardner falsified company records to conceal his theft and implemented elaborate schemes to extort the owners. When he was finally fired, Gardner repeatedly blackmailed the owners for months, which the Ventura County Sheriff's Office monitored

and recorded. While on bail facing extortion charges, Gardner burned down the owners' business offices. After he was again taken into custody, Gardner solicited jail inmates to murder the owners and another prosecution witness.

Gardner was sentenced to 33 years in state prison following his convictions in 2008 of 29 felony charges in two separate cases. Gardner's convictions included arson, multiple counts of solicitation of murder, extortion, illegal weapons possession, embezzlement, forgery, computer fraud, and tax fraud. Gardner was also ordered to pay restitution of more than \$800,000.

PEOPLE v. ANDREW SCHROLLER

EMBEZZLEMENT, GRAND THEFT, FORGERY, FALSE TAX RETURNS

Prosecutor: **Howard Wise**

Andrew Schroller was employed by a business for more than 20 years. As vice president of the company's western region, Schroller worked from the company's Ventura office. During a period of more than six years, Schroller stole more than \$1,131,000 from the company. In addition to his paycheck, he wrote more than 300 checks to himself. To conceal those checks, he falsified the corporate checkbook, submitted invoices from a nonexistent company, and falsified inventory reports. Schroller did not report the stolen money on his state tax returns. After a two-week jury trial, Schroller was convicted of 17 felonies including corporate embezzlement, grand theft, eight counts of forgery, filing false state tax returns, and failing to file a state tax return.

Schroller was sentenced to serve 13 years, 8 months in state prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$2,118,250 plus interest. Schroller was also ordered to pay \$230,092 in taxes and penalties to the Franchise Tax Board and a \$500,000 fine.

COMPUTER CRIMES SECTION

The Computer Crimes Section handles cases in which a computer is used as a means to commit crime. Prosecutors work closely with highly trained investigators on cases involving such crimes as identity theft, possession of child pornography, and possession of fraudulent or counterfeit documents.

PEOPLE v. RICHARD BALLARD

POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Prosecutor: **Kevin Drescher**
Investigating Agency: **Southern California
High Tech Task Force**
Investigation Detective: **Kevin Donoghue**

An employee of the Camarillo Library noticed Richard Ballard using a public computer to view what appeared to be child pornography. The employee called the police and an undercover detective from the Southern California High Tech Task Force responded. Detective Donoghue entered the library and observed Ballard viewing and downloading child pornography on the public computer. Ballard was arrested. In Ballard's car were hard candies, twine, duct tape, rope, and blankets. More child pornography was found in Ballard's home. After Ballard's arrest, his picture was published in the newspaper resulting in multiple citizens reporting to police that they had seen Ballard near parks in the area. Ballard was sentenced to two years in state prison and was ordered to register as a sex offender.



Left to right: Sylvia Nuno, Minerva Loya, Karen Simpson, Norma Gutierrez, Andeep Grewal, Analia Silva

REAL ESTATE FRAUD SECTION

The Real Estate Fraud Section is dedicated to deterring, investigating, and prosecuting real estate fraud crimes. Fueled by the real estate boom and bust of the last decade, unscrupulous real estate practitioners and fly-by-night criminal enterprises began preying upon the monolingual Spanish-speaking community, the elderly, and an increasingly desperate public seeing their home values decline. In 2005, the District Attorney's Office created the Real Estate Fraud Investigation and Prosecution Program to address the rise of real estate and mortgage fraud sweeping the nation and Ventura County.

In 2008, the Real Estate Fraud Section was honored by El Concilio del Condado de Ventura at the 19th Annual Latino Leadership Awards for services it provided to the Spanish-speaking community. In 2009, the District Attorney's Office secured a competitive grant award of \$1.6 million to expand its prosecution of real estate and mortgage fraud under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The grant was one of only seven awarded in the nation.

Real Estate Fraud prosecutors and investigators work closely with real estate professionals on the Ventura County Real Estate Fraud Advisory Team (REFAT) to educate industry professionals and the general public about real estate crime. Investigators and prosecutors also work closely with other law enforcement and related agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service, United States Secret Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Housing and Urban Development Office's Inspector General.



Left to right: Senior Deputy District Attorney Myles Weiss, Investigator Frank Huber, Deputy District Attorney Dominic Kardum

PEOPLE v. ENRIQUE SANDOVAL MARTINEZ

MAKING FALSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, GRAND THEFT, MONEY LAUNDERING, RECORDING FALSE DOCUMENTS

Prosecutor: **Myles Weiss**
Investigator: **Frank Huber**

In 2004, Enrique Martinez used a false identity to purchase a \$1.8 million luxury home in the Moorpark Country Club Estates development, intending to flip the home when the market value increased. To accomplish his scheme, Martinez defrauded an individual victim into investing more than \$400,000 toward the down payment in the new home. Martinez and a confederate also created numerous false documents to defraud the bank into funding a \$1.3 million purchase home loan, using the false name Antonio Padilla. When the home value decreased, Martinez defaulted on the loan and the defrauded individual lost the down payment he invested while the bank lost its loan value.

The investigation, conducted by the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation with assistance from Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General, and the Department of Motor Vehicles, revealed that Martinez obtained the false identity in the name of Antonio Padilla by providing falsified documents to state and federal governmental agencies.

A jury convicted Martinez of six felonies: making a false financial statement, grand theft, money laundering, and three counts of causing a false or forged instrument to be recorded. In addition, the jury found true several allegations involving fraud and the taking of more than \$500,000. The court imposed the maximum 15 year prison sentence. Although Martinez fled the country, he was arrested when he attempted to re-enter the United States from Mexico in March 2010.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE FRAUD SECTION

The Workers' Compensation Insurance Fraud Section actively investigates and prosecutes crimes involving employees who knowingly lie to obtain workers' compensation benefits and employers that use deceptive practices to reduce their workers'

compensation insurance premiums. The section also investigates and prosecutes workers' compensation fraud mills involving attorneys, doctors, and insurance agents.

PEOPLE v. NORMAN ANDERSON

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

Prosecutor: **Ernesto Acosta**
 Investigator: **Eric Bolland**

Norman Anderson injured his right hand while working at an off-shore oil rig. Anderson told his doctor he was too injured and in too much pain to do any type of work. As a result, Anderson began receiving tax-free insurance benefits while he was off work. Anderson received more than \$35,000 from the insurance company, though his injury claims were untrue.

Anderson was surreptitiously videotaped working on his 48-foot sailboat. The surveillance, conducted over a four-month time period, showed Anderson refurbishing his sailboat with extensive, unrestricted use of his supposedly injured hand.

Based on the videotape and the opinions of three experts, a jury convicted Anderson of two felony counts of workers' compensation insurance fraud. He was sentenced to two years in prison and ordered to pay \$97,425 in restitution to the insurance company.

PEOPLE v. TAPUZ ENTERPRIZES, INC.

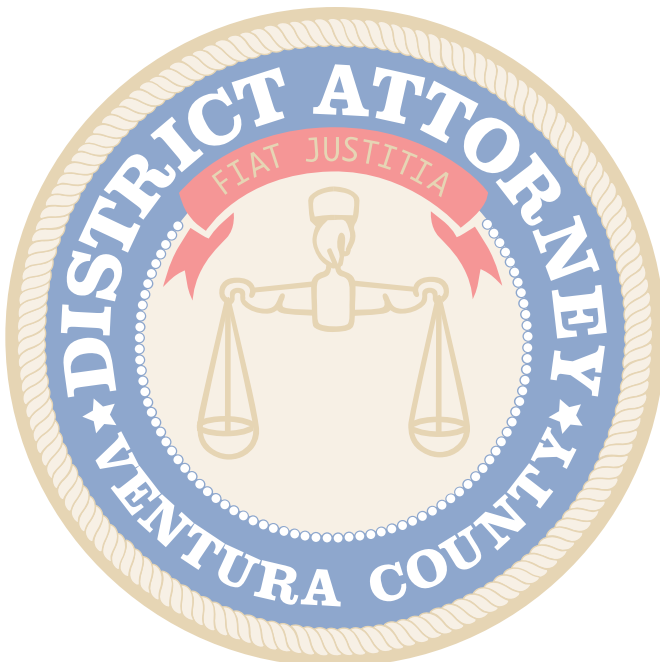
WORKERS' COMPENSATION PREMIUM FRAUD

Prosecutor: **Thomas Frye**

Tomer Rotholz ran a landscape/street contracting business initially operated as Tapuz Enterprises, Inc., and then later, Nativ Engineering, Inc. From approximately 1998 to 2004, the business systematically defrauded insurance companies by underreporting employee payroll. Workers' compensation premiums are based in large part upon the total payroll that a business reports to its insurance company. Rotholz underreported payroll by more than \$1million resulting in a much lower insurance premium than should have been assessed. With lower insurance costs, Rotholz was able to underbid honest contractors. Losses to insurance companies exceeded \$200,000.

The crimes were investigated by the Ventura County Underground Economy/Employer Fraud Task Force, comprised of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, the Department of Insurance Fraud Division, the Employment Development Department, the Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, the Franchise Tax Board, and the California State Contractors Licensing Board.

Rotholz was convicted of felony workers' compensation premium fraud and sentenced to two years in prison. Rotholz paid \$200,000 in restitution and was ordered to pay an additional \$130,900 in outstanding restitution.



AUTO INSURANCE FRAUD SECTION

The Automobile Insurance Fraud Section prosecutes cases of fraud against automobile insurance providers and carriers. Cases may involve the staging of accidents, repair shops fraudulently billing insurance companies, filing false injury claims, and a host of other schemes. The section is funded by a grant from the California Department of Insurance.

PEOPLE v. JAMES LOWTHER

AUTO INSURANCE FRAUD

Prosecutor: **John Vanarelli**
Investigator: **Russ Robinson**

On February 20, 2006, James Lowther contacted the Thousand Oaks Police Department to make a traffic collision report. Lowther claimed he was struck by a car while walking on the sidewalk near a strip mall. Police interviewed the driver, who denied the incident occurred. Lowther had no visible injuries and there was no physical evidence or other witnesses. Accordingly, police did not determine who was at fault in the alleged collision. Using a computer, Lowther altered the police report to read that the driver was at fault. Lowther sent the falsified police report to the driver's auto insurance carrier and sued the driver. The carrier alerted Thousand Oaks police, who initiated an investigation into falsifying a police report and filing a false insurance claim.

After his preliminary hearing, Lowther fled to the state of Washington, where he was captured. Lowther plead guilty to felony auto insurance fraud and was sentenced to 188 days in jail. He was ordered to pay \$6,461 in restitution to the insurance company.

PUBLIC INTEGRITY SECTION

The Public Integrity Section handles cases involving allegations of misconduct or corruption by government officials, as well as other breaches of the public trust such as embezzlement from nonprofit organizations. The section's cases are referred from a variety of sources including other governmental agencies, citizen complaints, fraud hotlines, and employees of the involved organizations.

PEOPLE v. CHERIE DUVAL

GRAND THEFT

Prosecutor: **Karen Wold**
Investigator: **Kimberly Michael**

In 2002, Cherie Duval was hired as the executive director of a nonprofit organization devoted to helping victims of domestic violence. The organization operated a battered-women's shelter and provided counseling, rape crisis intervention, and legal services. In 2003, Duval began embezzling money from the nonprofit organization through the use of the company credit card and checking account. She purchased furniture, a flat screen television, and car tires. In 2006, Duval fraudulently transferred title of the organization's van to herself and traded the vehicle for a \$9,000 credit toward the purchase of a new car. Duval secretly gave herself raises, increased her car allowance, and cashed out vacation pay without authorization. Over time, Duval stole more than \$100,000 from her employer.

A jury convicted Duval of multiple counts of grand theft, one count of false personation, and a special allegation that she stole more than \$65,000. Duval was sentenced to a state prison term of four years, four months.

CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

The Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit investigates and prosecutes civil and criminal violations of environmental and consumer protection laws. The unit consists of the Consumer Section, Environmental Protection Section, Asset Forfeiture/Code Enforcement Section, Consumer Mediation, and Small Claims Assistance. The violations prosecuted by the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit harm the environment, the individual consumer, and those businesses that diligently follow the law.

Consumer protection cases frequently involve unfair and fraudulent business practices, deceptive advertising, and food

safety laws. Environmental protection cases involve such violations as illegal discharge of hazardous materials, improper storage or transportation of hazardous waste, illegal dumping, and water or air pollution. The unit also handles Fish & Game Code violations.

Attorneys in the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit also provide public education presentations to schools, service clubs, and other groups. The goal of these presentations is to protect the community by raising awareness of current scams and deceptive practices.



*Left to right: Deputy District Attorney Steve Slyker,
Senior Deputy District Attorney Linda Groberg
Deputy District Attorney Laurel McWaters,
Senior Deputy District Attorney Mitch Disney*

PEOPLE v. AERA ENERGY LLC AND BAKER PETROLITE CORPORATION

UNLAWFUL BUSINESS PRACTICES – TOXIC MATERIALS VIOLATIONS

Prosecutor: **Mitchell F. Disney**
Investigator: **Glen Kitzmann**

On November 15, 2006, Aera Energy LLC (“Aera”), and Baker Petrolite Corporation (“Baker”), negligently caused a release of the chemical acrolein at Aera Energy’s “School Canyon” oil-production facility in west Ventura. Acrolein is an extremely potent liquid pesticide commonly used at crude-oil production facilities. Acrolein is flammable, reactive, and toxic. If the chemical is improperly released, vapors can pose a risk to human health and the environment.

Acrolein vapors were unlawfully released in 2006 affecting a residential neighborhood approximately 1.5 miles away. The Ventura County Fire Department responded to numerous “9-1-1” reports of an unidentified chemical odor causing eye, nose and throat irritation. The companies did not immediately report the release to authorities, leaving county fire and environmental health responders with the problem of identifying the nature and source of the problem.

The District Attorney’s Office filed a civil complaint against the companies for the improper release of hazardous materials. The complaint also alleged that Aera violated California’s unfair competition laws by improperly handling hazardous materials and failing to promptly report a hazardous materials release.

Under the final judgment, Aera and Baker paid civil penalties, restitution, and costs in the amount of \$173,872. The defendants also agreed to a permanent injunction relating to future handling of such products. The injunction included a requirement that Baker inform the Ventura County Fire Department of all locations to which acrolein is delivered in the county.

The investigation was conducted by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, the Ventura County Environmental Health Division, and the Ventura City and County Fire Departments, in conjunction with the Ventura County District Attorney’s Bureau of Investigation.

UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS STING OPERATION

In February 2007, a combined law enforcement team comprised of investigators from the District Attorney’s Office, the Contractors State Licensing Board and the Ventura Police Department conducted a sting operation against illegal contractors operating in Ventura County. Investigators posing as homeowners

PEOPLE v. LOWE’S HIW, INC. PEOPLE v. HOME DEPOT U.S.A., INC.

UNLAWFUL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Prosecutor: **Mitchell F. Disney**
Investigator: **Kimberly Michael**

In two related civil actions, the District Attorney’s Office alleged Lowe’s HIW, Inc. (Lowe’s) and Home Depot U.S.A., Inc. (Home Depot) collected building permit fees from purchasers of water heater installation services, but failed to use the funds to obtain the required permits. The complaints also alleged that Lowe’s collected fees from some customers in amounts higher than the actual permit fees. A building permit is required to lawfully install or replace a water heater in Ventura County.

Between December 2003 and March 2007, Lowe’s sold 422 water heater installations and collected related permit fees at its two Ventura County stores. Eighty-six installations were performed without obtaining permits. In 104 instances, Lowe’s collected amounts higher than the true permit fees. Between January 2003 and June 2007, Home Depot sold 3,492 water heater installations and collected related permit fees at its four Ventura County stores. During that same period, fewer than 300 building permits were actually obtained using the collected funds.

Without admitting or denying liability, Lowe’s and Home Depot agreed to final judgments. Lowe’s was required to refund overcharges to Ventura County consumers and pay \$150,000 in civil penalties and investigative costs. Home Depot was required to pay \$415,320 in civil penalties and investigative costs and required to obtain building permits for all customers who had not received them. The companies’ payments also paid for educational programs about the importance of complying with building permit and inspection requirements and are subject to a permanent injunction requiring them to adopt measures to prevent future violations.

invited suspected unlicensed contractors to bid on various home improvement projects, including kitchen remodeling, landscaping, concrete work, roofing, and painting. The two-day sting resulted in 33 unlicensed operators being cited for misdemeanor charges, including contracting without a license, advertising violations, and demanding excessive down payments.



Chief Deputy District Attorney Greg Brose

CONSUMER MEDIATION

The District Attorney's Consumer Mediation program assists Ventura County residents in resolving a variety of business and consumer-related problems. The program provides information regarding consumer protection laws and referrals to specialized state or federal agencies. Additionally, Consumer Mediation serves as a dispute resolution forum to resolve disputes between consumers and businesses without court action.

Between 2007 and 2010, mediators responded to more than 10,000 inquiries from the public. Mediators handled 1,022 formal mediations that resulted in voluntary restitution of more than \$583,000 to consumers and businesses without judicial intervention.



Robin Estes, Lissette Cortez

SMALL CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

The Small Claims Assistance program provides advice to litigants, both plaintiffs and defendants, regarding procedures for filing and presenting claims in small claims court, defending a claim, and collecting judgments. In this reporting period, small claims court advisors assisted more than 36,500 persons either by telephone or in person with their small claims court inquiries.



Yolanda Chavez, Daniel Gutierrez

NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS (NSF) CHECK RESTITUTION

The Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Check Restitution program seeks restitution from individuals who write bad checks. Under the program's guidelines, when a bad check complaint is received, the check writer is given ten days to pay full restitution. If restitution is not timely made, the check writer must attend a diversion class educating them about how to properly manage their checking account. If the bad check writer fails to meet the requirements of the program, criminal charges may be filed and court ordered restitution, as well as additional fines and fees, may be sought. From 2007 to 2010, the NSF program handled just under 11,500 bad checks and returned nearly \$1.5 million back to local businesses and other victims.



Gloria Hernandez, Robin Tribbitt

CHILD ABDUCTION AND RECOVERY UNIT

PEOPLE v. GERRIANN ELLIS

Prosecutor: **Thomas Johnson**
Investigator: **George Salazar**

In 2003, during divorce proceedings involving Gerriann Ellis, a court appointed custody evaluator recommended the court grant custody of Ellis' five-year-old son to the boy's father. After receiving the evaluator's recommendation, but before the custody hearing, Ellis forged the father's signature on a passport application and obtained a passport for their son. Ellis initially appeared at the custody hearing, but failed to return to court after lunch. Instead, Ellis abducted her son from his school and fled to Panama, where she remained for three years. An informant's tip ultimately led to Ellis' arrest in Panama and deportation to the United States, where she faced charges of felony deprivation of the right to custody. Ellis was convicted, sentenced to one year in jail, and ordered to pay restitution to the child's father and the District Attorney's Office.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Tom Johnson

ASSET FORFEITURE/CODE ENFORCEMENT UNIT

The Asset Forfeiture/Code Enforcement Unit prosecutes civil narcotics asset forfeiture cases under California law. The unit's investigator and prosecutor seek to deprive drug dealers of the proceeds of their crimes by seizing items obtained with drug sale

proceeds. The unit's prosecutor also handles code enforcement violations, which are typically misdemeanor violations of laws relating to weights and measures, building and safety, environmental health and general property maintenance.

PEOPLE v. \$166,076.

ASSET FORFEITURE

Prosecutor: **Steve Slyker**
 Investigator: **Jeff Barry**

During the summer of 2009, investigators from the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, Ventura County Combined Agency Task Force (VCAT), Drug Enforcement Administration, Los Angeles Police Department, and Nevada law enforcement agencies seized more than \$165,000 from marijuana dispensary locations, residences, and bank accounts tied to suspects Steven Kall, Annie Adams, and Jimmie Silva. The multi-agency investigation led to criminal indictments against the suspects for multiple counts of money laundering.

In May 2010, the District Attorney's Office filed a civil petition to forfeit \$166,076 in seized funds and a judge ultimately ordered the cash forfeited. As a result, more than \$165,000 was distributed to law enforcement, the State of California, and the Ventura County District Attorney's Office pursuant to state law. The funds released to local law enforcement are used to support drug investigations and fund drug awareness programs.

The joint effort successfully ended a sophisticated marijuana cultivation and sales enterprise that operated in two counties and laundered millions of dollars in illegal drug proceeds over a two-year period.



Left to right: Paralegals Christine Mitchell, Jennifer Lyons, Yvonne Lief, Connie Wright, Danali Ibarra-Cortez, Maria Rodriguez



ANN PHELPS
Manager

LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES UNIT

Between 2007 and 2010, the District Attorney's Office filed more than 100,000 criminal cases. The Legal Support Services Unit's staff are essential to the office's ability to handle such a large volume of cases. This unit's highly skilled employees support all areas of the District Attorney's Office by providing witness coordination, word processing, discovery, subpoena preparation, secretarial support, reception, mail room/courier, and a host of other services that assist attorneys and investigators in performing their duties.

Between 2007 and 2010, the Legal Support Services Unit processed more than 400,000 subpoenas, reproduced 1.25 million pages of documentation, duplicated an average of 14,000 CD/DVD's, typed over 16 million words, and prepared and processed an average of 6,700 felony cases, 24,800 misdemeanor cases, and 3,700 juvenile cases per year. In 2007, the unit transitioned all local law enforcement witnesses to electronic subpoena services, providing more efficient notice to officers and instant notice of cancellations and continuances. By 2010, the unit had fully deployed office-wide tracking of cases using the Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System (VCIJIS) so that all cases were available in one database.

The Legal Support Services Unit provides the critical "behind the scenes" work that enables the District Attorney's Office to function at the highest professional level.



Left to right: Bonnie Mesinoff, Peggy Drury, Cyndy Villa, Vilma Fullante, Kathy Ford



LINDA VIVIAN
Clerical Supervisor



AGGIE WILLIS
Clerical Supervisor



ROBERTA PARADA
Clerical Supervisor



LAURA LOVIO
Clerical Supervisor



MaryGrace Lagare-Courselle, Julie Peacock



Bobbie McQueen, Nancy Austin



Betsy Ramirez, Carmen Marquez



GENE MECAGNI
Manager

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNIT

The Information Technology Unit (ITU) provides the technological tools and services necessary to keep the District Attorney's Office functioning at a high level of efficiency and professionalism. Under the leadership of the Information Technology Director, the ITU is responsible for the design, development, implementation, and support of all information technology hardware, software, and business applications, as well as support for prosecution efforts in the courtroom and community outreach efforts. The ITU also provides direct support to local law enforcement in their use of the Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System (VCIJIS) case management database system.

The ITU supports the office's sophisticated data network, linking the five office locations and more than 600 desktops, laptops, and printers to more than 15 virtual servers. In addition, the ITU provides on-demand technical support to all office employees via phone and on-site service. The ITU resolves approximately 5,000 calls for assistance per year through its Help Desk. Additionally, in an effort to improve computing capabilities and services, our team continues to test emerging technologies including mobile devices, multimedia, and productivity software. The unit also manages the department's intranet and public Web site, which receives hundreds of views each week.



Left to right: Alfredo Valenzuela, Mike Sanders, Luis Vasquez



JUSTICE SERVICES

Justice Services encompasses a number of functions essential to securing justice for crime victims and the community. These include the Writs, Appeals, and Training Unit; the Ellie Liston Crime Victims' Assistance Unit; and the Safe Harbor Multi-Disciplinary Interview Centers.

Justice Services is managed by the special assistant district attorney, who also prepares legal opinions on miscellaneous subjects, prepares and edits many office publications, handles special civil law matters, responds to Public Records Act requests and civil subpoenas, processes requests for U Visa certifications for immigrants who are victims of crime, analyzes misconduct issues under *Brady v. Maryland*, and enforces Brown Act open-meeting laws. The special assistant serves as liaison on the Brown Act and other civil and municipal law matters to local government attorneys who are advising the county's 10 incorporated cities and its dozens of special districts.

MICHAEL D. SCHWARTZ

Special Assistant District Attorney

WRITS, APPEALS, AND TRAINING UNIT

The Writs, Appeals, and Training Unit's primary responsibility is to file and respond to writs and appeals in state and federal courts, including the California Supreme Court. The unit also coordinates a series of Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) credit courses required by the State Bar to maintain a license to practice law in California. For new prosecutors, the unit provides a training series covering every phase of criminal prosecution, as well as sessions on other topics helpful to new prosecutors. The unit also provides training to local law enforcement on a variety of topics.

GANG INJUNCTIONS

Prosecutors: **Michael Schwartz, Karen Wold**

After the superior court issued civil gang injunctions against Oxnard's largest criminal street gangs, defense attorneys appealed. The Court of Appeal upheld the injunctions, with the exception of the curfew provisions. The California Supreme Court denied the defense's request to hear the appeals. Writs and Appeals prosecutors then filed successful motions in superior court to modify the curfew provisions to comply with the appellate court rulings.



*Deputy District Attorney Michelle Contois,
Senior Deputy District Attorney Lisa Lyytikainen*



CATHERINE DUGGAN
Director

ELLIE LISTON CRIME VICTIMS' ASSISTANCE UNIT

The Ellie Liston Crime Victims' Assistance Unit functions to guide victims through the criminal justice process, to ensure victims' rights are honored, and to assist victims in obtaining services to help them cope with the trauma they have suffered. Through the efforts of a dedicated team of victim advocates, a victim advocate supervisor, and the program director, the Crime Victims' Assistance Unit provides comprehensive services to victims of all types of crime.

Skilled in crisis intervention, victim advocates offer an array of referrals to service providers that can respond to the individual needs of victims. Advocates accompany victims to court, provide a supportive ear, and display a calm strength to help victims get through court processes that can be frightening and highly emotional for victims. Advocates also assist in processing, filing, and verifying benefits claims filed with the California Victims of Crime Compensation Program. Victim advocates also make regular presentations to community organizations, service clubs, schools, and law enforcement agencies and publish brochures both in English and Spanish on topics such as domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, and crimes involving juvenile offenders.

The number of victims served by the unit has steadily grown from just under 5,000 in 2003, to over 7,000 in 2010. To expand the services advocates are able to provide in shrinking budget times, the District Attorney's Office has developed a robust volunteer program. Volunteer staff complete an initial 48 hours of training, which prepares them to assist victims with critical services, including obtaining a restraining order, emergency shelter placement, and court accompaniment. In 2010, 13 volunteers provided nearly 4,000 volunteer hours to victims.



Left to right: Victim Advocates Connie Young, Celia Cardona, Patricia Caputo, Susy Rios, Felicita Roy, Lisa Wright, Carlos Martinez, Maria Campos-Davies, Linda Finnerty, Elizabeth Elizondo, Patricia Wood, David Smith, Sandra Avila

VENTURA COUNTY SAFE HARBOR



Ventura County Safe Harbor consists of two multi-disciplinary interview and advocacy centers used by law enforcement to conduct interviews and forensic medical examinations for child victims of crime and adult sexual assault victims. The goal of the Safe Harbor program is to minimize trauma to victims during the criminal investigation by reducing the number of interviews and trips to different locations a victim must endure.

Safe Harbor provides a secure, confidential, and child-friendly environment where all involved agencies can obtain evidence and information from the victim in one visit. Each of the two Safe Harbor locations is overseen by a program administrator from the District Attorney's Office.

Prosecutors are on call 24 hours a day to observe interviews at Safe Harbor and assist the investigative process. Victim advocates may also be on hand to provide crisis intervention, referrals, and support to victims, alongside crisis counselors from the local rape crisis center. Pediatricians and sexual assault nurse examiners are

also on call to provide forensic exams for child abuse and sexual assault victims. By coordinating the investigative and prosecution processes, law enforcement, social workers from Child Protective Services, and prosecutors can reduce the number of times victims have to relive the details of their victimization.

In the Safe Harbor program, the District Attorney's Office partners with all law enforcement agencies, the Ventura County Health Care Agency, the Ventura County Human Services Agency, Children and Family Services Division, and local community service providers. Safe Harbor coordinators arrange training for parents, community groups, law enforcement, and others on topics designed to ensure the safety of children from those who would prey upon them. The Safe Harbor program administrators also provide orientation to Safe Harbor facilities for city managers, social workers, college students, crisis counselors, members of the Grand Jury and medical residents from Ventura County Medical Center.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER

The Family Violence Prevention Center, located within the Hall of Justice, provides victims of family violence with a single location to access governmental and nonprofit services designed to help them rebuild their lives. Community-based organizations such as Interface and the Coalition for Family Harmony provide mental health services and limited legal services on issues related to child custody. District Attorney victim advocates provide classes in

both English and Spanish on the process and forms required to obtain restraining orders, as well as information on the dynamics and dangers of violent relationships. The Center also provides referrals to community-based counseling services and local shelter programs. From 2007 to 2010, the Center provided counseling, restraining order, and referral services to more than 4,000 victims of family violence in Ventura County.



MICHAEL JUMP
Manager

FISCAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE SERVICES UNIT

Overseen by a unit manager reporting directly to the Chief Assistant District Attorney, the Fiscal, Administrative and Legislative Services Unit is responsible for assisting prosecutors, investigators, and support staff in fulfilling the District Attorney's mission of promoting justice and protecting the citizens of Ventura County. The unit's staff work behind the scenes to accomplish the critical functions that keep the office running: preparation and administration of a \$38 million operating budget, collection of \$15 million in revenues, payroll support for all employees, accounts payable and receivable, purchasing of equipment and supplies, facilities management, space acquisition, administration of grant and revenue programs, auditing, fiscal compliance, recruitment and hiring, employee benefits, employee and witness travel, and a host of other operational duties. The unit also serves as the liaison to the County Executive Office, Human Resources and Labor Relations offices, the County Auditor-Controller's Office and coordinates many of the District Attorney's legislative and research efforts.



*Back (Left to right): Yolanda Angeles, Judy Coronado, Linda Kelly, Ernestine Cook, Jessica McSilvers, Irene Rauschenberger
Front (Left to right): Barbara Dixon, Michael Jump, Sylvia Campos*



ROBERT A. BRINER
Chief Investigator



BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The Bureau of Investigation provides professional investigative support in both criminal and civil matters and plays a critical role in preparing cases for trial. The Bureau is staffed with a chief investigator, two deputy chief investigators, district attorney investigators, welfare fraud investigators, and investigative assistants.

Investigators serving within the Bureau are highly experienced and trained sworn peace officers who have been recruited from law enforcement agencies throughout California. Members of the Bureau of Investigation are available 24 hours a day to respond to investigative requests and critical incidents, such as officer involved shootings. Bureau investigators are called upon for assistance by their colleagues throughout the state and have been recognized as experts in a wide range of investigations from homicide to complex white collar fraud schemes.

The Bureau of Investigation is divided into two divisions: the Criminal Investigations Division and the Special Operations Investigations Division. The Criminal Investigations Division includes units that investigate major crimes, sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abductions. The Special Operations Investigations Division includes units that investigate economic crimes, computer crimes, public assistance fraud, non-sufficient funds checks, and official misconduct.

DEPUTY CHIEF INVESTIGATORS



Ken Valentini
Deputy Chief Investigator



Glen Kitzmann
Deputy Chief Investigator

SENIOR INVESTIGATORS

Left to right: Lance Steaman, Wayne Simmons, Jeff Robinson, Tracy Towner, Robert Velasquez, Danny Miller, Dan Thompson



HOMICIDE UNIT

The Major Crimes - Homicide Unit's investigators are assigned to the majority of the District Attorney's homicide cases. Among the most experienced investigators in the county, Major Crimes - Homicide investigators serve as an indispensable aid to the preparation of the prosecution's case for trial by preparing and executing search warrants for additional evidence, identifying

and locating witnesses, interviewing witnesses, thoroughly investigating the defendant's background, and strategizing with prosecutors. Investigators also respond to officer-involved shooting scenes and work closely with the assigned deputy district attorney to prepare a comprehensive public report in such cases.



Left to right: Investigator Mike Palmieri, Senior Investigator Danny Miller, Investigators Greg Hayes, Tom Rigali, Robert Coughlin, Joe Cipollini

GANG UNIT

The Major Crimes - Gangs Unit's investigators are responsible for the investigation of gang crimes, as well as juvenile and automobile theft crimes. Investigators working on gang cases in the unit are experts on local gang culture, monikers, affiliations, rivalries, and criminal enterprises. To ensure the safety of

witnesses pending testimony in gang cases, unit investigators are often responsible for relocation and management of the witnesses and their immediate families pursuant to the California Witness Relocation Assistance Program.



Left to right: Investigators Tom Mendez, George Morris, Cloyce Conway, Senior Investigator Dan Thompson

SUBPOENA SERVICE UNIT

Witness testimony is essential to successful prosecution in nearly every criminal case filed by the District Attorney's Office. The primary way to ensure the presence of a witness is proper service of a subpoena. Between 2007 and 2010, the Subpoena Service Unit personally served more than 400,000 subpoenas. Though the vast majority of witnesses are cooperative in fulfilling their civic duty, there are those few who are not. Through expertise and diligence, Subpoena Service Unit personnel are able to locate and serve even the most challenging witnesses to support the successful prosecution of filed cases.



Left to right: Investigative Assistants Dominique Rosales, Chris Hart, Dianne VanScoy

SEXUAL ASSAULT / FAMILY PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

The Sexual Assault / Family Protection Unit's investigators work closely with prosecutors handling sexual assault, child molestation, child abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence cases. Cases within this unit are typically vertically prosecuted, meaning the same prosecutor and investigator handles the case from filing through conclusion. As a result, investigators in the unit become

involved in the early stages of the case, even pre-filing, to ensure the allegations can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt at trial. Given the unique dynamics of sexual assault and family violence cases, talented and experienced investigative support is critical to the successful prosecution of these cases.



Left to right: Senior Investigator Tracy Towner, Investigative Assistant Janet Notaro, Investigator Ralph Martinez, Investigative Assistants Teresa Canosa, Erika Lorenzen, Investigators Lori Erickson, Russ Robinson, Christina Alvarez, George Salazar

CHILD ABDUCTION AND RECOVERY UNIT

Child Abduction and Recovery Unit investigators work to locate and return children who have been abducted by one of their parents in violation of child custody orders. The unit successfully reunites parents with children who have been abducted and

hidden elsewhere in California, other states, and in foreign countries. To accomplish this critical task, investigators work closely with local, federal, and foreign law enforcement agencies and courts.

ECONOMIC CRIMES UNIT

The Economic Crimes Unit's investigators handle a variety of crimes committed primarily for economic gain, ranging from false and misleading advertising to multimillion dollar investment fraud, workers' compensation fraud, auto insurance fraud, consumer fraud, environmental crimes, real estate fraud,

asset forfeitures, fish and game violations, and code enforcement violations. All of the unit's investigative positions are funded by grants and revenues from the California Department of Insurance, federal government, and local fines and fees.



Left to right: Investigative Assistants Erika Lorenzen, Janet Notaro, Cole Gibson, Teresa Canosa, Oralia Acuna, Lisa Simmons, Rosario Gonzalez, Kristina Lee, Sandra Molina, Investigator Eric Bolland, Senior Investigator Jeff Robinson, Investigators Kimberly Michael, Randy Janes

GOVERNMENT FRAUD UNIT

The Government Fraud Unit's investigators conduct investigations to prevent payment of government aid to applicants engaging in fraud and to detect past aid payments obtained by fraudulent means. Unit investigators determine whether suspicious aid applications involve fraudulent claims or omissions in an attempt to receive improper benefits. Common schemes include failure to report earned income or falsely claiming dependents live in the home. From 2007 to 2010, the unit's investigators prevented the loss of \$12.2 million in taxpayer funds.

The unit also receives investigative referrals from government agencies that suspect current aid recipients have fraudulently received government aid. These investigations primarily involve fraudulent welfare and housing assistance claims. Between 2007 and 2010, the unit uncovered \$1.1 million in fraudulently received government aid.

PEOPLE v. NINA MARIE McMAHAN

GRAND THEFT, WELFARE FRAUD

Prosecutor: **Michael Lief**

Investigator: **Jeffrey Barry**

Between 2004 and 2008, Nina Marie McMahan received three different forms of government assistance, including Food Stamps, CalWorks Cash Aid, and Section 8 Housing Assistance. To receive aid for which she was ineligible, McMahan intentionally omitted her husband and his annual income from her government aid

applications. In truth, McMahan's husband was employed and had been living in her Section 8 subsidized home for nearly four years. In this way, McMahan under reported her income to increase her government aid. District Attorney investigators worked with special agents from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General to conduct the investigation.

McMahan was convicted of grand theft and welfare fraud. She was ordered to pay nearly \$50,000 in restitution to the government agencies she defrauded and was sentenced to 365 days in jail and three years of probation.



Left to right: Senior Investigator Robert Velasquez, Investigator Kent Bodin, Office Assistant Marianne Coblentz, Investigators Terry Carroll, Noel San Jose, Legal Processing Assistant Mayela Ramirez, Investigators Sean Conroy, Jackie Grant, Investigative Assistant Kristina Lee

COMPUTER CRIMES UNIT

The Computer Crimes Unit (CCU) investigates crimes in which a computer or other emerging technology is a significant instrumentality of the crime, including internet crimes against children, complex identity thefts, breaching of financial networks, theft of trade secrets, and frauds. The CCU is involved in the proactive investigation of child pornography crimes and assuring that investigations that use high tech techniques keep up with evolving constitutional law. The CCU works closely with local law enforcement through its partnership with the Southern California High Tech Task Force (SCHTTF), which includes investigators and civilian computer forensic examiners from several law enforcement agencies, including the District Attorney's Office. The SCHTTF provides highly technical support and forensic technology services for the ever-growing number of cases involving digital evidence. Digital evidence has proven crucial to the prosecution of capital murder cases, sexual assaults and other serious cases. The CCU provides training on a national, state and local level for prosecutors, peace officers, computer forensic examiners, county employees, and probation officers.



Left to right: Investigator Ryan Hamlin, Tom Henry, Senior Investigator Lance Steaman

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

Created in 2008 as part of a Bureau of Investigation reorganization, the Administrative Unit serves the special investigations needs of the District Attorney's Office. Investigators in the unit conduct background investigations on prospective employees, investigations of citizen complaints involving members of the District Attorney's Office, internal administrative investigations, and special external investigations involving public corruption or organized crime, as assigned by the chief investigator.



PROSECUTORS WHO HAVE TAKEN THE BENCH



THE HONORABLE NANCY L. AYERS
Ventura County Superior Court Judge

The Honorable Nancy L. Ayers obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of the Pacific in 1980 in French and international relations and her doctorate of jurisprudence from Santa Clara University School of Law in 1983.

Shortly after graduating, Nancy returned to the Central Valley, where she worked for a general practice law firm. In March 1984, she joined the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, eventually promoting to supervising deputy district attorney and senior deputy district attorney. Nancy received the District Attorney's Prosecutor of the Year award in 1990.

While working for the District Attorney's Office, in 1996 Nancy began participating in Guide Dogs of America, raising and training guide dogs to assist those with disabilities. Her passion for working to improve the lives of those with disabilities spilled over into her work as a prosecutor,

leading her to establish several innovative programs within the District Attorney's Office designed to provide the disabled with greater access to the criminal justice system.

In 2007, Nancy left the Ventura County District Attorney's Office after 23 years of service to return to Fresno County as a deputy district attorney. In 2009, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Nancy to the Ventura County Superior Court as a superior court judge, where she presides over criminal trials and preliminary hearings.



THE HONORABLE JEFFREY G. BENNETT
Ventura County Superior Court Judge

The Honorable Jeffrey G. Bennett earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice at California State University Sacramento in 1978 and began his law enforcement career that same year as a deputy sheriff with the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department. He later joined the University of California Police in 1980.

Jeff received a juris doctorate from the Santa Barbara College of Law in 1988 and joined the Ventura County District Attorney's Office in January 1989 as a deputy district attorney. In April 1990, he assumed the responsibility of directing the District Attorney's Auto Insurance Fraud Unit. Jeff was promoted to Major Fraud Supervisor in 1993. In that capacity, he managed all complex fraud cases, special prosecutions, political corruption, and worker's compensation fraud cases.

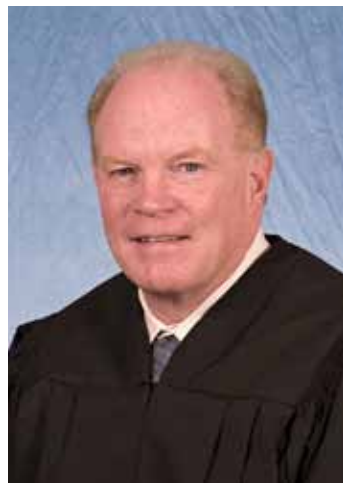
In May 1994, Jeff was appointed chief deputy district attorney in charge of the Bureau of Investigation.

During his 13-year tenure as a chief deputy district attorney, Jeff also had responsibility for the Child Support, Administration, and Special Prosecutions divisions.

Jeff was honored with the Knights of Columbus Prosecutor of the Year award for outstanding service in public safety in 1990 and again in April 2002. He also received the District Attorney's Prosecutor of the Year award in 1990.

On June 3, 2008, Jeff won election to the Ventura County Superior Court and took the bench on January 5, 2009. As a superior court judge, Jeff has presided over criminal trials and preliminary hearings, as well as various calendar courtrooms.

PROSECUTORS WHO HAVE TAKEN THE BENCH *continued from page 39*



THE HONORABLE WILLIAM R. REDMOND **Ventura County Superior Court Commissioner**

Superior Court Commissioner William R. Redmond earned his bachelor's degree in political science from San Francisco State University, graduating magna cum laude in 1979. He worked as a park ranger for the National Park Service for eight years before becoming a juvenile probation officer for Ventura County Corrections Services Agency in 1987.

Bill received his juris doctorate from Ventura College of Law and joined the Ventura County District Attorney's Office in 1990.

After joining the office, Bill rose through the prosecutorial ranks, handling misdemeanor, major fraud, juvenile, narcotics, and sexual assault cases. Bill handled a variety of special assignments during his career in the District Attorney's Office, and was a supervising deputy district attorney

and a chief deputy district attorney. Bill was twice recognized as the District Attorney's Prosecutor of the Year, in 1992 and 1996.

In August 2008, Bill accepted an appointment as a Superior Court Commissioner with the Ventura County Superior Court. Since becoming a commissioner, Bill has presided over a diverse array of cases, including criminal trials, unlawful detainers, preliminary hearings, small claims matters, and arraignments.



THE HONORABLE RYAN J. WRIGHT **Ventura County Superior Court Judge**

The Honorable Ryan J. Wright received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Irvine in 1994, and his doctorate of jurisprudence from Pepperdine University School of Law in 1997.

Ryan began working for the Ventura County District Attorney's Office in May 1996 as a law clerk and formally joined the office as a deputy district attorney after gaining admission to the California State Bar in 1997.

Ryan progressed through the ranks as a trial attorney and received the District Attorney's Prosecutor of the Year award in 1998 while working in the Sexual Assault Unit. In 2001, Ryan was recognized by the United States Department of Justice for his outstanding contributions in the area of narcotics enforcement. He was again recognized in 2006 as the California Narcotics Officers' Association Region 6 Prosecutor of the Year. Shortly thereafter, Ryan was promoted to senior deputy district attorney in February 2007.

In 2009, he was once again recognized as the District Attorney's Prosecutor of the Year and in 2010 he received the United States Attorney's Office Law Enforcement Award. In June 2010, Ryan was elected to serve as a Ventura County Superior Court Judge and took the bench on January 3, 2011. He currently presides over criminal trials.

RETIREMENTS

EMPLOYEE AWARD WINNERS

2007

John Eric Bond
 Paul Kollinzas
 Lawrence Young
 Steven O'Neil
 Joyce Brooks
 Steven Ramirez
 Phyllis Pulley

Andrea Tischler	Prosecutor of the Year
Lance Steaman	Investigator of the Year
Christine Mitchell	Employee of the Year
Rosario Gonzalez	Employee of the Year
Misdemeanor Unit	Team of the Year Award
Kellye Edwards; Vilma Fullante; Karin Gonzalez; Analia Silva; Ezekiel Berkley	
Richard Hawley	Volunteer of the Year
Sandra Avila	Employee of the Year
Dan Thompson	"Top Gun" Award

2008

Edward Smith
 Robert Meyers
 Ronald Carpenter

Mitch Disney	Prosecutor of the Year
Andrea Tischler	Prosecutor of the Year
Tom Mendez	Investigator of the Year
Bruce Holler	Employee of the Year
Rachel Watkins	Employee of the Year
Daniel Gutierrez	Employee of the Year
Ken Valentini	"Top Gun" Award

2009

Ernest Guzman
 Michael McKendry
 John Bunch
 Dennis Peet
 Vinse Gilliam
 Celia Loera
 Robert Velasquez

Miles Weiss	Prosecutor of the Year
Ryan Wright	Prosecutor of the Year
Jeff Barry	Investigator of the Year
Ernestine Cook	Employee of the Year
Patricia Wood	Employee of the Year
Jan Aston	Employee of the Year
Robin Estes	Employee of the Year
IT Unit	Team of the Year
Gene Mecagni; Alfredo Valenzuela; Mike Sanders; Luis Vasquez	
Tom Mendez	"Top Gun" Award

2010

Wretha Huber	Connie Young
Wendy Macfarlane	Gregory Askay
Kent Bodin	Mark Volpei
Katherine Smith	Terry Carroll
Daniel Thompson	Janet Notaro
Joseph Cipollini	George Salazar
Eric Bolland	Inez Lavery

Diane Arnold	Prosecutor of the Year
Lori Erickson	Investigator of the Year
Peggy Drury	Employee of the Year
Michael Sanders	Employee of the Year
Teresa Canosa	Employee of the Year
NSF Unit	Team of the Year
Robin Tribbit; Gloria Hernandez	
Tom Mendez	"Top Gun" Award



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