



FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

A Message From Prosecutor Walsh

Reporting The Truth About Rape

In last month's newsletter, I highlighted the recent push to test old sexual assault kits. The hope is to find justice for rape victims. But now I'm concerned that more rape victims will not come forward.

Late last year, *Rolling Stone* magazine published a story about a University of Virginia college student who reported she was gang raped at a fraternity. Then details were uncovered suggesting the assault could not have taken place the way it was described, and in December, *Rolling Stone* published a retraction of the story. Just last month, the Columbia School of Journalism, at the request of *Rolling Stone's* editors, completed its report of how the magazine got the story wrong. The report is fascinating, disturbing, and scary. The victim had such a vivid description of what happened that it seemed almost impossible not to believe her. However, the reporter's failures to question certain aspects of what happened left her story open to doubt. That doubt, and its impact on other victims, is what scares me now.

What are the effects of the *Rolling Stone* story and eventual retraction? Poor reporting by a journalist must not stop rape victims, or victims of



Rolling Stone

any crime, from coming forward. In December, the U.S. Department of Justice released numbers from its National Crime Victims Survey showing the number of college-aged women who are raped or sexually assaulted. From 1995-2013, females ages 18 to 24 had the highest rate of rape and sexual assaults compared to females in all other age groups. And among students, only 20% of rapes and sexual assaults were reported to police. Unfortunately, everyday someone becomes a victim of sexual assault or rape. Yet the one case which generated national attention focused on false reporting.

As a victim of crime, I know all too well the emotions victims go through. In the Justice Department report, one in five said they were afraid of reprisal. Many believed the

incident was not important enough to report.

In a recent article in the *Columbus Dispatch*, The National Sexual Violence Resource Center in Pennsylvania said, "research has shown that, in the vast majority of cases, victims of sexual assault are telling the truth. Trauma impacts memory. It is common for details to be delayed or blurry, but it does not signify that an entire story is inaccurate. In fact, lapses in recollection may indicate that something traumatic did happen."

What I can tell you is be strong. You can do it. And you don't have to do it alone. There are wonderful people who work at the Rape Crisis Center of Medina & Summit Counties. The Victim Assistance Program of Summit County provides outstanding services to crime victims.

Don't remain silent. Silence gives the attacker strength. Take that strength and fight back. Report the crime. And we will prosecute.

Stay safe.

Sherrri B. Walsh



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In The Community

We had such a wonderful time being in the community last month.

Thank you for supporting us and the Rape Crisis Center of Medina & Summit Counties during the 10th annual 'Walk A Mile In Her Shoes' event at Lock 3 on April 24. The 'Prosecutors in Pumps' raised \$800. We had a ton of fun (and a few blisters!) and were honored to take part in the event, which raised close to \$100,000 for the Rape Crisis Center of Medina & Summit Counties.



We also had a great time teaching women potentially life saving techniques at our self-defense class. The free event



was held April 27th at the Akron/Springfield Assembly of God. Over 120 people took part in the class, sponsored by our office, **Summit County Sheriff Steve Barry**, and **University of Akron Police Lt. Chad Cunningham**. We hope to provide more free self-defense classes in the coming year.

Make sure you 'like' our Facebook page -

www.facebook.com/SummitCountyProsecutorOffice or visit our website — co.summitoh.net/prosecutor.

We'll post upcoming class information there.



On March 18, **CSEA Director Jennifer Bheam** and **Joe Fantozzi, CSEA Chief Assistant Prosecutor**, attended the Ohio Child Support Directors' Association Statehouse Day in Columbus. Both met with lawmakers, including **State Representative Emilia Sykes**, to support new legislation. Lawmakers are reviewing many

proposals, including an update to the child support guidelines and how the Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency calculates how much it costs to raise a child.

On April 21, we honored victims at the annual Crime Victims Awareness Luncheon, sponsored by the Victim Assistance Program. Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecutor Margaret Scott took part in a panel discussion during the event.



And thanks to everyone who stopped by our table at the annual Princess Palooza & Heroic Heroes Family Expo at Summit Mall on April 11. 2,500 parents and children took part in the annual event. A great day of family fun!



HELP KEEP A SERIAL RAPIST IN PRISON



On May 26th, Willie Lagway (Criminal Case No. 83-02-0232) goes before the Ohio Parole Board to consider his release. The Summit County Prosecutor's Office is asking for your help to keep Willie Lagway in prison.

From February 10-14, 1983, Lagway, then 27, went on a five-day crime spree victimizing six women in Summit County. For his crimes, Lagway was sentenced to a minimum sentence of 109 years and a maximum sentence of 375 years.

We are asking for the public's help in keeping Lagway in prison.

Please send letters or emails to:

Ohio Parole Board

Attn: Cynthia Mausser, Parole Board Chair

770 West Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43222

DRC.Victim.Services@odrc.state.oh.us

Please include Lagway's name and Inmate Number, A173689, on each page of the correspondence.

You can also sign a petition in support of keeping Lagway in prison.

Please note YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DONATE to sign the petition.

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/keeplagwayinjail>

GUILTY VERDICTS

April 2015

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining convictions at trial in April:

Kassim Ahmed

Ryan Stickel

Pete Daly

Brian Stano

Felicia Easter

Jaime Syx

Justin Richard

Great Job Prosecutors!!!!



Tough Prosecutions

These defendants will be locked up for a lengthy period of time thanks to our dedicated Assistant Prosecutors:

Steven Bittel, 54

- Child pornography
- 14 years in prison

Michael Nicodemus, 20

- Inducing Panic
- Making False Alarms
- 3.5 years in prison

Alex Garcia, 35

- Burglary
- 17.5 years in prison

Joshua Seese, 35

- Rape
- Gross Sexual Imposition
- **LIFE** in prison

Ramous Lewis, 17

- Aggravated Murder
- Gang Specification
- Felonious Assault
- **LIFE** in prison



Help Us Go Green!

Contact Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net to receive this newsletter by e-mail

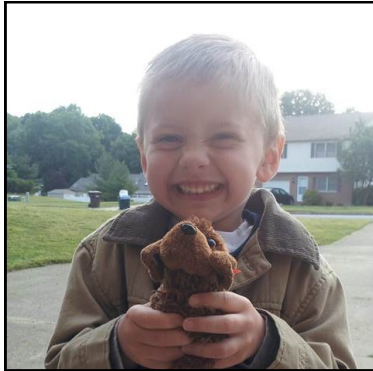


May Top Cop

**Tallmadge Police Sgt. Doug Bohon & Det. Jeremy McGee
Nominated by Asst. Prosecutor Jon Baumuel**

On the afternoon of August 10, 2013, Sergeant Doug Bohon of the Tallmadge Police Department was notified of the discovery of the bodies of 31-year-old Wendy Ralston and her 5-year-old son Peyton in a wooded area behind their residence. Sgt. Bohon was assigned the monumental task of leading the investigation and solving the case without any initial information as to when, where, or how these tragic deaths occurred.

The first step in the investigation required processing the scene, which required a meticulous examination of the wooded area where the bodies were discovered. Detective Jeremy McGee of the Tallmadge P.D. was in charge of processing the scene. On August 10th, Det. McGee, missed his daughter's birthday, spending it instead at the crime scene digging through trash, processing, searching and organizing evidence, and handling subpoenas and search warrant requests. Items discovered by Tallmadge Police officers along with



investigators from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), would later prove crucial to solving and proving the case against Daniel Tighe.

Sgt. Bohon and his officers not only discovered evidence proving that Daniel Tighe was responsible for the murders, but they searched and obtained evidence to disprove Tighe's version of events. This involved Sgt. Bohon obtaining and analyzing thousands of pages of records from websites, phone companies, and computers, and engaging in extensive interviews with over 50 witnesses.

The hard work of Sgt. Bohon, Det. McGee, and the numerous other officers, resulted in the conviction of Daniel Tighe for Aggravated Murder in the death of Peyton, and a murder conviction in the death of Wendy. Daniel Tighe was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Way to go TOP COPS!

Citizen Spotlight: Jordan Baker

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office would like to recognize Jordan Baker for his contribution to a police investigation, leading to the arrest of three teenagers for a burglary committed in Akron.

On March 11, 2015, Jordan observed three teenagers trying to get into a neighbor's house. When they couldn't enter the first house, the suspects moved on to a second house. Two suspects acted as lookout while the third entered the house and returned with the victim's property, which included two firearms. Jordan contacted the police and kept an eye (from a safe distance) on the suspects to alert police as to their movements.



Thanks to Jordan's contribution, all three suspects were apprehended, and all property was recovered, including the firearms.

Although our daily news may be full of stories of youth making bad decisions and finding themselves on the wrong side of the law, Jordan's actions should highlight that there are young people out there ready and willing to do the right thing to protect our neighborhoods and communities.

Moreover, all of us should be reminded that as friends and neighbors, we all can

support and look out for each other to keep our neighborhoods safe from crime.

As for Jordan's future, he wants to become a police officer.

If there is someone you would like to nominate for a Citizen Spotlight, please email our Director of Communications James Pollack at

pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net

Thank you, Jordan!

Meet our new Juvenile Prosecutor: Samantha Hardin

Hire Date: March 2, 2015

Title: Assistant Prosecutor, Juvenile Division

Hometown: Wadsworth

Education: I went to the University of Akron for both my bachelor and law degrees. For undergrad, I majored in Political Science with minors in Pre-Law, Family Development, and Child Development. I immediately went on to law school. I graduated from Akron's School of Law in May 2014, sat for the July Bar, and was licensed in November 2014.



Background: I interned twice with the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. My first intern experience was in the Appellate Division while I was still an undergrad. The second was in the Civil Division while I was in law school. I also worked for the City of Akron Law Department as a law clerk for almost 3 years. After receiving my law license, I worked as the City's Collections Attorney.

Hobbies/Interests: The most enjoyable times that I have are times that I spend with my family. My husband and I have three awesome, loveable, crazy, energetic kids ages 1, 2, and 3.

Fun Fact: To keep at least partially sane from my awesome and fully energized children I regularly attend Zumba classes. I am considering getting licensed so that I would be able to teach Zumba in the near future.

There's an APP For That!

Child Support Enforcement Agency of Summit County

Each year, the Summit County Child Support Agency collects nearly \$84 million dollars, and handles over 49,000 cases. And now there is an easier way for families to get help.

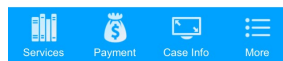


In March, CSEA launched a new free app, available in Google Play and the iTunes store. Clients with smartphones can download the new app by visiting CSEA's website at

<https://co.summitoh.net/prosecutor/index.php/divisions/child-support-enforcement>



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CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY



or by searching "Summit CSEA" or "Summit County Child Support" in the Play Store for Android users or the App Store for iPhone users. The app is easy to use and streamlines the process for families. Parents seeking child support can quickly find phone numbers, access forms, and get the agency's address and office hours. Plus you can find out the different ways to make child support payments. And you can even get information about what to bring to a child support hearing.



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