



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## Summit County Prosecutor

### Newsletter

#### February 2010

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## Message from the Prosecutor



Prosecutor  
Sherri Bevan Walsh

Have you ever read those lines in a newspaper that say “The prosecutor’s office declined (or refused) to comment on the details of the case because it is pending?” Have you ever wondered why?

The answer or reasoning is found in a term called **pre-trial publicity**. This term refers to how attorneys must refrain from trying a defendant in the court of public opinion rather than in a court of law. The Constitution protects all of us with a right to a fair trial, comprised of admissible evidence with a jury of our peers. Attorneys — both prosecutors and defense counsel — are required to follow ethical rules by not commenting on a case or its evidence in a public forum prior to that Constitutionally protected trial. Therefore, until after the trial we are limited to general facts surrounding an incident and prohibited from giving out details or our opinions of the crime.

So, “not commenting” helps to minimize misinformation and innuendos that are not supported by evidence and witnesses as required in a court of law. Just imagine how many supermarket tabloid gossip stories you have read that would not withstand the tests of direct and cross-examination in a courtroom trial.

With intense media coverage of many of our pending cases, we do everything we can to ensure that at trial we can identify jurors who can weigh the evidence fairly and set aside what they have read in a newspaper, which may or may not be accurate.

So how do we as prosecutors balance our legal obligation to seek justice and to effectively manage the prosecution process against the public’s expectations to hear from the Prosecutor on cases that concern them?

It is not always easy, but you will see that we err on the side of not commenting. Yes, there are many times that a story is written without the information we believe to be true based upon a police investigation and evidence obtained. We believe that being cautious is ethically the correct path to support our goal as a prosecutor to seek justice.



## Tough Prosecution With K-9 Coco’s help!

### *State vs. Christopher Shinholster*

**Coco**, a black Labrador who works with the Sheriff’s Office Drug Unit, was working at a local parcel distribution center and made a “hit” on a package. It turned out the package contained 1,555 grams of cocaine, enough to fill a large freezer bag.

The police watched the house where the package was to be delivered and saw our defendant, Shinholster, circling the block and also watching the house. The delivery was made. The woman who signed for the package told the police that Shinholster was her friend and that he was coming over that morning to help her move. She also told them that she had sent a package to Texas a few days earlier at Shinholster’s request, and that she put her return address on the package because it required a return address.

Meantime, Shinholster was several houses up sitting in the driveway watching the scene unfold. Akron police stopped him as he began to back out of the driveway. They removed him from the car and when he put his hands on the roof of his car, he tried to throw a piece of paper away. That paper was the receipt from three days earlier.

Tracking records revealed that his supplier was a former Akron drug dealer who now resides in Texas. The Texas packages were to and from him.

The woman who signed for the package passed a polygraph that she was set up to receive the package and had no knowledge of its contents.

Her “friend,” Shinholster, was sentenced to 15 years in prison on February 24 after being found guilty by a jury of Trafficking in Cocaine and Possession.

As for our **K-9 hero Coco**, who has been with the Sheriff’s Office since 2002, we sent her partner **Det. Keith Gowens** hero dog biscuits.

Questions? E-mail Laurie Cramer  
cramer@prosecutor.summitoh.net

We're on the Web!

[www.co.summit.oh.us/Prosecutor/Index.htm](http://www.co.summit.oh.us/Prosecutor/Index.htm)

## Top Cop!



Det. Edward Carlile, Northfield PD

Nominated by: Prosecutors Jon Baumoeel  
and Jennie Shuki

### *State of Ohio vs. James Brown*

Detective Ed Carlile is being named **Top Cop** this month for his excellent police work in the investigation and conviction of James Brown. Det. Carlile's investigation involved sexual crimes against an uncooperative 15-year-old victim that occurred in two counties, Summit and Athens, and involved a time period that ranged from 1998 to 2009.

Det. Carlile's thorough investigation uncovered DNA evidence in a vehicle and evidence on the family computer that corroborated the victim's allegations and strengthened the State's case. Det. Carlile remained closely involved as the case was pending and developments arose in which the victim was being pressured to recant. Ultimately, the victim did recant, but because of the detective's diligence during both the initial stages of the investigation and as the case was pending, we were able to obtain a conviction in trial. Furthermore, Det. Carlile's hard work uncovered additional crimes committed by the defendant whereby the defendant was providing drugs to minors.

As a result of the Detective's thorough and superb police work, we were able to obtain convictions for multiple sex and drug offenses, and the **defendant received a sentence of 24 years in prison.**

**Way to go, Top Cop!**



## GUILTY at TRIAL!

**Congratulations** to Prosecutors Jon Baumoeel, Teri Burnside (2), Jessica Didion, Kevin Mayer (2), Nick Palumbo, Greg Peacock, Angela Poth-Wypasek (2), Dan Sallerson, Norm Schroth (3), Jennie Shuki, Brian Stano, Chad VanOrman, Angela Walls-Alexander, who obtained **GUILTY** verdicts at trial in January.

## MEET ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR MICHAEL RICKETT



**Hire Date:** May 15, 2006

**Hometown:** Wooster, Ohio

**Law Degree:** University of Akron  
School of Law, 2004

**Background:** Wooster High School. Bachelor's in Christian Education and Communications from Wheaton College, Illinois. After law school, I was a federal law clerk for The Hon. Randolph Baxter of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court before coming to the Summit County Prosecutor's Office.

**Little Known Fact:** After college, I planned on going to Dallas Theological Seminary and becoming a pastor. God has a good sense of humor and I ended up working my way through law school as a youth-pastor and becoming an attorney instead.

**Most Memorable Case:** My first solo jury trial was prosecuting a defendant who was not allowed to have a gun due to a prior robbery conviction. Police were called out on reports of gunfire. The defendant had put a handgun in the front of his waistband and accidentally pulled the trigger, discharging a round through his privates. The defendant and his brother told police they hadn't heard gunshots, but the hospital called the police when he arrived minutes later. The jury convicted him of Having Weapons While Under Disability. At sentencing, defense counsel argued that the defendant had been punished enough! The court thought otherwise, and he was sentenced to one year in prison.

## THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!



Stiff competition for this month's ***That's Outrageous!*** We have **Karin Goeldi** who stole over \$1 million from her employer and spent it on lavish events and possessions that could have been in an episode of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. Equally disturbing, she stole the trust of those she worked for and with at Cedarwood Corporation. Seven years in prison is a long way from limousines and steak dinners.

We also have **Lewis Napoleon**, who pled guilty, withdrew his plea, and pled guilty again to the burglary of an elderly couple's home that resulted in the death of their dog. The good news, Napoleon is in the big house for 10 years. Napoleon and his brother viciously kicked the couple's little dog and her injuries were so extensive, she had to be put to sleep.

***Now that is outrageous!***