



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## Summit County Prosecutor

### Newsletter

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## Message from the Prosecutor



Prosecutor  
Sherri Bevan Walsh

I have been asked recently if there is an increase in bullying, or just an increase in awareness? Maybe both, maybe not...but what we do know is that bullying has expanded its reach through the internet and cell phones to make it that much more difficult to control.

Cyberbullying is faceless taunting where bullies can't see their victim's reactions. Public humiliation that goes to hundreds of people, or texts that are intended to embarrass and "slap" the recipient, are rampant.

I have thought a lot about bullying over the years. As the mother of a child with special needs, I have worried about my son's safety and ability to tell me if he was being bullied. Strategies are usually given to the victim of a bully to *tell an adult* and to learn to *act like the bully's actions or words don't hurt*. Those are good strategies but expanding the circle to better support the victim and give greater penalties to the bully might work better yet.

**Empower children** with the tools they need to support the victim and to feel safe standing up to bullies. My mother used to say, "Dare to be Different." Corny by today's standards, but the message is that we don't have to go with the crowd. When a kid sees someone being bullied, and usually bullies enjoy an audience (even on Facebook), tell your child they don't have to be a bystander.

- 1) They can say "Cut it out. That's not cool." Take the victim and walk away and "de-friend" the bully on Facebook.
- 2) Tell an adult right away what they saw, who was doing the bullying, and where it happened. Tell them to write it down if they need to and give the note to a trusted adult.
- 3) This is where adults make it clear that they are safe reporting bullying. We must support a culture in our society that sees bullying for what it is...someone with power harming someone with less power because they are different: bigger, older, maybe smarter (maybe not), more physically agile, are a different color, or don't have the same interests. Maybe, because they have a different sexual orientation. The bully in all of these situations is the coward and our kids need to know that it is not okay to hurt someone for any reason.
- 4) Bullies also need to know that they can be charged with a crime. While bullying itself in Ohio is not a crime, their actions can land them in juvenile court. Charges such as Assault, Telecommunications Harassment, Menacing by Stalking are options. **Working together is the only way to stop bullying.**



Congratulations **Brianna Miller**, Hyre Middle School, as this year's Grand Prize Safety Kids Calendar winner! Her message says, "Don't let a bully dim your star, tell an adult and you're safer by far!"

## Tough Prosecution Five Co-Defendants One Common Victim

**Abdulmahdi Algarawi** was a husband, father of three, and a businessman who sold shoes out of his van. He also was the victim of two violent crimes, one that ended with his death.

Last January, Mr. Algarawi was lured to a location set up by a man who said he wanted to buy shoes. Charles Peterson, Stephen Green, and Edroy McCormick showed up with a gun and robbed Mr. Algarawi. They took his van, shoes and all his personal belongings. The van was found hours later and the men were tracked through the snow to one of the defendant's houses where police found Mr. Algarawi's belongings.

**Peterson** was found guilty by a jury and was sentenced to **six years in prison**. **Green** pled guilty and was sentenced to **seven years in prison**. **McCormick** pled guilty and was sentenced to **three years in prison**.

Sadly, Mr. Algarawi didn't live long enough to see justice. He was murdered by two men in April after being lured to a location under the same pretense of buying his shoes. Mr. Algarawi was shot once by Xzavier Penwell, killing him. Co-defendant DeAnthony Smith and Penwell stole Mr. Algarawi's van containing numerous pairs of shoes. Mr. Algarawi's vehicle was located several hours later on the other side of Akron and had been set on fire. In the weeks that followed Penwell sold the shoes on the streets.

**Smith** was found guilty by a jury and sentenced to **21 years to life in prison**. **Penwell** was also found guilty by a jury and is awaiting sentencing.

*Prosecutors Jon Baumoe, Jay Cole, Justin Richard, Jennie Shuki and Victim Advocate Maureen Vos deserve KUDOS on these cases!*

Questions? E-mail Laurie Cramer  
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We're on the Web!

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

## Top Cops!

**Top Cops:** Sgt. Dave Garro, Det. Jim Pachelich, Officers Todd Sinsley and Daniel Metzger, Akron Police Department



**Nominated by Prosecutors:** Jon Baumuel, Jay Cole, Justin Richard and Jennie Shuki

*State of Ohio vs. Penwell, Smith, Peterson, McCormick and Green*

Through excellent observational police work, **Officers Sinsley and Metzger** recognized a van parked in the driveway at a vacant house that matched the description of the van stolen from shoe salesman and robbery victim Muhammad Algarwari. The officers followed foot prints in the snow to a house where they found evidence of the crime, including Allgawari's stolen shoes.

Months later, **Sgt. Garro** and **Det. Pachelich** produced key evidence in the case against **Abdulmahdi Algarawi's** murderers. They interviewed Xzavier Penwell for 2 ½ hours when he tried to implicate an innocent person. Through their questioning they caught Penwell making several inconsistent statements that ultimately led him to admit he was present for the shooting and lied to police. The interview was a key piece of evidence in the case.

Similarly, co-defendant DeAnthony Smith was interviewed multiple times. These Top Cops found inconsistencies that when presented to Smith along with evidence, forced him to tell the truth. The Detectives quickly obtained hundreds of pages of cell phone records, including calls and cell phone tower information, that were also key to the case.

**Way to go, Top Cops!**



## GUILTY at TRIAL!

**Congratulations** to Prosecutors Jay Cole (2), Felicia Easter (2), Greta Johnson, Brian LoPrinzi (2), Kevin Mayer, Katherine Milane, Angela Poth-Wypasek, Justin Richard (3), Mike Rickett, Dustin Roth, Dan Sallerson, (2), Chad VanOrman, Angela Walls-Alexander who had **GUILTY** verdicts at trial in October.

## MEET ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR CHRIS MASTRAN, SUPERVISOR JUVENILE DEPENDENCY AND NEGLECT

Hire Date: April 2001

Hometown: Tallmadge, Ohio

Law Degree: University of Akron



**Background:** First job was civil litigation with a focus on foreclosure, construction law, liens and real estate. I also worked as an associate for a firm doing intense research and writing as support for the litigation team. I found my niche in child protection as a trial attorney for the Stark County Department of Job & Family Services before ultimately landing in Summit County. My undergraduate degree is in Mass Media Communication.

**Little Known Fact:** During my undergraduate years at The University of Akron, I worked as the Public Affairs Director, part-time D.J., and newscaster at University radio station WZIP.

**Most Memorable Case:** The case of the severe abuse of a child who was adopted from Russia. The child was violently slammed over her crib railing by her adoptive father. The physician testified that the injury to her spinal cord was similar to that seen by the force of an automobile accident. The parent's defense counsel attempted to introduce material from a "Russian physician" that would show that the child had brittle bone disease. Our expert was quickly able to discredit that argument by various test results and other medical factors. Ultimately, permanent custody was granted to Summit County Children Services and she found a new adoptive home! We Juvenile prosecutors don't often get feedback about how children are doing as years go by. But in this case, The *Akron Beacon Journal* featured a detailed article discussing how well she is doing with her forever family, despite her physical limitations. And still today, her story grows with the November 17th premiere at the Akron Civic Theater of "More Than Chance," a movie about her life and recovery.



## That's Outrageous!

*No one should endure three trials...*

Murder victim Abdulmahdi Algarawi left behind a widow and three children. His widow had to sit through three painful trials to see her husband's robbers and murderers brought to justice. We wish there was an easier way, or that we never had to meet this family under these circumstances.

The widow also lost the family's main bread winner, but we are glad to report that our office has collected money all year to sponsor families that are impacted by violence for the holidays and one of those families is the Algarawi family. We are glad for that.

### **Child Abuse is So Sad...**

When I sent the announcement out about the movie, "More than Chance," referenced by Chris above, I received multiple comments from prosecutors who remembered the case and how much it has stuck with them all these years!

***Now that is outrageous!***