



# Sherri Bevan Walsh Summit County Prosecuting Attorney

Issue V

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## Link:

Ohio Department of  
Corrections



## Message from the Prosecutor

Brett X. Hartman, who is sitting on Ohio's death row for the 1977 murder of 46-year-old Winda Snipes, is scheduled for a clemency hearing on July 12. While the parole board unanimously recommended against his clemency in March of 2009 to then Governor Ted Strickland, the board will hear his case again and make a recommendation to Governor Kasich. My office will once again be at the hearing to present the cold facts about this case: despite his claims of innocence and constant delay tactics, the evidence is overwhelming that Hartman killed Winda Snipes.

Winda was beaten, strangled, stabbed 138 times – including several X's cut on her body – her throat was slashed, and her hands were cut off. From day one, Hartman has created stories to try to explain the overwhelming evidence against him. This needs to end with the court's sentence being carried out to achieve justice for Winda Snipes and her family.

The morning of Winda's murder an anonymous caller – later discovered to be Brett Hartman – called 911 to report that there was a "mutilated" body in a Highland Square apartment building. The police went to the building and initially did not see anything unusual and left. The caller phoned again and used profanities at dispatchers, saying the officers did not find the body and suggested they return. The same officers returned and this time heard loud music coming from Winda's apartment; music that was not heard the first time they were there. Officers then discovered Winda's body.

Another witness called the police and said there was a man hiding behind a tree looking at an apartment building and thought maybe the police were looking for him. The man standing behind the tree soon became known as Brett Hartman. He approached several officers during the investigation and said things like "She got what she deserved," "I hear it's pretty gruesome in there...have you ever seen anything like that?" No one else but officers had seen the crime scene.

Police interviewed Hartman. After denying that he made the 911 calls and that he was watching the scene from behind the tree, he later admitted that he made the calls and hid behind the tree. He further explained that had just gone over there to check on her and found her dead, even though he claimed to not even know her name. He then

## Summit County Felony Heroin Charges

2007: 24

2008: 79

2009: 110

2010: 160

2011: 82 to date

claimed that he was afraid so he wiped down his prints with his t-shirt (a bloody one found by police stuffed behind his waterbed headboard). When expert testimony said the blood stains were inconsistent with the shirt being used to “wipe,” he changed his story to say that he left his shirt at her apartment the night before.

Hartman did wipe the scene down, likely with a rag that was stuffed in Winda’s mouth. He did leave behind a bloody palm and fingerprint that matched his. He claimed that the two had consensual sex and that when he left her, she was alive.

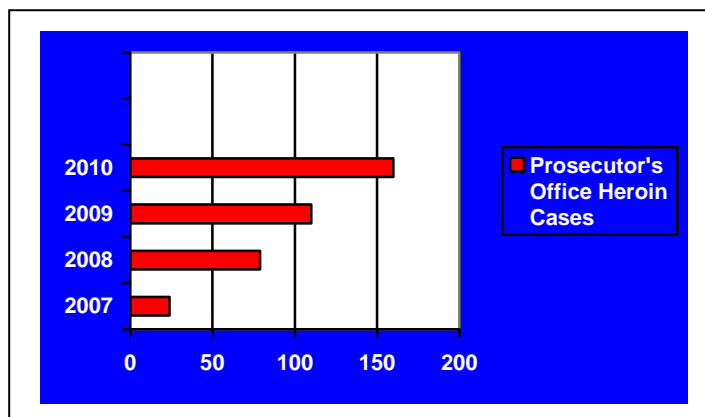
About a month before the murder, Hartman and a co-worker were talking about the O.J. Simpson case. Hartman said that if “he was going to do that he would just cut the person’s hands off and that way there wouldn’t be any DNA under the fingernails. You know, don’t go through that, just cut the hands off.”

Hartman was also a chef that used knives on a regular basis. Testimony from a surgeon at trial was that Winda’s hands were cut off very precisely with three different knives. Hartman’s cooking knife set was found and was missing three knives.

The evidence in this case is overwhelming. We will once again ask the parole board to deny clemency and to see justice through for Winda and her family. They have now waited almost 14 years for peace.

## Did you know? Heroin is on the rise in Summit County

The number of individuals indicted on charges of Possession of Heroin and/or Trafficking in Heroin has more than quadrupled since 2007. The numbers are astounding and the trend appears to be on track with 82 cases so far this year.



Summit County prosecutors have seen first hand the perils of drug use for many years. The devastating effects caused by heroin are extreme as the form of the drug can vary

greatly. Everyone from first time users to seasoned addicts can die quickly from one encounter when the drug is “too pure,” or so strong that it causes an immediate overdose. A Cuyahoga Falls man bought heroin for himself and his girlfriend. She died within minutes of shooting up with her two-year-old son nearby. Her boyfriend went to prison for two years for his role, but the tragedy was avoidable.

*In 2010, Heaven worked on 107 cases that were being appealed by defendants. She filed 103 briefs to the 9<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals. She also can be counted on to serve hot meals at Open M with the Community Relations Committee.*

## **GUILTY AT TRIAL**

**Congratulations** Assistant Prosecutors for a **PERFECT** trial record in May!

Those who obtained a **GUILTY** verdict at trial in May include **Teri Burnside, Mike Cody, Jay Cole, Aaron Howell, Tom Kroll, Brian LoPrinzi (3), Steve Neumeyer, Jennie Shuki (2) Colleen Sims, Ryan Stickel, Nicole Walker, Angela Walls-Alexander.**

Heroin is easy to find, relatively cheap when compared to other drugs, and highly addictive. For some, one use of the drug and they are hooked. It also impacts more than just the person addicted.

On July 5, Ruth Helderlein, 30, of Kent, was sentenced to six years in prison by Judge Thomas Parker for Theft from the Elderly. She also was ordered to pay restitution to both the victim and the stamp company.

Helderlein pled guilty on June 7, 2011 to stealing over \$60,000.00 in rare coins and stamps from a disabled adult whom she had cared for the past five years. She stole the items to sell so she had money to buy heroin. Helderlein first took Oxycontin, then injected heroin after becoming addicted to the Oxycontin, which is essentially a synthetic form of heroin.

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## Meet Assistant Prosecutor Heaven Guest, Appellate Division

**Hire date:** January 2003

**Hometown:** Long Island New York

**Law Degree:** University of Akron



**Background:** I have been an attorney for ten years, the last eight being with the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. Prior to that, I was a judicial attorney at the Eleventh District Court of Appeals. I have worked in several divisions of the Prosecutor's Office including: CSEA, Juvenile, and, Appeals. I was a G.R.E.A.T. officer for two years, teaching students to stay away from gangs. I actively participate with the office's Community Relations Committee. I am certified to teach grades 1-8 and truly enjoy teaching students about the law on behalf of the Prosecutor's Office.

**Little Known Fact:** Since graduating from law school, I have earned two additional graduate degrees: a Master of Arts in Education and Masters of Public Administration. Favorite Quote: "Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence." Abigail Adams, Wife of John Adams.

**Most Memorable Case:** *State v. Fischer*, where I represented the State in the Ninth District Court of Appeals and in the Supreme Court of Ohio. In this case, the Supreme Court of Ohio modified its prior holding in *State v. Bezak* and held that, when a sentence fails to properly include a statutorily required term of post-release control, the new sentencing hearing is limited to the proper imposition of post-release control and, any appeal from the re-sentencing hearing is limited in scope to issues arising at the re-sentencing hearing.

*Thank you, Top Cops!*

## Contact Us

For information about the summit County Prosecutor's Office, go to our website at:

Prosecutor - Summit County

53 University Avenue  
Akron, OH 44313  
(330) 643-2800

Want to receive con-alerts and other information from the Prosecutor's Office?

Email Melanie Hart at  
Hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net

*Is Mr. Bubble next?*

## Top Cops



**Top Cops:** Detective Marco Berquist and Officer Caroline Heaney, Reminderville Police Department

**Nominated by:** Assistant Prosecutor Brian LoPrinzi  
*State vs. Tracy Reed*

In the fall of 2010, the President of the Inlet Point Condo Association in Reminderville went to the Police Department and reported that he suspected approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 had been stolen from the association. As a result of this initial investigation, it was determined that Tracy Reed, the sole owner of the Aurora Management Company, was the suspect. **Detective Marco Berquist** and **Officer Caroline Heaney** continued their investigation and soon uncovered that Ms. Reed was managing funds for over 40 condo and home owners associations. Most of the associations were not within the Village of Reminderville, and were actually spread out over four counties. With the support and guidance of **Chief Jeff Buck, Berquist** and **Heaney** took on the task of investigating the significantly expanded case. After searching her home and business, two truck loads of documents revealed over six years of manipulation and deceit by Reed. As a result, Reed was interviewed and confessed to taking over **\$1 million** from 20 associations, comprised of over 500 individual victims.

A case of this nature can take several years to investigate and prosecute, and often includes a multi-jurisdictional task force. In this case, however, because of **Detective Berquist and Officer Heaney's** hard work and thorough investigation, the case was turned over to the Prosecutor's office in less than five months. Moreover, the case was so thorough that Reed agreed to bypass the Grand Jury and go right to a plea of guilty to Aggravated Theft.

Reed is now serving a **seven year sentence** in the Ohio State Penitentiary for Women.

**Way to go, Top Cops!**

## That's Outrageous!



Are "**Bath Salts**" the next emerging statewide drug trend in Ohio? That is the question buzzing around the prosecutor's office and law enforcement agencies wondering how items off the shelf from a pharmacy or specialty bath store can become a toxic drug. Bath salts, sold under the name of Dragon or Lightning, are a synthetic stimulant with hallucinogenic properties and are legal in Ohio (for now). The bath salts are linked to several deaths across the state and have side effects similar to cocaine or methamphetamine.

The question we all want to know is who was the first person to get high off of bath salts? *Will Calgon change their slogan to "Take Me Away for five to 10?"*

**Now that is Outrageous!**