



June 2014

News from the Criminal Division

Message from Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh

Every month I highlight a few of the defendants who received lengthy prison sentences in the previous month. This month I couldn't narrow it down to only two or three. This issue features five defendants who were each sentenced to more than 40 years in prison.

Four of those will spend the rest of their lives in prison.

What is especially startling is that three of those defendants are serving life sentences for multiple counts of rape.

The timing is interesting, as a national conversation has begun about the way women are treated in the U.S. and the entire world.

On May 1, the U.S. Department of Education released a list of colleges under investigation for the way they handle sexual violence and harassment complaints.

That was followed by the shocking news of two teen girls in India who were gang raped and then hung from a tree.

And on May 23, a college student went on a murderous rampage near the University of California, Santa Barbara out of anger at the numerous women who had rejected his sexual advances.

These events led to the creation of the hashtag #YesAllWomen, which women are using to educate men about the daily fears and concerns women face simply because they are women.

It can be easy to look the other way and say that other

countries and even other states are the ones with the problem. But rape can happen to anyone anywhere.

In 2013, my office prosecuted 23 people for raping victims under the age of 18. That's in addition to the numerous people we prosecuted in rape cases involving victims who were 18 or older.

If you think that's a lot of people who are raped each year, consider this sobering statistic. According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 60 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police.



Sexual assault is a problem in our country and in our community. We all must take an active role in reducing the number of people -- women and men, children and adults -- who are sexually assaulted each year.

My office ensures justice for victims by seeking a punishment commensurate with the crime. And as you can see from our

Tough Prosecution section this month, we do a pretty good job.

However, our ultimate goal is not simply to punish defendants. It is also to have fewer defendants to punish. Even one rape is far too many.

It takes a community to change its culture. Sexual assault should never be acceptable. Rape victims should not have to justify their sexual history, their manner of dress, their looks or their mental health.

What will you do to make a change?

Stay safe,



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Follow us on Twitter
[@ProsecutorWalsh](https://twitter.com/ProsecutorWalsh)



Tough Prosecution

These defendants are out of our community for a long time thanks to the hard work of my assistant prosecutors:

Jacob Singleton, age 33

- Rape (three counts)
- Corrupting a Minor with Drugs
- Pandering
- Child Endangering
- Sexually Violent Predator
- **Sentenced to life in prison**
- **Tier III sex offender**
- **Eligible for parole in 2039**

Cecilia Lower, age 30

- Rape (three counts)
- Corrupting a Minor with Drugs
- Pandering
- Child Endangering
- Sexually Violent Predator
- Illegal Use of a Minor in Nudity Oriented Material
- **Sentenced to life in prison**
- **Tier III sex offender**
- **Eligible for parole in 2039**

Jeffery Burks, age 54

- Rape (four counts)
- Gross Sexual Imposition (four counts)
- Sexually Violent Predator
- **Sentenced to four life terms plus another 20 years in prison**
- **No parole eligibility**

David Stoddard, age 25

- Aggravated Murder
- Attempted Murder (two counts)
- Reckless Homicide (two counts)
- Aggravated Burglary
- Felonious Assault
- **Sentenced to life in prison**
- **No parole eligibility**

Demarco Wright, age 20

- Aggravated Robbery (three counts)
- Kidnapping (four counts)
- Aggravated Burglary
- Tampering with Evidence
- **Sentenced to 43 years in prison**

Friday Finds

Do you want to help our Child Support Enforcement Agency find the parents who are neglecting their financial responsibilities?



We have a new feature on our Facebook page and website called the Friday Find. Each Friday we post the picture and identifying information of a parent we're looking for.

If you have any information, send a message through Facebook or call CSEA at (330) 643-2765.

Guilty at Trial in May

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining guilty verdicts at trial last month:

Nik Buckmeier

Dan Sallerson (2)

Mike Cody (2)

Brian Stano (2)

Mike Rickett (2)

Great job, prosecutors!

Help us go green!

If you currently receive this newsletter on paper and would like to receive an electronic version instead, email Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net.



June Top Cop

Top Cop: Detective Matt Hudak

Nominated By: Assistant Prosecutor Jon Baumel



In October, Northeast Ohioans were horrified to learn of a couple who repeatedly drugged and assaulted two young children. At the urging of 33-year-old Clinton resident Jacob Singleton, Cecilia Lower drugged and sexually assaulted a four-year-old girl and molested a seven-year-old boy. Lower, a 30-year-old Barberton resident, photographed the abuse and shared the images with Singleton.

Barberton police were alerted after Lower's husband found the images and messages between Lower and Singleton on her phone and Facebook account.

Detective Matt Hudak quickly went to work to put together a case against Lower and Singleton. Concerned about the possibility of

additional victims, Detective Hudak interviewed every child who had regular contact with Singleton or Lower. He learned about the second victim through those conversations.

Detective Hudak maintained frequent communication with our prosecutors and collaborated with one of our investigators to ensure the case was as strong as possible.

Lower and Singleton pleaded guilty to three counts of Rape with Sexually Violent Predator specifications, Corrupting a Minor with Drugs, Pandering and Endangering Children. Lower also pleaded guilty to Illegal use of a Minor in Nudity Oriented Material.

Both were sentenced to life in prison. They will be eligible for parole after serving 25 years in prison.

Detective Hudak retired from the Barberton Police Department shortly after this case was resolved. His work on this case capped a notable career with the Barberton Police Department.

Our office has been so impressed with his work that we offered him a job! He'll be joining our Child Support Enforcement Agency as an investigator.

Way to go and welcome to the team, Detective Matt Hudak!

Agency Spotlight:

Battered Women's Shelter of Summit & Medina Counties

Our office works closely with the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit & Medina Counties (BWS). The agency focuses on the intervention and prevention of family violence.

BWS recently relocated its administrative offices to free up space for a larger shelter for victims of family violence. Because the agency will not turn anyone away due to a lack of space, the move was necessary to ensure they could continue to meet the demand.

Currently, BWS operates two shelters in Summit County. Once the renovations are complete, both shelters will be in one building that can accommodate many more clients.

When people think about how they can help an organization like BWS, they usually consider a financial

donation or toiletries.

However, BWS is always in need of toilet paper, paper towels and garbage bags. Kitchen and bathroom items are helpful for clients

who are ready to move into their own home. Another item in demand in summer is children's bathing suits. Children rarely bring their swim suits when they come to a shelter, but they go on field trips and play outside with hoses during the summer.

For more information on how you can help, visit www.scmcbws.org or call (330) 374-0740.



Meet an Employee: Jesse Lemasters



Hire Date: May 2014

Title: Criminal Investigator

Hometown: Louisville, Ohio

Fun Fact About Me: In the winter of 2007, when I first started with the Carrollton Police Department, I responded to a squad call for a female in labor around the corner from the police department. I arrived on scene almost 10 minutes before the ambulance and had to deliver the baby on the living room floor of the home. The paramedics awarded me with a stork decal to stick on my patrol car.

Education: I'm currently pursuing my bachelor's degree at Kent State University.

Background: I have worked for five different police agencies, most recently as a Law Enforcement Ranger for the Summit Metro Parks. I also work as a part-time patrolman for the City of Louisville Police Department.

Job Duties: I conduct pre/post-indictment investigations to assist the prosecutors in discovery of evidence and enhancement of investigations.

My Most Memorable Case: In May 2010, I was on patrol at the Gorge Metro Park with another Ranger when we noticed a man breaking into a parked car. By the time we were able to get to the scene on foot, the offender had reached his own vehicle and began climbing inside. We continuously ordered the suspect to get out at gunpoint, but could not gain compliance. The suspect then put his vehicle in drive in an attempt to flee the scene. He struck me with his vehicle, causing my partner to open fire at him. The suspect, Kenyen Hood, was able to escape with his life, but was apprehended two days later with the assistance of the Violent Fugitive Task Force. With the help of Assistant Prosecutor Jennie Shuki, Hood was convicted of Aggravated Robbery, Robbery and Felonious Assault. He was sentenced to six years in prison.

Why I Wanted to Join the Prosecutor's Office: I wanted to join the Prosecutor's Office to be part of the team that builds strong cases to put criminals in prison. I've always felt a strong draw toward criminal justice and public service, and I'm excited to be a member of this team.

Congratulations to Ben Bergeron!

We recently promoted Criminal Investigator Ben Bergeron to Chief Investigator. Ben has been with our office since June 2012. His fresh ideas have greatly enhanced our investigative efforts. Ben takes every opportunity to further his knowledge of the latest law enforcement techniques, then implements those tools in our office.

At the end of this month, Ben will achieve Master Criminal Investigator certification through the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy. Certification requires 193 hours of advanced investigative training. Once certified, Ben will join an elite group of law enforcement within Ohio.

Congratulations, Ben, on earning your Master Criminal Investigator certification and your new position of Chief Investigator!



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