Promoting Excellence in Investigative Journalism

US OBSERVER
Vindicating the Innocent

www.usobserver.com

Volume 2 • Edition 61

FALSE CHARGES SPOTLIGHT

Trial Postponed Again For Innocent Oregon Coach

Having rejected the DA's "offer" to pay $20,000.00 to make this go away, Dave Samuelson was about to have his day in court, or so he thought!

By US~Observer Staff

Coach Dave Samuelson

Clatsop County, OR – On November 2, 2021, 63-year-old Dave Samuelson of Seaside was well prepared to stand trial for allegedly touching his assistant coach Shannon Wood on the outside of her yoga pants and "annoying her." Clatsop County District Attorney Ron Brown originally charged Samuelson with one count of Sexual Harassment/Abuse but later stacked charges, by adding another 9 counts.

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INJUSTICE SPOTLIGHT

Arizona's Life Care Services / Sagewood Assisted Living "Evicted Elderly 'Life-Long' Patient"

Did They Cause His Premature Death?

By US~Observer Staff

Arizona - Bruce Myers sold his home in Surprise, AZ and took possession of his new residence at Sagewood Assisted Living; that should have been his final residence for the rest of his natural life. As soon as Bruce began showing lapses in cognition, Sagewood allegedly did everything they could to evict him. After two incident-free years at Sagewood, Bruce began having memory issues and was moved to their to dementia memory care unit. On the day he moved from independent living to memory care, he was immediately sent off to ER (the first of three times he was sent to ER in the span of a month while under their care); they reportedly instigated multiple behavioral issues, didn't follow his prescribed medication schedule and further contributed to his poor quality of life. According to one witness, *"he fell twice and was left on the floor, unassisted by Sagewood, and had to wait hours for his son to help him up, while Sagewood watched."*

According to witnesses, Sagewood promised Mr. Myers around-the-clock care, but when Bruce's memory started to wane; they required outsourced independent caregivers to avoid providing the life-care Bruce paid for. Bruce was forced to pay these

Stewart Ingram, Executive Director at Sagewood Assisted Living

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Public Message to DA Ron Brown

By Edward Snook
Editor-In-Chief, US~Observer

Clatsop County, OR - The following allegations were received from a 32-year-old housewife who is currently married to a well-respected public official. We have known her husband for many years and all of us at the US~Observer both like and respect this fine man. We have withheld last names in this article as there is currently no legal case going on, even though there should be and potentially could be in the future.

The purpose of this short article is to expose just one of many complaints we have received at the US~Observer since opening our investigation into Clatsop County, Oregon District Attorney Ron Brown. Brown might not fully know the complete ramifications of his actions, but he should, and he will. Brown is not someone to be respected yet he is certainly someone to fear if you live in Clatsop County. Ron Brown will know exactly who we are writing about.

If for some miracle Ron Brown decides to face his corrupted actions, he will correct as much of the damage as possible, however, I will certainly not lose any sleep waiting for

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Offshore Banking Leads to Lost Wealth and Prison

Michael Quiel and Stephen Kerr can tell you, when you have someone set up your offshore accounts, make absolutely sure the structure is as they say it is, or you can lose everything, including your freedom.

By US~Observer Staff

"I'd like to protect my estate with an offshore account. Is that possible?" The man on the other side of the phone answered the question with such seeming authority, professionalism and intelligence that, if I were anyone else, I would have been taken for a ride. But I knew who I was calling. He's a disgraced tax attorney. He's a man who lied to his clients about the organization of an European investment, gave them fraudulent tax counsel, then made-up testimony to help the U.S. Government falsely convict his clients in order to get off easy for his illegally structured scheme – not to mention retain much of the money his clients had put-up as a legitimate

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An American Hero

Thad Everett Blanchard Sr

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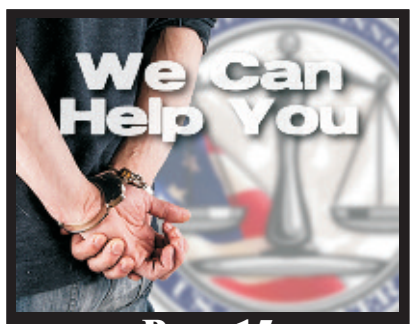

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Continued from page 1 • Trial Postponed Again For Innocent Oregon Coach

Clatsop County Assistant District Attorney (ADA) Paul Charas submitted "new" evidence – a text message – during the pre-trial hearing on October 28, 2021. Charas, who is factually acting as DA Ron Brown's puppet for purposes of prosecuting Dave Samuelson, possessed the evidence long before intentionally handing it over at the last moment. He knew the trial would be postponed for the ninth time because of this calculated move. ADA Charas represented to Samuelson's Attorney, Rich Cohen, that he thought they had already provided the text to Cohen. Charas' deception to Cohen and ultimately the court is easily exposed by simply asking the following question; Why turn over evidence immediately prior to trial if you thought that evidence had already been turned over to the defense? If Charas actually believed the defense had the text there would be no need to make it an issue at the last moment – Clearly, Charas' excuse (deception) is actually very childish and most certainly not believable.

Clatsop ADA Paul Charas sporting a "Thug Life" beanie, which is apropos for one prosecuting an innocent man.
Image: Facebook

Note that Ron Brown was originally prosecuting Dave Samuelson, but according to ADA Charas during the October 28th hearing, DA Ron Brown is now in fear for his family's safety because of what the US~Observer has published. Why in the world would Brown be in fear of the truth? He has had many months to call us and attempt to correct any information we have published but we haven't heard one word from him.

Keep in mind as you read on that every time a trial is set the innocent defendant, Samuelson, must pay for having witnesses served. He must also pay for his Attorney's prep time, etc. etc., and both DA Ron Brown and his puppet ADA Paul Charas know this fact all too well as they have used this ploy on other defendants in an effort to beat them into submission – forcing them to accept plea bargains.

A CLOSE LOOK AT THE LAST MINUTE, SO-CALLED EVIDENCE

The evidence is simply a text from Dave Samuelson to Shannon Wood stating in so many words that the two of them (Samuelson and Wood) needed to get their heads together regarding the Jewell Basketball program and that Wood needs to get over differences between the two. These differences were over Woods' actions or extracurricular activities that Samuelson knew about. According to one witness, Wood was trying to accuse Samuelson of wrongdoing to get the focus off of her getting drunk at the Clatsop County Fair and then having a student with only a drivers permit drive her home with her two minor children allegedly in the car. According to Samuelson, who, according to eyewitnesses, has never done anything inappropriate to Wood, he was telling Wood they needed to get on with sports and that she needed to get her false allegations behind her. Little did Samuelson know that Wood would go to a corrupt prosecutor(s) who would attempt to use Samuelson's sarcastic text statements to build guilt into something from absolutely nothing.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S WITNESS LIST

A pretrial hearing was held on October 21, 2021. Assistant District Attorney Paul Charas informed the court that the state would only be calling four witnesses, Clatsop County Deputy Sheriff Eric Dotson and Sergeant Chance Moore, Shannon Wood, and Ann Samuelson (Dave Samuelson's wife, who under law cannot be compelled to testify for the prosecution). The defense in this case plan on calling approximately 40 witnesses.

"How this case has been allowed to cost the good citizens of Clatsop County their hard-earned tax dollars is beyond me, as I have investigated and written extensively on this case," Edward Snook, editor-in-chief of the US~Observer said shaking his head. He continued, *"My investigation has shown Wood has allegedly made false allegations against other individuals, and that she has clear motives to falsely accuse Samuelson."*

THE HARD FACTS

The continued pursuit of Dave Samuelson by District Attorney Ron Brown, "the most evil man in Clatsop County," is motivated by politics. Ann Samuelson is a former Clatsop County Commissioner who stood against the DA's Office on several issues while she was a commissioner. Keeping a prosecution alive that has no physical evidence and no other corroborating witnesses reeks of political retaliation.

Even still, let's look at the hard facts surrounding Shannon Wood's claims.

According to highly credible sources, during the time that Wood claims Samuelson "touched her butt with yoga pants on and annoyed her," she allegedly took part in the following acts, or arranged for them to occur:

Wood coached little kids' basketball with Dave Samuelson. The Wood and Samuelson families went clam digging together. Wood asked Dave Samuelson to haul her husband's truck to a shop on his trailer. **These things occurred during the timeframe in which Wood claims Samuelson was abusing her.**

The Samuelson's allowed Wood to use their Home Depot credit card to get new flooring for her house with the understanding she would pay it back. Shannon Wood then reportedly continued to use it and didn't pay. The Samuelson's were notified by Home Depot that $1,300.00 was owed and no payment had been made in 3 months. They put a stop to Wood's use of the card and demanded she pay the balance. Wood reportedly paid the debt approximately two weeks before she accused Dave Samuelson of multiple counts of Sexual Harassment/Abuse. **This occurred during the timeframe in which Wood accused Samuelson of abusing her.**

Shannon Wood

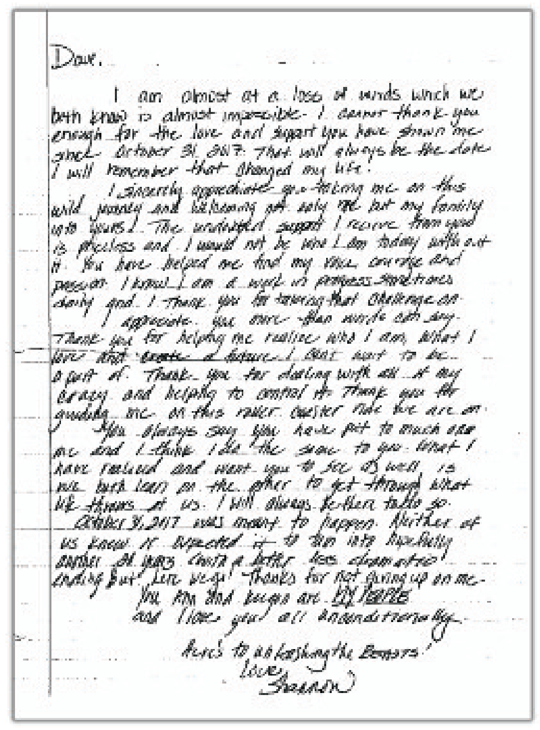
Wood's son and Samuelson's grandson, who he has custody of, were friends. This helped build the relationship between the Wood and Samuelson families. Shannon Wood was "treated like a daughter by me and my wife, Ann," according to Samuelson. Wood and her family would hang out at the Samuelson's home quite often. **This occurred during the timeframe in which Wood accused him of abusing her.**

After two years of coaching little kids' basketball and varsity basketball together, Samuelson was approached by a student athlete's parent with damning news about Shannon Wood. Samuelson was told, "Wood stayed in the same motel room as Brian Meier during an out-of-town school volleyball tournament, and the kids were all talking about it." **This occurred during the timeframe in which Wood accused Samuelson of abusing her.**

On September 24, 2019, just one day after a student's parent told Samuelson about their concern regarding Shannon Wood's possible indiscretion, Samuelson informed Steve Phillips, Jewell's school Superintendent.

Then, on September 27, 2019, just three days later, Shannon Wood or Superintendent Steve Phillips, "retaliated against Dave" and contacted the sheriff's department with allegations that he had sexually harassed her. According to the police report, Wood claimed Dave Samuelson had, "repeatedly grabbed her butt and made lewd comments to her." Wood's criminal report also mentioned that Samuelson was allegedly stalking her, and Wood made the claim he had "attempted to kiss" her around August of 2018 – which is over a full year before she brought the allegations to the police. **And keep in mind, this occurred during the timeframe in which Wood accused Samuelson of abusing her.**

When questioned by Deputy Moore, Samuelson said that his relationship with Shannon Wood was like a father-daughter type. Samuelson claimed Wood had told him she loved him on numerous occasions. To Samuelson, his relationship with Wood was never sexual in nature. She was "Coach" to him, and their relationship was familial. **And again, this occurred during the timeframe in which Wood accused Samuelson of abusing her.**



Dave,

I am almost at a loss of words which we both know is almost impossible. I cannot thank you enough for the love and support you have shown me since October 31, 2017. That will always be the date I will remember that changed my life.

I sincerely appreciate you taking me on this wild journey and welcoming not only me but my family into yours! The undoubted support I receive from you is priceless and I would not be who I am today without it. You have helped me find my voice, courage and passion. I know I am a work in progress sometimes daily and I thank you for taking that challenge on. I appreciate you more than words can say. Thank you for helping me realize who I am, what I love and [illegible] a future I can't wait to be a part of. Thank you for dealing with all of my crazy and helping to control it. Thank you for guiding me on this roller coaster ride we are on. You always say you have put to much [illegible] me and I think I do the same to you. What I have realized and want you to see as well, is we both lean on the other to get through what life throws at us. I will always be there [illegible]. October 31, 2017 was meant to happen. Neither of us knew it [illegible] it to turn into hopefully another 20 years [illegible] a better [illegible] ending but [illegible] thanks for not giving up on me. You, Ann and Megan are MY PEOPLE and I love you all unconditionally.

Here's to [illegible] the Beavers!

Love, Shannon

SHANNON WOOD'S LETTER TO DAVE SAMUELSON COMPLETELY EXPOSES HER

In a letter Wood delivered to Samuelson on February 8, 2019, just seven months prior to her accusing him, Wood told Samuelson she loved him. This letter was written after the date Wood claimed Samuelson "grabbed" her butt and tried to kiss her (in her police report filed later). Shannon Wood's letter stated in part, *"The undoubted support I receive from you is priceless and I would not be who I am today without it. I cannot thank you enough for the love and support you have shown me since October 31, 2017. That will always be the date I will remember that changed my life… I appreciate you more than words can say… I sincerely appreciate you taking me on this wild journey and welcoming not only me but my family into yours… Love Shannon."*

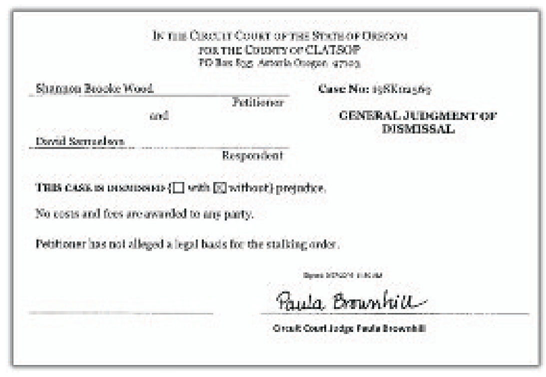
Samuelson said, *"if I committed the crimes Shannon claimed then why would she write such a wonderful letter to me – and why, if I was stalking her, and sexually abusing and harassing her, would she ask me to take care of her child for the night, six weeks prior to her accusations?"*

The truth is she would not have!

One sentence in the letter Wood wrote to Samuelson is quite revealing. Wood wrote, ***"thank you for dealing with all of my crazy and helping me control it."*** What did she mean when she called herself *crazy*? Again, according to the police report, Wood claimed Samuelson was sexually harassing her long before her heart-felt letter where she said Dave Samuelson's involvement in her life had been *"priceless."*

If Samuelson had been committing the alleged crimes that Wood stated, and it really bothered her, why didn't she go to law enforcement before September 26, 2019?

Furthermore, if he had grabbed her butt and was doing what she said, wouldn't there be witnesses? Wouldn't the school staff, basketball players, bus drivers, chaperons, or others at the games have seen him doing the things Wood has accused him of? According to US~Observer sources, not one person has corroborated Wood's "lies about Dave." Let's not forget that a deputy testifying that they investigated a case does not make them a witness to anything having happened – they can only state what they did, what they witnessed and what they were told. In Clatsop County, Oregon, these same deputies can and do intimidate witnesses, they coach witnesses into saying what they want to hear, etc., etc.



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
FOR THE COUNTY OF CLATSOP
PO Box 835 Astoria Oregon 97103

Shannon Brooke Wood, Petitioner
and
David Samuelson, Respondent

Case No: 19SK02569

GENERAL JUDGMENT OF DISMISSAL

THIS CASE is DISMISSED (☐ with ☒ without) prejudice.

No costs and fees are awarded to any party.

Petitioner has not alleged a legal basis for the stalking order.

Paula Brownhill
Circuit Court Judge Paula Brownhill

WOOD'S REJECTED RESTRAINING ORDER

Wood attempted to get a restraining and stalking order against Samuelson. Judge Brownhill obviously was not buying Wood's story and rejected it by dismissing Shannon Wood's attempted order. The order was denied by the judge on September 27, 2019.

We have no doubt that jurors in Clatsop County are intelligent enough to see the overwhelming support, testimony and evidence in favor of Dave Samuelson's innocence. If not, then there is a whole other level of corruption in Clatsop County.

Editor's Note: The US~Observer will be publishing a complete report on Samuelson's trial. Anyone with information of anyone involved in this case are urged to contact the US~Observer at 541-474-7885 or by email to editor@usobserver.com. ★★★

Continued from page 1 • Public Message to DA Ron Brown ...

him to do so.

Let's let the public in on just one of your secrets; your alleged acts of evil destruction Ron...

District Attorney Ron Brown, do you remember a gal named Kelsey? Well, according to this fine young lady, you "ruined her life, both inside and out". Remember Ron? Remember, back in 2010-2011 you were allegedly protecting your confidential informant (snitch) Jeremy? According to Kelsey, you had Jeremy giving you information on the Mongol and Nortenos gangs so he could avoid the criminal charges he was facing in Clatsop County.

Jeremy was Kelsey's boyfriend at the time, remember? She had a young daughter, who was taken into the system, and she was unfortunately pregnant with Jeremy's child.

Kelsey had no idea Jeremy was a criminal when she became his girlfriend. She had no idea he was reportedly facing the three-strike law in CA. And, Ron Brown, she had no idea that she would have her young baby boy allegedly stolen from her as soon as he was born.

She claims that you are totally responsible, not only for stealing her baby but for failing to prosecute Foster Care parents when they allegedly abused her daughter – the daughter she lost. Remember any of this Ron? Remember, you were working with DHS caseworker Karen as well as Kelsey's public defender Mark. According to young Kelsey you and Mark scared the hell out of her and extorted a plea bargain from her.

Remember charging Kelsey with kidnapping Ron, when she was simply following a young child riding a bike because she thought the child was abandoned? Suddenly people jumped her, your police were called, you falsely charged her with a crime like you have so many others and her boyfriend Jeremy had just what he wanted –

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Expert Witness on Police Slams Bad Practices

By US~Observer Staff

When it comes to people successfully standing up to bad police practices, Professor Gregory Gilbertson, the CEO of Gilbertson Investigations, Inc., has proven to be a force to be reckoned with as an expert witness. As a direct result of Gilbertson's investigations and testimony, two problem Washington police agencies have been hit right where it hurts – in the pocketbook for a combined judgment total of $9 Million.

Gregory Gilbertson

Professor Gilbertson has been a tenured criminal justice professor and university lecturer for 25 years. He's also a former Georgia police officer, International Police Advisor (Iraq and Afghanistan), Guardian ad Litem, U.S. Army Infantry Officer, and Distinguished Military Graduate of the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School. After completing his military service, Professor Gilbertson became a police officer in Atlanta and LaGrange, Georgia. In LaGrange he served as a SWAT Team member, senior patrolman, school resource officer, juvenile court investigator, and stakeout squad officer.

As a private investigator, Professor Gilbertson specialized in criminal defense casework for 12 years. In 2014 he began consulting as an Expert Witness in Police Practices. To date he has consulted on over 117 civil rights and criminal cases in 22 states and the District of Columbia. He has testified on numerous occasions in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, the District of Arizona, and in the state courts of Washington, Oregon. Illinois, Kansas, and Connecticut. As of this publishing, Professor Gilbertson has helped attorneys achieve well over ten million dollars ($10,000,000.00) in judgments and settlements for his clients.

Three recent cases that Professor Gilbertson was instrumental in bringing to settlement are out of Pierce and King counties in the State of Washington.

$3.5-MILLION EXCESSIVE FORCE SUIT SETTLEMENT

On September 7, 2021, Pierce County Council approved a $3.5-million settlement in the case of The Estate of Brent Lee Heath vs. Pierce County Sheriff's Office and Deputy Carl Shanks.

This case involved a police pursuit that began as a result of a minor traffic violation and ended when Brent Lee Heath's car was disabled by spike strips. Pierce County Deputy Sheriff Carl Shanks then approached Heath's car on the passenger side. Heath's vehicle was completely disabled and surrounded by at least 5-6 other deputies off the roadway. Heath's passenger had been suffering a seizure at the time of the incident and when the officers approached. From the passenger side window of the car Deputy Shanks inexplicably shot Mr. Heath in the head, just missing the passenger. No other deputies fired. Heath was unarmed at the time Deputy Shanks shot him, and he had not moved from the driver's seat of the vehicle. Mr. Heath lived for one year, completely disabled and unable to speak or care for himself, before he died in his mother's care.

$4-MILLION EXCESSIVE FORCE SUIT SETTLEMENT

Estate of Jesse S. Sarey v. City of Auburn, WA and Officer Jeffrey Nelson, Excessive Force Complaint for Damages and Civil Rights Violations, reached settlement in the sum of $4-million dollars to be paid to Sarey's estate.

Auburn, Washington Police Officer Jeffrey Nelson responded to a disorderly conduct call at a local store. His contact with the alleged perpetrator ended when he shot Jesse Sarey in the torso and then, over 3 seconds later, shot him in the head. Mr. Sarey was unarmed at the time of the incident. Backup officers arrived at the scene within minutes and were able to restore Sarey's pulse, but he later died at a hospital. The video is quite telling and shows why Officer Jeffrey Nelson was charged with 2nd Degree Murder and 1st Degree Assault in King County Superior Court on August 20, 2020.

$1.5-MILLION WRONGFUL DEATH SUIT SETTLEMENT

In the case of The Estate of Che Andre Taylor vs. City of Seattle et al, the government defendants made arrangements to pay Taylor's estate $1.5-million dollars for their part in the wrongful death of Che Andre Taylor.

Taylor was initially approached by two plain clothes police officers on February 21, 2016 on the suspicion of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Taylor was seen on video as being compliant with multiple law enforcement orders but multiple, simultaneous, contradictory commands were shouted at him as Seattle Police Officers Scott M. Miller and Michael B. Spaulding approached him with their weapons raised and pointed at him. On the video you can clearly hear commands of "Show me your hands, hands up…" and "Get on the ground, Get on the ground…" It was impossible for anyone to perfectly comply. Because the officers say they saw him reaching for a weapon, they shot Taylor to death with point-blank blasts. Taylor did not have a weapon on his person. It is impossible to know if Taylor thought the officers were police or just heavily armed thugs trying to rob him. They never stated they were police and their clothes did not identify them as such.

ACCOLADES FOR GILBERTSON FROM A PRESIDING JUDGE

In a recent U.S. District Court trial in the Western District of Washington, Moises E. Ponce Alvarez v. King County Sheriff's Office, the presiding judge entered the following opinion regarding Defendant's motion to exclude Professor Gilbertson's testimony: "Mr. Gilbertson's qualifications demonstrate extensive experience in policing. His experience includes work as a Georgia police officer, SWAT team officer, superior court investigator, school resource officer, stakeout squad officer, and senior patrolman. After his law enforcement career, Mr. Gilbertson became a college professor and private investigator. He has taught courses in criminal justice and conducted pretrial investigations for attorneys in criminal cases. The Court finds his testimony can be expected to have a reliable basis in knowledge and experience."

One thing is certain, if your case involves corrupt or incompetent policing, Professor Gilbertson will flush it out and professionally relay his findings to the court and jury. He makes for an exemplary expert witness. While Gilbertson Investigations, Inc. is based in Olympia, Washington, Gilbertson is available for casework nationwide. ★

Continued from page 2 • Public Message to DA Ron Brown ...

the baby boy. Remember forcing Kelsey to plead to a sex abuse charge when the case had absolutely nothing to do with sex or abuse. You charged the sex abuse so she would be required to register as a sex offender for many years – keeping her under your control. In fact, the only thing this case had anything to do with is pure, abusive corruption by a corrupt as hell District Attorney named Ron Brown!

God only knows how Kelsey was able to survive this traumatic experience, but she has, and she is beginning to thrive with the help of her exceptional husband.

Aren't you proud of yourself Ron Brown? Honestly Ron, you should be charged with felony crimes. If we had an Oregon Attorney General who was interested in justice, you would be charged! But that isn't the case, so welcome to our court - the court of public opinion!

The fine people of Clatsop County need to know that Ron Brown's assistant Paul Charas recently represented to the court that Brown will not be personally prosecuting the Dave Samuelson case *(also reported on in this edition, on page 1)* anymore, as he is "afraid for his family's safety" because of what the US~Observer has published. This is pure unadulterated BS Ron Brown. Our publication has never threatened you or your family with harm, nor have we called on our readership to do so.

Face it, the only fear you have is for your phony, unwarranted reputation because the public is now beginning to find out about the extreme and traumatic damage you have caused so many people and the unchallenged power you believe your office grants you. It would be a great pleasure to take your victims into court and easily prove this statement.

In any event, we'll be here reporting until the people show you the door.

Editor's Note: Don't miss our next edition wherein we will publish a short article about another victim of DA Ron Brown, Thomas Kelly.

Kelly claims he was literally forced to take a plea bargain by Brown, just like the many others who have called us about Brown's wrongdoings.

Anyone with information on DA Ron Brown, his puppet ADA Paul Charas or any others mentioned in this article are urged to contact the US~Observer at 541-474-7885 or by email to editor@usobserver.com.

★★★

Oregon Attorney Lies to the BBB

By Edward Snook
Editor-In-Chief, US~Observer

Clackamas County, OR – On September 14, 2021, Oregon Attorney Brian Schmonsees filed a false and malicious complaint with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) against the US~Observer. Schmonsees' complaint was so riddled with falsehoods that he must have typed it while in a state of rage. His rage obviously occurred after he read an article titled, "Guardianship Nightmare Turned Criminal."

In that article we explain how Jack Dunn and Rose Henley have been abused by the Clackamas County, Oregon legal system for nearly four long years. Dunn and Henley were literally forced to seek out the assistance of the US~Observer when they realized that the attorneys who had been appointed as public defenders to represent them and those they hired were not doing an adequate job. According to Henley, *"Our attorneys have been basically leading us to slaughter, to prison on false charges, when all they had to accomplish to prove our innocence was complete a very simple forensic accounting. An accounting would show that we were owed money as opposed to stealing it like the Prosecutor contends."*

Schmonsees was Henley's last attorney, and he was court-appointed, as she is now indigent. Schmonsees was appointed on 01/15/19 and he withdrew on 09/13/21, soon after reading our article which quoted him several times. Schmonsees' quotes were taken directly from email correspondence between he and Henley.

SCHMONSEES COMPLAINT TO BBB

"US Observer is a purported news website that publishes false and defaming articles about local attorneys in Oregon City, Oregon. This business has filed false and misleading comments about me that constitute the torts of false light and defamation. I am drafting retraction demands. This business should not have an A+ designation as they are not a legitimate media company."

US~OBSERVER'S SEPTEMBER 21, 2021 RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT

"The complainant is not a customer of mine nor has he ever been a customer.

The complainant is in fact an attorney who is disgruntled that I was able to obtain documents allegedly showing that he was not being straightforward with his client who is on trial in Clackamas County, Oregon.

I have attached a copy of the article that we published. Please note that the article is full of quotes taken directly from this disgruntled person's correspondence with his client.

Again, the complainant is not a customer of mine."

BBB AFFIRMS THE US~OBSERVER'S A+ RATING

The BBB quickly ruled, dismissing Schmonsees' vindictive complaint. Their note was short and sweet:

"Complaint Closed Invalid."

It is obvious why we have an A+ rating. Unlike others (Schmonsees) who file false complaints saying they are a customer, when in fact they are not, we take our reporting seriously.

Continued on page 14

In The News

Felony Charges Dropped For Man Who Underpaid 43¢ for Mountain Dew

By Christine Vendel

Joseph Sobolewski

(Pennlive) - The Perry County district attorney's office dismissed a felony charge that Pennsylvania State Police had filed against a homeless man after he paid $2 for a Mountain Dew drink that cost $2.29.

Joseph Sobolewski maintained all along that his arrest for retail theft after visiting the Exxon at 3298 Susquehanna Trail in Duncannon was a misunderstanding. He said he saw a sign for 20-ounce Mountain Dew bottles: 2 for $3.

He grabbed a bottle, slapped $2 on the counter and walked out.

What he didn't know was a single bottle was $2.29, not $1.50. So he had shorted the store 29 cents plus tax, or 43 cents total.

The store called police, who tracked him down. Pennsylvania State police Trooper Johnathan Sullivan charged him with a felony, and a Magisterial District Judge Jackie Leister locked him up for seven days on $50,000 cash-only bond. He was facing up to seven years behind bars because of Pennsylvania's "three-strikes" law that mandates a third theft charge must be a felony regardless of the amount.

The original story last month of Sobolewski's plight went viral, with dozens of other publications across the country and into Canada writing about it.

Then, earlier this month, prosecutors quietly dropped the theft charge and reduced another charge, driving while suspended, from a misdemeanor to a summary offense, which is the same level as a traffic ticket.

His bond remains at $50,000, unsecured, according to the online portal. It's unclear if a bond condition set by Leister that Sobolewski stay out of all retail establishments remains in place.

His next court date was set for Nov. 18.

District Attorney Andrew Bender, who is running for Perry County Common Pleas judge in next month's election, declined to answer repeated calls and message from PennLive about this case.

Sobolewski's public defender also did not return messages.

Sobolewski received a letter from his attorney Monday that notified him the theft charge had been dropped and reminded him of his court date for the driving offense.

"That's great news," Sobolewski told PennLive about the felony being dismissed. "I feel I was treated unequally because I had a record."

Sobolewski has two prior theft convictions dating back to 2011. He also has other convictions, for DUI and marijuana possession, which were misdemeanors, but no felony convictions.

While Sobolewski is glad that the felony charge was dismissed, he said he remains angry about spending seven days locked up for a "crime" that turned out not be a crime.

A Perry County resident who read about his plight in PennLive last month was disturbed by the situation and started an online fundraiser to help Sobolewski. Originally, the fundraiser was intended to help with a legal defense to fight the felony, but Sobolewski still faces other legal issues, including outstanding court costs and fees.

When Lori Kelley learned of his arrest for 43 cents, she thought it was ridiculous.

"I've worked in retail and have been short-changed many times," she said. "But not once did I call police. I think this was a misunderstanding, and definitely not worth jamming up the court system for something like this."

Kelley felt the system was kicking Sobolewski when he was already down, so she launched the fundraiser.

"His tent has holes in it," she said. "A hand-up and you do your best. By all accounts, he is in need." ★★★

Female Sniper Grad is an Army First
Military is not yet identifying the Montana soldier

(NEWSER) – A Montana soldier is the first woman to graduate from the US Army's sniper course, the Montana National Guard announced. "We are extremely proud of this soldier's achievement and recognize that this is a milestone for not only Montana, but the entire National Guard and Army," said Maj. Gen. J. Peter Hronek, per the AP. The military is not identifying her at this time. The soldier enlisted in the Montana Army National Guard in December 2020 and underwent a 22-week training course at Fort Benning in Georgia that combines Army basic training with advanced individual training in infantry skills.

Her training staff recommended she be given the opportunity to attend the sniper course after she qualified as an expert shooter. She began the US Army sniper course in September and graduated on

Capt. John Farmer/1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs

Nov. 5. "We're all incredibly proud of her," says Capt. Joshua O'Neill, her company commander. "There wasn't a doubt in our minds that she would succeed." The course trains soldiers to deliver long-range precision fire and to collect battlefield information. Now that her sniper training is completed, she will rejoin her Montana National Guard unit. Though she is the first to complete the Army's intensive course, several women have previously completed the shorter training of the Air Force, notes Military.com. ★★★

Two Law Enforcement Officers Indicted in Death of Man Shot 76 Times

By US~Observer Staff

Eric Heinze and Kristopher Hutchens

East Point, GA — On October 26, 2021, a grand jury returned an eight-count indictment against two law enforcement officers in connection with the 2016 killing of a man shot 76 times during an attempted arrest in the Atlanta area.

According to court documents, Eric Heinze, an assistant chief inspector with the U.S. Marshal's Southeast Regional Fugitive Task Force, and Kristopher Hutchens, a Clayton County police officer working with the task force, were formally charged with felony murder, aggravated assault, burglary, making false statements and violation of oath by a public officer. Heinze and Hutchens were booked and released on Nov. 3 according to the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. A 10% surety or property bond for $50,000 was granted by the court.

A medical examiner's report said Jamarion Robinson, 26, was shot 76 times by police on Aug. 5, 2016, when officers tried to enter his apartment. Law enforcement believed Robinson was the man responsible for pointing a gun at Atlanta officers and fleeing, according to authorities.

Attorney Gerald Griggs, who is close with Robinson's family, said the family celebrated the decision, which they've been waiting on for five years.

According to news reports, a U.S. Marshals Service spokesman has said officers were attempting to serve warrants on Robinson issued by Atlanta police and Gwinnett County police in the Atlanta suburbs. A private detective hired by Robinson's mother, Monteria Robinson, uncovered evidence of gunshots fired straight into the ground where her son's body was lying. Robinson had been a college football player at Clark Atlanta University and Tuskegee University, and had no criminal convictions.

There is no body-camera video of the shooting because at the time of this shooting, federal policies did not allow U.S. Marshals or local police officers assisting them to wear body cameras. Cell phone video from outside the apartment where the shooting took place captured nearly three minutes of gunfire.

Robinson's family said their son, who suffered from mental illness, was at his girlfriend's house when 16 officers broke down the door. "Over 90 rounds were fired at my son, flash-bang grenades were thrown at him, landed on him burning him. Somebody walked up the stairs, stood over him, and shot down into his body two more times. After that he was handcuffed and drug down a flight of stairs," Monteria Robinson said at a news conference in June 2020.

It was reported that former Fulton County district attorney, Paul Howard, said the investigation into the case was blocked by the officers' refusal to cooperate and the absence of body camera footage. But when Howard lost his position to Fani Willis, the new district attorney promised swifter action. ★★★

Prosecutor Pleads Guilty Before Jury Can Finish Deliberations

(NEWSER) – As a jury was deliberating over his fate, a Georgia district attorney on Monday pleaded guilty to several charges stemming from improper acts while in office and agreed to resign. Mark Jones had already been suspended as Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit district attorney after the state attorney general's office obtained the indictment on Sept. 7. It accused him of trying to influence a police officer's testimony, offering bribes to prosecutors in his office, and trying to influence and prevent the testimony of a crime victim, the AP reports. Jones took office in January, overseeing the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, which serves Muscogee, Harris, Chattahoochee, Marion, Talbot, and Taylor counties in west Georgia.

Ex-Prosecutor Mark Jones

After deliberating briefly Thursday and then all day Friday, jurors had indicated Friday afternoon that they were unanimous on three of the nine charges, and the judge instructed them to keep working on the others, according to local news outlets. After about an hour of deliberations Monday, jurors said they had reached a consensus of guilty on five charges, but Jones had decided to agree to a plea deal, the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer reports. He pleaded guilty to four counts in the indictment in exchange for a sentence of five years—one year to be served in prison and the remainder on probation—and a $1,000 fine, Attorney General Chris Carr said in a news release.

Jones also agreed to resign, submitting a resignation letter to Gov. Brian Kemp. "By abusing his power and abdicating his responsibility as district attorney, Mark Jones did a disservice to those he was elected to protect and put our very justice system at risk," Carr said in the release. "This outcome is a victory for integrity in prosecutions and the rule of law." Jones pleaded guilty to one count of influencing witnesses for telling a police officer to testify a certain way. He also pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted violation of oath by a public officer for offering two prosecutors in his office $1,000 each in exchange for following instructions he gave them. And he pleaded guilty to one count of violation of oath by a public officer for not helping a crime victim's nephew understand the court system and his rights.

US~Observer Editor's Note: This is a travesty of justice; a prime example of prosecutorial privilege. You can take it to the bank that if you or I tried to plea while the jury is deliberating (and already finding guilt), we'd get very little if no reduction in our charges and sentence. The court should be ashamed.

★★★

Americans Are The Most "Miserable" In Decades

(ZeroHedge) - In his latest economic daily, Bank of America's (BofA) chief economist Ethan Harris eyes the recent article from the New York Times which summarized the foul mood Americans are in as follows "Americans Are Flush With Cash and Jobs. They Also Think the Economy Is Awful," and lays out his view as to why this is happening. In a nutshell:

Ethan Harris

• The growth outlook is very strong, but this is offset by the first serious bout of inflation in decades.

• The "misery index", a simple sum of the unemployment rate and consumer price inflation, has moved sharply higher.

• This "misery" is expected to fall in the months ahead as easing supply constraints lower both unemployment and inflation.

First, a quick primer: in the late-1960s, Arthur Okun created a simple statistic to capture the cost of stagflation. His "misery index" simply added the unemployment rate to headline inflation. Over time the index dropped off the radar screen, but in the past year it has staged a dramatic comeback.

Putting the index in context, after today's record PPI print tomorrow consensus expects year-over-year CPI inflation to rise from 5.4% to 5.9% for October, more than offsetting the drop in the unemployment rate, and boosting the misery index to 10.5%. That, according to Harris, is the highest in recent decades, outside of a couple years around the Great Financial Crisis, and the 1990 recession and oil price spike.

Of course, some positive spin is mandatory here, and the BofA chief economist writes that "the good news is that a big chunk of this is the temporary impact of supply constraints. Worker shortages and capacity issues have both slowed the drop in the unemployment rate and caused many prices to spike higher." Furthermore, with the Delta wave receding, BofA expects the labor market to pick up speed even as headline inflation cools. It's why the bank expects the Misery Index to drop to 6.3%, with a 3.5% unemployment rate and 2.8% inflation.

That said, such an optimistic forecast is hardly encouraging to those Americans who are suffering from runaway inflation now.

It's also why besides the obvious social implications, this index is important to both the economic and political outlook. On the economic front, high inflation acts as "tax" on real spending power, although this is currently offset by massive cash balances (which benefit mostly the top 10%) and a recovering labor market.

On the political front, BofA notes that a standard model of elections includes three variables: high inflation and weak growth in the election year hurts the party in control of the White House, and there is a tendency for the incumbent party to do poorly in the midterms regardless of the economy.

As BofA concludes, if these models are correct, then Democrats may be in better shape by next fall when the misery index is expected to dip, although as Harris admits, "split government is probably still the most likely outcome."

★★★

Ohio judge suspended for ordering court spectator to take drug test

By Chelsea Simeon

(WKBN) Fostoria, OH – A court spectator's refusal to take a drug test led to the suspension of an Ohio judge.

The Ohio Supreme Court announced that Tiffin-Fostoria Municipal Court Judge Mark Repp would be suspended for one year without pay as a result of placing the woman in contempt of court for her refusal.

In its unanimous opinion, the Supreme Court ruled that Repp violated four rules governing the professional conduct of Ohio judges and lawyers, including failure to perform all his judicial duties fairly and impartially.

Judge Repp was elected to the Tiffin Municipal Court in 2002. In 2013, Tiffin and Fostoria combined into one municipal court, and Repp has been the sole judge of that court since its inception. The court also operates a drug-court program called Participating in Victory of Transition (PIVOT).

In March 2020, a man was arrested for violating the terms of his probation for failing to appear at PIVOT. He was to appear in Judge Repp's court via video from the Seneca County Jail, where he was held.

The man's girlfriend went to Repp's courtroom to observe the arraignment and hearing.

While other cases were proceeding, Repp addressed the woman on several occasions, suggesting she might be using drugs. Court video showed the woman sitting quietly in the back of the courtroom, bringing no attention to herself.

Judge Mark Repp

According to the Supreme Court, the woman did not have a case before Judge Repp, was not on probation and had never been charged with or convicted of a drug-related case. However, Repp had read the police report regarding the man's case and noticed his girlfriend was in the car with him when he was arrested.

Judge Repp paused hearing other cases and announced to the court that he thought the woman was under the influence. He stated, "I want her drug tested."

The bailiff directed the woman to the probation department, and she requested a lawyer when she was told by a probation officer that she had to get a drug test.

The officer told her she was not eligible for a court-appointed lawyer because she had not been charged with a crime.

When she refused to take the test, she was ordered back to Judge Repp's courtroom.

When the woman returned to the courtroom, she told the judge she refused to take the test because she did not think she had done anything to be in trouble. Judge Repp stated, "Well, you come into my courtroom, I think you're high, you're in trouble."

The woman responded, "OK, I'm not, though."

When she again refused to be drug tested, Judge Repp found her in contempt of court and told her that she was sentenced to 10 days in jail and that they could "talk about this again" if she took a drug test.

The Court's opinion stated that the woman "experienced several indignities" while in custody. She was required to take a pregnancy test, and then a female officer conducted a full-body scan that allegedly detected anomalies that the officer believed could have been contraband in the woman's body. A male officer then viewed the nude scans of the woman. She was handcuffed and transferred to Tiffin Mercy Hospital for a second pregnancy test and body scan.

The hospital's scan found no contraband, and she was returned to jail.

The Court ruled that Repp's actions were an abuse of judicial power.

"We agree with the board's assessment and concluded a one-year suspension with no stay will best protect the public and send a strong message to the judiciary that this type of judicial misconduct will not be tolerated," the Court stated.

Judge Repp also was required to pay the cost of the disciplinary proceedings.

★★★

Changes announced following two different corruption investigations within the Detroit Police Department

By Sarah Cwiek and Eli Newman

Photo: Lester Graham / Michigan Radio

(MichiganRadio.org) - One corruption investigation into the Detroit Police Department is wrapping up, while another is just getting started. DPD announced Tuesday, November 9, 2021, it is ending an internal investigation into corruption within its narcotics unit.

Twelve officers left the department after they were accused of misconduct as part of "Operation Clean Sweep." Allegations include overtime fraud, falsified search warrants, and perjury.

DPD's director of professional standards Christopher Graveline led the investigation.

"One officer, we calculate, approximately $16,000 worth of fraud based on court appearances," he said.

Graveline says inadequate supervision contributed to the group's ability to commit fraud and the department is changing policies as a result.

"The practice of releasing or flipping felony drug offenders has ceased at the Major Violators unit," Graveline said. "While working overtime now, Major Violators members must do a body worn camera introduction, state their purposes and also on and off duty times."


Chief James White

DPD Chief James White says the department is addressing those failings.

"We're confident that we've rooted out the problems and that we can move forward."

Graveline says supervisors will be present for future narcotics raids. He says eight officers could face charges.

TOWING FRAUD

White also laid out plans to revamp the city's dysfunctional towing system Tuesday, after an FBI investigation revealed widespread corruption in Detroit towing.

A former police officer is charged with bribery for taking kickbacks from towers. And a former Detroit City Council member pleaded guilty to taking bribes from towers.

White says one major change will be that towers will get contracts through a competitive bidding process. That will be handled outside the police department.

The department will also get a software program to ensure jobs are distributed neutrally and equally, and can track every tow.

There are also plans to launch an investigative unit to keep watch over the whole system, and build an app that lets customers request tows with clear pricing information up front.

★★★

Queens DA Melinda Katz Moves to Expunge 60 Convictions Linked to Corrupt NYPD Officers

By George Joseph


DA Melinda Katz

(Gothamist) - At a virtual hearing on Monday, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz successfully petitioned a judge to expunge 60 convictions linked to three NYPD officers who were found to have committed crimes and fabricated evidence in other cases in years past.

"We cannot stand behind a criminal conviction where the essential law enforcement witness has been convicted of crimes which irreparably impair their credibility," said District Attorney Melinda Katz in a statement. *"Vacating and dismissing these cases is both constitutionally required and necessary to ensure public confidence in our justice system."*

The expungements are the result of a campaign by the Legal Aid Society, the Exoneration Project, and other organizations focused on overturning wrongful convictions, which asked prosecutors across the city in May to investigate cases involving 22 NYPD officers who were convicted of crimes at some point in their careers.

In response to that request, Katz, who formed a conviction integrity unit when she took office as district attorney last year, launched a review and found that 10 of the 22 flagged officers had contributed to convictions in Queens. The 60 dismissals announced on Monday stemmed from an initial review of three of those officers' arrest records.

Thirty-four of those cases were linked to Detective Kevin Desormeau, who was convicted in 2018 for lying about an alleged cocaine sale in Jamaica, Queens.

Another 20 were tossed because they hinged on the work of Detective Sasha Cordoba, who pleaded guilty in 2018 after prosecutors found she made repeated false statements in a gun possession case in Washington Heights in Manhattan.

The other six convictions stemmed from the work of former NYPD Detective Oscar Sandino, who was charged in 2010 and pled guilty to sexual assault and other sexual misconduct charges involving arrestees.

Elizabeth Felber, a supervising attorney at the Legal Aid Society's wrongful convictions unit, thanked Katz, who is the first District Attorney in the city to seek to overturn convictions in response to the mass exoneration campaign Felber's organization helped spearhead.

Felber also directly addressed the 60 people who had their convictions purged, some of whom she said served prison sentences, lost jobs, and had licenses suspended as a result.

"We hope you will pursue all available legal remedies," Felber said. *"While it may not undo the harm caused to you. It will be a measure of justice to make up for the original injustice of your arrest and conviction."*

In court, Katz promised that these expungements were just the beginning as her office continues to probe the work of the other officers tied to convictions in Queens. ★★★

Police officer jumps into traffic to save a man

By Jenna Kurzyna and Blair Barnes


Officer Emmons

(11Alive) Greensboro, NC - On Oct. 20, 2021, officers responded to a call of a man sitting on the guard rail on highway I-40 ... around 9:10 a.m.

Officer Emmons not only jumped on the call, but he jumped into action. Emmons responded to what he knew was a person suffering from mental distress.

"I just happened to be coming in through the area, so I got up on the highway ... and I saw somebody walking that matched the description," said officer Emmons.

With over 47 million adults suffering from mental illness in America, according to Mental Health America, Emmons had to act fast.

He relied on previous training to prepare himself for what he was up against.

"In this situation, you never know what's going to happen so you're relying back on the training ... to try and talk with somebody to get on their level and hopefully get them to build a rapport with them and get their trust and get them to you and focus on you and better assist them," said Emmons.

As the man threatened to take his life by walking into oncoming traffic, Emmons jumped closer towards him, so he could get him to safety.

Emmons said, *"Once we were able to get him away from the road ... Once he realized we weren't there to hurt him and that we were actually there to help him, he calmed down a bit. Then he was transported to a local hospital to get treatment. We went along with him to make sure he was going to get the help he needed."*

US~Observer Editor's Note: Emmons is to be commended for putting himself at risk. ★★★

THE EXONERATED

Woman Wrongfully Convicted in Death of Baby Looking Forward to Life Outside of Prison

By Brandon Bounds, Jerry Revish

Columbus, OH - After a nearly two-decade battle to prove her innocence, a Columbus woman is no longer a prison inmate.

Kim Hoover-Moore couldn't believe the warden assistant's words: "You're going home. Now."

She told herself, "this can't be happening."

"Because it had been so long and we had so many setbacks and so many things that didn't go our way," she said.

A 19-year nightmare of court battles and parole rejections had suddenly come to an end.

Kim Hoover-Moore

Hoover-Moore was wrongfully convicted in the 2002 death of 9-month-old Samaisha Benson who was in her care as a babysitter.

The infant died from what's called "shaken baby syndrome," where a child is shaken so violently it causes bleeding in the brain.

An autopsy revealed a skull fracture in addition to the brain bleed, but it took the Ohio Public Defender's Office presenting new scientific evidence that the injuries suffered by the baby were weeks or even months old.

"The medical evidence actually doesn't point to Kim at all, and it shows the opposite," said Joanna Sanchez from the Ohio Public Defender's Office. "In fact, it shows Samaisha wasn't injured in Kim's care."

To this day, no one knows for sure who hurt Samaisha Benson. But, earlier this month, a Franklin County judge vacated Hoover-Moore's conviction and ordered her release.

Jerry Revish first sat down with Hoover-Moore at the Ohio Reformatory for Women, located in Marysville, in 2011. From that day to now, there is no doubt in his mind that she didn't kill little Samaisha Benson.

He sat down with her again now that Hoover-Moore is out of prison.

Jerry: So what do you want to do?

Hoover-Moore: I don't know. I'm still trying to get my bearings, still trying to figure out things out.

Hoover-Moore is grateful to be staying with family for now. She has some health issues that need attention as well. That includes cataract surgery and the need for a cardiologist following the heart attack she suffered in prison earlier this year.

"I don't like to say this, but I was under prolonged stress for a long time," she said. "I kept wanting to prove my innocence and when you have something like this hanging over you for a long period of time, it does bring stress."

But that's all behind her now. Freedom is good for reducing stress, but so would some compensation for the years of life Kim has lost.

Her lawyers say down the road, she may file a civil suit against the state for wrongful imprisonment. A condition that Sanchez says an untold number of inmates find themselves in today.

"It's a human system," Sanchez said. "Our criminal justice system is made up of humans doing human things. Human-made mistakes. Errors happen. Science progresses. I have no doubt with the large scale of people we have incarcerated in Ohio and across country, that there are any people still in prison who are innocent."

At age 57, Hoover-Moore plans on making up for lost time. She's earned an associate degree from Ashland University.

She has thoughts of eventually opening up a dog care business. ★★★

After 45 Years in Prison, Cleveland Man Who'd Maintained Innocence in 1974 Murder of His Wife Found Not Guilty in New Trial

By Vince Grzegorek

(Cleveland Scene) - Isaiah Andrews, an 83-year-old Cleveland man who maintained his innocence for 45 years in prison for the 1974 murder of his wife, was found not guilty October 27, 2021 in a new trial that was ordered after his lawyers with the Ohio Innocence Project found police files pointing to another suspect that were never turned over to Andrews' original trial team.

The jury spent just over an hour deliberating before returning with a unanimous verdict of not guilty.

Because just about everyone involved in the original proceedings have passed away, the trial this week mainly featured the reading of transcripts from 1974.

"For over four decades Isaiah Andrews has fought for justice for his wife and for his freedom," Marcus Sidoti, one of the attorneys, said in a statement. "Today the jury got it right. He is finally vindicated. Isaiah will never get these decades of his life back, but he can now live the remainder of his life a free man."

Andrews had faced a long path to get to this day.

His lawyers in 2018 sought a court order to test samples collected from the body of Regina Andrews — fingernail scrapings and vaginal swabs — with DNA technology not available at the time of the trial. Andrews was found near Forest Hill Park wrapped in bedsheets, brutally stabbed, with her nightgown pushed up around her waist, indicating a sexual assault. Isiah Andrews had told police he'd been out all day on Sept. 18, 1974, running errands and selling clothes and returned to the hotel room just east of downtown he shared with his wife to find her missing.

Isaiah Andrews

In communication with the Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office in the aftermath, the Ohio Innocence Project discovered the office's file on the case included Cleveland police reports and narratives pointing toward a separate suspect named Willie Watts, who had been in the area where Andrews' body was found wrapped in hotel bed linens in Forest Hills Park and who had been in Howard Johnson hotel the night before in a room that was missing its linens the next day. When police investigated him initially at the time, he had an alibi for when police believed the murder happened. But when the coroner adjusted the estimated time of death, they failed to circle back to Watts.

This was never disclosed to Andrews' lawyers at the time, which is why an appelate court ordered a new trial.

Watts, Andrews' lawyers documented in filings, went on to accumulate a criminal record littered with violence against women.

No physical evidence tied Andrews to the crime and he was convicted on the basis of shaky eyewitness testimony from a maid and short-term tenant of the Colonial House Motel on Euclid Ave. near East 30th, where the Andrews had been staying after getting married three weeks earlier. He told police he had been out all day on Sept. 18, 1974.

In the courtroom yesterday, Andrews told reporters "I've become free."

"This was the right result today, but I don't know if he'll ever get actual justice," Brian Howe of the Ohio Innocence Project told Cleveland.com. "He should have never been convicted in the first place and he certainly never should have been retried."

Andrews posed for pictures with fellow exonerees Ru-El Sailor, Charles Jackson and Laurise Glover, who served 15, 27.5, and 20 years respectively, in prison after being wrongfully convicted. All together, the four have spent more than a century behind bars while being innocent.

★★★

Prosecutors Drop Murder Charges As Maryland Man is Exonerated After Nearly 17 Years in Prison

By Chris Boyette

(CNN) - David Morris has spent almost 17 years in prison for a murder that he didn't commit.

On Wednesday, a judge threw out his conviction following a review of evidence that determined Morris was wrongfully charged and found guilty in 2005, according to the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City.

Baltimore Circuit Judge Charles Peters granted prosecutors' request to throw out Morris' old conviction after the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project (MAIP) brought the case to the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU). The unit began a re-investigation in 2018, ultimately finding Morris should not have been convicted, according to the state's attorney's office.

"This case exemplifies the deeply damaging nature of the historical failures of the criminal justice system and our duty as prosecutors to address the wrongs of the past," said State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby. "On behalf of the state, let me extend my sincerest apologies to Mr. Morris and his family for the unspeakable trauma inflicted upon him as a result of this wrongful conviction."

Morris, 18 years-old at the time, had been identified on the scene of the 2004 murder of Mustafa Carter and arrested by a police officer, who was one of the key witnesses, according to State's Attorney for Baltimore City director of communications Zy Richardson.

Morris was convicted in 2005 and was sentenced to life suspended all but fifty years, according to the state's attorney's office.

The CIU investigation concluded that an additional suspect other than Morris had been identified and investigated before Morris' trial, but this was not disclosed to his defense attorneys, nor was the fact that the arresting officer had a previous misconduct finding, according to the state's attorney's office.

"That police officer was much later convicted of various crimes relating to fraud and placed on our 'Do Not Call' list, a list that we published last week, where we believe the officer is no longer credible to call as a witness in any case," Richardson said.

In addition, the CIU investigation found that DNA on the victim's pants did not match Morris, and statements of the only identifying witness were contradictory.

The investigation found "crime scene analysis, additional witnesses and attendant circumstances strongly suggests Mr. Morris was not involved when considered under a totality of circumstances," the state's attorney's office said.

Morris is the 11th person the CIU has exonerated for offenses that they did not commit, according to the state's attorney's office. In 2019, three Baltimore men who each spent 36 years in prison were released after authorities said they were falsely convicted of a 1983 murder.

"To the family of Mr. Carter, we will continue to use everything in our arsenal to find your son's killers. Our support networks stand ready to help everyone involved through their long and necessary journey of healing," Mosby said.

"We're extremely gratified that the CIU's investigation confirmed the results of the University of Baltimore Innocence Project Clinic (UBIPC)/MAIP investigation into Mr. Morris's case," said Michele Nethercott, Of Counsel at MAIP and former director of UBIPC.

"The evidence at his trial was incredibly weak, and our post-conviction investigation unearthed even more evidence supporting his longstanding claim of innocence. We're grateful to Mr. Carter's family for assisting in the investigation despite the pain it must have caused, and we want to thank all former staff, students, and colleagues for their hard work. I look forward to seeing Mr. Morris as a free man later today," Nethercott said.

★★★

Man Wrongfully Imprisoned for 26 Years for Murder is Pardoned

Dontae Sharpe

(BBC) Raleigh, NC – Dontae Sharpe had fought to prove his innocence since his 1994 arrest. He was released from prison in August 2019.

"My family's name has been cleared," he told reporters on Friday. "It's a burden off of my shoulders and my family's shoulders."

The news follows a BBC documentary on the miscarriage of justice in his case.

Mr Sharpe's story highlighted how it can take years to get a full pardon even after a person is exonerated and wins their freedom.

Governor Roy Cooper said in a statement announcing the pardon that he had carefully reviewed the case, and those who have been wrongly convicted like Mr Sharpe "deserve to have that injustice fully and publicly acknowledged".

With the full pardon, Mr Sharpe will be able to file a request for compensation from the state.

"My freedom still ain't complete as long as there are people wrongfully in prison, wrongfully convicted, and people waiting on pardons," Mr Sharpe added.

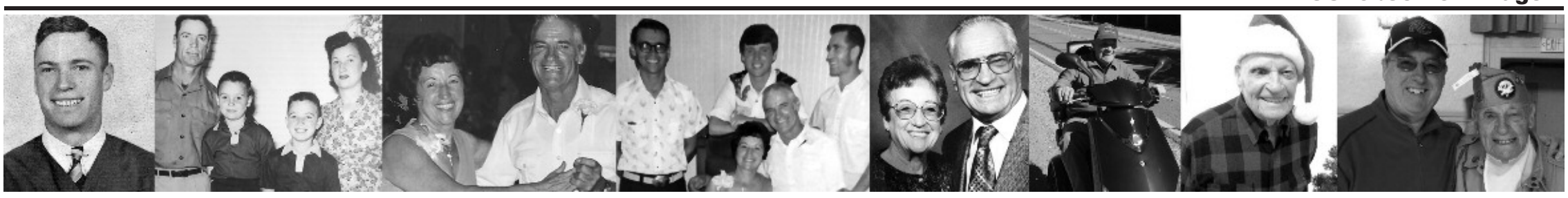
"I've been in there and know there are guys that are innocent and know that our system is corrupt and needs to be changed."

Mr Sharpe is a fellow with Forward Justice, where he advocates for criminal justice reform in North Carolina.

He was convicted on a first-degree murder charge over the killing of George Radcliffe. Months after the trial, a teenage eyewitness for the state recanted her testimony.

It still took *over two decades* for Mr Sharpe to be exonerated and released from prison.

US~Observer Editor's Note: Two decades... How about we keep the innocent from ever going to prison to begin with. That is our aim with the US~Observer. ★★★



The Life of Thad Blanchard

Thad Blanchard Sr. was my Great Uncle. His sparkle and zeal for life was as spirited as his advocacy for veterans. For our expansive family, he made reunions a joy, and could be found dancing, laughing and whisking the smallest away to spread cheer with him – he loved babies. His warmth was such that you immediately felt loved and cared for when he greeted you. Thad was a warrior-poet living each day to its utmost.

His son Kevin had just finished updating Thad's autobiography the Saturday before his father passed. According to Kevin, Thad had started writing it in 1972 to deal with the flashbacks and nightmares he suffered from his time fighting in WWII.

His story is enlightening.

With his son's permission, I am sharing it in part here in the paper and in whole online, so you too can be touched by the life of a man who was always the hero he never claimed to be.

--Ron Lee, Editor, US~Observer

Airborne!!

My name is Thad Everett Blanchard Sr.

I was born on Friday March 3rd, 1922 in Hansen, Idaho, and I was the 12th and youngest born child of Don Carlos and Geneverie Jane Blanchard.

When I was a 3-year-old toddler living in Hansen my Mother was out in the yard hanging clothes she had hand washed on a scrub board. With 12 children she had done a lot of laundry that day. I came out on the second story landing above where she was hanging the laundry when I slipped and slid across the deck and right under the railing. Mom saw me coming. She threw down the sheet she was about to hang on the line, spit out the clothes pins in her mouth, kicked over the laundry basket and tried desperately to catch me. I hit the second clothesline and bounced to the third clothesline. It caught me flat on my back and inside my right leg, raising a long red mark before the clothesline broke dumping me on the ground knocking the wind out of me. Mom grabbed me up and ran up the stairs two at a time. She slapped my back and asked if I was alright? I couldn't answer and was afraid to even if I would have been able to. Especially since I thought about all those clothes and all that hard work of washing them by hand that she would have to re-do and thinking surely I was going to get my butt tanned for messing it all up.

After she stripped me and checked for any broken bones while simultaneously trying to explain to my sisters what had happened, we sat rocking in the little wooden rocker that eventually ended up in my own home as an adult.

Little did I know that episode would be my first attempt at becoming a Paratrooper in my future.

My Father and Mother were two of the hardest working people I've ever known.

I seldom saw my father because he was on the road with a twenty-horse team hauling freight and equipment to mines and mills all over the country. I recall seeing those horses coming into town with the bells on the lead team ringing and how they responded to my Dad's commands and touch of the reins. Dad would take them into the woods and hook them up to logs, tie up their reins and send them down to the mill where they would be unhitched from the logs and return to Dad without guidance.

Mom was an ex-school teacher, gardner, homemaker and all around go-to for our family. Her tails of riding miles to teach school in Montana Blizzards, being chased by Indians and Wolves made life eventful for her during that time. I can still remember seeing her near bleeding fingers from doing all those mounds of laundry and other chores she so unceasingly did to care for our family.

The one lesson we all learned early in life is that if a job put food on the table, clothes on your back and a roof over your head then it was worthy.

Times were changing, new machinery came on the scene and soon Dad and the crews were out building roads in Nevada and Utah. Nevada is where our family settled.

On a summer jaunt to Reno to buy a new car, five of us younger kids got to tag along. Reno was having an Air Show that day. My older brother Irvin thought he and I should take a plane ride. Back then you could. I was so small that I was looking down at the ground through the crack of the open cockpit door.

When we landed we watched as the son of the very man my Dad was buying the new car from was doing a parachute jump. I was totally fascinated and somewhere deep in my mind I thought I could do that some day. Not realizing that years later I'd be making my own parachute jumps, just not under such MILD circumstances.

I was the sole graduate from the old, two-room schoolhouse in Stillwater, NV.

Soon after graduation my parents bought a little acreage in the Lone Tree District. Dad and I finished building our house on it.

I worked milking cows, digging a cellar and even driving school bus while attending Fallon, NV highschool.

Around that time my Dad got a huge urge to buy a new team of horses. He was buying them from a local farmer named Lorenzo Mori. When Mr. Mori showed up with the horses, he had his little freckled-face daughter (Rosa) Rosie with him. I had no idea that she would eventually become the mother of my children and the love of my life.

One time, my Dad had a vivid dream about a mine. After exploring an area out of Lovelock, NV he found a natural monument that he had seen in his dream. So, he and Mom ended up moving to Toy about twenty miles from Lovelock. I would stay in Fallon and live with my sister Jo and her husband Bill Lee to finish highschool.

That summer I went to work for Dodge Construction in Imlay, NV and a week later they sent me to Gardnerville on a new job. The next winter I was back in Fallon finishing High School and dating that little freckle-face Rosie.

After graduation I went to work in Battle Mountain with my Dad in a mine driving Dump Truck. I just couldn't stand not having my little freckle-face around, so Mom, Dad and I took off to Fallon. I asked Freckle-Face to marry me.

Rosie and I were married at her parent's ranch house where she was born. Rosie's mother, who was cooking for a large hay crew at the time and didn't need any additional work, stepped up and cooked us a meal fit for a king. I'll always remember the taste of that homemade pasta and her special sauce!

That night Rosie and I took a Honeymoon Train ride from Hazen to Reno – a whole 50 miles. My Dad and Mom dropped us at the train station then headed back to Battle Mountain. Rosie's Dad drove to Reno to pick us up the next day.

A Friend Chick Thomas came to Battle Mountain and talked us into moving to the Crown Mine to work for him.

So Rosie and I packed up and when we got their and looked at all the desolation at the mine Rosie said "I guess we know what HELL looks like".

We had found an old railroad train boxcar out in the desert. So we used Chicks old 1918 white truck to tow it to the new location. Chick had set up a site for us with running water and an outhouse. It was a two-holer no less! Who needs a two-holer?

Rosie found an old, wood cook stove that had been tossed out into the desert and we moved it into the boxcar. The first night she tried to cook our first dinner in it, well, I got back just in time to run for the water bucket. The bottom was rusted out and it burned clear thru the bottom of the boxcar. I found some metal plate and reinforced the bottom of it so we could use it. It was so warped and uneven that when she made her first cake in it, it was a complete disaster leaking all over the oven.

But, we made it our home. It had running water. Just outside the door was a faucet. Our kitchen had a table and two benches, crudely made with two-by-fours and rough lumber, well-worn and oily. There was a sink of sorts, so at least the water could be drained outside and not carried back out. A couple of open cupboards an 8' by 8' bedroom that was a beauty! A bed made of two by sixes with a battered coil spring and not too clean mattress. A refrigeration cooler made from an old orange box and covered with gunny sacks thus making it a neat place to store eggs and whatever else we could keep a day or two.

We made $0.75 per hour in those days but we had no rent and no utilities, so Rosie and I saved every penny. Eventually we had $250.00. We went all the way to Reno to buy a car, an old 1936 Plymouth Sedan for $230.00.

It was then that Draft time came and Uncle Sam requested my service. The transition from civilian to military life was almost unbearable. I believed with my construction experience I would be assigned to either the Engineers, Transportation or Armor division. The disappointment of Infantry designation was a bitter pill to swallow.

My indoctrination was at Fort Douglas, Utah.

I got word that my wife Rosie had presented me with a bouncing baby boy, Thad Jr. It was August 16, 1943, and I wondered how long it would be if ever before I would see them.

Orders came in for our boys to go overseas but I had just been promoted to Corporal and I was held back to train kids from the Army Staff Training Program and the Air Cadet Schools. We trained them for two weeks and then they were sent immediately overseas. It was disturbing for me to know that many of them would be dead before I ever left the States.

After weeks of training, 500 of us NCO's were returning to Ft. Meade, MD for processing overseas.

I was transferred to Miles Standish, Mass where we formed a Saltwater Division for the trip to England. We traveled across in the Aquitania, one of the most prominent liners converted to a troop carrier. Three days out we passed a convoy and had an enemy submarine scare that night. We docked in Glasgow, Scotland and loaded onto a train bound for Camp Glenwood. After a week there I signed up for the paratroopers. I was finally going to do that thing I had thought about since the Reno Airshow all those years before.

I thought I was in great shape from all my training with the 76th but I soon learned the paratroopers were a special breed. I was sent to the 505th Parachute Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division. I was outfitted and moved to Camp Ashwell - a tent city set up for jump training.

My first jump was easy and all too short. What a thrill to see that chute open right before my eyes! Then a jolt, but a welcome one before the landing. On our second jump we were running to be the first on the plane. It was a night jump and when we were circling the drop zone one of our men froze in the doorway. They were pounding on his arms and legs to no avail. He would not budge. They finally got him out of the doorway for our 4th and final turn. I stood shaking like a leaf in the door. When the green light to jump came on I dove out headfirst causing my feet to tangle in the suspension lines. I was kicking like crazy to get loose when my parachute opened, it about ripped me apart! They call it a Mae West and the jump masters on the ground were yelling at me to pull my reserve chute. I could see the board fence and the trees at the edge of the drop zone when the wind caught me and the edge of my chute touched the ground while I was still up in the air. The chute drug me up to the fence and collapsed over a bunch of baby carriages that the spectators had gathered around the area. Cadre were yelling at me for not opening my reserve. As I struggled to my feet gasping for air, feeling like every bone in my body was broken, the Jump Master made me get down and do 50 push-ups for disobeying orders. Back at camp the C.O. made me get down and do another 100 push-ups - 50 for diving out the door and 50 for not opening my reserve.

Graduation day came and General Gavin pinned on my wings. He said, "I hear you did a Mae West. Get down and give me 50 push-ups and promise me you'll never use poor body position again."

I was transferred to the 507th Parachute Regiment at Tollerton Hall just outside of Nottingham. What a thrill to see the storybook place, hanging scaffold, castle and square where Robin Hood had been.

Christmas came and we paraded for Ike and the King then loaded up and flew to France to back up the 82nd and 101st. We landed at Rheims then trucked along the Muese River and crossed into Charlieville and then moved into battle.

"BATTLE OF THE BULGE"

Soft American Music played by Axis Sally on the radio. "This is radio Berlin," she said. "Bringing you the latest news and music. Hello, Allied Forces. We hope you enjoy it. Especially you Damn Yankees! Soon you won't be enjoying anything. Why don't you little boys go home where you belong! We've composed a little jingle for you! Yankee, Yankee, you think you're brave! But soon we'll be dancing on your grave!" I cussed her, Hitler and Hirohito! Damn their vicious hearts anyway!

We entered Neufchateau, Belgium. The quiet there bellied the hell that was about to pop!

Grateful to get out the convoy trucks and stamp the frost from our frozen feet, bodies and hands, we loaded up extra ammo. Beyond the town we entered a wooded area to await our attack. We had hardly stopped before a shell hit the tree I was leaning against. One second I was visiting with my Platoon leader who was sitting in a jeep, the next I'm flying 40 feet in the air. I landed unscathed. However, my Platoon leader and 36 men from my A Company, and across the street in D Company, lay dead or dying around me. They were shredded by shrapnel with tree splinters sticking out of them. They lay bleeding and dying, and I was helpless to save any of them. "My God," I thought, "can this really be happening?" We stacked their lifeless bodies in the blowing, piling, incessant snow.

Many of the men suffered from dysentery. Running to the side of the road, jerking their equipment and clothes off only to realize they were too late. Demoralizing as it was, we joked about it and found a chance to laugh in the midst of our misfortune.

Despite the miseries, we fought on into and captured Bertogne then finally collapsed the strangle hold on Bastogne.

With a break in the weather, fighter support and the arrival of Patton's tanks, we began to move ahead much faster. We had broken the German offensive and driven what was left of it back to Germany.

We had won the Battle of the Bulge but the scenes from the past few months sped across my mind. Yes, we had won the battle but what a price we had paid! I shuddered remembering the bitter cold, those house size tanks, the 88's and those damn "screaming meemie" rockets that got their name from the eerie whirlwind noise they made.

And, it was only the beginning...

[Thad went on to save General Patton and get a field promotion to Sergeant during Operation Varsity at the Our River and the Siegfried Line. He was also wounded on the banks of the Our when an enemy explosion riddled his body with shrapnel.

Thad rescued prisoners from a concentration camp and saw first-hand the horrors inflicted on these people. He participated in some of the bloodiest campaigns that ended the war in Europe.]

I don't know why God chose to keep me alive while so many others gave of theirs.

They that gave all, are the true heroes, not me. They will never share another laugh, hug, kiss or find the joy of life that I have. Some never even had the opportunity to find their true love, get married and have children to surround them with love, as I have.

I have dedicated my life to serving and honoring their memories. I have been a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Veterans (AM Vets) in Corning, CA. I have served as honor guard performing burial services for our fallen comrades. I have been blessed to have the Corning Am Vets renamed the SGT Thad Blanchard Post. My deceased son David has also been honored by the Corning VFW renaming theirs the SGT David Blanchard Post.

I was honored by Local, State and Federal Representatives with Plaques and Certificates for my dedicated service to the men and women who serve this country still.

I was honored to be interviewed by students from Corning High School who videotaped me and sent the video to the Smithsonian Institute for a Public Archive of men and women who served and fought in WWII.

I lost my little Freckle-Face in January of 1996. My dancing partner and the Angel of my life. Our family has never been the same without her.

My Children have blessed me with many Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren.

I currently reside at Oakdale Heights Assisted Living in Redding, CA. The staff here take super good care of me. I love them all as if they are my own.

I will be (God willing) turning 100 years old on March 3, 2022. My wish is to make a final parachute jump in Memory and Honor of all my comrades who fought and died for the Freedom of this Country.

My son Kevin, Granddaughter Mindy and friend Mike Ramirez will honor me by jumping with me on Saturday March 5, 2022 at Rolling Hills Casino Golf Course in Corning, CA.

God has Blessed me, shown me Mercy and Guided me through some of the most challenging times of my life.

-- Thad Blanchard

Thad fell on Veterans Day November 11th, 2021 and separated his artificial right hip for the second time in four days. On Friday November 12th he was rushed to Mercy Hospital due to blood flow problems discovered by the Staff and Nurse at Oakdale Heights.

A scan of his body revealed the news that this would be his final day on Earth. His son Kevin sent word out to the family to come fast. Almost all of his immediate family came to the Hospital to say a final "I Love You."

It only seems fitting that this dedicated Soldier's last days would involve Veterans Day as he dedicated his life to serving them so diligently!

He passed away peacefully at 6:30pm on November 12, 2021

Read Thad's complete autobiography online at www.usobserver.com.

★★★

The views expressed herein are the author's own.

COMMENTARY

Your Right to Speak Out

The Metaverse is Big Brother in Disguise: Freedom Meted Out by Technological Tyrants

By John & Nisha Whitehead

"The term metaverse, like the term meritocracy, was coined in a sci fi dystopia novel written as cautionary tale. Then techies took metaverse, and technocrats took meritocracy, and enthusiastically adopted what was meant to inspire horror."
— Antonio García Martínez

Welcome to the Matrix (i.e. the metaverse), where reality is virtual, freedom is only as free as one's technological overlords allow, and artificial intelligence is slowly rendering humanity unnecessary, inferior and obsolete.

Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, sees this digital universe — the metaverse — as the next step in our evolutionary transformation from a human-driven society to a technological one.

Yet while Zuckerberg's vision for this digital frontier has been met with a certain degree of skepticism, the truth — as journalist Antonio García Martínez concludes — is that we're already living in the metaverse.

The metaverse is, in turn, a dystopian meritocracy, where freedom is a conditional construct based on one's worthiness and compliance.

In a meritocracy, rights are privileges, afforded to those who have earned them. There can be no tolerance for independence or individuality in a meritocracy, where political correctness is formalized, legalized and institutionalized. Likewise, there can be no true freedom when the ability to express oneself, move about, engage in commerce and function in society is predicated on the extent to which you're willing to "fit in."

We are almost at that stage now.

Consider that in our present virtue-signaling world where fascism disguises itself as tolerance, the only way to enjoy even a semblance of freedom is by opting to voluntarily censor yourself, comply, conform and march in lockstep with whatever prevailing views dominate.

Fail to do so — by daring to espouse "dangerous" ideas or support unpopular political movements — and you will find yourself shut out of commerce, employment, and society: Facebook will ban you, Twitter will shut you down, Instagram will de-platform you, and your employer will issue ultimatums that force you to choose between your so-called freedoms and economic survival.

This is exactly how Corporate America plans to groom us for a world in which "we the people" are unthinking, unresistant, slavishly obedient automatons in bondage to a Deep State policed by computer algorithms.

Science fiction has become fact.

Twenty-some years after the Wachowskis' iconic film, The Matrix, introduced us to a futuristic world in which humans exist in a computer-simulated non-reality powered by authoritarian machines — a world where the choice between existing in a denial-ridden virtual dream-state or facing up to the harsh, difficult realities of life comes down to a blue pill or a red pill — we stand at the precipice of a technologically-dominated matrix of our own making.

We are living the prequel to The Matrix with each passing day, falling further under the spell of technologically-driven virtual communities, virtual realities and virtual conveniences managed by artificially intelligent machines that are on a fast track to replacing human beings and eventually dominating every aspect of our lives.

In The Matrix, computer programmer Thomas Anderson a.k.a. hacker Neo is wakened from a virtual slumber by Morpheus, a freedom fighter seeking to liberate humanity from a lifelong hibernation state imposed by hyper-advanced artificial intelligence machines that rely on humans as an organic power source. With their minds plugged into a perfectly crafted virtual reality, few humans ever realize they are living in an artificial dream world.

Neo is given a choice: to take the red pill, wake up and join the resistance, or take the blue pill, remain asleep and serve as fodder for the powers-that-be.

Most people opt for the blue pill.

In our case, the blue pill — a one-way ticket to a life sentence in an electronic concentration camp — has been honey-coated to hide the bitter aftertaste, sold to us in the name of expediency and delivered by way of blazingly fast Internet, cell phone signals that never drop a call, thermostats that keep us at the perfect temperature without our having to raise a finger, and entertainment that can be simultaneously streamed to our TVs, tablets and cell phones.

Yet we are not merely in thrall with these technologies that were intended to make our lives easier. We have become enslaved by them.

Look around you. Everywhere you turn, people are so addicted to their internet-connected screen devices — smart phones, tablets, computers, televisions — that they can go for hours at a time submerged in a virtual world where human interaction is filtered through the medium of technology.

This is not freedom. This is not even progress.

This is technological tyranny and iron-fisted control delivered by way of the surveillance state, corporate giants such as Google and Facebook, and government spy agencies such as the National Security Agency.

So consumed are we with availing ourselves of all the latest technologies that we have spared barely a thought for the ramifications of our heedless, headlong stumble towards a world in which our abject reliance on internet-connected gadgets and gizmos is grooming us for a future in which freedom is an illusion.

Yet it's not just freedom that hangs in the balance. Humanity itself is on the line.

If ever Americans find themselves in bondage to technological tyrants, we will have only ourselves to blame for having forged the chains through our own lassitude, laziness and abject reliance on internet-connected gadgets and gizmos that render us wholly irrelevant.

Indeed, we're fast approaching Philip K. Dick's vision of the future as depicted in the film Minority Report. There, police agencies apprehend criminals before they can commit a crime, driverless cars populate the highways, and a person's biometrics are constantly scanned and used to track their movements, target them for advertising, and keep them under perpetual surveillance.

Cue the dawning of the Age of the Internet of Things (IoT), in which internet-connected "things" monitor your home, your health and your habits in order to keep your pantry stocked, your utilities regulated and your life under control and relatively worry-free.

The key word here, however, is control.

In the not-too-distant future, "just about every device you have — and even products like chairs, that you don't normally expect to see technology in — will be connected and talking to each other."

By the end of 2018, "there were an estimated 22 billion internet of things connected devices in use around the world… Forecasts suggest that by 2030 around 50 billion of these IoT devices will be in use around the world, creating a massive web of interconnected devices spanning everything from smartphones to kitchen appliances."

As the technologies powering these devices have become increasingly sophisticated, they have also become increasingly widespread, encompassing everything from toothbrushes and lightbulbs to cars, smart meters and medical equipment.

It is estimated that 127 new IoT devices are connected to the web every second.

This "connected" industry has become the next big societal transformation, right up there with the Industrial Revolution, a watershed moment in technology and culture.

Between driverless cars that completely lacking a steering wheel, accelerator, or brake pedal, and smart pills embedded with computer chips, sensors, cameras and robots, we are poised to outpace the imaginations of science fiction writers such as Philip K. Dick and Isaac Asimov. (By the way, there is no such thing as a driverless car. Someone or something will be driving, but it won't be you.)

These Internet-connected techno gadgets include smart light bulbs that discourage burglars by making your house look occupied, smart thermostats that regulate the temperature of your home based on your activities, and smart doorbells that let you see who is at your front door without leaving the comfort of your couch.

Nest, Google's suite of smart home products, has been at the forefront of the "connected" industry, with such technologically savvy conveniences as a smart lock that tells your thermostat who is home, what temperatures they like, and when your home is unoccupied; a home phone service system that interacts with your connected devices to "learn when you come and go" and alert you if your kids don't come home; and a sleep system that will monitor when you fall asleep, when you wake up, and keep the house noises and temperature in a sleep-conducive state.

The aim of these internet-connected devices, as Nest proclaims, is to make "your house a more thoughtful and conscious home." For example, your car can signal ahead that you're on your way home, while Hue lights can flash on and off to get your attention if Nest Protect senses something's wrong. Your coffeemaker, relying on data from fitness and sleep sensors, will brew a stronger pot of coffee for you if you've had a restless night.

Yet given the speed and trajectory at which these technologies are developing, it won't be long before these devices are operating entirely independent of their human creators, which poses a whole new set of worries. As technology expert Nicholas Carr notes, "As soon as you allow robots, or software programs, to act freely in the world, they're going to run up against ethically fraught situations and face hard choices that can't be resolved through statistical models. That will be true of self-driving cars, self-flying drones, and battlefield robots, just as it's already true, on a lesser scale, with automated vacuum cleaners and lawnmowers."

For instance, just as the robotic vacuum, Roomba, "makes no distinction between a dust bunny and an insect," weaponized drones will be incapable of distinguishing between a fleeing criminal and someone merely jogging down a street. For that matter, how do you defend yourself against a robotic

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The Political Center is Gone

By Star Parker

(Townhall) - In a new USA Today/Suffolk University poll, President Joe Biden's approval is down to 38%. Which looks pretty good compared to Vice President Kamala Harris, whose approval now stands at 28%.

Democrats have just been reprimanded by voters, with the upset victory of Republican candidate and political novice Glenn Youngkin in the governor's race in Virginia, an almost upset victory in New Jersey by Republican gubernatorial candidate Jack Ciattarelli, who came within 2% of the vote of winning, and revolts in school board elections nationwide, pushing back against critical race theory and COVID-19 government interventions.

It's not rocket science that Biden and his party have lost touch with the voters who elected them. Large percentages of these Democrats did not vote for Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the "squad." And they are unhappy with Biden's capitulation to the far-left elements of his party.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Photo: Victoria Pickering / flickr

Respected Democrat strategist Mark Penn has a piece in The New York Times urging Biden to shake off these progressives and reconnect with the moderates in his party. This is what Bill Clinton did, he reminds readers, to save his presidency in the mid-1990s.

Former Louisiana Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal offers up a similar message in a Wall Street Journal op-ed. Both parties, after victories, tend to relinquish too much influence to the "extreme" elements in their party, he says. Statesmanship, the message goes, means understanding the need to move to the middle.

But there are problems with this sage advice. One, voters themselves are moving away from the middle. And, two, the reality of culture and politics of the country is things keep moving left. The only difference between when Republicans are in control and when Democrats are in control is how fast it happens.

Yes, it's true that Bill Clinton saved his presidency by turning to the middle. But then, in 1994, according to Gallup, 25% of Democrats self-identified as liberal, 25% conservative and 48% as moderate. Today, per Gallup, the percentage of Democrats identifying as liberal has doubled to 51%; the percentage identifying as conservative is half what it was in 1994 -- 12% -- and the percentage of moderates has dropped from 48% to 35%.

At the same time, Republicans have become more conservative than they were in 1994.

In 1994, 58% of Republicans identified as conservative. Today, it's 75%.

Statesmanship and compromise are only realistic when most voters, of both parties, are generally on the same page regarding our core values. But what happens when the common ground of core values is lost?

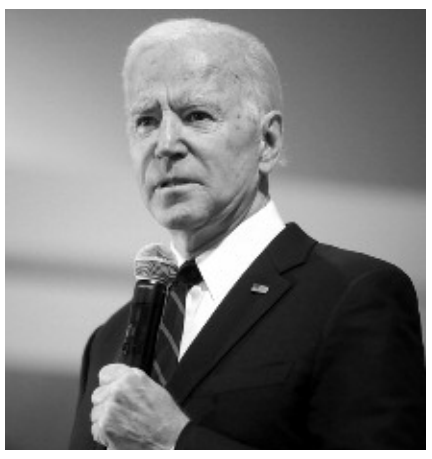
I started writing several years ago, noting the similarities of what is happening today in our country to where things stood in the 1850s when the institution of slavery was tearing at the soul of the nation.

Where is compromise about whether slavery should be accepted or not in a country that is supposed to be about freedom? Some insisted yes, some insisted no, and everything exploded into a civil war.

What is happening today is similar.

In a Pew Research survey from last November, 80% of Biden voters and 77% of Trump voters agreed with this statement about voters from the other party: "Not only do we have different priorities when it comes to politics, but we fundamentally disagree about core American values."

Culturally, there is no more room for compromise about differences of opinion regarding those accepting and those rejecting biblical, traditional values regarding marriage, family and sex than there was about slavery



President Biden - *Photo: Gage Skidmore*

Fiscally, government involvement in the lives of Americans is off the charts. In 2020, government spending at federal, state and local levels was already at 43% of our GDP. With the Democrats' spending blowout, government will be headed toward taking half our economy.

The challenge today is not to find a middle that doesn't exist. The challenge today is for Americans to choose who they are and what kind of country they want -- free or not. ★

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." --Martin Luther King, Jr.

COMMENTARY

Videos Are Making It Hard To Trust the Cops

It's difficult to avoid the suspicion that the powers-that-be habitually lie about their conduct.

By J.D. Tuccille

(Reason) - There's a lot to dislike about the increasingly pervasive surveillance state, but a little of its danger is offset when the forces of officialdom are themselves captured by the all-seeing eye. All too often, official versions of events turn out to be completely at odds with video and audio records of what actually happened. Given stark discrepancies between some police reports about searches and arrests and video footage of the same events, it's difficult to avoid the suspicion that the powers-that-be habitually lie about their conduct.

In New York, David Yezek is suing police in a case that explains just why drug dealers would install video cameras that watch them going about their business: because they know cops all too well. Yezek's surveillance system caught more than him growing and selling cannabis (allegedly—the police never had the stuff tested); it also recorded police violating his rights and fabricating a story after the fact. According to WIVB, which obtained video-recorded depositions in the lawsuit:

The two officers, Sean Hotnich and Richard Cooper, got several key details wrong in the search warrant affidavit and the police report, according to their depositions.

For example, the police report states that once the two officers entered Yezek's kitchen, "patrol then observed two large bags of suspected marijuana in plain view on the dining room table."

But a security camera aimed directly at Yezek's kitchen table does not show two large bags of suspected marijuana on the table, and certainly none in plain view. Rather, the officers found two large bags of marijuana inside an opaque paper bag on a chair near the table after they got inside Yezek's home and walked to the dining room.

"Got several key details wrong" in this case should probably be interpreted as "manufactured out of whole cloth." It's an even bigger deal than it seems because allegedly seeing two large bags of marijuana in plain view was the excuse the officers used for entering and searching Yezek's home. Instead, they searched the place without legal authority and then invented a justification after the fact. But wait, there's more!

In addition, the police report states that Yezek granted permission for the officers to enter his house. But the security camera outside Yezek's home shows both officers entered an enclosed mudroom after one of them pushed open a gated door of the residence without permission.

In summary, the cops barged into a house without permission, tossed it without legal authority, and then lied about the search to conceal their misdeeds.

"If Yezek did not have the security cameras in and outside of his home, he very well could be sitting in prison," one of Yezek's attorneys told reporters. So, score one for turning the surveillance state's capabilities against the authorities.

Yezek's lawsuit against Gowanda, New York, police may result in rare vindication for somebody on the receiving end of official fibbing, but he's hardly alone in pointing to surveillance footage that tells a story at odds with the official account — sometimes with very high stakes.

"San Antonio police dash camera video obtained by the KSAT 12 Defenders contradicts the department's long-held narrative that a woman shot and killed by an SAPD sergeant in early 2019 had pointed a weapon at him prior to being shot," the TV station reported last year after the shooting death of Hannah Westall.

In addition, police originally insisted that there was no bodycam recording of the incident. That turned out to be untrue and Bexar County District Attorney Joe Gonzales has reopened his investigation.

Officers Sean Hotnich and Richard Cooper

Also in Texas, police sat on a cellphone recording that Sandra Bland made of her own arrest during a 2015 traffic stop. She was found dead in her jail cell three days later, fueling the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement. A lawyer for Bland's family "said the video, by showing Ms. Bland with a cellphone in her hand, seriously undercut the trooper's claim that he feared for his safety as he approached the woman's vehicle," according to The New York Times.

Like Yezek, Bland recorded her own footage. But as the San Antonio case shows, it's often the police's own cameras that contradict them.

"A California police officer's body camera footage of an arrest that left a 26-year-old man dead was released Tuesday, contradicting the department's earlier sanitized narrative of what happened," Buzzfeed News reported in April after the death in Alameda of Mario Gonzalez. "What the video actually shows, and what police didn't mention at the time, is that officers pinned him to the ground for just over five minutes, at times applying pressure on his back with a knee, until he lost consciousness."

Sometimes, the police malign the public at large, such as with the police claim that bystanders ignored a rape on a Philadelphia train and might face charges. Video revealed a different story.

These situations are pretty egregious, but recordings don't have to contradict police. They can, instead, support the official story, and undermine bogus claims of abuse, rights violations, and innocence by criminal suspects. When cops are above-board, that's exactly the purpose the recordings serve.

But it's all too easy to find situations where police told stories that didn't match recordings of which they were unaware or which they tried to suppress. Sometimes an officer loses a job or even (very rarely) faces charges, but it often leaves the impression that an especially incautious or unconnected cop was thrown to the wolves to appease critics. How many lies remain unexposed is anybody's guess.

It's worth pointing out that the FBI, which often investigates misconduct by state and local police, itself resists recording interviews.

"When the rule prohibiting FBI agents from recording interviews was instituted, the reasoning mostly was that their testimony under oath is credible and means something to the court and the public," James M. Casey, a former FBI agent, explained last year. "That should still hold true."

But "trust us" really doesn't fly the more we see the government's enforcers at work. It's too easy to find examples of them playing fast and loose with the truth when there's a record of their conduct.

Few people enjoy the prospect of living in a surveillance state with all of our actions watched and, potentially, judged. But, if the authorities are going to point their cameras at us, they need to know that we can return the favor and uncover their own unsavory secrets.

★★★

A Brief History of the Law of Personal Privacy and Bodily Integrity

By Judge Andrew Napolitano

(JudgeNap.com) - As more governors issue so-called mandates requiring municipal and state employers, as well as private employers and public accommodations, to require their employees and patrons to be vaccinated against COVID-19, they are being challenged by arguments based on personal privacy and bodily integrity.

The former argues that personal medical decisions are protected by the right to privacy, which is a natural right that supersedes governmental needs. The latter argues that since we each own our bodies, we can decide what goes into them. Both the personal privacy and the bodily integrity arguments recognize that the government can only trump fundamental rights if it can prove fault at a jury trial.

Thus, a case where an infected and contagious person is intentionally infecting healthy folks can and should result in an arrest and prosecution for aggravated assault at which the state would need to prove its case. If it did, the convicted defendant would be incarcerated and isolated for the duration of her sentence. But that does not animate the government today.

Today, the government — local, state and federal — is attempting to compel healthy people to be vaccinated against their wills. All three levels of government are attempting to do this by command, not by legislation.

The favorite U.S. Supreme Court case that the pro-mandate folks cite is the 116-year-old Jacobson v. Massachusetts. There, in the era before the court recognized personal privacy or bodily integrity as constitutionally protected, it upheld a Massachusetts statute requiring inoculation for smallpox.

The issue in the case was whether a state legislature can enact public health laws that authorize force to enforce them. The issue was not whether a governor could issue a command, call it a law and use the police to enforce it. Moreover, the Jacobson case was decided in 1905, well before the personal privacy and bodily integrity cases came along.

The privacy doctrine began at the Supreme Court in 1928, with a dissent. In Olmstead v. United States, the court upheld wiretapping telephone calls without a search warrant since it held there was no expectation of privacy in the calls.

Justice Louis Brandeis distilled the privacy doctrine in his famous dissent when he wrote that the framers of the Constitution "sought to protect Americans in their beliefs, their thoughts, their emotions and their sensations. They conferred, as against the government, the right to be let alone — the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men."

Brandeis' iconic language would languish as a dissent until 1965 in a case called Griswold v. Connecticut. There, the Supreme Court recognized personal privacy as a fundamental liberty — the highest category of liberty in the constitutional pantheon. In Griswold, the state of Connecticut had enacted legislation prohibiting the use of contraceptives by married couples.

Embracing the values ignored by the Jacobson case and rejected by the Olmstead case, the court invalidated the Connecticut statute and ruled that the decision to use contraceptives is so integral to control over one's body and is made in such a zone of privacy that the Constitution protects it from the government's reach.

Eight years later, the Jacobson case would suffer a stake through its dead heart in Roe v. Wade. This case, which prohibited the states from banning pre-viability abortions, also upheld the privacy rights of all persons when deciding what medical procedures to undergo, and thus it protects from the government's reach the zone in which those decisions are made. A portion of Roe is currently on its deathbed, but not the part that protects bodily integrity; rather, the infamous part that catastrophically fails to recognize the personhood of babies in the womb and permits killing them.

While the right to privacy was slowly being recognized and Brandeis' Olmstead dissent gradually becoming the law at the federal level, a comparable line of cases, upholding both personal privacy and bodily integrity, was making its way through state courts. The pioneer of those cases is In re Quinlan, a decision of the Supreme Court of New Jersey in 1976. It upheld the right of the parents of Karen Ann Quinlan to deny their comatose daughter artificial life-sustaining procedures.

From and after the Quinlan case, all states recognized the fundamental right of sick people — directly or through their guardians — to reject medication and medical procedures.

The values underlying the Olmstead to Griswold to Roe migration of federal jurisprudence and the values underlying the post-Quinlan state jurisprudence and statutes are the same; and those values are preeminent today.

Today, the states and the federal courts recognize that competent persons can decide for themselves what medications to take or reject because the natural, moral and constitutionally recognized decision-maker over one's body is oneself, not the government. Moreover, when these decisions are made in consultation with a physician or an intimate mate, they are done so within the zone of privacy and are none of the government's business.

The folks who believe that the president can direct the Department of Labor to compel employers of more than 100 persons to require vaccines of the healthy and who also believe that a governor can do similarly for public and private employers in his state — and cite the 1905 Jacobson case to support their claims — are sadly ignorant of the 20th-century jurisprudence that stands firmly, convincingly and uniformly against them.

Moreover, these pro-vaccine mandate folks also confuse legislation with executive orders. Under the Guarantee Clause of the Constitution, only laws enacted by a state legislature, not gubernatorial commands, have the force of law. Under the separation of powers doctrine in the federal system, only Congress writes laws, not the president.

And under current Supreme Court rulings, we all can decide for ourselves what medications to take, while the government takes a hike.

★★★

Report Finds Gruesome Medical Malpractice and Death in Arizona Prisons

By C.J. Ciaramella

(Reason) - A paraplegic man was left to physically deteriorate until his penis had to be amputated. A man with undiagnosed, untreated lung cancer lost 90 pounds and died "slowly and agonizingly" without pain medication. A woman's multiple sclerosis was ignored and misdiagnosed until she was left, at age 36, nearly completely paralyzed.

Arizona's prison system is on trial once again in a long-running civil lawsuit over claims of medical neglect, including the examples above, and a doctor's testimony in the case paints a stomach-churning picture of unnecessary suffering, malpractice, and death behind prison walls.

In an expert witness report filed last week in the lawsuit, Tod Wilcox, medical director of the Salt Lake County Jail System, describes several cases of preventable deaths that he says were offensive to him as a medical professional and showed that Arizona prisons put incarcerated people at unacceptable risks of harm.

"A system that allows this level of sustained incompetence and cruelty, and fails to take decisive action to determine the causes of these myriad and horrific breakdowns and to ensure that the people involved in this case are thoroughly retrained and/or separated from service," Wilcox writes, "is morally bankrupt."

Wilcox's report found that the poor quality of nursing inside Arizona prisons continues to put incarcerated people "at an unreasonable and substantial risk of serious harm."

As Reason has reported, medical neglect is widespread in American prisons and jails, despite the Eighth Amendment's supposed guarantee of basic medical care, hygiene, and living conditions.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona and several law firms have been litigating the case since 2012. The federal class-action lawsuit, filed against the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR), followed media investigations and persistent allegations of fatally inadequate medical care by the department's medical provider.

The ADCRR agreed to settle the lawsuit in 2015 by taking steps to improve medical care inside its prisons. But since then, the ACLU and several other law firms have repeatedly accused the ADCRR of failing to abide by the settlement agreement, and federal judges have agreed.

A federal magistrate judge fined the ADCRR $1.4 million in 2018. Judge Roslyn Silver of the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona held the department in contempt this February and fined it another $1.1 million for failing to meet the benchmarks for proper medical care. Silver also rescinded the settlement agreement, forcing the ADCRR back into court, where a civil trial began at the beginning of November.

The ACLU argues that the lack of medical and mental health care constitute cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment.

"It falls very, very short of the constitutional standard," says Corene Kendrick, deputy director of the ACLU's National Prison Project. "The bar is pretty low. It's not like they're entitled to a Mayo Clinic level of medical care. We're just talking about basic, fundamental stuff. Unfortunately our experts are finding that, systematically, they fall short."

Kendall Johnson, one of several incarcerated witnesses in the trial, testified last week via video conference from the special needs unit where she is now confined due to advanced multiple sclerosis.

According to Wilcox's report, it took three years after Johnson first reported numbness in her feet and legs before she was correctly diagnosed. In the meantime, she progressively weakened and lost the ability to walk. Johnson testified last week that she wrote letters asking for help until she couldn't, then had other inmates write on her behalf. She eventually had to resort to paying other inmates to feed her, she said.

After she was diagnosed, it took another year for Johnson to start receiving appropriate medication, but by that time the disease had irreversibly progressed, leaving her "profoundly disabled," Wilcox writes. The best she can look forward to is maintaining the ability to speak and swallow for some time.

Johnson testified that she spends her days now watching TV and "counting the ceiling tiles," the Arizona Republic reported.

Wilcox describes another case where an incarcerated man, whose name is redacted from the report, died "horrific and painful death" from lung cancer. Staff overlooked, ignored, and failed to act on obvious signs of cancer, including drastic weight loss.

"A grown man who has lost 90 pounds from his baseline is a medical crisis that demands an explanation," Wilcox writes.

Instead, in response to the man's complaints of severe throat pain and weight loss, a nurse practitioner told him to "eat slow and cut food in small pieces."

Even the man's end-of-life care, after he was finally diagnosed with lung cancer, was substandard, Wilcox says. For two months, the man received only Tylenol #3 pills for pain, which in addition to being inadequate for pain management was "malpractice," Wilcox writes, because the man could barely swallow and had already had life-threatening gastrointestinal bleeding from anti-inflammatory drugs. He eventually received morphine, but only sporadically.

Wilcox says the patient's "end of life care does not conform to any standard of care for palliative or hospice care. His cachetic body was racked with pain, and he wasted away with no reasonable assistance from medical science in the form of comfort or compassionate pain control."

In another case, Wilcox describes a paraplegic man who has open sores on his buttocks and scrotum from sliding from his broken wheelchair onto a toilet, as well as having to frequently sit in his own waste. Prison officials allowed his condition to deteriorate until his penis had to be amputated.

According to Wilcox's report, Centurion, the ADCRR's contracted medical care provider, won't even give the man moistened wipes to keep himself clean.

"The amazing thing is that the provider wants to deny him some very inexpensive wipes and Centurion runs the risk of having him develop infections and skin breakdown which would cost phenomenally more money to address through hospital stays and plastic surgery," Wilcox writes. "The priorities here just make no logical sense."

Wilcox's report concluded that the main problem with the ADCRR's healthcare system is the quality of nursing.

"By design, healthcare decisions in [Arizona prisons] are pushed down to the lowest possible level—nurses who are practicing poorly and far outside the scope of their licenses," Wilcox writes. "There is a clear pattern of failure by nurses to complete an adequate nursing assessment, take patient reports seriously, recognize dangerous symptoms, and elevate concerns to Providers."

Even if the ADCRR had complied with the rules of the settlement agreement, Wilcox writes, incarcerated people would still be at serious risk of harm "because when they did see providers and nurses, those clinicians often exercised poor clinical judgment and failed to provide clinical care that meets community standards for such care."

A spokesperson for the ADCRR declined to comment, citing the pending litigation.

US~Observer Editor's Note: It appears Arizona's justice system, its prisons and its medical facilities all warrant scrutiny. ★★★

Continued from page 1 • Arizona's Life Care Services / Sagewood Assisted Living ...

independent caregivers out-of-pocket, even though all these services were meant to be provided by Sagewood. One witness recounted, *"Sagewood Assisted Living knowingly reduced the level of care available to Bruce, against their written contract; and used his ailing memory as an excuse to pawn off his care to others to pocket Bruce's residency dues. What's even worse about Sagewood is that they promised internal memory care, but made Bruce pay for outside caregivers, without the memory care training to handle him, and billed Bruce for the out-of-pocket expense. Even with all the extra assistance, they still kicked Bruce out at the worst possible time for Bruce."*

Bruce Myers

Bruce was forced to gain residence at an unrelated assisted living facility where he was treated with respect and dignity. According to his son, *"Sagewood's treatment of Bruce didn't meet the most minimum level of care, and certainly not at a 5 star level."*

WHO IS SAGEWOOD ASSISTED LIVING?

Life Care Services (LCS) and Westminster Capital (WC) formed a partnership which opened the Sagewood facility. Primary funding for the partnership was provided by National Health Investors (NYSE: NHI), a publicly traded REIT on the NYSE. NHI provided funding of $180 million to Sagewood. At this point we don't believe NHI should be considered complicit, but they should be aware that they are funding a facility that's allegedly willing to evict patients in need. This article is to be considered notification of such alleged behavior.

The US~Observer is currently investigating Sagewood, Westminster and their other facilities – who were also funded by National Health Investors. Mr. Joel Nelson is the CEO of Life Care Services, the parent company of Sagewood Assisted Living. According to their website, Life Care Services manage over 134 facilities, and 87 of them handle memory care and assisted living.

Editor's Note: If you or a loved one has experienced any poor care or medical mistreatment provided by Sagewood, Life Care Services, Westminster, or NHI, please reach out to the US~Observer at (541)-474-7885 or send an email to editor@usobserver.com. ★★★

Arizona's Do-It-Yourself Justice System

"The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate."
-Arizona Constitution

By Ronald Fraser, Ph.D.

(DKT Liberty Project) - When charged with a crime, do Arizonans call upon fellow citizens, sitting as a jury, to decide their guilt or innocence? No way.

Of the 5,610 federal criminal cases resolved in Arizona in 2019, according to the United States Sentencing Commission, only 40 or 0.7% — were decided by a jury trial. While many thousands more state criminal cases are resolved in Arizona each year, it is even less likely a case will go to trial in state court than in federal court.

Instead of forcing the state to prove their guilt in a courtroom, around 99%, or 990 of every 1,000 criminally charged Arizonans choose to convict themselves. Trial by jury — in Alexander Hamilton's view, "a safeguard to liberty," is being replaced with assembly-line, do-it-yourself "justice" factories in which the accused's defense attorney and a government prosecutor privately negotiate a guilty plea.

Reversing earlier decisions, the U.S. Supreme Court in Brady v. United States (1970), declared that a negotiated guilty plea may be allowed if, "motivated by the defendant's desire to accept the certainty or probability of a lesser penalty rather than face … a higher penalty authorized by law for the crime charged."

With the top court's blessing, state lawmakers stacked the deck against defendants with harsh, mandatory minimum sentences for conviction of drug- related and many other crimes. These laws tie the hands of judges but give prosecutors the power to threaten to indict a defendant for additional, related crimes in order to get a guilty plea. At first glance guilty pleas might look like a win all around. Defendants avoid the costs and uncertainty of a trial. Prosecutors avoid time-consuming preparation for a lengthy courtroom trial. Judges, too, benefit by avoiding tedious courtroom trials.

But wait. A 2018 report by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the Foundation for Criminal Justice titled, *The Trial Penalty: The Sixth Amendment Right to Trial on the Verge of Extinction and How to Save It*, exposes the popularity of plea-mania. For the same federal crime, post-trial sentences are indeed much harsher than plea-bargain sentences.

"In 2015," for example, "the average sentence for fraud was three times as high (six years versus 1.9 years) for defendants who went to trial versus those who pled guilty … for burglary/breaking and entering it was nearly eight times as high (12.5 years versus 1.6 years)." The difference — a trial penalty — is the cost paid by defendants if convicted in a courtroom trial.

The report concludes, "the threat of a substantially greater sentence following a conviction at trial is a powerful incentive for even an innocent person to forego his or her Constitutional rights…[and]…it is well established that the trial penalty is just as prevalent in state and local criminal prosecutions, and that the virtual extinction of jury trials is just as prevalent in these jurisdictions."

But at a trial not all are convicted. In a public courtroom, unlike backroom plea deals, the government must make its case to impartial jurors, and defendants are free to show jurors that the government's evidence is not sufficient to prove one's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Using 2016-2017 data, the National Center for State Courts found that nationwide nearly one-third of felony jury trials ended in acquittal or dismissal, suggesting that if 90% of criminally charged Arizonans were to go to trial rather than

accept a guilty plea each year, three in ten would likely be found not guilty and go free.

In other words, plea-mania may needlessly be putting thousands of Arizonans behind bars each year.

What to do? Since 1990, FAMM, a national organization has successfully lobbied for sentencing reforms in dozens of states. FAMM recommends that:

• Lawmakers repeal mandatory and restrictive minimum sentencing laws" and return to judges "the authority to consider all the relevant facts and circumstances of a crime and an individual before imposing a fair punishment.

– Prosecutors stop threatening people with decades in prison for exercising their right to trial.

– Courts require mandatory plea-bargaining conferences that are supervised by judicial officers not involved in the case."

Prosecutors now decide, out of the public's view, who goes to jail and for how long. It is time to end this travesty of the open, jury-based justice system found in our Constitution.

Ronald Fraser, Ph.D., writes on public policy issues for the DKT Liberty Project, a Washington-based civil liberties organization.

★★★

Scottsdale Police Take Action After Discovery That School Board President Kept Creepy Dossier on Parents

By Chris Enloe

(The Blaze) - Police in Arizona have launched an investigation into Scottsdale Unified School District president Jann-Michael Greenburg after allegations surfaced that he kept a dossier of information on parents who oppose COVID restrictions and critical race theory.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND?

News of the dossier broke last week after Greenburg reportedly shared it with a parent by accident.

The Arizona Republic reported:

A copy of the Google Drive that parents created was obtained by The Arizona Republic and it included screenshots of Facebook conversations parents had about their opposition to topics such as critical race theory and COVID-19 mask mandates. It also included emails sent to school board members calling for Greenburg's resignation, photos and videos of parents protesting the school district and screenshots of parents' Facebook profiles that indicated their support for former President Donald Trump.

Even more shocking, the dossier allegedly contained Social Security numbers, property records, and divorce decrees, among other personal information. Information had been collected on nearly 50 parents.

WHAT HAPPENED NOW?

The Scottsdale Police Department released a statement saying the agency is "aware of the allegations against Scottsdale Unified School District President Jann-Michael Greenburg."

"We are conducting an investigation into the matter and will report our findings once it is complete," the statement added, the Associated Press reported.

The statement, however, did not specify any details about the investigation. It is not clear if Greenburg is accused of breaking laws.

Scottsdale Unified School District superintendent Scott Menzel similarly announced on Friday an investigation into Greenburg and the dossier.

Menzel said in a letter:

Today, the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) began the process of hiring an independent forensic investigator to determine if any school resources were used to compile, access or modify the private dossier allegedly created and maintained in Google drive folders by Mark Greenburg, the father of SUSD Board President Jann-Michael Greenburg, and shared by the latter. We want to determine if school resources were used inappropriately. We take our responsibility as good stewards of public funds very seriously.

Jann-Michael Greenburg

It is important to emphasize the District did not create, maintain or have control over the dossier. The information it contains appears to be largely from public documents, and parents are rightly upset that certain data, photography and video has been collected and shared.

According to the Arizona Republic, more than 1,200 parents have signed a petition demanding Greenburg's resignation.

★★★

Continued from page 1 • Offshore Banking Leads to Lost Wealth and Prison

investment. He has even changed his name to obfuscate his true identity. He is Christopher Rusch, now known as Christian Reeves, and he is a refined conman operating in the realm of offshore banking and investment schemes through the company Premier Offshore Tax & Corporate, Inc., and others. He will make you feel like your investment is safe, while backdooring you, making off with your hard-earned funds. Worse yet, you just might end up doing time once he's done with you, just so he can skate on his crimes against you.

Don't take my word for it either.

Talking to us on the condition of anonymity an official has confirmed that several people have recently filed reports with the Department of Justice regarding their experience with Christian Reeves.

Interestingly, Reeves was keeping a low profile until recently. He had not updated his Premiere Offshore website with articles since May of 2020 until he began posting again on October 1st, 2021. But we know he was taking appointments for consultations during that time, which until recently, were running you a cool $150.00 just to lock-in your date.

Christian Reeves, Christopher Rusch, or whatever name he now operates under, is still out there and the big question is… how? How did a man who lost his law license, took a plea deal and supposedly served ten months in prison suddenly get his passport back to immediately begin taking people's money without missing a beat?

THE HOW

Not only did Rusch play ball with Assistant US Attorney Monica Edelstein, he had previously set-up the structure of the investments to be owned by his clients. This meant he was covered if anything ever happened. You see Rusch was the only one who knew how the investments were set-up, and he and his hand-picked banking buddies were the only ones with access to the funds. Even though the clients' names were on the accounts they could never even get a statement, let alone take out any money – and this was all because of how Rusch gamed his clients through the Swiss bank system.

When the U.S. government went after foreign bank account holders, they came after Christopher Rusch's clients, because on paper, they were the ones who weren't filing taxes properly. Let's not forget Rusch was their tax attorney. He instructed them and their accountants as to how to file their taxes. Even though they had been filing taxes properly per those instructions and had no idea how Rusch had bamboozled them, they were the ones in the government's crosshairs.

The government was too fixated on the people whose names were on the account, and that made them blind to the truth. As such, they made a deal with Rusch to testify against his own clients. It was a deal that most likely allowed him to keep some of his ill-gotten gains. So, he gave AUSA Edelstein exactly what she needed to get a conviction, a hand-crafted story to unjustifiably out the people who paid him to make sure they were tax compliant. We are certain that's why he was allowed to change his name to Christian Reeves, and to continue taking offshore clients for rides, while freely coming in and going out of the country as he pleases.

We have evidence that proves Rusch lied on the witness stand, and AUSA Monica Edelstein, now a judge in Arizona, was complicit with his fabrication.

No matter what, it's time he and the government were held accountable for harming two innocent, successful men whose lives were ruined in order to satisfy some government mandate to round-up tax-dodging American foreign bank account holders. Not only were these two unjustifiably labeled such, they learned you don't have to commit a crime to be found guilty of one.

One thing is certain, the US~Observer will continue to dog Christoper Rusch aka Christian Reeves until he either has no more offshore banking or investment clients to steal from and is arrested, or until he comes clean about his deal with the government and that his testimony against his clients Michael Quiel and Stephen Kerr was in fact fabricated. We will also pursue Judge Monica Edelstein, in hopes that in her hindsight she can see that Rusch was the mastermind of it all; that it was through her that he has been able to continue fleecing good people; and that she can make a difference now and help Quiel and Kerr get their convictions vacated. It's the least she can do.

If either of these events occur, Michael Quiel and Stephen Kerr have a chance at not only being exonerated but being 100% vindicated.

Stay tuned for our undercover expose on the life of an offshore conman.

★★★

WANTED

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Traveling to help people who are innocent of the crimes they are facing prosecution for is extremely expensive.

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Garrett's Autopsy of a Crime Lab illuminates the flaws in forensic science

Duke Law Book Review

Nearly 20 years ago, as a civil rights fellow at the famed law firm Cochran, Neufeld & Scheck (now NSB Civil Rights), Brandon Garrett was struck by the role that flawed forensic evidence played in many of his clients' wrongful convictions.

That experience is one reason why Garrett, now the L. Neil Williams, Jr. Professor of Law at Duke, has made preventing wrongful convictions through research on accuracy and transparency in forensic science a priority for the Wilson Center for Science and Justice, which he directs. While DNA evidence has helped exonerate more than 350 people since it was first used in 1989, more than half were convicted on the basis of fingerprint, bite mark, blood spatter, or other forensic analysis presented at trial, according to a database Garrett maintains.

In his latest book, Autopsy of a Crime Lab: Exposing the Flaws in Forensics (UC Press, March 2021), Garrett conducts a critical review of how forensics are used in criminal cases, detailing the many ways that evidence relied upon by courts and juries can be – and frequently is – compromised on its way from the crime scene to the lab to the courtroom. They include an overreliance on forensic analysis methods that lack scientific validity or have been disproved altogether; the lack of federal regulation of crime labs; and the allowing of trial testimony by "expert" witnesses with unvetted proficiency, undisclosed bias or conflicts of interest, and claims of "100 percent certainty" in results from methods with troubling error rates not disclosed to jurors. In most criminal cases, this evidence is presented by prosecution witnesses and goes unchallenged by under-resourced defense teams – if the case goes to trial at all.

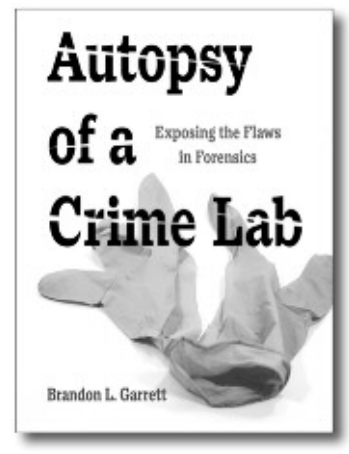
The book illuminates the failure of the forensic profession to self-regulate, and the toll that widespread problems at crime labs and with forensic disciplines themselves have taken on the integrity of the criminal legal system. Garrett also proposes a comprehensive reform agenda that includes adequate funding, independence from law enforcement, and the establishment of quality control measures at the nation's virtually unregulated network of crime labs.

"Stubborn resistance to criticism and hostility to scientific research is the very antithesis of good science," Garrett writes. "What leading scientists keep telling us is that, apart from the DNA area, no forensic techniques have undergone sufficiently rigorous testing. Error rates have been unknown ... Simply put, we need to bring good science to forensics."

At a Wilson Center event earlier this year, Jennifer Mnookin, dean of UCLA School of Law and founding co-director of its Program on Understanding Law, Science and Evidence, praised the book's "synthetic" quality.

"It reviews the entire range of issues around crime labs and some of the challenges around them. It really gives us the whole soup-to-nuts range of engagements," Mnookin said.

"And in so doing, it tells a really powerful story of how this is a systemic set of problems. It's not just an issue in one area but, from beginning to end, forensic science doesn't appear to be operating with a serious focus on making sure we're doing all that is reasonably possible to ensure both accuracy and validity, and to ensure transparency about what we know and don't know."



ORIGINS OF CRIME LABS ARE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, NOT SCIENCE

In Autopsy of a Crime Lab, Garrett traces the origins of crime labs and shows how their beginnings inform the way many still operate today. Crime labs didn't emerge from the scientific community but as "cop shops" within law enforcement, staffed by police officers.

According to the book, when J. Edgar Hoover established the FBI's Technical Crime Laboratory in 1932, only a few of the big-city police departments dealing with a wave of Prohibition-era gangster activity had evidence-processing divisions. Today there are more than 400 publicly funded crime labs in the U.S., the majority of which are still part of law enforcement agencies.

"When you get your funding from police you see yourself as an arm of law enforcement to help solve crimes," Garrett points out.

The "war on drugs," a term coined during the Nixon administration, spurred an expansion of crime labs, and today drug-testing is still their bread and butter, accounting for about half the work of a typical lab. The other half involves linking evidence to individuals through firearm and fingerprint analysis, and disciplines like hair and handwriting comparison. DNA analysis, despite its high profile, makes up only 4% to 5% of most labs' work, yet three-quarters of the $200 million in federal grants available to crime labs is earmarked for it.

For all the scientific gloss on TV shows like CSI, there are no federal regulations holding crime labs to scientific or quality standards. In fact, clinical laboratories diagnosing minor illnesses like strep throat are more scrutinized – by many orders of magnitude – than crime labs processing evidence that could help put a person on death row, Garrett notes. Clinical laboratories are regulated under a system administered by the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, while no federal agency holds crime labs to account.

"It just shows how much we care about people charged with crimes versus people asking for a medical test," Garrett says.

Lack of oversight has led to scores of failures at crime labs across the nation, covering the gamut of forensic disciplines. In Massachusetts, misconduct by two analysts at state drug labs dating back to 2003 has affected close to 100,000 cases, many of which have been vacated. More recently, Washington, D.C.'s Department of Forensic Sciences' accreditation was suspended over a ballistics error in a murder case and the emergence of broader issues at the lab. And tainting, falsifying reports, improper handling, and other misconduct involving testing at crime labs from New Jersey and Florida to California and Oregon have resulted in the reopening and vacating of tens of thousands of convictions.

"I have documented over 130 crime lab scandals, involving errors or audits of multiple cases, at labs across the country," Garrett writes. "Hardly a month goes by that I do not find more labs to add to the list."

Along with the growing tally of costs to government related to investigation, retrial, and remediation, Garrett illustrates the human costs, from fines and incarceration to death, of wrongful convictions based on flawed forensics.

Autopsy of a Crime Lab opens with the high-profile case of Brandon Mayfield, an Oregon attorney whose fingerprints were erroneously matched by three experienced FBI examiners to evidence from the 2004 Madrid terrorist bombing – despite Mayfield's never having been to Spain. While the federal government issued a formal apology and $2 million settlement, and the FBI made changes to the way it performs fingerprint comparisons, Mayfield has suffered extended emotional and reputational damage from two and a half years under suspicion for terrorism.

Garrett uses examples from his earlier book, Convicting the Innocent: Where Criminal Prosecutions Go Wrong (Harvard University Press, 2012), which analyzes the first 250 people exonerated by DNA, to illustrate the many ways forensics can go wrong and the suffering caused to its victims. Among them are Keith Harward, who spent 33 years in prison partly on the basis of bite mark identification, a widely discredited technique with a high error rate, before being exonerated by DNA. Harward spoke about his case, the lingering effects of his long incarceration, and his struggle to rebuild his life during an appearance at Duke Law in March 2019.

"I'll never be free. This is something I have to live with the rest of my life," Harward said, choking up and drawing tears from audience members. "I get emotional about every little thing. Because unlike most people, I see things and witness things that y'all pass right by."

THE REFORM AGENDA: A WAY FORWARD

... "Many of the key reforms that Brandon outlines in Autopsy of a Crime Lab are part of my own wish list, and many of them would bring forensics in line with modern scientific practice, which is long overdue," said Ed Cheng, the Hess Chair in Law at Vanderbilt Law School, at the Wilson Center event, calling it "a timely and important book."

★★★

Continued from page 8 • The Metaverse Is Big Brother in Disguise: Freedom Meted Out by Technological Tyrants

cop — such as the Atlas android being developed by the Pentagon — that has been programmed to respond to any perceived threat with violence?

Moreover, it's not just our homes and personal devices that are being reordered and reimagined in this connected age: it's our workplaces, our health systems, our government, our bodies and our innermost thoughts that are being plugged into a matrix over which we have no real control.

It is expected that by 2030, we will all experience The Internet of Senses (IoS), enabled by Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), 5G, and automation. The Internet of Senses relies on connected technology interacting with our senses of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch by way of the brain as the user interface. As journalist Susan Fourtane explains:

Many predict that by 2030, the lines between thinking and doing will blur. Fifty-nine percent of consumers believe that we will be able to see map routes on VR glasses by simply thinking of a destination… By 2030, technology is set to respond to our thoughts, and even share them with others… Using the brain as an interface could mean the end of keyboards, mice, game controllers, and ultimately user interfaces for any digital device. The user needs to only think about the commands, and they will just happen. Smartphones could even function without touch screens.

In other words, the IoS will rely on technology being able to access and act on your thoughts.

Fourtane outlines several trends related to the IoS that are expected to become a reality by 2030:

1: Thoughts become action: using the brain as the interface, for example, users will be able to see map routes on VR glasses by simply thinking of a destination.

2: Sounds will become an extension of the devised virtual reality: users could mimic anyone's voice realistically enough to fool even family members.

3: Real food will become secondary to imagined tastes. A sensory device for your mouth could digitally enhance anything you eat, so that any food can taste like your favorite treat.

4: Smells will become a projection of this virtual reality so that virtual visits, to forests or the countryside for instance, would include experiencing all the natural smells of those places.

5: Total touch: Smartphones with screens will convey the shape and texture of the digital icons and buttons they are pressing.

6: Merged reality: VR game worlds will become indistinguishable from physical reality by 2030.

This is the metaverse, wrapped up in the siren-song of convenience and sold to us as the secret to success, entertainment and happiness.

It's a false promise, a wicked trap to snare us, with a single objective: total control.George Orwell understood this.

Orwell's masterpiece, 1984, portrays a global society of total control in which people are not allowed to have thoughts that in any way disagree with the corporate state. There is no personal freedom, and advanced technology has become the driving force behind a surveillance-driven society. Snitches and cameras are everywhere. And people are subject to the Thought Police, who deal with anyone guilty of thought crimes. The government, or "Party," is headed by Big Brother, who appears on posters everywhere with the words: "Big Brother is watching you."

As I make clear in my book Battlefield America: The War on the American People and in its fictional counterpart The Erik Blair Diaries, total control over every aspect of our lives, right down to our inner thoughts, is the objective of any totalitarian regime.

The Metaverse is just Big Brother in disguise.

★★★

Articles and Opinions

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The goal of *US~Observer* is to ensure "due process" and "equal protection under the law."

Citizens who have founded and support it believe in the Bill of Rights and Article 1, Section 1, of the Oregon Constitution which states:

"We declare that all men, when they form a social compact are equal in right; that all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness and they have at all times a right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such a manner they think proper. This enumeration of rights and privileges shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people."

Let Parents Choose

By John Stossel

As Virginia's gubernatorial election drew to a close last week, Democrat Terry McAuliffe brought in teachers union president Randi Weingarten.

He thought that would help?

I suppose he, like many progressives, believes everyone thinks the way he does.

"I'm not going to let parents come into schools and ... make their own decisions," he'd said. "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach."

That's the political attitude: Government runs things. We, the experts, know what's best. Parents as "customers" who make choices? Nonsense.

I hope his defeat means Americans are figuring out that such politicians are enemies of progress.

Years ago, I was surprised to discover that NYC's failing public schools spent $20,000 per student. Teachers had been holding protests where they shouted: "Fund schools! We don't have enough money!"

But they spent $20,000 (now nearly $30,000) per student! At 25 students per class, that's $500,000 per classroom! Think what you could do with that money: hire five good teachers?

Where did the money go? No one in the bureaucracy had a good answer. Governments make money ... disappear.

I researched different education systems and did an ABC TV special called "Stupid in America." It showed how American students do worse than kids in other countries.

I suggested that parental choice would help. After all, competition brought us better phones, cars, supermarkets, etc., while holding prices down. Competition forces providers to constantly try new things to please their customers. But not in government schools.

Randi Weingarten

This year, most private and Catholic schools opened, while "public" (government-run) schools often stayed closed.

Monopolies kill innovation. When public schools began, most Americans worked on farms. That's why schools took a summer break, so kids could help on the farm. Today, fewer than 2% of us work on farms, yet nearly every government school still takes the summer off.

"Unionized monopolies like yours fail," I told Weingarten (when she still would speak to me). "It is the children who you are failing."

"We are not a unionized monopoly!" she snapped. "Folks who want to say this ... don't really care about kids."

But I do care about kids.

Of course, government-run schools are a monopoly. Don't like your school? Tough. School is terrible? Tough. Your taxes fund that school regardless of whether it's good or bad.

Suppose we bought groceries that way: no more supermarkets offering choices. We vote on whether we want meat or fish. Whichever wins -- that's what everyone eats.

When I interviewed Weingarten, I pointed out that civil service and union rules meant it could take 10 years to fire a bad teacher.

"We'll police our own profession," she said.

"I'd like to police my job, too," I responded. "But that's not how it works in life!"

Apparently, I was wrong. When it comes to public education, it's still how things work.

After "Stupid in America" aired, and millions watched, Weingarten held a protest outside my office. Hundreds of teachers carried signs,and shouted, "We are here to demand an apology from '20/20's' John Stossel!"

I surprised them by coming out of the ABC building to let them yell at me personally. Teachers told me I'd insulted them. Some said (probably correctly) that I had no clue how hard their jobs were.

So, Weingarten came up with a plan to educate me. "Teach for a week!" she shouted at me, through the loudspeaker. "We've got high schools; we've got elementary schools."

The teachers liked that idea. They started chanting, "Teach, John, teach!"I think I surprised them again by saying, "OK!"

I would have taught in any classroom they picked. I wanted to videotape it.

But then they showed their bureaucratic nature. After repeatedly rescheduled meetings, they decided that I would not be allowed to teach.

Children are too important to be entrusted to unions or government monopolies. Competition, parental choice, would bring innovation that will make schools much better.

After Glenn Youngkin won the race for governor, he said, "We're going to introduce choice within our public school system."

If he does it, it's about time. ★★★

'I could be killed at any time':
The anguish of being wrongfully convicted of murder

By Stuart Wolpert

(UCLA Newsroom) - Maurice Caldwell spent 20 years in prison before his wrongful conviction for a 1990 murder in San Francisco was finally overturned.

Paul Abramson, a UCLA professor of psychology who was hired as an expert by Caldwell's legal team to assess the psychological harm Caldwell suffered, conducted 20 extensive interviews with Caldwell between 2015 and 2020, in addition to interviewing prison correctional officers and reviewing court hearings and decisions, depositions, psychological testing results and experts' reports.

In a paper published in the peer-reviewed Wrongful Conviction Law Review, Abramson provides an overview of the case and a comprehensive psychological analysis detailing the devastating and ongoing effects of Caldwell's wrongful conviction and imprisonment. He also examines the historically contentious relations between police and communities of color and asks why corrupt and abusive officers rarely face punishment for their actions.

Caldwell's 1991 conviction was overturned on March 28, 2010. The San Francisco District Attorney's Office dismissed the case, and Caldwell was released from prison in 2011. He settled his decade-long civil suit against the county and city of San Francisco, the police department and one SFPD officer just weeks before the scheduled start of the trial, and this month, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors approved an $8 million payout to Caldwell, who was 23 at the time of his conviction.

'APPALLING INJUSTICE': THE WRONGFUL CONVICTION OF CALDWELL

In January 1990, San Francisco Police Sgt. Kitt Crenshaw was among several officers who chased a group of young Black men who had allegedly been firing weapons at streetlights in the city's Alemany public housing project. Caldwell was apprehended but not arrested. Caldwell alleged that Crenshaw physically abused him and threatened to kill him, and he filed a complaint against the officer with the city's police watchdog agency.

About five months later, a man was shot to death in the Alemany projects. Crenshaw, who was not assigned to the homicide division, volunteered to search the projects for offenders and made Caldwell his primary subject, write Abramson and his co-author, Sienna Bland-Abramson, a UCLA undergraduate psychology major (and Abramson's daughter) who worked on the case as a senior research analyst at two civil rights law firms.

On the strength of a dubious eyewitness claim and Crenshaw's investigation notes, Caldwell was ultimately convicted of second-degree murder and two other charges and sentenced to 27 years to life in prison. Another man eventually confessed to the murder. Bland-Abramson concluded that San Francisco police officers had committed racial profiling, harassment and acts of corruption.

Maurice Caldwell

Crenshaw, who retired from the San Francisco Police Department in 2011 with the rank of commander, had 67 civilian complaints lodged against him over the course of his career but never faced repercussions for purportedly fabricating his notes to frame Caldwell for murder, Abramson and Bland-Abramson write.

CATASTROPHIC SUFFERING AND PROFOUND DISTRESS

Caldwell endured catastrophic suffering, profound and overwhelming stress throughout his incarceration in various prisons, Abramson writes. How did Caldwell's experiences affect him?

About 2 1/2 years after Caldwell entered the California prison system, he was brutally stabbed in the head, shoulder and chest by another inmate who used an improvised 6-inch-long knife made from a metal rod filed to a sharp point. At the time, he was an inmate at California State Prison, Sacramento, also known as New Folsom's Level 4 Prison.

Caldwell said the stabbing changed his life. "I knew at that very moment I could be killed at any time, on any day," he told Abramson.

A retired correctional officer, Chris Buckley, who knew and had supervised Caldwell while he was incarcerated in a Northern California maximum-security prison, told Abramson last year, "A Level 4 prison is like the worst neighborhood you could imagine. Something terrible always might happen. Besides all of the stabbings, there are so many sexual assaults. Fear of dying in prison is a legitimate concern."

Caldwell routinely observed violent struggles and riots throughout his incarceration, and repeatedly saw lethal weapons in the possession of inmates. He never felt safe any time he walked outside his cell, always fearing for his life. His closest family members — his grandmother, mother and brother — all died while he was in prison. He was prohibited from attending their funerals and became suicidal, feeling he had nothing, and no one, to live for, Abramson and Bland-Abramson write.

"Being in prison was like going to war every day," Caldwell told Abramson. "It's only when I was in my cell at night that I felt I was safe. I was depressed every day in prison. I don't sleep. I suffer every day. I can understand how someone would go postal. I wouldn't do something like that, for my kids, for all kinds of reasons. But I can understand."

Caldwell suffers from what is known as complex post-traumatic stress disorder — a form of deeply entrenched severe psychological distress also experienced by Holocaust survivors, prisoners of war and victims of childhood abuse, domestic abuse and torture — the result of having experienced sustained and repetitive agonizing events, Abramson said. Complex PTSD is often marked by rage and an unyielding depression, as in Caldwell's case, according to Abramson.

"Mr. Caldwell could very well be an archetype for complex PTSD," Abramson writes. "Maximum-security prisons maintain complete coercive control through 24-hour armed surveillance, locked cell blocks, 24-hour visibility of every aspect of a prisoner's life, routine strip searches and thoroughly structured daily routines; all of which is encompassed within a fortress that is distinguished by outside perimeter barriers, and surrounded by razor wire with lethal electric fences designed to eliminate the possibility of escape."

The many traumas Caldwell, now 54, experienced while in captivity imposed such an emotional burden on him that he disintegrated psychologically, Abramson writes, and the recent civil settlement provides no measure of relief from the deep and lasting anguish and rage that consume him — and likely will for the rest of his life.

Caldwell and Buckley, the former correctional officer, spoke with UCLA undergraduates in late September in an "Art and Trauma" honors collegium course that Abramson co-teaches.

Abramson and Bland-Abramson conclude that Caldwell was a victim of appalling injustice, which continues to disproportionately affect people of color in the United States. Recent research has shown that Black people in the U.S. are seven times more likely than white people to be wrongfully convicted of murder.

"Our hope," the authors write, "is that by presenting this material, we can facilitate an understanding for, and empathy with, the trials and tribulations of victims of color who have suffered tremendously from police corruption and wrongful convictions. Until equal protection under the law is sustained unequivocally, restorative justice for people of color will be grievously foreshortened."

★★★

The FDA Warns That Hand Sanitizer 'Can Cause Serious Injury' if You Put It in Your Eyes

By Lenore Skenazy

(Reason) - Recently the government issued a press release sure to distress anyone who was about to sanitize their hands: "FDA warns that getting alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the eyes can cause serious injury."

This is scary stuff. Everyone I know carries hand sanitizer at all times, particularly since the pandemic. Is hand sanitizer blinding an entire generation?

Well, not quite. It seems that, perhaps lacking other public health emergencies to deal with, the government decided to study the issue of eye injuries hand sanitizer might be causing. To do so, it reviewed calls to poison control centers, as well as the academic literature on sanitizer eye injuries, from January 1, 2018 trough April 30, 2021. That is, it studied two and a half years' worth of ocular incidents, starting a year before COVID-19 right on up through its crest. And in a country of 330,000,000 people over the course of 1,215 days, what horrible truth did the FDA discover?

Precisely "3,642 cases of side effects resulting from eye exposure to these hand sanitizers." How many of those folks went blind? Zero.

How many of them required eye surgery?

Zero.

So what were the horrific "side effects" discovered by the FDA? Eye irritation and "red eye."

But that's not quite the whole story, the agency hastened to add. Among those 3,000+ cases of eye irritation, 58 were categorized as "more serious." These were treated via a radical intervention known as "rinsing the eye." Twenty-six of those folks also received antibiotics. In the end, 51 of the 58 were treated and released, but I don't think you have to worry that the other seven eventually turned up at guide dog orientation. Their particular cases "were either not followed or were minor."

The FDA adds that when it reviewed two other publications, it encountered 18 cases of "eye exposure" in children that required treatment in a hospital or by a health care professional (which I assume could include a school nurse). Ten had some eye damage, and two required surgery. And another study reported on two children who needed several days of eye-washing and medicine for their problems to resolve.

While that obviously must have been disturbing for those families, why is the government publicly warning us about something that happened to a truly minimal number of people when hundreds of millions of people are using this stuff day in and day out with no eye damage?

"Our policies follow our fears, not the facts," says David Ropeik, author of How Risky Is It Really?. We are a culture that distrusts chemicals and fears for our kids on almost every front. "Raising the alarm on behalf of public safety feels like a public service," Ropeik says. Even when it's not.

And as chemist Josh Bloom, Director of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Science at the often-skeptical American Council on Science and Health, points out: "There are few chemicals that won't do damage if you get them in your eye."

The FDA also warns about the dangers of breathing in hand sanitizer vapors, having discovered 50 adverse incidents over the course of 11 years. That's almost five a year, or one incident for every 66,000,000 people. For comparison, your odds of dying in a lacrosse incident are 1 in 22,000,000.

"These are the same people who could not approve an at-home COVID-19 test for a year," says John Tierney, former New York Times science writer and author of The Power of Bad.

Blame it on the Purell fumes. ★★★

Continued from page 3 • Oregon Attorney Lies to the BBB

A FACTUAL DISSECTION OF SCHMONSEES' COMPLAINT

Is the US~Observer not a "purported news website" as Schmonsees claimed? We have been in print for approximately thirty years, with subscribers in all 50 states, making the US~Observer well established and quite legitimate. We investigate cases on a factual basis. We never intentionally file false or defaming articles. We do, however, publish damning articles from time to time about crooked attorneys who steal from their clients by not providing an adequate defense for them. We also publish complementary statements about attorneys who properly represent their clients. It all depends on the facts.

The quotes we published and attributed to Schmonsees do not constitute the torts of false light and defamation, as they are taken directly from his correspondence – he factually said those things. On the other hand, Schmonsees complaint to the BBB contained only desperate lies which does constitute the torts of false light and defamation against the US~Observer, especially considering his complaint was designed to injure the US~Observer's stellar rating and reputation. Attorney Brian Schmonsees has not served any retraction demand on the US~Observer like he told the BBB he was going to do. He obviously told the BBB he was doing so in hopes that he could sway them into believing his lies.

The only thing that anyone needs to do to see if the US~Observer deserves an A+ rating is to go to our website and view our many references.

Our practice is always to take the high road. I called Public Defender Schmonsees twice and left cordial voice messages both times asking that he call and explain what was incorrect with the article we published. We did not receive any response. I finally sent Schmonsees the following email:

"I have left you two voicemails on your phone and have not had the courtesy of a return call – Why?

You filed a false complaint against the US~Observer with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) on 9/14/2021. I answered their inquiry into the complaint on 9/21/2021. The BBB subsequently sent me notice they decided "Complaint Closed Invalid". The BBB instructed me to contact you and work the matter out directly with you. You have been non-responsive to my attempts.

I consider this matter to be serious as you attempted to ruin our A+ rating and reputation with the public body most people check with before deciding to do business with someone. Further, you stated in your complaint that you were "drafting retraction demands". I have not received any such demand to date.

I would appreciate a call or email from you so we can discuss this matter and resolve it. I certainly do not want to have any false or misleading information about someone in the public realm with my name on it or that of the US~Observer. If I misquoted you or have stated anything that is not factual we need to fix this as I would never intentionally defame anyone.

If you fail to respond to this communication within the next couple weeks, I will have no other option but to settle this matter publicly."

And here we are…

Editor's Note: To date, the US~Observer has not received any response.

If you have information regarding Brian Schmonsees, contact the US~Observer by calling 541-474-7885.

★★★

Judge at center of FOX46 investigation resigns

By Jody Barr

(FOX 46 Charlotte) Marlboro County, SC – The second-in-charge at the Marlboro County Probate Judge's Office is no longer with the office. A call to Judge Mark Heath's office Friday morning confirmed Deputy Probate Judge Tammy Bullock is no longer with the office.

A woman who answered the phone in the judge's office confirmed Bullock no longer worked there. The woman did not identify herself and hung up on FOX 46 Chief Investigator Jody Barr when asked when Bullock resigned.

Follow-up calls to the office were not answered.

Bullock is currently the subject of a criminal investigation by the State Law Enforcement Division and a South Carolina Supreme Court Office of Disciplinary Counsel investigation after FOX 46 aired an investigative series titled 'Final Disrespects' on Oct. 5.

The series detailed criminal allegations against Bullock and others who plundered through Hollis Slade's home in January 2021. Slade died on Jan. 23 and security camera recordings at his home captured audio and video of Bullock and the group discussing searching Slade's home for a will. The videos showed members of the group walking out of the home with property.

Bullock is also accused of impersonating a probate judge when she met with Slade's family on Jan. 24; the day after his death.

This all happened over the course of two days in January while Slade's wife, who suffers from severe dementia, was inside the home.

Bullock and the group never responded to multiple requests to schedule interviews with FOX 46 to explain what happened in those videos.

On Oct. 18, Judge Heath asked the state Supreme Court to reassign Slade's probate case to another county after Heath wanted to recuse himself from Slade's estate case. Heath had already spent nearly nine months presiding over the case despite knowing of the allegations against his deputy judge since at least Jan. 29.

Slade's neighbor, Bobby Norris, told Judge Heath about the criminal allegations against Bullock and the videos during a Jan. 29 phone call. Heath told Norris he'd investigate the allegations, but Norris said he never heard anything further from Heath.

Heath swore Bullock into office seven weeks later, granting her full judicial powers in his absence.

Bullock and Heath attended a South Carolina Association of Probate Judges conference at a Myrtle Beach resort this week. Our investigation found Bullock attended the first day of the three-day conference but left the resort after our arrival. Bullock missed two of the three days and the resort confirmed Bullock never checked out of her hotel room for the final two days of the conference.

The conference provided up to 12 continuing legal education, or CLE, hours for all elected probate and appointed probate judges in the state. State regulations require all probate judges to earn 15 CLE hours each year.

We attempted to interview Heath inside the resort at 10:30 Wednesday morning as he waited on an elevator. "No comment," Heath said as the door closed.

About 30 minutes later we video recorded Heath and a woman carrying luggage through the parking lot and loading it into a vehicle registered to Heath. We followed Heath as he left the resort and got onto the highway out of Myrtle Beach.

Heath attended only 30 minutes of the final day of seminars at the conference. Heath was not in the office Friday morning when we called to ask about Bullock's employment status.

On Feb. 5, Bennettsville Police charged Bullock with pointing and presenting a firearm during an argument with her roommate. Bullock was never arrested in the case after city police investigators chose to charge Bullock under a city ordinance instead of the state's criminal code.

Bullock was issued a criminal citation on a state traffic summons. Bullock's trial on that charge is set for Nov. 16 in Bennettsville.

Following our Final Disrespects series, the South Carolina Supreme Court's investigative unit, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, sent subpoenas to the Bennettsville Police Department seeking records in Bullock's prosecution. The unit also sent subpoenas to the Marlboro County Probate Judge's Office; sources familiar with that office told Barr.

The ODC acts as a "screening and investigating" arm for the South Carolina judicial system for investigations involving misconduct allegations against lawyers and judges in the state. The agency has the authority to prosecute misconduct complaints.

The Supreme Court would not confirm the existence of an investigation in an emailed response to FOX 46 received Oct. 13, "Court rules prohibit us from confirming the existence of disciplinary investigations while they are ongoing, so I will not be able to respond to your request," South Carolina Judicial Branch Public Information Director, Ginny Jones wrote in the statement.

Tammy Bullock

Court rules prohibit members of the Supreme Court and its employees from confirming such investigations and violating the confidentiality rule could result in a contempt of court charge for those state employees.

"We have received a subpoena for records pertaining to the case and we have fulfilled those particular subpoena needs, wants, and questions regarding this case and that has been forwarded to our city attorney so they can properly go through the channels to ensure that information is given to that state agency," Bennettsville Police Chief Kevin Miller told FOX 46.

We asked Bullock multiple times for an interview throughout our investigative series, but Bullock would not respond to any of our requests.

Following our investigation into the Bullock weapon charge, Chief Miller asked the State Law Enforcement Division to "review" his department's prosecution decisions. SLED declined Miller's request.

"At this time no information or evidence has been obtained to warrant SLED opening a new criminal investigation into this matter. There is no evidence to indicate anything improper was done by the arresting agency or officers. Any cursory review of the initial arrest would be handled by the City Attorney or Solicitor's Office," SLED spokesman Tommy Crosby wrote in a response to FOX 46 seeking clarification on the agency's decision.

Fourth Circuit Solicitor Will Rogers said since his office performs legal work for the county probate office it would not "be proper" for his office to be involved in any investigation of Bullock. Rogers directed the Marlboro County Sheriff's Office to send a separate criminal investigation into Bullock to SLED in June citing a potential conflict of interest between his office and the probate court.

The separate criminal investigation was presented to SLED in June and it took the agency more than two months to officially open that investigation into Bullock. In that case, Bullock is accused of impersonating a judge, rummaging through a dead man's home, and participating in the removal of property from the man's home in January 2021.

That man, Hollis Slade, died on Jan. 23. Security cameras outside Slade's Joyce Drive home captured Bullock and others searching the man's home looking for his will. The cameras also captured discussions between Bullock and the group about keeping financial information they found inside the man's home from his family.

That investigation is still open at SLED.

Chief Miller is the only law enforcer in Marlboro County to agree to an interview regarding Deputy Probate Judge Tammy Bullock.

"This interview was important to me because let's face it, I could have hid behind a desk, I could have hid behind a phone; that's very easy to do is to hide. I'm out here in the open. I want people to know this is the truth, these are the facts. The Bennettsville Police Department is 100% acting in good faith with everything we've done," Miller told FOX 46.

Miller submitted the case to the city's attorney's office for review and has requested the city attorney prosecute the case during the scheduled Nov. 16 trial, "I will not hide behind a desk or a door or a phone from anyone who has questions about anything pertaining to this case. That is not who I am and that is not what this police department represents," Miller said.

Bullock will be tried in the Bennettsville municipal court. Her trial date is currently set for Nov. 16, 2021. We will continue to follow the prosecution and update our reporting. ★★★

Traffic stop involving Clarksville cop example of why many question system

(NewsandTribune.com) Clark County, IN – An Indiana State Trooper wrote in a probable cause affidavit that he drew and pointed a Taser at Clarksville Police Det. Bryan Coburn "in fear" for his safety during a traffic stop early on the morning of Sept. 25th. According to the trooper's statements in the affidavit, which were reported by the News and Tribune recently, Coburn was upset that the vehicle driven by his wife had been stopped. His wife was later charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated, and Coburn faces a misdemeanor count of resisting law enforcement.

If the affidavit is true, the glaring question is, how is Coburn not facing a felony?

The trooper states in the report that Coburn's wife refused a portable breath test. While attempting to place her into custody, Coburn exited his vehicle on two different occasions, according to the affidavit.

On his second attempt to interfere with the traffic stop, Coburn again disobeyed "loud verbal commands" and grabbed the trooper's left arm with both hands, according to the affidavit.

After the trooper drew the Taser, Coburn warned him, in summary, to not mess with him, according to the affidavit. Mess wasn't the word used, but rather another word of the four-letter variety.

Those accused of crimes should be presumed innocent until proven guilty. But based on the affidavit, Coburn interfered with the trooper's arrest of his wife, threatened the trooper and placed his hands on the trooper while he was arresting the woman.

How many ordinary citizens could do the same and only be charged with a misdemeanor? If a man who wasn't a cop grabbed a trooper's arm (after telling the trooper he had a gun, according to the affidavit) while the trooper was attempting to place the man's wife in custody, what would have been the outcome?

In the affidavit, the suggested offenses committed by Coburn include battery on a police officer and obstruction of justice. But Coburn is facing neither of those charges.

Situations like these are why many people believe our criminal justice system is broken. But it's not just an issue of policing. Prosecutors shouldn't give special treatment to cops who break the law.

Clark County Prosecutor Jeremy Mull has stepped back from this case, with Harrison County Prosecutor Joshua Otto Schalk taking the lead. They must be wary of a precedent that could be set. If grabbing a trooper's arm and threatening him is only a misdemeanor, that's a scary proposition for any law enforcement officer.

Detective Bryan Coburn

Laws must be enforced equally, or the system and those who are paid to manage it must change. ★★★

Cop Kills 8-Year-Old Girl; Two Teens Charged With Her Murder

By Billy Binion

(Reason) - Two Pennsylvania teens are staring down first-degree murder charges after a bullet killed 8-year-old Fanta Bility outside of a high school football game in August this year.

Neither Angelo "A.J." Ford, 16, nor Hasein Strand, 18, fired that fatal shot. A police officer did, but the two teens were charged under the concept of transferred intent, which allows the state to prosecute someone for a crime he didn't technically commit if it happened during the commission of a related offense.

On August 27, Ford allegedly threatened Strand and his friends with a handgun at an Academy Park High School football game, prompting Strand to retrieve his own firearm from his vehicle. Ford opened fire and Strand responded in kind; a nearby victim was ultimately wounded in the gunfire - that victim was not Bility.

Fanta Bility

Bility died when an unidentified Sharon Hill cop shot her in the back after three officers began shooting at a car that they reportedly believed was involved in the shooting between Ford and Strand. The bullets from the police also struck Bility's older sister and two other bystanders, who survived.

The charges against the two teens have revived an under-the-radar debate about the doctrine of transferred intent, a controversial approach that some say grants the state too much latitude to sweep people up in prosecutions for crimes they did not commit. That's complicated here by the fact that the actual shooter in question was another agent of the government.

It would not be the first time that police have used the legal doctrine to deflect responsibility onto someone else for a tragic accident. An Idaho woman was recently charged with manslaughter after a police officer killed another police officer with his vehicle while responding to the woman's apparent mental health crisis. Though an internal investigation revealed that the officers had failed to follow safety protocols that evening, Jenna Holm spent over a year in jail awaiting trial on that homicide charge. A judge eventually struck the charge down as unconstitutional.

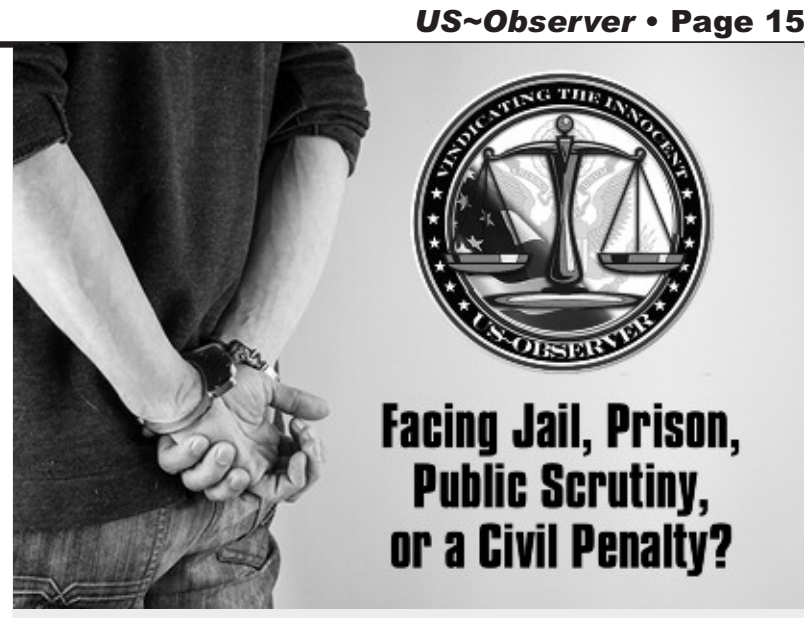
Observers will likely find this story less cut and dry; having a mental health crisis on the side of the road is obviously not the same thing as engaging in a gunfight. But it remains a matter of debate whether the two teens should be prosecuted solely for the crimes they allegedly committed—aggravated assault and gun charges—as opposed to the first-degree intentional murder of someone everyone acknowledges they did not actually kill.

The doctrine of transferred intent is inherent to the contentious felony murder rule. It's how, for example, prosecutors in Ohio were able to zero in on a teenager for the murder of her boyfriend after a police officer killed him during a botched robbery. Though the state conceded the obvious—that 16-year-old Masonique Saunders hadn't pulled the trigger—they pinned the killing on her because she allegedly helped him plan that burglary. She ultimately pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter.

Bility's family has filed a civil suit against the officers and the police department. It's questionable that her family members will ever get the opportunity to state their case before a jury, as they will need to overcome qualified immunity, the doctrine that shields government officials from lawsuits if the way they allegedly violated someone's rights has not yet been "clearly established" in a prior court decision. So, too, will they face an uphill battle in suing the department, as the Monell doctrine will require they prove that the government had a specific policy in place that explicitly propagated the behavior that evening.

"I want the focus to remain on the Sharon Hill police officers whose negligent and reckless behavior in reacting as they did is what killed Fanta Bility," Bruce Castor, an attorney for the family, told The Philadelphia Inquirer. "From the point of view of the Bility family, these officers killed Fanta, and they need to be held accountable for that, and those responsible for their supervision and training need to be held accountable for that."

★★★



If You're in Trouble, We Help

By US~Observer Staff

Many people wonder how a newspaper can help a person facing criminal charges, or those who are being faced with being victimized in a civil issue.

People find it difficult to understand that maybe their first stop when they are falsely accused, charged or abused should be the US~Observer.

So... Why the US~Observer? The answer is quite simple. We win your case.

When an innocent person is charged with a crime, or taken advantage of civilly, the US~Observer conducts a thorough investigation. We obtain evidence that attorneys and licensed investigators cannot obtain because of the many licensing rules they must follow. We have no rules. When an innocent person's life, freedom or property are in jeopardy, we expeditiously get to the truth and facts, no matter what it takes.

CRIMINAL CASES

Concerning false criminal charges, when we have acquired conclusive evidence of innocence we go to the elected prosecutor responsible for filing those false charges, and give him/her the evidence. Then, we demand that they drop the false charges they have filed. If they refuse, we take them into our court – the court of public opinion. Here, the two things they are protective of, or are always concerned with, their reputation and career, become vulnerable.

When we publish about them and the specific abuse they have leveled at an innocent person the game changes. Publicly, they must face their friends, family and community – our court is where accountability begins.

The prosecutor soon finds that the one and only thing that he/she fears is exposure. When they are faced with losing their career and/or reputation they usually do the right thing and dismiss the false charges. If they don't we escalate our exposure until they are forced to accept the truth – the facts!

Keep in mind that as we escalate our efforts publicly, any possible future jury pool is becoming aware of the false charge(s) as they read the facts on the front page of a national newspaper.

When prosecutors file charges they send press releases to the media. We do the exact same thing that prosecutors do except we publish absolute facts, obtained by conducting our thorough investigation; they often rush to judgment and release lies to the jury pool. They do this because it works and ensures them a conviction. We do this because it works and ensures the innocent person a dropped charge or an acquittal.

Again, at the end of the day the prosecutor either drops the false charge(s) or their reputation and career are demolished and they lose at trial. They lose because we were able to obtain crucial evidence that no one else could.

CIVIL CASES

We handle civil cases in much the same manner as our criminal cases. If someone has stolen from you, whether it be your money, property, child or other, we give that person, agency or other the chance to return your property. Often, they comply because they cannot stand exposure – exposure can lead to possible criminal charges and huge civil damages payouts. Before long, they all either do the right thing and comply or they are ruined – ruined by the truth and facts.

If you are in trouble, don't roll the dice with just an attorney.

CRIMES UNANSWERED

Given the US~Observer's track record of defeating false criminal charges, it stands to reason that the US~Observer is definitely the "Go To" when someone is getting away with a crime or dishonest action.

Do you know someone who should be in prison? Did they harm you? Steal from you? Abuse you or someone you know?

Did the justice system turn a blind eye? Were they seemingly above the law?

Contact the US~Observer – We will help ensure justice is served!

★★★

Go to usobserver.com for references. Call 541-474-7885 if you need help.

★★★

The US~Observer's services have defeated over 5,000 false charges to-date.

Are You Facing False Criminal Charges?

Have You Been a Victim of False Prosecution?

Welcome to the largest racket in history: The American Justice System

If you are facing prosecution for false charges then you are aware of how the 'justice' industry (racket) in America works. You (the innocent person) have been falsely charged with a crime. Most of the time you receive a myriad of stacked charges intended for the sole purpose of extracting a "plea bargain" from you.

You then rush to an attorney, pay him a huge retainer to cover the usual $200.00 per hour (if not higher), which he/she charges, to supposedly defend your innocence. The attorney usually files some motions, writes some worthless letters and makes many unproductive (unless they pertain to you accepting a plea bargain) phone calls until you are broke. Generally, you haven't even started your trial and 99% of the time the attorney hasn't completed any investigation.

All of a sudden your attorney is telling you that you can't win your case and you should accept the benevolent plea bargain that the almighty prosecuting attorney has offered you. "Do you want to take the chance on spending 30-40 years in prison when you can plea bargain for 18 months," your attorney tells you. What happened to: "I think we can win this case, it's a good case." Remember? Isn't that pretty close to what your attorney told you as he/she was relieving you of your money?

You then accept a plea bargain and go to jail or you have a jury trial, you're found guilty (because your attorney hasn't produced enough evidence-if any and because the judge directs the jury to find you guilty) and then you go to jail. When you finally wake up you realize that on top of now being a criminal, you are flat broke and incarcerated. You find that the very person (your attorney) you frantically rushed to retain, became your worst enemy.

There is only one way to remedy a false prosecution: Obtain conclusive evidence by investigating the accusers, the prosecutors – everyone involved with your case. In other words, complete an in-depth investigation before you are prosecuted and make the facts public, forcing a just outcome.

The US~Observer newspaper will not waste your time or your money. This is not a game, it's your life and your freedom. We do not make deals. If you are innocent, then nobody has the right to steal what belongs to you, most of all, your liberty. Nobody! That includes your attorney - as well as your supposed public servants.

Why have a bad day when it's still possible to force justice ... right down their throats?

The US~Observer investigates cases for news. We want to win, just as you want to prove your innocence.

For justice sake, don't wait until they slam the door behind you before contacting us if you are innocent. Preventing a wrongful conviction is much easier than achieving a post-conviction exoneration.

Call Us Today!
541-474-7885

If you prefer email:
editor@usobserver.com

"One false prosecution is one too many, and any act of immunity is simply a government condoned crime." *- Edward Snook, US~Observer*

Faces of the US~Observer's VINDICATED

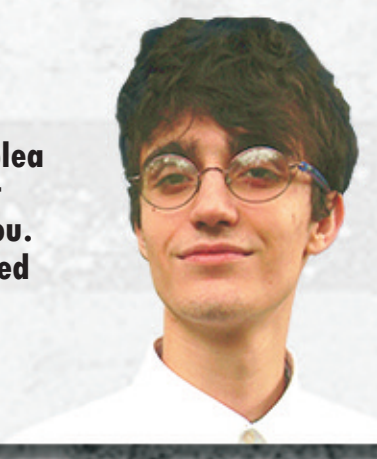
Shawn Yoakum
Employment Discrimination

"You changed my life forever, and made me want to help others. You did what you said you would."

Status: Compensated

Bryan Tucker
Sex Abuse

"I would have taken the plea deal for crimes I didn't commit if it wasn't for you. Thank you. I was acquitted because of you."



Status: Acquitted

Dean Muchow
Government Abuse

"Your investigative reporting was instrumental in stopping the District Attorney's abusive attacks."

Status: Cleared

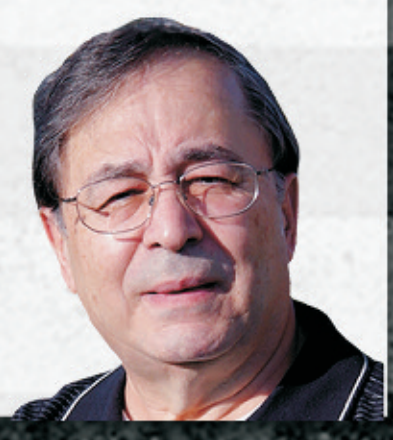
Jessica Morton
Sex Abuse

"If it wasn't for the US~Observer I would have lost everything; my freedom, my family. You made sure that didn't happen!"

Status: Dismissed

Jose Velasco-Vero
Felony Firearms Crimes

"My case was the first of its kind. You absolutely defeated these unwarranted charges!"



Status: Dismissed

Ella Lee
Assault & Resisting Arrest

"...no amount of reading can convey the heart, the sincerity and dedication of care you receive from these guys. Through their hard work, I got my dismissal papers today... So sweet it is."

Status: Dismissed

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