

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2016**



**DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT**  
**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

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## Message from the U.S. Attorney

As Connecticut's United States Attorney, it is my honor to work closely with federal and state prosecutors, agents and police officers in our collective effort to improve the safety and security of all our communities. I am grateful for the opportunity to support this meaningful work and the many accomplishments of my dedicated colleagues.



The aim of this Annual Report is to share with you the highlights of our work in 2016. Our office is comprised of 65 Assistant U.S. Attorneys and 52 staff members who work in Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford. Together, we enforce all federal criminal laws in Connecticut and represent the United States in all civil matters. This Report describes what we do, who does it, our great agency and police partners, and how you can contact us, including contact information for our key program coordinators. I hope this information is helpful and interesting to you and your families.

Our prosecutions and outreach programs are designed to support our communities and victims of crimes. We have worked hard to build bridges and create greater understanding between law enforcement and the minority communities we serve. Last year, this work included robust partnerships with members and leaders of the Arab, Muslim, Sikh, African American and LGBT communities. Together, we have provided cultural competency and anti-bias trainings for thousands of police officers, know-your-rights anti-bullying trainings for students, and security trainings for religious leaders. We equally prioritize our work with victims closely advising them of the developments in their criminal cases and supporting them in every way that we can.

In the wake of the growing opioid epidemic in Connecticut and throughout the country, we formed a statewide overdose task force. The State Medical Examiner's Office confirmed that 917 people died of drug overdoses in 2016; that is a 25% increase from 2015 and a 155% increase in deaths in which fentanyl, a highly dangerous synthetic opioid, was a contributor. Closely collaborating with Drug Enforcement Administration agents, state prosecutors, the Connecticut State Police and local police departments, we investigated 100 overdose deaths and charged 60 criminal cases. But we also recognize that increasing awareness of the dangers of opioid addiction is equally important. Together with parents who have lost their children to overdoses, we gave opioid presentations to close to 20,000 high school and middle school students, with the ultimate goal of reaching all high schools in Connecticut. We also made a short film aimed at raising awareness of opioid abuse. (*The Opioid Crisis Hits Home: Stories from Connecticut* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKWrlizNHlo>)).

Last year, there were significant accomplishments on a number of other fronts. We again prioritized prosecutions that protect those who are most vulnerable, especially children who are victims of sex trafficking or other forms of child exploitation, and the elderly who are too often the victims of investor fraud. We continue to use a data driven approach through our anti-violence initiative Project Longevity to direct our resources to prosecutions of those most responsible for gun violence in our inner cities, while at the same time encouraging potential offenders to step away from violence and take advantage of available resources. Our focus on the most violent defendants included

## Message from the U.S. Attorney

convictions in multiple homicide trials and guilty pleas resolving cold case homicides.

Our prosecutors also never shy away from challenging and complex work or seemingly powerful defendants. We dedicate ourselves to pursuing complicated fraud and corruption cases with the same rigor that we address violent crime.

Our sole goal is to seek justice. Everyone that is touched by the criminal justice system has the right to fair treatment whether they are victims, witnesses or defendants.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,



Deirdre M. Daly  
United States Attorney  
District of Connecticut

**Note:** Please understand that most of the information in this report concerns cases that have been fully adjudicated, and either the defendant has been sentenced or in the case of a civil matter, the parties have agreed to settlement terms. To the extent we mention a few newly charged cases, we do so to highlight the types of cases the Office prosecutes to protect the public safety and reinforce our commitment to certain initiatives. It is worth remembering that, in those instances we mention a case where the defendant has not been convicted, an indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Charges are only allegations, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.



# **USAO District of Connecticut Programs**

## **Victim-Witness Assistance**

### **Victim Witness Assistance**

The goal of the Connecticut Federal Victim/Witness Assistance Program is to ensure that victims of federal crime are treated with fairness and respect for the victim's dignity and privacy. The program carries out the mandates of the Federal Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982, the Crime Control Act of 1990, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 and the Justice for All Act of 2004. These laws apply to all victims and witnesses of federal crime who have suffered physical, financial, or emotional trauma.

Victims of all crimes under federal investigation are entitled to services under the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act (VRRRA), including notification of court events. For further details, please refer to Title 42, United States Code, section 10607, or the VRRRA link posted at <http://www.notify.usdoj.gov>.

A federal crime victim has the following rights:

- To be reasonably protected from the accused.
- To reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding, or any parole proceeding, involving the crime or of any release or escape of the accused.
- Not to be excluded from any such public court proceeding, unless the court, after receiving clear and convincing evidence, determines that testimony by the victim would be materially altered if the victim heard other testimony at that proceeding.
- To be reasonably heard at any public proceeding in the district court involving release, plea, sentencing, or any parole proceeding.
- To confer with the attorney for the Government in the case.
- To full and timely restitution as provided in law.
- To proceedings free from unreasonable delay.
- To be informed in a timely manner of any

plea bargain or deferred prosecution agreement.

- To be informed of the rights under this section and the services described in section 503 (c) of the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 10607(c)) and provided contact information for the Office of Victims' Rights Ombudsman of the Department of Justice.
- To be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy.

### **Notification Services**

When a federal criminal case reaches the prosecution stage of the criminal justice process, notification services are provided concerning the status of the case involving the victim or witness. The following notifications will be made, unless the victim specifically requests not to be notified.

- The release or detention status of an offender pending judicial proceedings, or the placement in a pretrial diversion program and the conditions thereof.
- The filing of charges against a suspected offender, or the proposed dismissal of any or all charges, including dismissal in favor of state prosecution.
- The scheduling, including scheduling changes and/or continuances, of any public court proceeding, to include post judgment hearings (*i.e.*, probation violations, appellate arguments).
- The terms of any negotiated plea, including the acceptance of a plea of guilty or the rendering of a verdict after trial.
- The dates of any plea, sentencing or parole hearing, and the victim's right to make a statement or present any information to the court in relation to the plea, sentence or parole of the defendant(s).

## **USAO District of Connecticut Programs**

### **Victim-Witness Assistance**

- The opportunity to present to the court a victim impact statement containing information concerning any harm, including financial, social, psychological, and physical harm done to or loss suffered by the victim of the crime.
  - The outcome of any trial, and the sentence imposed, to include restitution awarded.
- Justice and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut are committed to advocating, assisting and enforcing the rights of federal crime victims.

#### **Other Services Provided**

- To the extent possible, we will provide victims and witnesses with a waiting area removed from the offender and defense witnesses during court proceedings.
- Provide or arrange for support and assistance to victims and witnesses during court appearances.
- Upon request of a victim or witness, provide assistance in notifying the employer if cooperation in the investigation or prosecution of the crime causes his/her absence from work; and the creditors, where appropriate, if the crime or cooperation in the investigation or prosecution affects his/her ability to make timely payments.
- Routinely provide information or assistance concerning transportation, parking, lodging, translation and related services.
- Provide referrals to other agencies for shelter, counseling, compensation, and other types of assistance services when needed.

We have taken several steps to make participation by victims of crime and witnesses more effective and meaningful. The Department of



If you have any questions about our  
Victim Witness Program, please contact:  
**Ines Cenatiempo**  
**Victim Witness Coordinator**  
**United States Attorney's Office**  
**Email: [ines.cenatiempo@usdoj.gov](mailto:ines.cenatiempo@usdoj.gov)**

## **USAO District of Connecticut Programs** **Law Enforcement Coordination**

Our Law Enforcement Coordination Specialist Lori Vernali serves as the District's liaison to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. She provides a forum for the exchange of information, coordinates law enforcement training and serves as a point person for emerging issues within the law enforcement community. Our LEC Specialist is an active member of national and local law enforcement associations. She organizes conferences, activities, and programs on the issues that are importance to law enforcement. Ms. Vernali also works with members of local and state governmental agencies, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, community leaders, businesses, residents, youth, and concerned citizens. The goal is a holistic, systemic approach to addressing criminal activity in our communities by combining efforts aimed at prevention, intervention, treatment, enforcement/prosecution, and re-entry for offenders.

### **Training**

Providing high quality training is a priority for the LEC. In 2016, the U.S. Attorney's Office, together with the East Hartford Police Department and the Bureau of Justice Assistance held *Valor Essentials: Officer Safety, Wellness and Resiliency Training* at Goodwin College in East Hartford. This two-and-a-half-day training was attended by more than 100 law enforcement officers from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Ms. Vernali continues to work closely with law enforcement and mental health professionals throughout the country to maximize resources to assist officers cope with the stress inherent in their jobs. The LEC is an active participant in several national committees on the development of wellness practices and policies within the law enforcement profession and is an active member of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, Committee for Law Enforcement Wellness.

In addition to Valor training, in 2016, the LEC organized training in the areas of Hate Crimes, Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence and the Opioid Epidemic.

### **Grants**

The LEC also monitors and publicizes the availability of DOJ funding and grants for police departments and agencies to support programs that are consistent with DOJ priorities. She also consults with law enforcement and non-governmental organizations that are applying for federal grants. For example, in 2016 Ms. Vernali worked with the Justice Education Center to apply for, and implement, a second \$300,000 grant allocated to reducing youth violence.

For more information, please contact:

**Lori Vernali**  
**Law Enforcement Coordinator**  
**United States Attorney's Office**  
**(860) 760-7959**  
**Email: [Lori.Vernali@usdoj.gov](mailto:Lori.Vernali@usdoj.gov)**

## 2016 Outreach

Members of the US Attorney's Office — attorneys, support staff, and student interns — devote many hours to community outreach. This is critical work that helps to establish and nurture relationships with the communities we serve. The Office's 2016 Outreach efforts spanned a broad array of communities and issues. Through ongoing partnership with community groups, the Office was able to collaborate on a number of initiatives that help enrich the communities we serve.

As former Attorney General Eric H. Holder said, "Federal prosecutors should see themselves as community problem solvers, not case processors."

The following is a summary of our Outreach activities in 2016.

### *Awards*

In May 2016, the Office was honored to receive the 2016 Criminal Justice Award from the Greater New Haven Branch of the NAACP at the organization's 99th Freedom Fund Dinner in New Haven.

In 2016, U.S. Attorney Daly was also honored with a Diversity Award by the Urban League of Southern Connecticut.



## 2016 Outreach

### *Opioid Abuse Awareness and Prevention Initiative*

To combat the rising trend of overdose deaths from opioid abuse, the Office, in close collaboration with the FBI and DEA, has engaged in significant outreach to schools and community groups around Connecticut. In 2016 alone, Office members presented about the dangers of opioid addiction with physicians, family members of opioid abuse victims, recovering addicts, and law enforcement officers to more than 10,000 high school students at high schools in Milford, New Haven, Danbury, Plymouth, Shelton, East Hartford and New Fairfield. The Office also hosted a conference on opioid abuse at a high school in Waterbury, Connecticut, during National Heroin and Opioid Awareness Week (September 19-23, 2016).



In addition, the Office started a Heroin Education Action Team (USA HEAT) to partner with families who have lost loved ones to heroin abuse to raise awareness about the issue and mobilize communities to implement a coordinated, effective response to this growing threat.

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ct/heat>

The Office also produced a 15-minute educational film called *The Opioid Crisis Hits Home: Stories from Connecticut* to raise awareness about opioid abuse among parents, educators, and young people.

The video is available at this link for public dissemination: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKWrlizNHlo>



## 2016 Outreach

### *Reentry*

The Office hired its first Community Outreach and Reentry Coordinator, Holly Wasilewski, who recently retired as a Captain with the New Haven Police Department. The Office's Reentry efforts include:

- Hosting two job fairs for prospective employers of reentering citizens
- Presenting at "Skills of Socialization" programs at correctional facilities
- Collecting gently-used career clothing for reentering citizens

During National Reentry Week in April 2016, the Office hosted a panel called "Life After Lock-up" with five reentering citizens; participated in a reentry event at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut; and attended the Fifth Annual Bridgeport Reentry Awards Ceremony at Housatonic Community College. The Office also participated in the New England Reentry Conference with 330 participants from various states in New England.

In December 2016, the Office hosted a program called "Sustaining Our Reentry Efforts in Connecticut," which was attended by more than 100 reentry professionals, reentering citizens, and other community organizers.

The Office is also a founding partner in Connecticut's first Reentry Court. The Reentry Court is committed to helping individuals who have completed the incarceration component of their federal sentences and who have begun reentry to society while on federal supervised release. Through a team-oriented, personal engagement approach, the Reentry Court offers an intensive alternative to traditional supervision with a focus on encouraging participants to live pro-social, law-abiding lives, and helping participants to stabilize their lives by means of access to community services and benefits.





## 2016 Outreach

### *Community Policing and Engagement*

The Office has built and sustained critical partnerships with community organizations and law enforcement throughout the state to encourage effective relationships between communities of color and the police. Office events in 2016 included:

- A commemoration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Dr. Bernard Lafayette of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, at Hillhouse High School in New Haven.
- A “Civil Rights Summit” with leaders of community organizations throughout the state.
- A “Justice Forum” community dialogue during National Community Policing Week concerning investigations of police-involved shootings.
- A “Cops and Ballers” 3-on-3 basketball tournament sponsored by the New Haven Police Department, in which teams were comprised of both police officers and community members from New Haven.



*U.S. Attorney Daly and NHPD Chief Campbell at Cops and Ballers*

- The inaugural U.S. Attorney’s Office “Community Policing Awards” to recognize local officers who have collaborated with community members to improve safety and build public trust.
- A USAO-sponsored film about the importance of community policing. The video is available at this link for public dissemination: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_cmGG5BNMAY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cmGG5BNMAY)
- An event for law enforcement officers with former AUSA and FBI Special Agent Quentin Williams regarding his book, “How Not to Get Killed by the Police.”

## 2016 Outreach

The Office partnered with several Connecticut colleges and universities to educate students about their legal rights and how best to interact positively with law enforcement.

NAACP, MSA, LGBTQIA PRISM, SAGE CENTER, PRE-LAW SOCIETY, COLLEGE DEMOCRATS,  
AND SCSU MULTICULTURAL CENTER PRESENT:

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**CHARLIE GRADY**  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
SPECIALIST  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF  
INVESTIGATION

**NDIDI MOSES**  
ASSISTANT UNITED  
STATES ATTORNEY

**JOHN SERENO**  
US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
INVESTIGATOR

**SHAFIQ ABDUSSABUR**  
DISTRICT COMMANDER  
NEW HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT


**FEBRUARY 27TH**  
**2:00-5:00 PM**  
**ASC THEATER**

JOIN THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AS THEY DISCUSS  
YOUR BASIC RIGHTS AS A CITIZEN.


# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**Presenters:**  
Charles Grady – FBI  
Chief Tracy Mooney – UNH Police Department  
Ndidi Moses – Office of the United States Attorney  
John Sereno – Office of the United States Attorney

Friday March 3rd  
12:00pm to 2:00pm  
Alumni Lounge



University of  
New Haven



## 2016 Outreach

### *Hate Crimes Outreach*

Following the 2015 shooting of the Baitul Aman Mosque in Meriden, and the rise in hate-related incidents generally, the Office engaged in a number of hate crimes awareness programs. In December 2016, more than 100 people attended a forum entitled “Combating Hate Crimes and Civil Rights Violations,” hosted by the Office.



U.S. Attorney CT @USAO\_CT · 19 Dec 2016  
U.S. Daly opens Combatting Hate Crimes & #CivilRights Violations forum this afternoon in New Haven.



U.S. Attorney CT @USAO\_CT · 19 Dec 2016  
Dr. Qureshi of @CTMuslims4Peace speaking at today's Hate Crimes forum in New Haven.



U.S. Attorney Daly also authored a Thanksgiving Message entitled “Stand Up to Hate,” which is printed on the next two pages and also available here: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ct/pr/thanksgiving-message-us-attorney-deirdre-daly-stand-hate>

## **2016 Outreach**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 23, 2016

### **A Thanksgiving Message from U.S. Attorney Deirdre Daly: Stand Up to Hate**

This Thanksgiving, particularly after our highly-contested presidential election, is a time to reflect on our country's bedrock principles. These values include our commitment to tolerance and cultural understanding, our celebration of diversity and our respect for our fellow citizens, no matter their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or political viewpoint. Over the last year and particularly the last few weeks in Connecticut and throughout the country, we have seen these values increasingly give way to hatred, intolerance and bigotry.

Recently, such incidents have escalated. In New Haven, swastikas were painted on walls and doors of Wilbur Cross High School. In Danbury, swastikas were painted on a home and a car. In Ridgefield, a synagogue received mail with swastikas and pictures of Nazis. In East Windsor, a video surfaced of an individual dressed in Ku Klux Klan garb riding a motorcycle around a bonfire. In Windsor Locks, a Jewish man was verbally harassed because of his faith. In Meriden, two men attacked a man who held a sign supporting the President-elect. There are reports of Muslim children and children of immigrants being bullied in schools. And just over one year ago, a man fired four bullets from a high-powered rifle into the Baitul Aman Mosque in Meriden. He was subsequently convicted of a federal hate crime.

Last week, the FBI released its statistics on hate crimes committed in 2015. In Connecticut, 44 law enforcement agencies reported 93 hate-related incidents. Nationally, there were more than 7,000 victims of such crimes. These numbers are deeply sobering for all Americans. Equally disturbing, the FBI report showed a 67 percent increase in hate crimes committed against Muslim Americans as well as increases in these crimes against Jewish people, African Americans and LGBT individuals. Overall, reported hate crimes increased by six percent from the prior year – a number that does not account for those hate crimes that may go unreported out of the victims' shame, fear or desire not to stand out further and bystanders' belief that others will report the incident.

The Connecticut United States Attorney's Office, together with local, state and federal law enforcement, is committed to enforcing the broad array of hate crimes laws that protect vulnerable minorities. Last month marked the seventh anniversary of one of those laws: The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This landmark statute was named for two men who were killed for the most un-American of reasons – because they were different from their attackers – Matthew Shepard in his sexual orientation and James Byrd Jr. in his race. This Act is just one of the tools available to law enforcement and prosecutors working to combat any discriminatory or violent acts that erode our diverse democracy.

But we cannot act on incidents that we do not know about, and we cannot understand the true scope of the problem without accurate reporting. My office is encouraging those local law enforcement agencies who do not participate in reporting hate-related incidents to the FBI to join the 95



## **2016 Outreach**

agencies statewide that do. We are also training local law enforcement officers about hate crimes laws and cultural competency so that they are better equipped to assess situations they may encounter.

Above all, I ask each of you to take a stand against hate. Serve as an ally if you witness harassment or, worse, violence against your fellow citizens. Record video of incidents that can be used for investigations. And most importantly, report any incidents to your local police department or to the FBI. Your vigilance can help us ensure the freedom to which all Americans are entitled.

Deirdre M. Daly  
U.S. Attorney, District of Connecticut  
November 23, 2016



## **USAO District of Connecticut** **2016 Outreach**

### *LGBT Community Outreach*

The Office has engaged in outreach efforts with members of the LGBT community, particularly in the wake of the tragedy at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando in June 2016. LGBT community leaders participated in meetings with local and federal law enforcement to discuss protecting LGBT communities generally and, more specifically, concerns about human trafficking of LGBT youth and adults. The Office also hosted a training class for law enforcement regarding LGBT issues, including hate crimes and community/police relations.



The Office also produced an outreach video aimed LGBT youth in crisis, aimed at letting LGBT kids know that they are not alone and that their community stands ready to support them, no matter whom they love or how they self-identify. The video is available for public dissemination at this link: <https://youtu.be/chhLghz1G1Y>



## 2016 Outreach

### *Schools Outreach*

Many members of the Office have developed partnerships with schools throughout the state on programs ranging from violence prevention to drug abuse awareness to mock trial events. The Office has also conducted a video-taped training for school security officers that covers issues related to human trafficking, cultural competency with Muslim and Sikh students, and drug abuse awareness.

Our Office facilitates an Education Working Group, a partnership with other government agencies and local education rights advocacy groups, which meets quarterly and was formed to address and prevent civil rights violations through educational outreach and, when appropriate, legal enforcement actions. The group's priorities include initiatives to eradicate the "School-to-Prison Pipeline", support compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), further Arab/Muslim/Sikh (AMS) cultural competence and reinforce anti-bullying curriculum, support Title IX Compliance (including sexual assault and LGBT issues), and protect the educational rights of English Learners (EL).

### *Civil Rights Outreach*

Our Office continued its commitment to civil rights outreach in 2016, participating in numerous events to increase awareness of disability rights, fair housing rights, voting rights, and veterans' rights, among others.

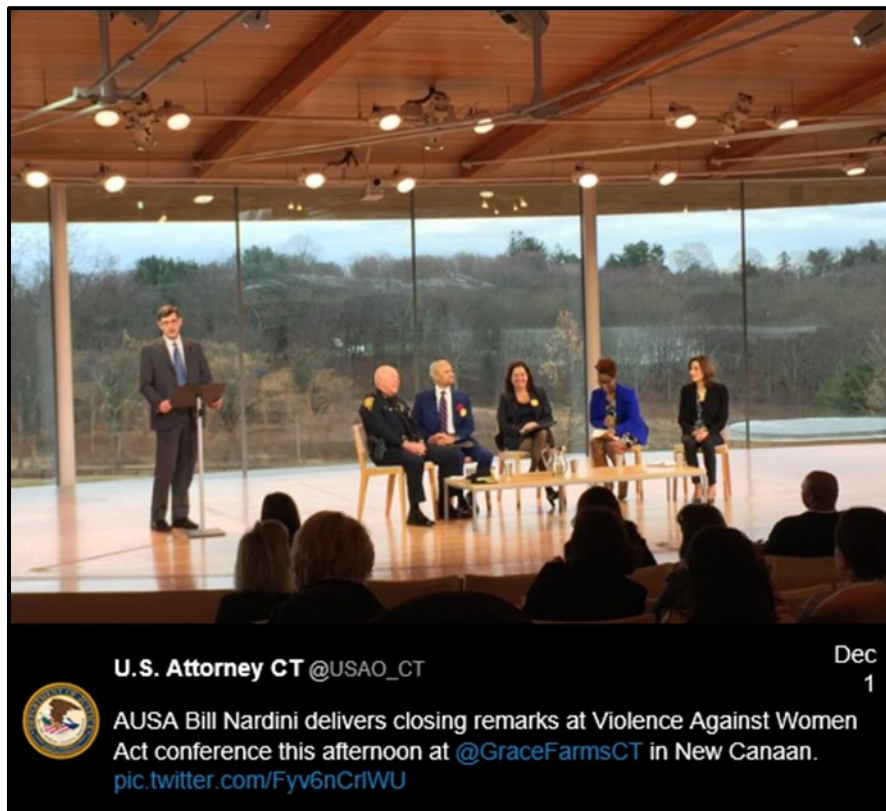


## 2016 Outreach

### *Human Trafficking Outreach*

In conjunction with the Connecticut Human Trafficking Task Force, the Office participated in numerous training events for students, state workers, hospital workers, and law enforcement concerning human trafficking awareness.

In 2016, the Office also co-hosted a conference regarding the Violence Against Women Act.



## 2016 Outreach

### *Naturalization Ceremonies*



U.S. Attorney Daly was the keynote speaker at the largest naturalization ceremony in Connecticut on July 19, 2016, where approximately 500 new citizens from 80 countries were sworn in as citizens — before an audience of 2600 in New Haven.





## **National Recognition**

On June 1, 2016, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sandra Glover and Liam Brennan, along with former Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Mattei, were three of 160 recipients recognized at the 32nd annual Director's Awards Ceremony in Washington D.C.

AUSAs Brennan and Mattei received the "Superior Performance by a Litigative Team" award for their work in public corruption prosecutions.

AUSA Glover was recognized for "Superior Performance by an Appellate AUSA." Ms. Glover has served on the Attorney General's Advisory Committee since July 2014.

In her prepared remarks, Deputy Attorney General Yates said, "The achievements being recognized today reflect the breadth of the department's responsibilities, and some of our most significant challenges. From dismantling dangerous gangs, drug cartels and human trafficking operations to tackling political corruption, white collar crimes, and international terrorism, these awardees have taken on our toughest cases. And the citizens of our country are safer because of their work."

The Director of the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, Monty Wilkinson, stated, "We honor the truly talented and dedicated legal and administrative personnel in the 94 U.S. Attorneys' offices and our law enforcement partners who everyday touch lives in our communities, protect the American people, and work to ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice."



## **National Recognition**



*U.S. Attorney Daly served from April 2015 to December 2016 on the Attorney General's Advisory Committee (AGAC), and as Co-Chair of the AGAC's White Collar Fraud Subcommittee, providing guidance on policy matters to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.*

## Appellate Division

The Appellate Unit supervises all of the Office's appeals and provides legal advice on a range of issues to the Office.

Sandra S. Glover serves as Chief of Appeals and Marc Silverman is the Deputy Chief.

In 2016, the Appeals Unit reviewed 44 briefs and 53 motions that were filed in the Second Circuit and also prepared AUSAs for 26 oral arguments. In pending cases, the government prevailed in 21 of the 25 decisions that were issued in 2016. These numbers reveal a substantial uptick in motion practice, attributable to defendants seeking authorization to file second or successive habeas petitions based on the Supreme Court's 2015 decision in *Johnson v. United States*.

In addition to the *Johnson*-related motions practice, some highlights of the government's appellate advocacy in 2016 are set forth below.



### **The government filed two affirmative appeals, both of which are still pending:**

- In *United States v. Hoskins*, the government appealed the district court's narrow reading of liability under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- In *United States v. Villanueva*, the government appealed the district court's determination that a prior Connecticut conviction for first-degree assault does not qualify as a "violent felony" under the Armed Career Criminal Act.



## Appellate Division

### **The government prevailed in a number of significant appeals:**

- In *United States v. Ganas*, the Second Circuit, sitting *en banc*, determined that law enforcement officers acted in good faith in retaining the image of a computer hard drive and subsequently searching that image pursuant to a new search warrant based on independent probable cause.
- In *United States v. Bohannon*, a government appeal, the Second Circuit overturned the district court's suppression of evidence recovered when officers arrested a defendant in the home of a third party.
- In *United States v. Faux*, a government appeal, the Second Circuit overturned the district court's suppression of the defendant's inculpatory statements provided during an interview conducted at the defendant's home while law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at that home.
- In *United States v. Rowland*, the Second Circuit upheld the public corruption convictions of former Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland.
- In *United States v. Natal*, the government defended the convictions and sentences imposed on two defendants convicted of arson that resulted in three deaths.

### **The government defended several significant prosecutions on appeal:**

- In *United States v. Aquart*, the government continued to defend a death penalty prosecution and verdict—at oral argument and in supplemental briefing.



***Former Solicitor General Donald Verrilli visited New Haven in April.***

## **Appellate Division** **Clemency & Pardons**

In April 2014, then-Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole announced the Justice Department's new clemency initiative. That announcement included six criteria for consideration when reviewing clemency applications from federal inmates:

- They currently are serving a federal sentence in prison and, by operation of law, likely would have received a substantially lower sentence if convicted of the same offense(s) today;
- They are non-violent, low-level offenders without significant ties to large-scale criminal organizations, gangs, or cartels;
- They have served at least ten years of their prison sentence;
- They do not have a significant criminal history;
- They have demonstrated good conduct in prison; and
- They have no history of violence prior to or during their current term of imprisonment.

Using these six criteria, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut undertook an internal review of defendants prosecuted in this District reaching back approximately two decades and covering hundreds of defendants. This internal review focused mostly—but not exclusively—on defendants convicted of narcotics offenses and sentenced to terms of imprisonment of fifteen years or longer. The U.S. Attorney's Office also reached out to the Office of the Federal Defender to solicit the recommendations of the defense bar. And it responded to inquiries from the Office of the Pardon Attorney. Wherever possible, this clemency review solicited the input of the Assistant United States Attorney(s) responsible for the underlying investigation and prosecution. This clemency review also took very seriously any history of violence.

By the end of this process, the U.S. Attorney's Office provided recommendations to the Office of the Pardon Attorney to grant or deny clemency regarding twelve candidates. Ultimately, President Obama granted commutations of sentence to two of those candidates and denied clemency to the remaining candidates.

The U.S. Attorney's Office separately provided recommendations to the Office of the Pardon Attorney to grant or deny pardons regarding three other candidates. Ultimately, President Obama granted pardons to two of those candidates and took no action on the remaining candidate.

A commutation of sentence and a pardon are different forms of executive clemency. A commutation of sentence reduces a sentence, either totally or partially, that is then being served, but it does not change the fact of conviction, imply innocence, or remove the civil disabilities that apply as a result of the conviction (e.g., restrictions on the right to vote, hold public office, or sit on a jury). A pardon is an expression of the President's forgiveness and ordinarily can be granted only after the applicant has finished serving his or her sentence. Although a pardon does not signify innocence, it does remove civil disabilities.

## **Criminal Division** **Introduction**

The Criminal Division prosecutes criminal cases in the District of Connecticut. The Criminal Division is organized into three program-based units: (1) National Security and Major Crimes; (2) Violent Crimes and Narcotics; and (3) Financial Fraud and Public Corruption. Assistant United States Attorneys (AUSAs) in all of the units advise federal law enforcement agents on criminal investigations, present matters to the grand jury, try criminal cases before the United States District Court, and represent the United States in criminal appeals before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Our priorities include the prosecution of cases involving national security violations, cyber crime, crimes against children, human trafficking, gang violence, narcotics and firearms trafficking, public corruption, investor and securities fraud, and civil rights violations.



*Despite the challenges we face, we can count on the law to keep our society on the right path. As Attorney General Lynch has said, “When struggles threaten to tear us apart, we turn to the law to reconnect ourselves with our highest principles. To give voice to those fighting oppression. To give hope to those seeking the redress of wrongs. To give meaning to the cry of 'never again.' And to protect those who call on us in the still small hours of the night when they are cold and frightened. These are our values.”*

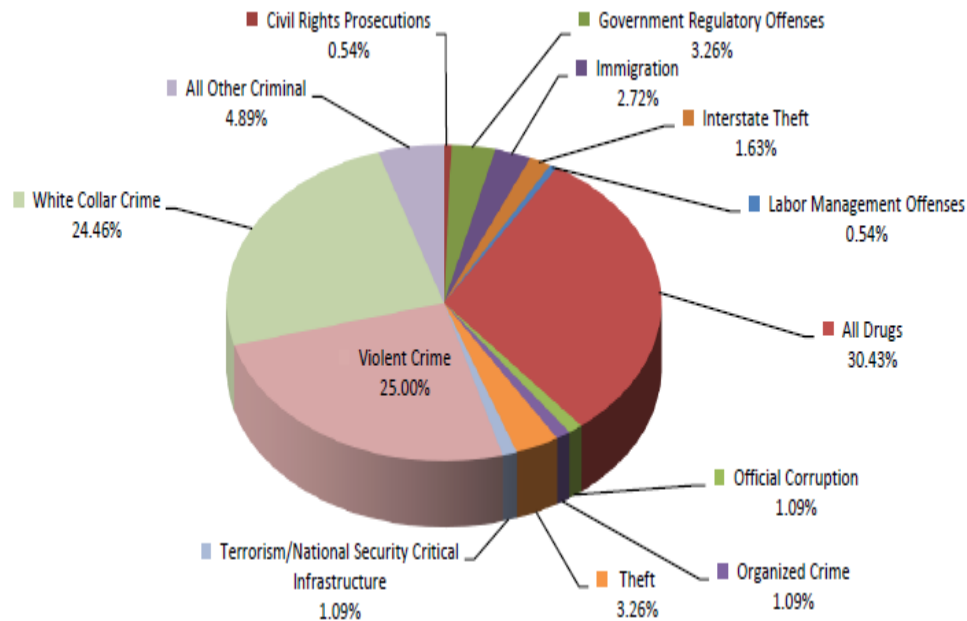
### **— Contact Information —**

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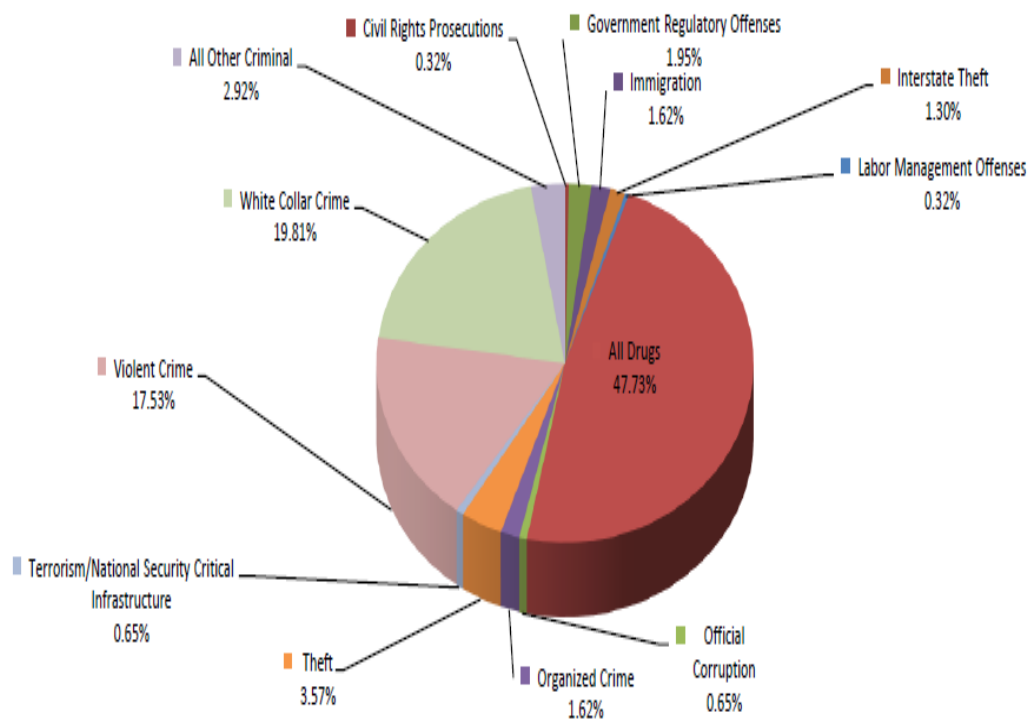
# Criminal Division 2016 (FY) Statistics Cases and Defendants Charged

**Cases Charged**



**Total:  
184**

**Defendants Charged**



**Total:  
308**



## **Criminal Division**

### **Violent Crimes and Narcotics Unit**

#### **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

S. Dave Vatti is the Chief of the Violent Crimes and Narcotics Unit (VCN), and Robert Spector and Patrick Caruso are the Deputy Chiefs. AUSA Spector also serves as the coordinator of the District's Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) and AUSA Vatti serves as the coordinator of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. In addition to the prosecutors already named, the VCN unit includes paralegals, legal assistants, and other specialists, as well as the following AUSAs: Amy Brown, Patricia Stolfi Collins, Natasha Freismuth, Gordon Hall, Rahul Kale, Tony Kaplan, Jocelyn Kaoutzanis, Brian Leaming, Peter Markle, Alina Reynolds, Mike Runowicz, Geoff Stone and Joe Vizcarrondo.

The prosecution of federal offenses involving violence, including gang- and drug-related murders and assaults, Hobbs Act robberies, kidnappings, firearms offenses, and attacks on federal officers, is a priority in the District. To that end, we seek to coordinate the enforcement efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement with the efforts of community outreach groups to counter criminal gun use, particularly gun use by violent criminal gangs. Additionally, much of the work in the VCN unit involves long-term investigations against the leaders of violent criminal organizations and street gangs responsible for the majority of the District's violence. Such investigations often employ covert investigatory tactics, such as the use of undercover agents, wiretaps, and physical and electronic surveillance, to develop racketeering cases.

The VCN unit also enforces federal laws relating to narcotics trafficking. OCDETF prosecutors and other task force members focus on investigations directed against high-level national and international trafficking cartels, as well as local gangs and distributors that support the business of these cartels.

On the next several pages are descriptions of some of the cases the VCN Unit prosecuted in 2016.

#### **— Contact Information —**

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## **Criminal Division**

### **Violent Crimes and Narcotics Unit**

### **Strategy to Combat Opioid Epidemic**

Our Office, together with the DEA, local police departments, and the Connecticut State Police, are working to combat the tragic opioid epidemic and resulting overdoses that are plaguing Connecticut and much of the country. We are prioritizing the investigations of these overdoses in order to identify the source and makeup of the drugs involved – and to take these drugs off the streets and out of the hands of vulnerable users. Frequently, these deaths are caused by the ingestion of heroin with particularly high purity levels and/or fentanyl, an opioid medication that can be as much as fifty times more potent than heroin. This is a very serious public health issue and we will continue to prioritize the prosecution of individuals who traffic narcotics that pose significant public safety concerns.

In 2012, 357 Connecticut residents died from accidental drug overdoses. Fentanyl played a part in only 14 of those deaths, while heroin contributed to 195 of the deaths. By 2016, the dynamics had radically changed for the worse. The Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner reported that 917 people died from overdoses in 2016. Opioids, such as oxycodone, heroin, fentanyl, and morphine, played a role in over half of those deaths. However, fentanyl, in particular, often mixed with other drugs was involved in a staggering 446 of the deaths. In Connecticut, fentanyl is the single largest contributor to the dramatic rise in opioid-related overdose deaths. This potent and lethal chemical is present in much of the heroin sold on our streets. To put it in perspective, two milligrams of fentanyl is a lethal dose.

The dramatic rise in the use of fentanyl as an additive to and even replacement for heroin comes at a time when opioids are prescribed at high rates for everything from school sports injuries to dental procedures. High school students have easy access to legally prescribed opiates. A sibling is injured in a football game. A friend has his wisdom teeth pulled. A parent is recovering from surgery. A neighbor has chronic back pain. There is no question this medicine can be an excellent tool for pain management, but it is also highly addictive. Four out of five new heroin users started with prescription opioids. As young people abuse opiates, their source of legally prescribed pills inevitably disappears and they are left to scramble for alternatives. The street price for a 40 milligram oxycodone pill is \$40, whereas heroin can be purchased on the street for as little as \$5 a dose. Soon, the teenager who began experimenting with his parent's Vicodin prescription has developed a heroin habit.

### **Our Three-Pronged Strategy**

In February 2016, the United States Attorney's Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration's Tactical Diversion Squad developed a statewide initiative to combat this epidemic. Our strategy has three essential components. First, together with state and local police, we are investigating overdose deaths across the state and targeting dealers who sell heroin and fentanyl. In consultation with the DEA, the Chief State's Attorney and the States' Attorneys from Connecticut's 13 judicial districts, we developed a statewide protocol for handling evidence in overdose cases in an effort to identify and prosecute the source of the lethal narcotics.

Using the established protocol, the DEA has investigated approximately 100 overdose deaths in towns across the state. These investigations have resulted in the federal and state prosecution of almost 50 drug dealers, all but seven of whom were charged in federal court. In many cases, law

## **Criminal Division**

### **Violent Crimes and Narcotics Unit**

### **Strategy to Combat Opioid Epidemic**

enforcement has identified the supplier within 24 hours by extracting information from a victim's cellphone.

But prosecutions alone will never adequately stop the alarming number of young people quietly becoming addicted to opioids. Our Office's second component involves the dedication of significant resources to awareness and prevention, focusing our efforts on high school students and their parents. Starting in May 2016, we began a statewide campaign using the FBI/DEA created documentary *Chasing the Dragon*. First, our United States Attorney sent a detailed letter to every school superintendent in the state, introducing the film and requesting that each school system incorporate it into their curriculum. The film, which chronicles the experiences of individuals impacted by the opioid crisis, is a powerful tool in our prevention efforts.

Next, we assembled a team of AUSAs and representatives from FBI and DEA to lead presentations in high schools across the state. Parents who have lost children to opioid overdoses have joined with us to facilitate these presentation. We have also relied on presentations from local doctors who talk about the dangers of prescription opioid abuse. Finally, we have called upon individuals who are in recovery and can speak of the realities of using and abusing opioids. Since May 2016, we have addressed approximately 10,000 students and also several hundred parents through evening community workshops. These outreach efforts, which are continuing in collaboration with FBI and DEA, will continue into 2017 with the goal of doing a *Chasing the Dragon* presentation at every high school in the state by June 2017.

Our third component targets the treatment of opiate addiction. The District of Connecticut has been on the forefront in its development of, and reliance on, organized drug courts. Referred to as Support Court, there are drug courts in all three seats of Court (New Haven, Bridgeport and Hartford), each of which is managed by one of our district court judges. The stakeholders in Support Court are the District Court, the Probation Office, our Office, and the Federal Public Defender's Office. Support Court meets weekly in each of the three cities. The participants are offenders who have a documented substance abuse history that motivated their offense conduct. Most of the participants are post-sentence and on supervised release. They participate in the year-long program with the goal of reducing the length of their supervision by one year. Some of the participants are on pre-trial or pre-sentencing release and participate in the program with the hope of receiving a lesser sentence. Support Court is an intensive program. Participants are under strict supervision and have significantly more contact with the Probation Office and the Court than the typical supervisee.

We have been able to utilize the drug treatment programs available through Support Court and the Probation Office to assist with our heroin overdose prosecutions. Many of those cases involve witnesses and defendants with significant opiate addictions and who are in desperate need of inpatient and outpatient treatment. Our Court's extensive Support Court and access to treatment providers has allowed us provide intensive treatment for these individuals.



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Heroin, Fentanyl & Opioid Cases**

#### **East Hartford Man Sentenced to Five Years for Trafficking Heroin**

In March 2014, the DEA received information regarding a large scale heroin trafficking organization that was operating in Hartford. During the investigation, investigators surveilled Brayan Gomez drive to a hotel in East Hartford. After approximately 20 minutes, Gomez walked out of the hotel with a large duffel bag that he did not have with him when he entered the hotel.

Investigators stopped Gomez's car, and Gomez consented to a search of his vehicle. Investigators removed the duffel bag from the trunk and seized 99.8 grams of raw heroin and 13,317 baggies that contained a combined total of 278.8 grams of heroin. In addition, investigators seized more than 25,000 empty bags used for packaging heroin and other items used in the processing and packaging of heroin.

Gomez pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin. On January 6, 2016, Gomez was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

#### **Operator of Hartford Heroin Processing Mill Sentenced**

In November 2015, the DEA received information that a drug trafficking organization was transporting large quantities of heroin from New York City to Connecticut in a vehicle with a hidden compartment. Further investigation revealed that the organization employed Amanda Gambardella to store and package heroin in her Hartford apartment, and to hold money in a storage unit in East Hartford on behalf of the organization.

On November 4, 2015, investigators searched the storage unit and seized \$795,000. A subsequent search of Gambardella's apartment yielded 778 grams of heroin (578 grams of which was packaged for sales), cutting agents, packaging

materials, and other items associated with large scale heroin processing.

Gambardella pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute heroin. On May 23, 2016, she was sentenced to 46 months of imprisonment.

#### **Ansonia Man Sentenced for Trafficking Prescription Narcotics**

In May 2013, the DEA and the Ansonia Police Department initiated an investigation into James Costanzo, who had previously been identified as an illegal distributor of narcotics. The investigation revealed that Brian Earl often supplied Costanzo with large quantities of oxycodone and other prescription narcotics that Costanzo then resold to customers.

At the time of Costanzo's arrest, he was found to be in possession of a 9mm handgun loaded with hollow point ammunition. A search of his residence also yielded 600 oxycodone pills, four firearms, ammunition, \$5,500 in cash, and more than 50 stored-value cards. A search of Earl's residence yielded 11,000 illegal prescription pills and \$2,557.

Both Costanzo and Earl pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute oxycodone. On May 11, 2016, Costanzo was sentenced to 57 months of imprisonment. He was also ordered to forfeit a residence at 85 Dwight Street, a residence at 21 Winchester Street in Waterbury, a 2005 Mercedes Benz ML350, a 2000 Ford F150, and approximately \$42,613. Earl was previously sentenced to 37 months of imprisonment and ordered to forfeit \$2,557.

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced to Prison for Fraudulent Oxycodone Prescription Scheme**

In 2012, the DEA began investigating an organization that created and filled fraudulent prescriptions for oxycodone and distributed the drug in the New Haven area. As part of the conspiracy, members of the organization obtained the person-



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Heroin, Fentanyl & Opioid Cases**

al identifying information of medical practitioners and used the information to create fraudulent prescriptions. Conspiracy members also purchased legitimate prescriptions for oxycodone from individuals and then used “runners” to fill the fraudulent prescriptions at pharmacies throughout Connecticut. Once a runner provided his or her personal information to a member of the organization, the runner’s information was kept on file and used to create and fill other fraudulent prescriptions.

The investigators also learned that Raymond Morales and Alejandrino DeJesus recruited runners to fill fraudulent prescriptions. Morales also had a close associate employed as a pharmacy technician in New Haven who filled the fake prescriptions for Morales.

Between February 2013 and September 2015, the organization stole the personal identifying information of more than 50 doctors and medical professionals and fraudulently obtained more than 80,000 oxycodone pills. Investigators identified more than 800 fraudulent prescriptions passed by members of the organization using more than 270 different “patient” names. Because almost all of the organization’s runners held state sponsored medical insurance, the initial cost of the drug was billed to Medicaid. Each 30 milligram pill was then sold for \$20 to \$30.

DeJesus and Morales both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute oxycodone. On November 7, 2016, DeJesus was sentenced to 132 months of imprisonment. On November 28, 2016, Morales was sentenced to 84 months of imprisonment. Other defendants have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

#### **New York Man Sentenced for Obtaining and Selling Prescription Narcotics**

In May 2012, the DEA began investigating the filling of fraudulent oxycodone prescriptions at Connecticut and New York pharmacies. The

investigation revealed that Donald McCann purchased prescription paper and obtained identifying information to forge prescriptions from five doctors. McCann and Jesse Kaplan then traveled to different pharmacies and used multiple aliases and fraudulent prescriptions to obtain oxycodone and hydromorphone. By October 2013, McCann fraudulently obtained more than 16,000 oxycodone 30 mg pills.

McCann and Kaplan pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute oxycodone. On January 20, 2016, McCann was sentenced to 54 months of imprisonment. Kaplan was previously sentenced to 57 months in prison.

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced for Distributing Deadly Fentanyl-Laced Cocaine**

On June 23, 2016, 17 individuals overdosed in New Haven after using narcotics; three of those victims died. An investigation revealed that while the victims believed that they were using cocaine, the substance was actually laced with fentanyl, an opioid 50 times more powerful than heroin.

The investigation revealed that Frank Pina supplied the drugs to middlemen who then redistributed the drugs to street-level customers. Notably, on the day before the 17 overdoses occurred, Pina had been hospitalized after consuming the same drug that he subsequently distributed.

Pina pleaded guilty to distribution of narcotics. On November 29, 2016, he was sentenced to 87 months of imprisonment.

#### **New London Man Sentenced for Distributing Heroin Involved in Overdose Death**

On April 12, 2016, Groton Town Police responded to a medical emergency involving a 25-year-old man. The victim, who had injected heroin, was transported to the hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Heroin, Fentanyl & Opioid Cases**

An investigation revealed that Rudy Hernandez supplied the deadly heroin to a middleman, who then sold the drug to the victim. A subsequent search of Hernandez's residence revealed heroin, cocaine, and multiple cell phones.

Hernandez pleaded guilty to distribution of heroin. On November 21, 2016, he was sentenced to 34 months of imprisonment.

#### **Ansonia Man Sentenced for Illegally Possessing Firearm and Distributing Heroin**

In January 2015, Marcos Boyd absconded from state parole supervision. On November 10, 2015, the U.S. Marshals Service Violent Fugitive Task Force encountered Boyd at a residence in Ansonia. Boyd attempted escape through a bedroom window while holding a firearm. He later returned to the residence and barricaded himself inside a bathroom.

Boyd eventually surrendered, and officers seized a loaded .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol, 187.6 grams of heroin, drug packaging materials, and \$6,763.

Boyd pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a narcotics trafficking offense. On December 5, 2016, he was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

#### **Overdose Investigation Leads to Sentence for Norwich Man**

On April 9, 2016, Norwich Police responded to a medical emergency at Jonathan Fisher's residence and encountered an 18-year-old male who had died from an apparent heroin overdose. A search of the victim's wallet revealed a used glassine bag and 10 unopened baggies marked with a particular heroin stamp. The substance in the bags tested positive for heroin and fentanyl.

Approximately one month prior to the overdose death, Fisher had been arrested in possession of numerous baggies of heroin that were marked

with the same stamp as the baggies found in the overdose victim's wallet.

On April 12, 2016, Fisher was arrested at a Norwich hotel. A search of Fisher and his hotel room revealed more than 300 bags of heroin, prescription narcotics, more than one pound of marijuana, a digital scale, and hundreds of empty glassine bags marked with the same heroin stamp.

Fisher pleaded guilty to distribution of heroin. On December 14, 2016, he was sentenced to 30 months of imprisonment.

#### **West Hartford Man Sentenced for Distributing Crack, Heroin and Fentanyl**

In 2015, the DEA received information that Eros Diaz was selling narcotics even though he had been released on a \$750,000 bond following his arrest for first degree assault. Between May and June 2016, an undercover agent conducted 17 controlled purchases of crack cocaine and heroin from Diaz and his associates. Laboratory testing revealed that some of the bags of purported heroin contained fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl.

Diaz pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute narcotics. On December 8, 2016, he was sentenced to 45 months of imprisonment.

#### **New Haven Men Sentenced for Role in Heroin Distribution Ring**

An investigation that utilized court-authorized wiretaps, surveillance, and controlled purchases of narcotics revealed that Elio Delima was providing Wilson Vasquez of New Haven with bulk quantities of heroin. Vasquez and several co-conspirators processed and packaged the drug and then redistributed it through a network of street-level distributors operating in New Haven's Fair Haven neighborhood. During the investigation, law enforcement seized 500 grams of raw heroin, three handguns, and five vehicles.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Heroin, Fentanyl, & Opioid Cases**

The investigative team also froze bank accounts containing more than \$300,000. Seventeen individuals were arrested and convicted of conspiring to distribute heroin in connection with this investigation. To date, the following defendants have been sentenced:

- On July 1, 2016, Roberto Torres was sentenced to 24 months of imprisonment.
- On July 19, 2016, Anthony Velez was sentenced to 34 months of imprisonment.
- On October 3, 2016, Miguel Soto was sentenced to 34 months of imprisonment.
- On October 27, 2016, Todd Beilby was sentenced to 40 months of imprisonment.
- On December 5, 2016, Francisco Rodriguez, who served as a lieutenant in the Vasquez organization, was sentenced to 72 months of imprisonment.
- On December 22, 2016, Delima was sentenced to 105 months of imprisonment.

Vasquez pleaded guilty and awaits sentencing.

#### **Derby Man Connected to Overdose Death Sentenced to 71 Months**

The DEA, Derby Police Department, and Shelton Police Department investigated two non-fatal heroin overdoses by an 18-year-old and a 23-year-old that occurred in Shelton on February 16, 2016, and one fatal overdose by a 22-year-old that occurred in Derby on February 17, 2016.

The investigation revealed that Bradley Commerford was the source of the heroin for all three overdoses and further that he was selling heroin to a 16-year-old. Commerford pleaded guilty to distribution of heroin to an individual under 21 years of age. On August 12, 2016, he was sentenced to 71 months of imprisonment.

#### **California Man Sentenced to 84 Months for Trafficking Heroin**

On November 4, 2013, members of the DEA followed an individual identified as Luis Cedillo to a store where he purchased several items used to process and package illegal drugs. Cedillo then drove to a garage in Wolcott. Agents approached Cedillo, secured him in handcuffs, and received permission from the owner of the property to search the garage. Agents saw that Cedillo's Cadillac Escalade, which was raised on a lift, had sheet-rock screws coming through the bottom of the car. The agents searched the car and discovered a secret compartment that contained six kilograms of heroin. The agents later recovered approximately \$400,000 in cash from Cedillo's residence.

Cedillo pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute heroin. On August 10, 2016, he was sentenced to 84 months of imprisonment.

#### **Glastonbury Man Sentenced to Three Years in Prison for Distributing Heroin to a Minor**

On February 15, 2014, East Windsor Police and other emergency personnel responded to a residence after a report of a possible drug overdose. The 14-year-old female victim was transported to Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, where she died the following day. The Chief Medical Examiner's Office determined the cause of death was an accidental overdose from heroin and fentanyl intoxication.

The investigation revealed that on February 14, 2014, Ryan Poulin and an acquaintance purchased \$80 of heroin from a dealer in Hartford. Poulin's acquaintance injected himself with the heroin stamped "New World" and passed out.

Poulin drove to his 16-year-old girlfriend's house and, over the course of the evening, twice injected himself with the "New World" heroin. The next thing Poulin remembered was that

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Heroin, Fentanyl & Opioid Cases**

someone placed him in the shower to revive him.

The following morning, Poulin gave a bag of the “New World” heroin to his girlfriend, who, after seeing the effects on Poulin, believed it was too strong. Poulin’s minor girlfriend traded the bag of “New World” heroin to her 14-year-old friend in exchange for a different bag of heroin. The two girls injected the heroin. The 14-year-old showered, went to sleep, and never woke up.

Poulin pleaded guilty to distributing heroin to a minor. On January 19, 2016, he was sentenced to 36 months of imprisonment.

#### **Men Involved in Steroid Manufacturing and Distribution Conspiracy Sentenced**

A long-term investigation led by the FBI, DEA, and Homeland Security Investigations revealed that Steven Santucci, a former Newtown Police sergeant, and others were receiving steroid ingredients from China and then manufacturing and distributing wholesale quantities of steroids. It was also revealed that certain members of the conspiracy were distributing prescription pills.

During the investigation, law enforcement officers seized hundreds of vials of steroids, approximately 600 grams of raw testosterone powder, 350 grams of cocaine, and four long guns.

Santucci pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute anabolic steroids and conspiracy to launder monetary instruments. On August 25, 2016, he was sentenced to 16 months of imprisonment, ordered to perform 120 hours of community service, and to pay a \$5,000 fine. On August 15, 2016, Frank Pecora was sentenced to 37 months of imprisonment.

#### **Hartford Drug Dealers Sentenced for Dealing Heroin**

In March 2013, the DEA began investigating a heroin trafficking organization headed by members of the Estevez family, who lived in New

York and the Dominican Republic. The investigation revealed that Robinson Crucetts and Martin Rodriguez were obtaining kilogram quantities of heroin from Carlos Gabriel Estevez, Jimmy Estevez, Miguel Estevez, and Josue Ortiz. Crucetts, in turn, sold the heroin to street level dealers, including William Suarez and Ivan Estrada.

Investigators watched Ortiz drive to New York and meet Carlos Gabriel Estevez. After receiving two brick-like packages from Estevez, Ortiz drove back to Connecticut. A Connecticut State Police trooper conducted a motor vehicle stop of Ortiz on I-91 and seized the two bricks of heroin, each weighing approximately 500 grams. Subsequent investigation revealed that one of the bricks was to be delivered to Crucetts.

Crucetts was arrested at his residence on September 3, 2014. When investigators entered the residence, they found Crucetts trying to swallow several bags of heroin. They also found and seized \$18,985.

Eight individuals were charged in connection with the case. Seven, including Crucetts, pleaded guilty to a narcotics conspiracy. Carlos Gabriel Estevez was convicted after trial of conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin.

- On January 19, 2016, Crucetts was sentenced to 66 months of imprisonment.
- On February 2, 2016, Jimmy Estevez and Miguel Estevez were each sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.
- On June 7, 2016, Gabriel Estevez was sentenced to 126 months of imprisonment.

Two co-defendants await sentencing.



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Narcotics Trafficking**

#### **Armed Heroin Trafficker Sentenced to More Than Seven Years in Federal Prison**

In May 2015, Miguel Diaz led Hartford Police on a high-speed chase. During the chase, Diaz discarded a bag containing more than 300 smaller bags of heroin from his car. Officers were forced to stop the pursuit because Diaz nearly collided with several cars.

Officers later apprehended Diaz at his residence in Hartford. A subsequent search of Diaz and his residence yielded approximately \$2,400, additional heroin, narcotics packaging materials, a loaded 9mm Hi-Point Model C-9 handgun and 9mm ammunition.

Diaz was convicted of possession with intent to distribute heroin and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense. On February 11, 2016, he was sentenced to 90 months of imprisonment.

#### **Bridgeport Woman Sentenced to Federal Prison for Drug and Gun Offenses**

In January 2015, Stamford Police received information that Amonda Mendez was distributing narcotics in Stamford. Between February and April 2015, the DEA made four controlled purchases of narcotics from Mendez. A court-authorized wiretap later confirmed that Mendez was distributing heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, and prescription pills.

On May 17, 2016, Mendez was arrested after the wiretap revealed she had been injured in a shoot-out and was planning to retaliate. A search of her apartment yielded the handgun used in the shoot-out, a sawed off shotgun, narcotics, and approximately \$10,000. Investigators also found a bulletproof vest in her car.

Mendez was convicted of possession with intent to distribute heroin and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking of-

fense. On June 23, 2016, she was sentenced to 120 months of imprisonment.

#### **Armed Heroin Trafficker Sentenced**

In September 2014, an FBI investigation revealed that Melvin Castro controlled the distribution of heroin in Hartford's South End. During the course of 12 controlled purchases, Castro sold 2,704 bags of heroin to a confidential informant and a gun to a second informant. Through a court-authorized wiretap on Castro's phone, law enforcement determined that Castro was regularly engaging in heroin sales.

Castro was convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute heroin. On May 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 84 months of imprisonment. On August 11, 2016, Francisco Sanchez-Reyes, a trusted associate of Castro's, was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

#### **Hartford Man Sentenced to More Than 17 Years for Drug and Gun Offenses**

On December 18, 2012, members of the DEA and Hartford Police Department conducted a motor vehicle stop on Rashaud Jones, a Hartford drug dealer who was under investigation. Law enforcement seized over \$9,000 and three cell phones from Jones's vehicle. Investigators then searched Jones's apartment and a vehicle at 232 Westland Street in Hartford. The search yielded 935 grams of crack cocaine, 635 grams of powder cocaine, narcotics packaging material, a loaded .22 Taurus revolver, a 9mm High Point pistol, a Ruger 345 .45 caliber firearm, a loaded .45 caliber magazine, a loaded 9mm magazine, and additional ammunition.

Following a jury trial, Jones was convicted of numerous narcotics trafficking and firearm offenses. On January 5, 2016, he was sentenced to 211 months of imprisonment.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Narcotics Trafficking**

#### **Hartford Man Sentenced for Distributing Crack Cocaine**

In February and March 2015, Courtney Byrd distributed 98 grams of crack cocaine to a confidential informant. On March 5, 2015, Byrd fled from law enforcement officers who were attempting to conduct a car stop. As he sped away, Byrd struck a pedestrian and broke the victim's leg. At the time, Byrd had a six-year-old child in his vehicle. Byrd was arrested on state charges, but was then released on bond.

On March 19, 2015, while on bond, Byrd arranged to sell an ounce of crack cocaine to a government informant. The FBI and HPD arrested Byrd as he came out of his house to consummate the deal.

Byrd was convicted of distribution of cocaine base. On February 4, 2016, he was sentenced to 72 months of imprisonment.

#### **Cocaine Traffickers Sentenced**

Raul Chavez headed a cocaine trafficking operation that smuggled cocaine from Mexico into El Paso, Texas, and then transported the drug to Connecticut and elsewhere. The investigation revealed that the Chavez organization had been supplying multiple kilograms of cocaine to Hartford-area distributors since approximately 2004. The shipments, which would typically be in the range of 30 to 40 kilograms, were sent from El Paso multiple times per year.

In 2014, the Chavez organization attempted to find an additional source of supply for its Hartford area cocaine customers. In July 2014, a DEA confidential source met Andrew Duron, one of Chavez's associates, in North Carolina. During the meeting, Duron told the confidential source that he wanted to purchase up to 50 kilograms of cocaine for \$28,000 per kilogram. On August 14, 2014, Duron, the confidential source, and an undercover DEA agent met in New Jersey where

Duron agreed to purchase 25 kilograms of cocaine. In subsequent conversations with the confidential source, Duron stated that he wanted an extra \$1000 per kilogram as a side deal. They agreed on a total price of \$725,000 for 25 kilograms of cocaine.

The investigation also revealed that this cocaine shipment was destined for Tyshawn Welborn of Bloomfield and Todd Vernon of Hartford, the latter of whom prepaid for approximately 13 kilograms of cocaine.

On August 22, 2014, Chavez and others met with Welborn at a restaurant in East Windsor where they discussed picking up the money from Welborn the following day and then delivering the cocaine to a location to be determined.

On August 23, 2014, Duron met the undercover DEA agent at a location in Wethersfield. Duron told the undercover agent that his associates were in Connecticut and that Duron and the undercover agent would need to meet with them to verify that the money was in place. Duron and the undercover agent then drove in separate vehicles to a parking lot in Windsor, where Duron met with Chavez and another associate. A short time later, a third associate arrived, met the undercover agent in the parking lot, showed him a duffel bag, and said it contained "half" of the money. Shortly thereafter, investigators arrived at the scene and arrested Duron, Chavez, and his associates. At the time of the arrests, investigators recovered from the Jeep a duffel bag containing approximately \$284,000 and a loaded .38 caliber revolver. The cash had been picked up from Welborn earlier that day.

After word reached Chavez's son, Christopher Chavez, that his father and others had been arrested, Christopher Chavez coordinated the diversion of a shipment of 34 kilograms of cocaine, which was on its way to Connecticut, to a high-level drug distributor in Cleveland, Ohio.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Narcotics Trafficking**

All of the defendants pleaded guilty to narcotics trafficking charges.

- On September 22, 2015, Duron was sentenced to 84 months of imprisonment.
- On October 7, 2016, Christopher Chavez was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay a \$25,000 fine.
- On December 21, 2016, Welborn was sentenced to 84 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay a \$200,000 fine.
- On January 11, 2017, Raul Chavez was sentenced to 144 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay a \$250,000 fine.
- On January 30, 2017, Vernon was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine.

#### **Waterford Man Sentenced for Trafficking Cocaine**

In 2012, Homeland Security Investigation (HSI), the U.S. Secret Service and the New London Police Department began an investigation to combat trafficking of heroin and cocaine from Puerto Rico into Connecticut. The investigation revealed that members of the conspiracy coordinated the shipments of heroin and cocaine via human couriers from the Dominican Republic to the U.S. while others, including Luis Zayas and Pedro Rivera, obtained kilogram quantities of cocaine from individuals in Puerto Rico via the U.S. Mail, and distributed the drug through a network of dealers in southeastern Connecticut.

Zayas was convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute narcotics. On October 6, 2016, he was sentenced to 85 months of imprisonment. Rivera was previously sentenced in December 2015 to 116 months of imprisonment.

#### **Men Sentenced to Federal Prison for Roles in Cocaine Trafficking Ring**



Hector Roman participated in a drug trafficking organization that shipped kilograms of cocaine from Puerto Rico for distribution in central Connecticut and western Massachusetts. Roman received shipments and stored the narcotics at his residence. Over the course of one year, he was responsible for the receipt and storage of approximately ten kilograms of cocaine.

Roman and Melvin Rivera-Lopez were arrested after they traveled to a post office to pick up a package that contained 300 grams of cocaine. The investigation revealed that Rivera-Lopez was the liaison to the connection in Puerto Rico.

Roman and Rivera-Lopez were both convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine. On June 27, 2016, Rivera-Lopez was sentenced to 65 months of imprisonment and on July 22, 2016, Roman was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

#### **Drug Traffickers Sentenced**

A year-long investigation conducted by the DEA and the Norwalk Police Department revealed that Alfred Catino and Demetrios Papadakos were long-time associates who headed a narcotics trafficking ring in Fairfield County. Catino and Papadakos supplied cocaine, oxycodone, and marijuana to individuals in the Norwalk area, including Konstantinos Zografidis, who then redistributed the narcotics to street level users.

The investigation further revealed that Papa-

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Narcotics Trafficking**

dakos purchased and redistributed more than 6,800 oxycodone 30mg pills that he obtained through various means, including: wholesale purchases in Florida; prescriptions from a corrupt doctor in New York to whom he had loaned a large sum of money; and from a co-defendant who purchased the pills from people with legitimate prescriptions in exchange for cash.

Catino, Papadakos, and Zografidis all pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute narcotics.

In 2014, Papadakos, whose criminal history spans approximately 40 years and includes six federal felony convictions, one state felony conviction and multiple misdemeanor convictions, most of which are related to drug trafficking, was sentenced to 121 months of imprisonment.

On June 16, 2016, Catino, who similarly has multiple federal convictions for narcotics trafficking, the first of which occurred in 1967 when he sold 115 grams of heroin to an undercover DEA agent, was sentenced to 108 months of imprisonment.

On January 27, 2016, Zografidis was sentenced to 72 months of imprisonment. He also faces deportation proceedings following completion of his sentence.

In total, sixteen individuals were charged and convicted as a result of this investigation.

#### **Bridgeport Meth Dealer Sentenced to Prison**

In July and August of 2015, the DEA and the Fairfield Police Department conducted six controlled purchases of methamphetamine from Mark Leigh-James. The purity of the methamphetamine Leigh-James sold to undercover officers ranged from 98.7% to 100%.

On October 5, 2015, Leigh-James was arrested. A subsequent search netted 7.5 grams of heroin, 120 grams of methamphetamine, a loaded Kel-Tec .380 semi-automatic handgun, and a loaded

Charter Arms .44 magnum revolver.

Leigh-James pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense. On September 16, 2016, he was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment.

#### **Former Ansonia Resident Sentenced for Importing “Molly”**

In May 2014, Ansonia Police learned that Waheed Islam was making and distributing MDMA (“Molly”). At the time, Waheed was on federal supervised release.

In July 2014, U.S. Postal Inspectors reported that Islam had been receiving packages from China labeled to contain “Rock Sugar.” In August, a package addressed to Islam’s Ansonia mailbox, originating from China, was intercepted at JFK Airport. The package contained one pound of ethylone, a Schedule I controlled substance that is closely related to methylone, MDPV, MDMA, and MDEA. Two other packages that were bound for Islam’s residence contained 3.4 pounds of contraband. Islam was arrested when he arrived to pick up the packages.

On June 6, 2016, Waheed Islam was sentenced to 108 months of prison.



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Project Safe Neighborhood Juvenile Outreach**

Through a DOJ grant and the efforts of the Justice Education Center, PSN Youth is designed to reduce juvenile violent activity in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven. The objectives of the initiative are to:

- Extend the work of Project Longevity to engage juvenile offenders (age 14-17).
- Offer individualized and comprehensive intervention plans designed to build on the strengths and address the challenges of each juvenile offender.
- Expand community outreach and education efforts to children ages 11-13 to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviors and a personal commitment to the “no gangs, no guns” philosophy.
- Engage experienced research partners to provide data, guide implementation, and report results.

The initiative engages juvenile offenders, ages 14-17, through regular group Juvenile Offender Meetings in each city. PSN Youth provides some serious juvenile offenders with intensive support for their choice to leave a criminal lifestyle, including intensive advocacy, mentoring, and individualized career plans, including through technical education opportunities. PSN Youth also expands community outreach and education efforts to reach younger populations of at-risk youth (ages 11-13).

The 2016 PSN Youth grant was expanded to include veterans and law enforcement mentoring of at risk youth and Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy for trauma involved youth, law enforcement and veterans.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Project Safe Neighborhood Combats Gang Activity**

Since its inception in 2001, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), has been awarded approximately \$2 billion in order to provide the necessary tools to combat gun and gang violence in America. If you are interested in more information about Project Safe Neighborhoods, and their initiatives please see their page on the Office of Justice Programs website at:

[https://www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program\\_Id=74](https://www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program_Id=74)

#### **Hartford Men Sentenced to Prison for Gang-Related Narcotics Trafficking**

In late 2012, law enforcement began investigating members of the West Hell street gang and the closely affiliated Wall Street/Team Grease street gang for narcotics trafficking and gang-related violence. The investigation, which included the use of court-authorized wiretaps, controlled purchases of narcotics, and physical surveillance, identified Melkuan Scott as the leader of the West Hell gang who, along with Gregory Thomas, Tyshawn McDade, and others, distributed crack cocaine in the Westland Street area of Hartford.

Thomas and McDade were intercepted over wiretaps engaging in drug-related conversations and, between May and November 2013, investigators made 17 controlled purchases of crack directly from Thomas.

25 individuals were eventually charged as a result of the investigation. Scott and 22 other defendants pleaded guilty to various offenses. One defendant was shot and killed while his case was pending. McDade was convicted after trial of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute narcotics.

- On August 12, 2015, McDade was sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment.
- On October 20, 2015, Thomas was sentenced

to ten years of imprisonment.

- On February 26, 2016, Tafarie Green was sentenced to five years of imprisonment.
- On March 24, 2016, Akeem Manoo was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment.
- On March 7, 2016, Michael Morrison was sentenced to two years of imprisonment.
- On March 21, 2016, Melkuan Scott was sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment.
- On June 8, 2016, Gabriel Horace Williams-Bey was sentenced to eight years of imprisonment.

In addition, in 2016, the Office tried two cold case homicides committed by members of West Hell and Team Grease. The first trial related to the April 2011 murder of Anthony Parker. On April 6, 2011, at approximately 10:47 a.m., the Hartford Police Department received a report of shots fired on Thomaston Street in the Blue Hills Section of Hartford. Officers responding to the scene found Parker seated in the driver's seat of a vehicle in the driveway of 15 Thomaston Street. Parker was unconscious and suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. Parker was transported to Saint Francis Hospital where he ultimately succumbed to his injuries. The investigation revealed that Parker was a member of The Ave, a gang of rival drug dealers who controlled narcotics distribution around Albany Avenue. Jimel Frank and Karl Royce, both members of Team Grease, believed Parker had pointed a gun at the mother of another Team Grease member in an aborted drug rip-off. They therefore shot Parker in retaliation. Frank pleaded guilty to murder in aid of racketeering and faces up to life imprisonment. On August 5, 2016, Royce was convicted after trial of murder in aid of racketeering. He faces a mandatory term life imprisonment.

The second trial related to the 2012 murder of

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Gang Activity**

Keith Washington. In July 2012, members of The Ave street gang shot at long-time West Hell gang member Arthur Stanley, who in turn drove to a known Ave hangout and opened fire. Keith Washington was struck in the head by one of the shots .

On December 19, 2016, Stanley was convicted after trial of murder in aid of racketeering. He faces a mandatory term of life imprisonment.

#### **Red Side Guerilla Brims Members Sentenced for Gang-Related Narcotics Trafficking, Firearms Offenses, and Violent Crimes**

In January 2014, law enforcement began investigating members and associates of the Red Side Guerilla Brims (RSGB), a New Haven set of the Bloods street gang engaged in narcotics trafficking and related acts of violence, including murder, attempted murder, assault and armed robbery. In addition to distributing crack cocaine and other narcotics in and around New Haven, the investigation indicated that members and associates of the RSGB, under the direction of one of its alleged leaders, Jeffrey Benton, transported crack cocaine and heroin to Bangor, Maine. The RSGB also traded narcotics for firearms, brought the firearms back to New Haven, and distributed them to gang members.

On September 30, 2015, a federal grand jury returned a 34-count indictment charging Benton, Keith Young, Robert Short, Trevor Murphy, Robert Harris, and Christopher Graham with murder, racketeering, robbery, firearms trafficking, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering. Luis Padilla, Rodrigo Ramirez, Miles Price, Kavon Rogers, and Harry Anderson have also been charged with related offenses in separate indictments.

With respect to the violent crimes, the charges include:

- A February 23, 2011, conspiracy to commit murder.

- The April 20, 2011, murder of Kevin Lee.
- The June 24, 2011, murder of Donnell Allick.
- The September 19, 2011, murder of Darrick Cooper.
- The December 23, 2011, murder of Joseph Zargo.
- The March 20, 2012, murder of Donald Bolden.
- Attempted murders on October 21, 2011, and December 23, 2014.

Several RSGB members and associates have already pleaded guilty to various narcotics trafficking, firearm, and violent offenses, including Benton, Rogers, Ramirez, Garvin, Pyles, Padilla, Graham, Harris, Anderson, Murphy, Young, and Short.

- On August 24, 2016, Graham was sentenced to 66 months in prison for assault in aid of racketeering and possession with intent to distribute narcotics.
- On August 25, 2016, Anderson was sentenced to 120 months of imprisonment for shooting a victim during an attempted robbery.

On November 14, 2016, Harris was sentenced to 36 months of imprisonment for assault in aid of racketeering and possession with intent to distribute narcotics.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Murder, Attempted Murder, and Murder-for-Hire**

We work closely with the States Attorneys' Offices and the local police departments to address violence, particularly homicides and shootings, in our State. This year, recognizing that our State colleagues can be hamstrung by the lack of an investigative grand jury process, we charged a number of cold case homicides. Federal prosecutors have jurisdiction to charge murders linked to racketeering activity, narcotics trafficking, weapons offenses or arson, as well as murders-for-hire. Prosecuting such violent offenses have historically been and continue to be a top priority for the Office.

#### **Hartford Men Involved in 2010 Murder Sentenced to Lengthy Prison Terms**

On December 21, 2010, Ian Francis was shot multiple times as he sat in his vehicle in Hartford. Mr. Francis succumbed to his injuries on January 15, 2011. The investigation revealed that Keronn Miller lured Mr. Francis to Sigourney Street where Dominique Mack was waiting to shoot and kill him. At the time, Mack was being sought by the FBI, following his indictment on federal narcotics charges. Mack murdered Mr. Francis in order to avoid his own apprehension and then plotted to kill a second individual who he thought might be a witness against him in the murder case.

On April 27, 2016, a federal jury found Mack guilty of conspiring to commit witness tampering by murdering one individual and planning to murder a second individual. On November 1, 2016, Mack was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Miller pleaded guilty of aiding and abetting the murder of Ian Francis. On August 2, 2016, he was sentenced to 210 months of imprisonment.

#### **Danbury Man Sentenced to 30 Years for Murdering I-84 Motorist in 2000**

On January 17, 2000, Mark Rebong was discovered in the driver's seat of an idling vehicle in the vicinity of Exit 2 off of I-84 in Danbury. Mr. Rebong had been shot in the head and died as a result of his injuries.

The investigation revealed in late December 1999, there was ongoing dispute in Danbury be-

tween the Latin Kings and another criminal gang, the Crips. On December 28, 1999, the dispute escalated as a result of the shooting of a high-ranking member of the Crips.

On January 17, 2000, three members of the Latin Kings, including Alex Garcia, were in a vehicle traveling westbound on I-84. The driver of the vehicle, a high-ranking member of the Latin Kings, saw Mr. Rebong driving near them on the highway and told Garcia to shoot at Mr. Rebong's vehicle. Garcia then used an assault rifle to fire two rounds at the vehicle. As a result, Mr. Rebong was killed. Mark Rebong was neither a member of a gang nor engaged in any criminal activity.

Over 16 years later, Garcia confessed to the murder and pleaded guilty to causing the death of Mr. Rebong through the use of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. On October 19, 2016, he was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

#### **Stamford Resident Orchestrates Murder for Hire Scheme**

In December 2013, Larry Talledo-Torrejón planned to buy a restaurant in Stamford for \$300,000. Talledo-Torrejón provided the seller with \$150,000 in cashier checks and an additional \$150,000 in checks drawn from accounts with insufficient funds.

Talledo-Torrejón approached an individual who owed him a \$5,000 debt, and offered to forgive the debt and to pay him an additional \$5,000 if he would murder the owner of the restaurant ("G.R."). The individual contacted law enforce-



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Murder, Attempted Murder, and Murder-for-Hire**

ment to report Talledo-Torrejón's offer. Thereafter, under the direction and control of law enforcement, the individual called Talledo-Torrejón and stated that he had kidnapped G.R.

Talledo-Torrejón then provided the individual with two copies of a receipt falsely stating that Talledo-Torrejón provided G.R. with the \$150,000 that was still owed for the restaurant. Talledo-Torrejón instructed the individual to force G.R. to sign the receipts and then kill him. Talledo-Torrejón also suggested that he and the individual could go into business together kidnapping and extorting money from people.

Talledo-Torrejón pleaded guilty to orchestrating a murder for hire. On October 7, 2016, he was sentenced to 120 months of imprisonment and fined \$150,000.

#### **New Milford Men Plead Guilty to the Extortionate Collection of Debts**

In late December 2015, James Broderick, a known loan shark, lent an individual approximately \$1,500 with an understanding that the individual was required to repay Broderick \$1,500, plus an additional \$500 in interest, within four days of the initial loan. When the individual failed to pay the loan within four days, Broderick asked Howard Hammer, a self-proclaimed member of an Outlaw Motorcycle Club, to assist him in collecting on the loan. Hammer then sent text messages to the victim that threatened harm to the victim if he failed to pay his debt. Broderick and Hammer also discussed taking the victim's car either as payment for the debt or as punishment for failure to pay the debt.

On January 25, 2016, several men broke into the victim's hotel room, beat him in the head and face with a hammer, and stabbed him in the back multiple times, all the while demanding the keys to the victim's car. The victim suffered permanent bodily injury in connection with this conduct.

In addition, the investigation revealed that Broderick made several extortionate loans to a second victim. When the victim was unable to repay the usurious interest amounts, which were at least 10 percent of the principal per week, Broderick repeatedly threatened to use force to collect the debt. Over the course of three years, Broderick collected more than \$20,000 in interest payments from this second victim.

Broderick and Hammer pleaded guilty to conspiring to participate in the collection and attempted collection of an extension of credit by extortionate means. They are both awaiting sentence.

#### **Massachusetts Men Plead Guilty to Murder-for-Hire Charges**

On December 30, 2014, Jesus Silva was found dead in a car in New Britain. He had been shot in the head. Through investigation by the DEA, United States Postal Inspection Service and New Britain Police Department, it was determined that Silva was a member of a drug trafficking organization that was sending kilogram parcels of cocaine from Puerto Rico to greater Hartford and Springfield, and that Silva had been responsible for large sums of drug proceeds that had gone missing. Through text messages on Silva's phone, review of various phone records and cell site activations, social media investigation and other information, Jesus Sierra and Joel Jaquez, residents of Springfield, were identified as suspects in Silva's murder. Investigators also developed information that Sierra and Jaquez carried out the murder at another's direction in retaliation for the missing drug proceeds. Sierra and Jaquez have since pleaded guilty to interstate murder for hire and face mandatory life imprisonment at sentencing. A third member of the organization is pending trial in September 2017.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Kidnapping, Home Invasion, Robbery**

#### **Men Sentenced to Long Prison Terms for Kidnapping, Jewelry Store Robbery**

On the night of April 11, 2013, William Davis, Jeffrey Houston, Kasam Hennix, and Christopher Gay, all of whom were wearing masks and gloves and two of whom were armed with handguns, broke into an apartment in Meriden and bound four victims with duct tape and covered their heads with pillowcases. Davis, Houston, and Hennix then forced two of the victims into one of the victim's cars and drove them to Lenox Jewelers in Fairfield, where the two victims worked. Gay remained behind to hold the remaining two victims hostage in the apartment.

At the store, the perpetrators stole jewelry, watches and loose diamonds with a total replacement value of more than \$3 million. They then fled in a getaway car driven by Timothy Forbes, leaving the two victims bound inside the store.

Davis, Houston, Forbes, and Hennix were arrested in Pennsylvania and Gay was arrested in New York. Subsequent searches of their various residences revealed over \$125,000; numerous Rolex, Breitling, and similarly expensive watches; multiple pieces of diamond jewelry; and a large quantity of crack cocaine. Several of the watches and items of jewelry were determined to have been stolen from Lenox Jewelers and two jewelry stores in Pennsylvania that were robbed in December 2012 and January 2013.

Davis, Houston, Hennix, and Gay were each



convicted of robbery and use of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. Forbes, who has a prior federal conviction for the armed robbery of a jewelry store in Pennsylvania, was convicted of kidnapping, robbery, and use of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence.

On April 17, 2015, Davis was sentenced to 176 months of imprisonment. On January 27, 2016, Gay was sentenced to 100 months of imprisonment. On February 8, 2016, Hennix was sentenced to 171 months of imprisonment. Houston and Forbes await sentencing. In addition, the defendants forfeited jewelry, watches, gemstones, a vehicle, and more than \$127,000 in cash, and have been jointly ordered to pay \$3.1 million in restitution.

#### **Danbury Man Sentenced for Armed Home Invasion and Kidnapping**

In March 2013, law enforcement began investigating a narcotics trafficking operation that maintained drug distribution locations, known as trap houses, in Danbury. During the investigation, law enforcement learned that Marlon Patterson and Michael Spears, the individuals who headed the drug trafficking ring, had organized and committed at least three armed home invasion robberies of marijuana dealers. During the robberies, armed and masked men would break into the victim's home in the middle of the night, pistol-whip the victims, and demand money and drugs.

In addition to the robberies, the investigation revealed that Patterson and coconspirator Paul Whitehurst used force to collect drug debts. For instance, in May 2013, Patterson and Whitehurst abducted an individual who owed a \$100 drug debt to Whitehurst. Whitehurst physically and verbally assaulted the victim, pushed the victim into a reservoir, and threw rocks at his head. Whitehurst and Patterson then forced the victim to consume a liter of vodka in approximately 15 minutes until the victim lost consciousness. The victim, still unconscious, was then bound and locked in a bath-

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Kidnapping, Home Invasion, Robbery**

room in one of the organization's trap houses and kept there overnight.

Ten individuals were charged with offenses including robbery, kidnapping, use of a firearm during a violent crime, and narcotics trafficking. All pleaded guilty.

Patterson was convicted of robbery, attempted robbery, and use of a firearm during a crime of violence. On March 10, 2016, he was sentenced to 192 months of imprisonment.

#### **New York Man Sentenced to Prison for Week-Long Armed Robbery Spree**

In a six day period, Francis Manigault committed five armed robberies of commercial establishments. Specifically, he robbed George's Market on June 27, 2015, B & M Grocery and Deli on June 28, 2015, Rodriguez Market on June 29, 2015, and a Subway restaurant on June 29, 2015, all of which are located in Bridgeport. He then robbed West Main Street Grocery in Stamford on July 1, 2015. Stamford Police responded to 911 calls following the West Main Street robbery and arrested Manigault. Officers recovered a stolen and loaded .40 caliber handgun that Manigault attempted to discard upon the officers' arrival.

Manigault pleaded guilty to armed robbery. On February 24, 2016, he was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment.

#### **Detroit Man Sentenced for Role in Smash and Grab Robbery**

In November 2014, Dajuhn Griffin and others stole an SUV in Stamford. Griffin and two co-conspirators, then entered the Sidney Thomas Jewelry store in the Stamford Mall, smashed open a jewelry display case with hammers, and stole more than \$250,000 in Rolex watches. The three fled with security guards in pursuit. One of the accomplices, Richard Matthew Bailey, was

apprehended while fleeing the mall.

Griffin pleaded guilty to robbery. On January 28, 2016, he was sentenced to 51 months of imprisonment.

#### **Bridgeport Man Sentenced for Armed Robbery Spree**

On April 26, 2014, Derrick Gilliam, Lance-lot Supersad, and others committed an armed robbery of CVS Pharmacy in Fairfield and stole \$2,376. On May 3, 2014, the group attempted an armed robbery at a Mobil Gas station in Bridgeport. On May 10, 2014, the group committed an armed robbery at a Webster Bank in Bridgeport and stole \$4,170. On June 1, 2014, the group committed an armed robbery at a Pizza Hut in Bridgeport. On June 6, 2014, Gilliam, Supersad, Anthony Santiago, and others committed an armed robbery at the Residence Inn in Shelton and stole \$200. And, on July 2, 2014, the group attempted an armed robbery at the Sikorsky Financial Credit Union in Stratford and committed



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics** **Firearms Offenses**

an armed robbery at a TD Bank in Westport. During each of the robberies, Gilliam pointed what appeared to be a handgun at employees.

Gilliam, Supersad, and Santiago all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery. On November 29, 2016, Gilliam was sentenced to 121 months of imprisonment. Supersad and Santiago await sentencing.

### **Jewett City Man Sentenced for Illegally Acquiring Guns and Ammunition**

On November 22, 2013, law enforcement executed a search of Brian Fletcher's residence in Jewett City. During the search, officers recovered a Savage Arms, Axis XP .308 rifle, a Smith & Wesson .40 caliber VE Handgun, a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson Model 60 revolver, multiple rounds of ammunition, and several ammunition magazines.

The investigation revealed that Fletcher had coordinated and financed the straw purchase of the .308 rifle and that the .40 caliber and the .38 firearms were stolen.

Fletcher, who has multiple prior convictions, including accessory to robbery in the first degree, hindering prosecution in the second degree, possession of a pistol without a permit, and attempted assault in the first degree, pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. On January 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 72 months of imprisonment.



### **Bridgeport Man Sentenced for Possessing Loaded Firearm and Crack Cocaine**

On May 28, 2014, Bridgeport Police conducted a traffic stop of a car driven by Lamar Carter. Officers discovered a Sig Sauer 9mm pistol that had one hollow point round in the chamber and 11 hollow point rounds in the magazine. A search of Carter's person also revealed 14 baggies of crack cocaine.

Carter pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense. On July 28, 2016, he was sentenced to 66 months of imprisonment.

### **West Haven Man Sentenced for Drug and Gun Offenses**

On June 4, 2013, law enforcement arrested Jesse Wrubel and Matthew Voloshin following the execution of several federal search warrants. A search of Voloshin's residence yielded two loaded handguns and approximately \$50,000. A search of an East Haven garage that Voloshin rented revealed three handguns and 40 pounds of marijuana. Three of the five firearms were stolen. In addition, law enforcement seized 20 pounds of marijuana, \$15,000, and a loaded nine millimeter rifle from Wrubel.

Voloshin and Wrubel pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute marijuana and possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking offense. In March 2016, Voloshin was sentenced to 66 months of imprisonment and Wrubel was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

### **Hamden Man Sentenced for Gun Possession**

Law enforcement officers arrested Christopher "Woozer" Duncan after having made a controlled purchase of PCP from him. A subsequent search of Duncan's vehicle yielded a Ruger 9mm handgun with a large capacity clip on the driver's side floor of the car.



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Firearms Offenses**

Duncan pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense. On April 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

#### **Bridgeport Man Sentenced for Gun Possession**

On February 25, 2015, Charles Young, a convicted felon, was arrested after engaging in a high-speed car chase with law enforcement. During the chase Young threw a loaded Glock 22 .40 caliber firearm from the car. The chase ended when Young crashed into a snowbank in Fairfield.

Young, who at the time of the offense was on state probation following a 2010 conviction for criminal possession of a firearm and possession of a weapon in a motor vehicle, pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On May 16, 2016, he was sentenced to 50 months of imprisonment.

#### **Federal Prison for New Haven Man Convicted of Illegal Gun Possession**

On December 12, 2012, ATF agents and New Haven Police executed a search warrant at Shawn Hill's residence. Upon entering Hill's second floor apartment, officers saw Hill throw a fully loaded Sig Sauer, P229, .40 caliber pistol, through a bedroom window where a nine-year-old child was sleeping. The firearm was later determined to be stolen.

Hill, who has multiple felony convictions, pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On March 11, 2016, he was sentenced to 72 months of imprisonment.

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced for Gun Possession**

On September 1, 2015, an investigation of an armed robbery of three male victims on Elm Street in New Haven led officers to Rajoun Julious, who was sitting in a parked car on Morse Street. During a search of Julious's car, officers

found a loaded Smith and Wesson .38 Special and a loaded Davis Industries model P380, .380 caliber semi-automatic pistol. Officers also found three iPhones underneath the car and two iPhones in nearby bushes. One of the iPhones was identified as stolen during the armed robbery.

Julious, a member of a gang known as Reade Street, or "R2," has a violent criminal history that includes felony convictions for first degree assault, intimidating a witness, and carrying a dangerous weapon.

Julious pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On April 7, 2016, he was sentenced to 87 months in prison.

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for Firearm Offenses**

On December 19, 2014, New Haven Police officers responded to a call concerning a person carrying a firearm. The officers encountered Earl Hobby. When officers tried to stop Hobby, he resisted and injured two officers. Once subdued, Hobby was found to be in possession of two rounds of Winchester .38 Special ammunition. Officers also found a loaded Ruger .357 revolver and heroin packaged for distribution in the vicinity of Hobby's arrest.

Hobby, who has multiple felony convictions, pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On June 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 46 months of imprisonment.





## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Firearms Offenses**

#### **Men Sentenced to Prison for Heroin and Firearm Offenses**

On May 23, 2014, ATF, DEA, and Hartford Police executed a search warrant at Roman Pantojas's residence. During the search, officers recovered 700 baggies of heroin and two handguns, one of which was stolen. The investigation revealed that Justin Ashline, who worked for the gun's rightful owner, stole the gun and sold it to Pantojas for money and heroin.

Ashline pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On April 25, 2016, he was sentenced to 61 months of imprisonment. Pantojas pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and possession with intent to distribute heroin. On November 30, 2016, he was sentenced to 74 months of imprisonment.

#### **Man Sentenced for Illegal Gun Possession**

On December 15, 2014, New Haven Police encountered Orlando Estrada and another male in an improperly parked vehicle. Estrada's associate attempted to flee when officers approached, and the officers saw him discard a packet before they apprehended him. When the packet was located, it was found to contain crack cocaine.

During a subsequent search of Estrada, officers found a handgun equipped with a laser sight in his pocket and a second loaded handgun under the passenger seat.

Estrada, who has multiple convictions, pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On May 26, 2016, he was sentenced to 37 months of imprisonment.



## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics** **Firearms Offenses**

### **New Britain Firearms Manufacturer Sentenced for Violating Federal Firearms Laws**

The possession of machine guns manufactured after 1986 is prohibited for private citizens. Moreover, licensed manufacturers of machine guns are required to stamp a unique serial number on each gun and register it with ATF within one business day of its manufacture. It is a violation of federal law for manufacturers to fail to mark a firearm with a serial number and for anyone to tamper with a firearm's serial number. It is also unlawful for anyone to possess an unregistered machine gun.

In 2003, Stag Arms LLC. obtained a federal firearms license to manufacture firearms. In 2007, ATF cited Stag Arms for a number of regulatory violations. In July 2014, ATF performed another compliance inspection at Stag and found that Stag was in possession of 62 machine guns and machine gun receivers that were registered to another entity or were not registered at all. The "receiver" is the portion of the firearm that houses the operational parts of the weapon and on which the serial number is engraved.

The investigation also discovered that Stag had failed to adequately document the manufacture and disposition of thousands of firearms,

making them more susceptible to theft or loss. Inspectors found more than 3,000 non-serialized receivers on the premises without any record of their manufacture or acquisition and found that more than 3,000 firearms were transferred by Stag without being properly recorded.

In September 2014, ATF executed search warrants at Stag's two facilities in New Britain and seized dozens of machine guns that had not been marked and/or registered and three machine guns with obliterated serial numbers.

Stag, through its representative and president Mark Malkowski, pleaded guilty to a felony charge of possession of a machine gun not registered to the company. Malkowski also pleaded guilty in his individual capacity to a misdemeanor charge of failure to maintain proper firearm records. As part of his guilty plea, Malkowski agreed to pay a fine, to divest himself of his interest in Stag, and to never again hold an ownership or management position with respect to a firearms business.

On May 17, 2016, Stag Arms was fined \$500,000. On the same day, Malkowski was fined \$100,000 and sentenced to serve two years of probation. In addition, Stag Arms' license was revoked.



*U.S. Attorney Daly and VCN Chief Vatti announcing the resolution.*

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics** **Domestic Violence**

In 2016, AUSA Alina Reynolds, the USAO's Violence Against Women Act Point of Contact ("VAWA POC") continued to partner with state and local domestic violence prosecutors, officers and service providers to coordinate the use of federal resources to enhance domestic violence investigations and prosecutions in Connecticut, and to provide training and technical assistance on the enforcement of federal domestic violence laws. The VAWA POC regularly coordinates with domestic violence prosecutors to identify cases where VAWA or other federal statutes may apply, and to bring federal charges when appropriate. The VAWA POC also conducts regular training with local, state and tribal police, and works closely with the Center for Family Justice and the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) on developing new strategies to prevent domestic violence.

### **Training and Outreach**

On December 1, 2016, the U.S. Attorney's Office hosted a national conference on the prevention of violence against women - "Changing the Culture, the Violence Against Women Act in 2016." The speakers included Bea Hanson, the former Principle Deputy Director of DOJ's Office of Violence Against Women and Margaret Groban, the National VAWA Coordinator, as well as Karen Jarmoc, the Director of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). Panel discussions and presentations included a discussion of unique issues (1) on campus violence, (2) in the world of professional sports, and (3) in the undocumented resident community.

### **Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams**

In 2016, DOJ encouraged increased participation on state "fatality review teams" in order to better address prevention of domestic violence fatalities. The fatality review teams seek to prevent future deaths and serious physical injuries by conducting multidisciplinary, systemic examinations of intimate partner fatalities and near fatalities. In April 2017, AUSA Reynolds will begin serving on the Connecticut Domestic Violence Fatality Review Task Force, and AUSAs Nancy Gifford and Patricia Collins will be attending a training at the DOJ's National Advocacy Center focused on this interdisciplinary approach to preventing domestic violence fatalities.

### **Looking Ahead**

The Office has expanded its bench in this area with the addition of AUSA's Nancy Gifford and Patricia Collins who will work with AUSA Reynolds on expanding the use of the tools in the USAO's tool chest to prosecute violations of Federal domestic violence statutes with a particular focus on domestic violence offenders who illegally possess or use firearms.

## **Violent Crimes and Narcotics**

### **Domestic Violence**

#### **Seymour Man Who Assaulted Girlfriend is Sentenced for Illegal Gun Possession**

On June 28, 2013, the Connecticut State Police arrested Maurice Earley after he punched his girlfriend in the face while driving on I-95 in Bridgeport. Earley then dragged the victim from the car, choked her and punched her several more times. A search of Earley's residence revealed a loaded 9mm handgun with a destroyed serial number, and 93 rounds of 9mm ammunition.

Earley, who has multiple felony convictions, pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On May 4, 2016, he was sentenced to 42 months of imprisonment.

#### **Norwalk Man Sentenced to Five Years**

On May 13, 2014, the Bridgeport Police arrested Branden Huertas after a foot pursuit during which Huertas tried to discard a loaded .22 caliber revolver. It is a federal crime for a convicted felon to possess a firearm. At the time, Huertas was released on bond following a series of arrests for state domestic violence charges, including strangulation in the second degree, unlawful restraint and assault in the third degree. Huertas was also subject to a protective order that required him to surrender or transfer all firearms and ammunition. The gun case was adopted for federal prosecution because Huertas had a lengthy criminal history and posed a threat to his ex-girlfriend.

Huertas was sentenced to five years of imprisonment and, as a special condition of supervised release, was ordered to abide by the terms and conditions of the protective order issued in connection with the state charges through 2025. The protective order requires that Huertas refrain from any con-

Victims of domestic violence can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233), or visit [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org).

Victims in Connecticut also can call the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) hotline at 888-774-2900 (English) or 844-831-9200 (Español).

# **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

## **What is it?**

Project Longevity began in New Haven in late 2012. It is a program aimed at reducing group-related homicides and violence in our cities. It is a data-driven, statewide initiative that combines preventive and enforcement aspects. Today, the Project operates in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. The strategy starts by working with our research partners (Yale University and the University of New Haven), federal, local and state law enforcement, including state and federal probation officers, service providers, and community members to identify those individuals most likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence, the groups with which they associate, and patterns of alliance and conflict between those groups.

The strategy is premised on the idea that violence can be reduced when community members and law enforcement join together to directly engage with these groups and clearly communicate a sincere, moral message against violence; a credible law enforcement message about the consequences of future violence; and a genuine offer of help for those who want it.

Longevity derives its name from two concepts: First we want this strategy to be hard-wired into law enforcement's approach to urban violence so that it may be sustained for years to come, and second, we want to provide "longevity" to the lives of the young men of color in our major cities.

## **How does it work?**

To do this, a partnership of law enforcement, social service providers, and community actors—parents, ministers, gang outreach workers, neighborhood associations, ex-offenders, and others, are assembled to engage in sustained relationships with members of violent groups.

The key moment in the strategy is a "Call-In," which is a face-to-face meeting between group members and the partnership. The Longevity partners deliver key messages:

- Group members are valued members of the community, and the community needs you alive and out of prison with your loved ones;
- Violence will no longer be tolerated in our community and must stop; and
- We will provide support in securing needed services to help you avoid criminal activity.

The message, in a nutshell, is one of group accountability. Local, state and federal law enforcement very clearly promise that the next group to commit homicide, or the most violent group overall, will be met with a focused and predictable response. As part of the Call-In, law enforcement reviews with the attendees and community its most recent, focused actions vis-à-vis the group that "self-selected" by committing a murder or being the area's most violent. Call-Ins occur regularly in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. In 2016, Hartford convened Call-Ins in May and November, Bridgeport convened a Call-In in June, and New Haven held Call-Ins in March, June and November. The public is welcome.



# **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

## **The Team**



**Statewide Coordinator  
Brent Peterkin**

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phone: (203) 314-9460



**Bridgeport Project Manager  
Harold Dimbo**

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phone: (203) 696-3022



**New Haven Project Manager  
Stacy R. Spell**

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phone: (203) 314-6804



**Hartford Project Manager  
Shawn St. John**

email: [ssjohn@project-longevity.org](mailto:ssjohn@project-longevity.org)  
phone: (203) 314-7375

## **Social Services Coordinators**

Bridgeport: Kate Rivera & Edgardo Soberal



L. Berta Holmes  
New Haven



Rio Comaduran  
Hartford

## **Types of Assistance We Offer**

Participants are presented with services to help transition from the gang lifestyle, such as:

- Addiction Services
- Medical/Mental Health Treatment
- Educational Opportunities
- Housing
- Employment, and other services which are offered through the partnered social service providers

## **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

### **New Haven Support and Outreach Partners**

New Haven Family Alliance, Incorporated  
The United Way  
The New Haven Housing Authority  
Project MORE  
Emerge  
New Haven Works  
Workforce Alliance  
Literacy Volunteers  
The Clifford Beers Clinic  
Yale New Haven Hospital  
Yale New Haven MOMS Partnership  
Yale Child Study Center  
City of New Haven Project Fresh Start  
Abdul-Majid Karim Hasan Islamic Center  
Community Action Agency of New Haven  
State of Connecticut Department of Correction  
Connecticut Against Gun Violence  
Survivors of Homicides Network  
Elmseed  
CONNCAT  
Connecticut Mental Health Center  
Tri-Cord LLC  
New Haven Health Department  
The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven  
The Baobab Studios  
Gateway Community College  
State of Connecticut, Department of Adult Probation  
R.O.A.R, Ministries  
New Haven Police Department  
Hamden Police Department  
State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health & Addictive Services  
New Haven Parking Authority  
State of Connecticut, DCF, Juvenile Parole Services  
Fathers Cry Too  
Connecticut State Police  
State of Connecticut, Department of Juvenile Services  
Christian Community Action  
Justice Education Center

**Please Contact the New Haven Social Services Coordinator  
L. Berta Holmes: [bholmes@project-longevity.org](mailto:bholmes@project-longevity.org)**

# **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

## **Hartford Support and Outreach Partners**

Chrysalis Center  
Hartford Adult Education Center  
Hartford Public Library  
CT Works  
Capital Community College  
Community Partners in Action  
Salvation Army at Nelson Street  
Asylum Hill Congregational Church  
Faith Congregational  
Hartford Housing Authority  
Compass Peacebuilders  
CT Center for Non-Violence  
HYPE  
Hartford Communities that Care  
Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA)  
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
Metro Hartford Alliance  
CT Pardon Team  
Loaves and Fishes  
Youth Challenge  
Urban League of Greater Hartford  
Center for Latino Progress  
Northstar Center for Human Development  
Hartford Jobs Funnel  
Our Piece of the Pie (Youth up to 24)  
Strive Career Resources  
Greater Hartford Re-entry Council  
Mutual Housing of Greater Hartford  
Knox Parks (Green Crew AmeriCorps)  
Capital Workforce  
Step Up  
University of Hartford  
Justice Education Center

**Please Contact the Hartford Social Services Coordinator  
Rio Comaduran: [rcomaduran@project-longevity.org](mailto:rcomaduran@project-longevity.org)**

# **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

## **Bridgeport Support and Outreach Partners**

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport (Dan Braccio)  
RYASAP (Bob Francis Co-Chair of PL SS network)  
Life Bridge Community Services (formerly FSW)  
Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (BNT)  
Park City Communities (formerly Bridgeport Housing Authority)  
Step-Up  
CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)  
Ralphola Taylor Community Center YMCA  
The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport  
RYASAP (Bob Francis Co-Chair of PL SS network)  
Life Bridge Community Services (formerly FSW)  
Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (BNT)  
Park City Communities (formerly Bridgeport Housing Authority)  
Alpha Community Services YMCA  
Family ReEntry  
Green Village Initiative  
Eastend POP-UP Market  
Bridgeport Mayor's Initiative for Reentry Affairs (MIRA)  
RYASAP (Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership)  
The Work Place  
Career Resources  
CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)  
Ralphola Taylor Community Center YMCA  
Justice Education Center

### **Please Contact the Bridgeport Social Services Coordinators**

**Kate Rivera**

**email: [krivera@project-longevity.org](mailto:krivera@project-longevity.org)  
phone: 203-696-3049**

**Edgardo Soberal**

**email: [esoberal@project-longevity.org](mailto:esoberal@project-longevity.org)  
phone: 203-696-3022**

# **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

## **Events**

The Longevity team hosted several events and participated in many others throughout 2016:

6th Annual Hartford Reentry Employment & Resource Fair  
Project Longevity New Haven Selfie With A Cop Social Media Campaign  
Project Longevity Hartford Suit Drive for Returning Citizens  
Project Longevity New Haven and ConnCAT Cookie Caper  
Young Adult Police Commissioner's Award Dinner (Project Longevity Bridgeport Youth Affiliate)  
Young Adult Police Commissioner's Visit to Niagara Falls & Exploration of Underground Railroad  
CAGV Screening of Armor of Light Regarding Gun Violence  
Project Longevity Bridgeport Christmas Toy Giveaway  
Project Longevity Bridgeport Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway  
Project Longevity Bridgeport "What To Do When Stopped By The Cops" Community Engagement  
University of Bridgeport Conference on Homelessness  
Live Work Love Hartford Community Presentation  
Project Longevity New Haven Christmas Toy Giveaway  
Project Longevity New Haven and Yale Law School Panel Discussion Regarding Public Health Issues



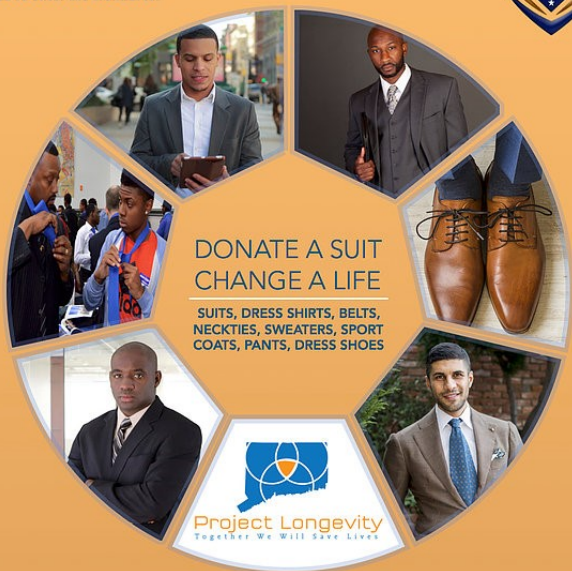

*Project Longevity New Haven & ConnCAT convened a Cookie Caper where teams of police officers and returning citizens staged a bake off and discussed racial reconciliation and building community solidarity.*



# Violence Reduction Project Longevity

**SUITED FOR SUCCESS**

Donate your gently used professional attire and give an individual a change of life as they attempt to re-enter the workforce.



**DONATE A SUIT  
CHANGE A LIFE**

SUITS, DRESS SHIRTS, BELTS,  
NECKTIES, SWEATERS, SPORT  
COATS, PANTS, DRESS SHOES

**Project Longevity**  
Together We Will Save Lives

**WORK PHONE**  
860-490-6533  
860-595-2541  
203-671-7285

**E-MAIL, URL**  
sstjohn@project-longevity.org  
www.project-longevity.org

**ACCEPTING DONATIONS  
FROM**  
DEC 1, 2016 - FEB 1, 2017

450 MAIN STREET  
HARTFORD, CT 06103

PROJECT LONGEVITY AND HARTFORD POLICE DEPT. GUARDIANS

*Project Longevity Hartford teamed with the Hartford Police Department's Guardians to organize a clothing drive in December 2016.*



## Violence Reduction Project Longevity



**SHOWING OUR UNITY! COPS AND COMMUNITY!**  
**SELFIE WITH A COP**

**TEXT OR EMAIL YOUR SELFIE!  
WE'LL POST IT ON OUR WEBSITE 203-314-9460**

[www.project-longevity.org](http://www.project-longevity.org)

A picture is worth a thousand words! Join us! Take a selfie with a cop that says, "Together We Will Save Lives!"

We must work together to confront the long-standing challenges through purpose, policy, practice, and reconciliation tempered by patience.

Project Longevity exists at the nexus where the core values of law enforcement and community converge. Project Longevity's purpose is to reduce gun violence driven by active street groups. Fundamental to this effort is sharing ownership by involving community members and law enforcement in reducing violence and creating neighborhoods that are safe for our residents and our sworn officers. Let's create the vision of our aspirations! Project Longevity is creating a community photo album to showcase solidarity. **Join us in our, Selfie With A Cop, campaign! We're asking community members and law enforcement to pause for a moment to introduce yourself or become reacquainted for just a few minutes. Ask to take a selfie together and send us the selfie via email or text message. email: [helloprojectlongevity@gmail.com](mailto:helloprojectlongevity@gmail.com)**

 @LONGEVITYCT  PROJECTLONGEVITYCT 

**Project Longevity**  
Together We Will Save Lives



## **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**



*Project Longevity Bridgeport's Christmas Toy Drive.*

## **Violence Reduction Project Longevity**

### **The Executive Committee:**



**Peter Markle**  
Assistant US Attorney



**Mike Lawlor**  
Under Secretary for  
Criminal Justice  
Policy and Planning



**Anthony Campbell**  
Chief of Police  
New Haven



**James Rovella**  
Chief of Police  
Hartford



**Armando "AJ" Perez**  
Chief of Police  
Bridgeport

### **— Office Locations —**

**New Haven:**  
157 Church Street  
25th Floor  
New Haven, CT 06510

**Hartford:**  
450 Main Street  
3rd Floor  
Hartford, CT 06103

**Bridgeport:**  
1000 Lafayette Blvd  
10th Floor  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

# Violence Reduction Project Longevity

## Links

For more information and updates about Project Longevity, please visit:

**New Haven Link** — <http://www.project-longevity.org/new-haven-community-page>

**Bridgeport Link** — <http://www.project-longevity.org/bridgeport-community>

**Hartford Link** — <http://www.project-longevity.org/hartford-community-page>

**Web Blog** — <http://www.project-longevity.org/news>

**Newsletters** —

<http://www.project-longevity.org/so/aKrIFuKa#/main>

<http://www.project-longevity.org/so/1LZrkcMn#/main>





## **Criminal Division**

# **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

## **Financial Fraud & Public Corruption**

David Novick is the Chief of the Financial Fraud and Public Corruption unit (FFPC), and Sarah Karwan and Michael McGarry are the Deputy Chiefs. AUSA Liam Brennan is the coordinator of the Public Corruption Task Force. In addition to the prosecutors already named, the FFPC Unit includes paralegals, legal assistants, and other specialists, as well as the following AUSAs: Heather Cherry, Jonathan Francis, David Huang, Peter Jongbloed, Jennifer Laraia, Avi Perry, John Pierpont, Dave Sheldon, Susan Wines and Senior Litigation Counsel AUSA Kit Schmeisser.

This group's responsibilities include the important work of investigating and prosecuting public corruption, which includes cases involving public officials who seek to use their positions for private benefit and those who seek to corrupt their office. These cases frequently involve a number of different offenses, including theft of honest services, mail and wire fraud, bribery, theft of government property, and tax violations.

In addition, the FFPC Unit investigates and prosecutes corporate fraud, as well as securities and investment fraud, particularly focusing upon crimes that undermine the trust of the investing community. Cases involving securities, commodities and investor fraud, falsification of corporate financial information, self-dealing by corporate insiders, market manipulation, insider trading and Ponzi schemes. Other white-collar crime priorities include healthcare fraud, mortgage fraud, financial institution fraud and embezzlement, tax fraud, fraud and corruption in connection with government program activities, and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.

On the next several pages are descriptions of a sampling of the cases the FFPC Unit has prosecuted over the past year.

### **— Contact Information —**

**David E. Novick:** [david.novick@usdoj.gov](mailto:david.novick@usdoj.gov).

**Michael S. McGarry:** [michael.mcgarry@usdoj.gov](mailto:michael.mcgarry@usdoj.gov).

**Sarah P. Karwan:** [sarah.p.karwan@usdoj.gov](mailto:sarah.p.karwan@usdoj.gov).

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **Public Corruption Task Force**

#### **Housing Authority Director, Contractor, Sentenced to Prison for Bribe Scheme**

From February 2007 through February 2012, Michael Siwek, the executive director of the West Haven Housing Authority (WHHA), received \$1.5 million in bribes in exchange for awarding WHHA business and contracts. Siwek received these bribes through wire transfers and check payments to himself and to the Four Star Development Company LLC, a limited liability corporation that he controlled. Siwek also received payments characterized as “loans,” but which were not subject to any terms or conditions typically associated with commercial loans. Siwek did not report these payments to the IRS and filed false tax returns that underreported his income and tax liability. Andrew Ross, who controlled business entities that received WHHA business and contracts for financial and consulting services, made approximately \$350,000 in corrupt payments to Siwek and the Four Star Development Company.

Siwek and Ross both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit bribery in connection with a program receiving federal funds. On July 15, 2016, Siwek was sentenced to 48 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay \$1,503,096.91 in restitution, as well as back taxes, penalties and interest totaling more than \$363,000. On February 26, 2016, Ross was sentenced to 12 months and one day of imprisonment.

#### **East Haven Zoning Official Solicited and Received Payments from Residents**

While employed as East Haven’s Planning and Zoning Administrator/Zoning Enforcement

Officer, Frank Biancur sought and received payments from at least five people in exchange for official acts he rendered as the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

For instance, on May 19, 2015, Biancur informed one of his victim’s that a new addition to the victim’s house had to be inspected. Although Biancur stated that he was “fighting for the victim,” he also demanded a \$200 cash payment if the victim wanted to avoid having to tear down the addition. The victim reported the shake down to the East Haven Police Department and the FBI. Thereafter, the victim engaged in a consensually-recorded meeting with Biancur during which the victim gave Biancur \$200. While the dollar values were in the hundreds of dollars, Biancur nonetheless abused his position and violated the public trust.

On March 9, 2016, Biancur was sentenced to 30 days of incarceration in a halfway house, six months of home confinement, and 200 hours of community service.



— **Contact Information for Public Corruption Task Force Coordinator** —

**AUSA Liam Brennan:** [liam.brennan3@usdoj.gov](mailto:liam.brennan3@usdoj.gov).

Citizens who want to report corrupt activity can call: **1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324)**.

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption** **Investor Fraud**

### **Norwalk Accountant Sentenced to 97 Months for Running Ponzi Scheme**

Beginning in approximately 2006, James Neilsen, who was a certified accountant, solicited and received more than \$1 million from several individuals to invest with Ulysses Partners, LLC, where he was a partner and chief financial officer, and at Neilsen Financial Services, a company he owned. Neilsen promised investors a guaranteed rate of return of 9 to 10.5 percent. However, Nielsen used much of the new investor money to pay back earlier victim investors and to make various personal expenditures.

Neilsen also submitted fabricated account statements to his victims and sent lulling emails to multiple victims. Neilsen's victims included his accounting clients; clients of his tax preparation business; friends; members of his family, including his 93-year-old great aunt; and the minor children beneficiaries of a trust established after their father's untimely death. Through this scheme, Neilsen defrauded victim investors of \$1,663,641.

Neilsen pleaded guilty to wire fraud. On January 28, 2016, he was sentenced to 97 months of imprisonment.



**Citizens are encouraged to report any financial fraud schemes by calling, toll free, 855-236-9740, or by sending an email to [ctsecuritiesfraud@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:ctsecuritiesfraud@ic.fbi.gov)**

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **Investor Fraud**

#### **Participants in Advanced Fee Fraud Scheme Sentenced to Five Years in Prison**

On September 30, 2015, a federal jury convicted David C. Jackson and Alexander D. Hurt of conspiracy and wire fraud related to an advance fee fraud scheme that victimized more than 40 people out of an estimated \$4.5 million.

The trial evidence showed that Jackson set up a fraudulent business purportedly for the purpose of assisting individuals who were seeking to obtain business loans. Jackson, Hurt, and others then collected what were described as “application,” “collateral,” or “commitment” fees from individuals seeking such loans. The victims included small business owners, developers, and even family farmers who were seeking loans to create, expand, or operate their businesses. The victims were promised a refund if Jackson could not secure the requested loan.

To convince potential borrowers that the loans were legitimate, Jackson provided them with the contact information of a co-conspirator who was posing as a reference. When contacted, the co-conspirator falsely represented to the potential victims that she had previously received funding from Jackson for a construction loan.

On February 8, 2016, Jackson, who had a prior federal fraud conviction, was sentenced to 205 months of imprisonment and on March 18, 2016, Hurt, who had previously served as a Baptist minister and who had used church funds and church accounts to facilitate the fraud, was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

#### **Former Financial Advisor and Securities Broker Sentenced for Stealing More Than \$1.2 Million from Client**

Robert Tricarico was a registered securities broker with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. He was formerly employed or associated with various financial firms, including RNT

Wealth Management, Northstar Wealth Partners, LPL Financial, and Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network.

From January 2010 through June 2013, Tricarico acted as a financial advisor for an elderly victim who had substantial assets. Tricarico misappropriated more than \$1.1 million from the victim by writing checks to himself or for his own benefit, liquidating a coin collection that belonged to the victim, and misappropriating checks made payable to the victim. Tricarico used the stolen funds for personal expenditures.

Tricarico also defrauded two other victims of \$20,000 by falsely stating that he would use their investments for a business venture with a guaranteed rate of return. Instead, Tricarico appropriated the victims’ money for his own use.

Tricarico pleaded guilty to wire fraud. On October 5, 2016, Tricarico was sentenced to 41 months of imprisonment and was ordered to pay restitution of \$1,220,763.

#### **Former New Canaan Resident Sentenced for Defrauding Investors**

John B. Jeffrey offered investors the opportunity to invest in Anchor Shipping and Trading and Southern Cross Shipping, representing that the companies were organized in the Marshall Islands, were engaged in the cargo shipping business and had long-term contracts that supported a profitable business. The shipping companies were entirely fictitious. As part of the scheme, Jeffrey created bogus documents stating that certain well-known executives in the international shipping business were involved with the companies when, in fact, those executives had no such involvement with the non-existent companies. He also falsely represented to his victims that the companies were profitable and that the victims would soon be receiving distributions from their investments.

Instead, of investing the victims’ funds as

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **Investor Fraud**

promised, Jeffrey used the money for his personal expenses, including mortgage payments, private school tuition, country club dues, home renovation, and landscaping costs. When Jeffrey learned of the FBI's investigation, he paid back certain victims, but required those victims to sign "settlement" agreements.

Jeffrey pleaded guilty to wire fraud. On October 19, 2016, he was sentenced to 33 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay \$919,500 in restitution to the victims of his scheme.

#### **Danbury Resident Who Stole from Investors is Sentenced**

Alexander Bergen operated CT Wholesale, a company that bought electronic equipment. In 2013, Bergen accepted funds from investors who were promised a high return on their investments. Bergen made investors believe that he would use their funds to purchase new products and that they would begin to receive their principle investment back with profit over time.

Bergen received over \$300,000 from 10 investors. Rather than invest the funds as promised, Bergen used \$150,000 to pay his personal credit card bills.

Bergen pleaded guilty to stealing from investors. On November 2, 2016, he was sentenced to 24 months of imprisonment and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$282,609.71.

#### **Danbury Man Sentenced for Defrauding Investors**

Ian Bick was a principal and/or managing member of multiple Danbury-based entities including This Is Where It's at Entertainment, LLC, Planet Youth Entertainment, W&B Wholesale, LLC, and W&B Investments, LLC. Bick solicited investment funds from friends, classmates, acquaintances, and their parents by promising high investment returns over a short period of time.

Bick represented to investors that he could acquire high returns by purchasing electronics, including iPhones, tablets, and head phones, and then selling them for a substantial profit over the Internet. The electronic re-sale business never began in earnest and did not generate any meaningful profit. Bick also represented that he could generate a large profit by using investor funds to promote concerts at venues in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Bick did not invest his victims' money. Instead, he used the funds for personal expenditures. Bick defrauded more than 15 investors out of \$480,635.

On October 26, 2016, following his conviction at trial, Bick was sentenced to 36 months' imprisonment and was ordered to make full restitution.



## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption** **Theft, Embezzlement, and Fraud**

### **Former Middlebury Fire Chief Sentenced to Prison for Embezzling Funds**

On July 23, 2015, a jury found Paul Perrotti guilty of two counts of theft concerning programs receiving federal funds. According to the evidence at trial, Perrotti served as the Fire Chief of the Middlebury Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. (MVFD) from 1997 until 2014. Perrotti was also a licensed electrical contractor and, since approximately 2010, had operated Paul Perrotti Electric, LLC (PPE).

In 2012 and 2013, Perrotti used approximately \$25,000 in Town funds to pay for unauthorized personal expenses and for expenses associated with PPE. These payments included checks made directly payable to employees of PPE, checks made to various vendors of PPE for PPE-related supplies, and checks made payable to third parties, who ultimately passed on the payments to Perrotti. Perrotti also submitted invoices to the Town of Middlebury for expenses he falsely claimed were incurred by MVFD but, in fact, were expenses related to PPE's business, including bills for PPE's vendors.

Perrotti was sentenced to serve three months imprisonment and to perform 200 hours of community service.

### **Former Insurance Agency Owner Sentenced**

Earl O'Garro, Jr. was the President, Chief Executive Officer and an owner of Hartford-based Hybrid Insurance Agency, LLC (Hybrid), a wholesale insurance brokerage specializing in placing excess and surplus line insurance products.

Beginning in approximately April 2013, O'Garro defrauded Capital Premium Financing, Inc., a specialty lender that provides premium financing on behalf of insured entities. O'Garro falsely represented to Capital Premium Financing that an insurance carrier, AmTrust E&S Insurance Services, Inc. (AmTrust), had issued insurance

policies for four companies, that these companies were using Capital Premium Financing's services to finance their premium payments, and that Hybrid had brokered the contracts and was entitled to collect the premiums on behalf of AmTrust. Relying upon O'Garro's false representations, Capital Premium Financing released \$849,282 in premium payments to Hybrid on the purported insurance policies. O'Garro converted the funds to his own use.

Hybrid also served as the wholesale broker for certain insurance policies held by the City of Hartford. In July 2013, O'Garro directed the city to transfer \$868,244 in premiums to Hybrid. After the city of Hartford wired Hybrid the funds, O'Garro intentionally withheld \$669,997 in premium payments from the appropriate excess insurance carriers, Starr Indemnity & Liability Company, Inc., and National Casualty Company. Instead, O'Garro converted the money to his own use, yet falsely advised the city that the premium payments had been remitted to the insurers.

In July 2013, O'Garro, on behalf of Hybrid, also submitted a false application to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for a \$500,000 loan. In his application, O'Garro provided false information concerning his and Hybrid's financial condition. Based in part on these false statements, DECD approved Hybrid's loan application and mailed a \$250,000 check to Hybrid. O'Garro used a substantial portion of those loan funds to make a payment on a million dollar condominium he had purchased in the Dominican Republic and to pay other personal expenses.

O'Garro was convicted after trial of two counts of wire fraud and one count of mail fraud. On April 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 78 months of imprisonment. He also was ordered to pay restitution of approximately \$1.3 million.

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **Mortgage Fraud**

#### **Attorney Who Stole \$1.8 Million from Oxford Woman's Estate Sentenced to Federal Prison**

Miriam S. Strong, of Oxford, died in 2010. Her will left money, property, and other items to a list of individuals, the Town of Oxford, the State of Connecticut and several religious and charitable entities. It also initiated a scholarship fund for college-bound students from Oxford.

Peter M. Clark, her attorney, drafted the will and served as a witness to Strong's execution of the will. The will named Clark and another individual as co-executors. Clark subsequently took more than \$1.8 million from Strong's estate for his own use.

Clark pleaded guilty to mail fraud. On January 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 45 months of imprisonment. He also was ordered to make restitution to the Connecticut Client Security Fund, which reimbursed Strong's estate.

#### **Southport Man Sentenced for Failing to Pay Taxes on Money He Stole from Benefactor**

Orval Furlong was a life-long friend of a wealthy benefactor. During the last years of the benefactor's life, Furlong hired home health aides to help care for the benefactor. Furlong then provided an attorney, who handled the benefactor's expenses, with an itemization of the hours worked by the home health aides, the hourly rates for their services, and the amount needed to pay them for the services provided. The attorney issued Furlong checks from one of the benefactor's bank accounts to pay the health aides.

From at least 2009 to 2011, Furlong routinely inflated the applicable hourly rate paid to the home health aides. Furlong then paid the home health aides in cash or by check in an amount significantly lower than Furlong had represented to the attorney. Furlong kept the difference and used the funds for his personal expenditures.

Furlong pleaded guilty to tax evasion. On June 22, 2016, he was sentenced to five months of

imprisonment and ordered to perform 200 hours of community service. He also was ordered to pay back taxes, interest, and penalties on his illegal income.

#### **Former Connecticut Resident Sentenced for Defrauding Federal Energy Program**

In 2010 and 2011, Walter Craig Bradway, the owner and president of DataComm Services LLC, a Glastonbury-based company, submitted more than 300 applications for U.S. Department of Treasury reimbursements for solar panel projects in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Florida, California, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Maine. He fraudulently represented on the applications that the projects were installed and in service, when in fact they had not even begun. Bradway also submitted false documentation for many of the projects, including falsified engineer reports and fake interconnection agreements with local utility companies.

Bradway pleaded guilty to defrauding the Federal Energy Program and to obtaining more than \$9 million in economic stimulus program funds in 2010 and 2011. On May 16, 2016, Bradway was sentenced to 13 months of imprisonment and was ordered to pay \$8.9 million in restitution.

#### **Owner of Company that Falsely Advertised Mortgage Assistance Sentenced to Prison**

John Vescera was the President of First One Lending Corporation (First One) in San Juan Capistrano, California. During the mortgage crisis, Vescera and First One offered home mortgage loan modification assistance to homeowners struggling to repay their mortgage loans.

From 2010 through 2012, Vescera and First One solicited clients through television advertisements and infomercials produced by National Media Connection of New London. The advertisements touted the mortgage modification services of an entity known as the National

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **Mortgage Fraud**

Mortgage Help Center (NMHC). Matthew Goldreich had incorporated NMHC two months after the U.S. Treasury Department announced that it would partner with financial institutions to reduce struggling homeowners' monthly mortgage payments through a program called the Home Affordable Modification Program.

NMHC advertisements misrepresented that NMHC was affiliated with or regulated by the U.S. Government and falsely stated that NMHC "helped thousands of homeowners every day." When homeowners called the advertised phone number they were not directed to NMHC, which operated as a front and did not provide mortgage modification services, but instead to clients of National Media Connection, including First One.

Through this scheme, 302 victims lost \$374,622.

On September 28, 2016, Vescera was sentenced to 12 months and one day of imprisonment.

#### **Ring Leader of Mortgage Loan Modification Scheme Sentenced to More Than Nine Years in Prison**

Aria Maleki operated a series of California-based companies that targeted homeowners across the country who were behind on their mortgage payments or who had recently experienced a financial hardship. The co-conspirators cold-called homeowners offering to provide mortgage loan modification services. Homeowners were charged \$2,500 to \$4,300 for Maleki's services and were told they had already been approved for mortgage loan modifications on extremely favorable terms. The victims were assured that if the mortgage loan modifications fell through, all fees would be refunded. The homeowners, in fact, had not been pre-approved for mortgage loan modifications and did not receive refunds of their fees.

To avoid detection, scheme participants used pseudonyms and periodically changed their business and operating names. They also had the homeowners mail their fee payments to addresses and mail boxes that had been set up in states outside of California, again to evade detection.

On July 18, 2016, Aria Maleki was sentenced to 112 months of imprisonment for heading a mortgage loan modification scheme that defrauded more than 1,000 struggling homeowners of more than \$3 million. Maleki forfeited approximately \$812,000 and a 2013 Ferrari 458 Italia.

In addition to Maleki, six other defendants were convicted of charges relating to the fraudulent mortgage scheme. On September 1, 2016, Serj Geutssoyan and Daniel Shiau were sentenced to 52 months and 58 months of imprisonment, respectively. On September 6, 2016, Mehdi Moarefian was sentenced to 52 months of imprisonment. On October 25, 2016, Kowit Yuktanon and Cuong Huy King were each sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment. And on October 31, 2016, Michelle Lefauseu was sentenced to 12 months and one day of imprisonment. Participants in the scheme were also ordered to jointly pay \$2,390,496 in restitution.

# **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

## **Insider Trading**

### **Former Executive of Stamford Company Sentenced to Prison for Insider Trading**

Dennis Hamilton was employed as Vice President of Tax at Harman International Industries, Inc. (Harman) in Stamford. Harman is a publicly-held company whose shares trade on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol "HAR." Beginning in 2009, Harman allowed directors, members of its executive committee and certain other insiders to buy or sell Harman securities in the public market only during a declared trading window period.

In August 2013, Hamilton was included on Harman's insider trading list and he was notified when the window in which he could engage in open market purchases of Harman securities opened. On September 27, 2013, Hamilton and other Harman employees were advised via email that the "window period" within which they could engage in open market purchases or sales of Harman securities had closed.

In October 2013, Hamilton received material, non-public information about Harman's financial results for the first quarter for the fiscal year ending 2014, including drafts of Harman's Form 10-Q filing and an earnings press release. He and other Harman executives also participated in a conference call with Harman's Audit Committee in which they discussed a draft resolution declaring a quarterly cash dividend on Harman's common stock.

On October 30, 2013, Hamilton, armed with material, non-public information, purchased 17,000 shares of HAR through a trading account for \$72/share. The next day, Harman announced positive first quarter earnings for fiscal year 2014, and the closing price of HAR shot up to \$81.02/share. Hamilton ultimately realized a gain of \$131,958 on the 17,000 shares of HAR he purchased.

Hamilton pleaded guilty to securities fraud. On September 2, 2016, he was sentenced to eight months of imprisonment.



## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **RMBS Related Cases**

#### **RMBS Task Force**

The Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force's Residential Mortgage-Backed Securities Working Group is a federal and state law enforcement effort focused on investigating fraud and abuse in the RMBS market that helped lead to the 2008 financial crisis and the federal government's subsequent bailout. The RMBS Working Group brings together attorneys, investigators, analysts and staff from dozens of state and federal agencies including the Department of Justice, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, the FBI, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), HUD's Office of Inspector General, the Federal Housing Financing Agency-OIG, the Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, the Federal Reserve Board's Office of Inspector General, the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, and State Attorneys General Offices around the country. For more information about the RMBS Working Group and the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, visit: [www.stopfraud.gov](http://www.stopfraud.gov).

#### **RBS Supervisor Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Commit Multimillion Dollar Securities Fraud**

Between 2008 and 2014, Adam Siegel was the Co-Head of U.S. Asset-Backed Securities, Mortgage-Backed Securities and Commercial Mortgage-Backed Securities Trading at RBS Securities Inc. RBS is a global securities firm with headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut. RBS also has a trading floor in Stamford where Siegel and some of the RBS employees that he supervised traded fixed income investment securities such as residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS) and collateralized loan obligations (CLOs).

On December 20, 2015, Siegel waived indictment and pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit securities fraud. Siegel admitted that he and others conspired to increase RBS's profits on CLO and RMBS bond trades at the expense of customers.

The conspiracy was perpetrated in two ways. In certain transactions, Siegel and his co-conspirators misrepresented the seller's asking price to the buyer (or vice versa), keeping the difference between the price paid by the buyer and the price paid to the seller for RBS. In other transactions, Siegel and his co-conspirators misrepresented to the buyer that bonds held in RBS's inventory were being offered for sale by a fictitious

third-party seller, which allowed RBS to charge the buyer an extra, unearned commission.

The investigation revealed numerous fraudulent transactions by Siegel and other members of the conspiracy that cost at least 35 victim customers, including firms affiliated with recipients of federal bailout funds through the Troubled Asset Relief Program, millions of dollars.

Siegel has agreed to cooperate with the government, and his sentencing has been postponed. Previously, on March 11, 2015, Matthew Katke, a registered broker-dealer and managing director at RBS Securities Inc., pleaded guilty to the same charge and also is cooperating with the government.



## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **RMBS Related Cases**

#### **Bond Trader Convicted and Sentenced to Jail for Second Time in Four Years**

On January 27, 2017, a jury in New Haven found Jesse Litvak, 42, of Boca Raton, guilty of one count of securities fraud stemming from trading in residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS). The jury returned a verdict of guilty on one count of securities fraud, and a verdict of not guilty on nine counts of security fraud.

According to the evidence introduced during the trial, in response to the 2008 financial collapse, the U.S. Department of Treasury introduced the Legacy Securities Public-Private Investment Program (PPIP), and used billions of dollars of bailout money from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) to restart the trading markets for many troubled securities, including certain kinds of RMBS. The program created nine PPIP funds, and more than 100 firms applied to manage the funds.

Litvak was a senior trader and managing director at Jefferies & Co, Inc. (“Jefferies”), a global securities and investment banking firm headquartered in New York. Jefferies also had a trading floor in Stamford, where Litvak and other members of its Mortgage and Asset-Backed Securities trading group worked.

The jury found that Litvak engaged in a scheme to defraud. As a broker-dealer, only Litvak – not the bond seller or buyer – knew the selling and asking prices of the parties. In the count of conviction, Litvak exploited this information by misrepresenting to his PPIP fund victim the price Jefferies paid for a RMBS bond in order to increase Jefferies’ profit on the trade.

Previously, on March 7, 2014, Litvak was convicted after trial of 10 counts of securities fraud, one count of TARP fraud and three counts of making false statements to the government. Litvak was sentenced to two years of imprison-

ment and fined \$1.75 million. Litvak appealed his conviction and, on December 8, 2015, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit reversed the judgment of conviction as to the TARP fraud and making false statement charges, and remanded the matter for a new trial on the securities fraud charges.

The investigation of this matter revealed that members of Jefferies’ management in the fixed income division became aware that Jefferies employees were making misrepresentations to customers and did nothing to stop it. Jefferies cooperated with the federal criminal investigation and paid a \$25 million penalty as part of a non-prosecution agreement with the government. The penalty included up to \$11 million in restitution to victims and up to a \$4,200,402 penalty to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Jefferies also addressed deficiencies in the compliance and ethics practices and policies of its Mortgage and Asset-Backed Securities Trading group. These measures included Jefferies’ agreement to retain an Independent Compliance Consultant to conduct a review of Jefferies’ policies and procedures for detecting and preventing fraud in connection with the purchase or sale of RMBS.

On April 26, 2017, Litvak was again sentenced to two years of imprisonment. This time, the court increased the fine to \$2 million.

## **Financial Fraud and Public Corruption**

### **RMBS Related Cases**

#### **Indictment Charges Former Cantor Fitzgerald RMBS Trader with Securities Fraud**

On December 7, 2016, a federal grand jury in New Haven returned an indictment charging former Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. bond trader, David Demos, 35, of Westport, with six counts of securities fraud.

According to the indictment, Residential Mortgage-Backed Securities (RMBS) are collections of mortgages and home equity loans, which are grouped together and sold as packages between and among banks, money managers, pension funds and others. Investors in RMBS receive payments on a monthly basis. Those payments are based on the extent to which homeowners, who had originally taken out the mortgages or loans, repaid their lenders. The payments to RMBS investors continue until the homeowners repay their mortgage debt, refinance or default. Unlike stocks that trade on the New York Stock Exchange or the NASDAQ, RMBS are not publicly traded on an exchange and pricing information is not publicly available. Instead, buyers and sellers of RMBS use broker-dealers, like Cantor Fitzgerald, to execute individually negotiated transactions.

Demos was a trader and managing director at Cantor Fitzgerald from November 2011 until his employment was terminated in February 2013. The indictment alleges that Demos defrauded customers by fraudulently inflating the purchase price at which Cantor Fitzgerald could buy an RMBS bond to induce their victim-customers to pay a higher price for the bond, and by fraudulently deflating the price at which Cantor Fitzgerald could sell a RMBS bond to induce their victim-customers to sell bonds at cheaper prices.

It is alleged that, as a result of this scheme, Cantor Fitzgerald and Demos profited illegally, and victim-customers sustained millions of dollars of losses.

The victims of this alleged scheme include asset managers and firms affiliated with or subsidiaries of recipients of funds from the U.S. Government's Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).

## **Criminal Division**

# **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **National Security and Major Crimes**

Raymond F. Miller is the Chief of the National Security and Major Crimes unit (NSMC), and Sarala Nagala and Jacabed Rodriguez-Coss are the Deputy Chiefs. Doug Morabito serves as the National Security Coordinator and manages the District's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council.

John Fitzgerald is the Office's Intelligence Specialist and Security Manager. In addition to the prosecutors already named, the NSMC Unit includes paralegals, legal assistants, and other specialists, as well as the following AUSAs: Hal Chen, Nancy Gifford, Anastasia King, Hank Kopel, Doug Morabito, Neeraj Patel, Vanessa Richards, and Deborah Slater.

The NSMC team investigates and prosecutes matters involving national security, civil rights violations, hate crimes, human trafficking, child exploitation, cybercrime, identity theft, international and domestic organized crime, bank robberies, immigration and customs enforcement, government program and defense contractor fraud, and environmental crimes. National Security remains the top priority of both the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office. We focus our efforts on the investigation and prosecution of international and domestic terrorism related matters, threatening communications and hoaxes, the export of restricted technology, theft of trade secrets and cyber-intrusions, and cases involving economic espionage and the loss or compromise of classified materials.

Additionally, cybercrime, including both cyber-based attacks on the nation's electronic infrastructure and economic crimes committed using computers are a key Office priority.

On the next several pages are descriptions of a sampling of the cases the NSMC Unit prosecuted in 2016.

#### **— Contact Information —**

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**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Joint Terrorism Task Force  
(203) 777-6311**

**State of Connecticut Department of  
Emergency Services and Public Protection  
(866) HLS-TIPS**

## **National Security and Major Crimes** **National Security Program**

The District of Connecticut's national security program is a multi-pronged approach that includes: (1) the investigation and prosecution of national security matters by its counter-terrorism prosecutors and investigative agencies; (2) an Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (the ATAC); and (3) a robust anti-terrorism training program.

### **Keeping Our Community Safe**

The Office aggressively investigates and prosecutes international and domestic terrorism-related offenses; terrorist financing offenses, including money laundering and cash smuggling; the unlawful possession or trafficking of explosive, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials; threatening communications and terrorism-related hoaxes; cases involving the export of restricted technology; and cases involving espionage and the loss or compromise of national security information and classified materials.

Our Office works closely with the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations, and all federal, state, and local agencies on national security, counterterrorism and intelligence matters, in order to provide legal and investigative guidance; to assist, as appropriate, in obtaining subpoenas, warrants, court orders, court-authorized electronic surveillance, and other processes to further such investigations; to consult on Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Classified Information Procedures Act, and intelligence equities; and to bring criminal charges when they are appropriate.



### **The Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council**

Our Office also chairs Connecticut's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council, which includes representatives from approximately 100 different law enforcement agencies. The ATAC program provides training for, and ensures collaboration between, federal, state and local law enforcement officers on national security matters.

Over the past several years, ATAC training to law enforcement groups has included trainings on biological and radioactive weapons, improvised explosive devices, active-shooter scenarios and the protection of critical infrastructure.

Our Office also partners with the FBI for its Indoor Post-Blast School, an intensive, week-long course taught by expert bomb technicians and federal prosecutors, which has taken place in Connecticut at least annually for the past fourteen years and has hosted, each time, approximately 60 federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, bomb technicians, and other first responders. The training includes intensive instruction on explosive materials, improvised explosive devices, letter and package bombs, large vehicle bombs, suicide bombings, evidence collection, bombing investigations, WMDs, and investigative techniques/post-blast analysis. Various explosive devices are detonated under controlled circumstances, and students must process the scene, collect evidence and try to determine the source of the blast and the type and design of the device used, while interacting with AUSAs to obtain subpoenas, court orders and search warrants to further their investigation.

## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Thefts and Transfers of U.S. Defense Technology**

### **Company Owners Sentenced for Defrauding Government Customers**

Jeffrey Krantz is the CEO and part-owner of Harry Krantz, LLC, a New York-based company that bought and sold obsolete electronic parts that were originally intended for use by the U.S. Military and commercial buyers. In 2005, Krantz entered into an agreement with Jeffrey Warga, the president and owner of Bay Components, LLC, to sell military microprocessor chips to Bay Components that Krantz and Warga both knew to be obsolete. Krantz also knew that Warga intended to sell the chips to a company in Connecticut (Company A).

Between 2005 and 2008 Krantz purchased and sold more than 1,000 chips to Bay Components. Warga, in turn, sold the chips to Company A. When Company A rejected the chips because they were not what they agreed to purchase, Krantz replaced them with other chips that he obtained from a parts supplier in China. Krantz knew that there was a high probability that the replacement chips were counterfeits.

While many of the chips were used in the assembly of U.S. Military and commercial helicopters, investigators determined that the chips had not caused any mechanical problems experienced by the helicopters prior to the detection of the fraud.

Warga and Krantz were convicted of wire fraud. On December 10, 2015, Krantz was sentenced to three years of probation and ordered

to pay more than \$400,000 in restitution. On January 21, 2016, Warga was sentenced to three years of probation and fined \$10,000.

### **Citizens of China Sentenced for Trafficking Counterfeit Computer Chips**

In 2012, law enforcement began investigating Jiang Guanghou Yan for trafficking in counterfeit semiconductors. Between 2014 and 2015, Yan sold 45 counterfeit Intel microprocessors to an undercover agent (UC) who told Yan that the components would be used for a U.S. Navy submarine contract.

In July 2015, Yan asked the UC to provide him with 22 military-grade Xilinx semiconductors. Yan said he would pay \$37,000 per semiconductor. When the UC advised Yan that the Xilinx components would be stolen from a U.S. Navy base, Yan offered to provide fake Xilinx components that could be substituted for the stolen components to prevent detection of the theft. Yan explained that the fake components “look the same” but would not actually function. In November 2015, Yan shipped eight of the fake Xilinx components to the UC.

In December 2015, Yan, Daofu Zhang, and Xianfeng Zuo traveled to the U.S. to take delivery of the Xilinx semiconductors. The three men were arrested and charged with violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and conspiring to traffic in counterfeit goods.

Yan, Zhang, and Zuo were convicted of conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit goods. Yan was also convicted of attempting to export integrated circuits without the required export license. On July 8, 2016, Zhang was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment. On November 4, 2016, Zuo was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment. And, on December 20, 2016, Yan was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment. The three defendants also forfeited \$63,000.





## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Thefts and Transfers of U.S. Defense Technology**

### **Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiring To Travel To China With Stolen U.S. Military Program Documents**

From August 2008 to May 2014, Yu Long worked as a Senior Engineer/Scientist at a research and development center for a major defense contractor (“Company A”). On August 19, 2014, when Long returned to the U.S. from China through JFK International Airport, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”) officers searched Long and found him to be in possession of \$10,000 in undeclared U.S. currency, registration documents for a new corporation being set up in China, and a largely completed application for work with a state-controlled aviation and aerospace research center in China. The application materials highlighted Long’s work history and experiences obtained while employed at Company A, including work on F119 and F135 engines, which are used by U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft.

On November 5, 2014, Long boarded a flight from Ithaca to Newark Liberty International Airport, with a final destination of China. During Long’s layover in Newark, CBP officers inspected his checked baggage and discovered sensitive, proprietary, and export controlled documents from several defense contractors. The documents bore warnings that they contained sensitive, proprietary and export controlled material, which could not be copied or communicated to a third party. Moreover, since 1989, the U.S. has imposed a prohibition upon the export to China of all U.S. defense articles and associated technical data.

On December 19, 2016, Long pleaded guilty to conspiring to engage in the theft of trade secrets that would benefit a foreign government and to unlawfully exporting and attempting to export defense articles from the United States in violation of the Arms Export Control Act.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Thefts and Transfers of U.S. Defense Technology**

### **U.S. Service Member Who Took Illegal Photos Inside Nuclear Sub and Impeded Investigation Sentenced to Prison**

From September 2007 to March 2012, Kristian Saucier served as a machinist's mate aboard the USS Alexandria, a U.S. Navy nuclear submarine based at the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut.

On at least three separate dates in 2009, Saucier used his personal cell phone to take pictures of classified spaces, instruments, and equipment on the USS Alexandria. The pictures documented technical components of the submarine's propulsion system. Saucier had a Secret Clearance and knew that the photos depicted classified material and that he was not authorized to take them.

In March 2012, Saucier's cell phone was discovered at a waste transfer station. In July 2012, the FBI and NCIS interviewed Saucier about the photographs on the phone. After the interview, Saucier returned home and immediately destroyed a laptop computer, a personal camera and the camera's memory card. Fragments of the laptop were found in the woods on a family member's property.

In May 2016, Saucier pleaded guilty to unauthorized possession and retention of national defense information. On August 19, 2016, he was sentenced to 12 months of imprisonment followed by six months of home confinement.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Cybercrime**

In 2016, the Office took significant steps to advance the cyber investigations and prosecutions in the District. We established a “cyber bench” to investigate and prosecute serious cyber violations. That bench consists of six AUSAs who have an interest in this area and who work with the Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Coordinator and the National Security Cyber Specialist to investigate and prosecute matters involving malware and botnets, denial of service attacks, business e-mail compromises, identity theft, and cybercrimes that cause economic loss. To insure that these AUSAs are up to speed on new techniques and nation-wide trends, they receive training from various speakers from Main Justice, FBI, HSI and USSS.

Additionally, the Office formed the Federal Cyber Working Group, which includes representatives from FBI, HSI, Secret Service, DCIS, U.S. Postal Service and DEA. This group meets monthly to discuss federal investigations, share intelligence to maximize each agency’s effectiveness, and coordinate outreach efforts.

As a result of these efforts, the Office currently oversees several large scale international cyber investigations. Moreover, the cyber group has helped their investigative partners triage their cases and thereby focus their attention on these one or two large scale investigations while simultaneously moving forward on important, but less intense cases that can make a difference to community, such as DDOS attacks and smaller scale cyber fraud cases. DEA is also now entering the cyber sphere with that agency’s first dark web investigation.

Finally, the Federal Cyber Working Group has conducted a significant amount of outreach. Most notably in May 2016 the Office co-hosted the First Annual Conference of Combatting Cyber Security Threats, a one-day cyber security conference that catered to internal risk auditors and legal counsel for technology, finance and military companies. More than 100 people attended, representing more than two dozen companies. Members of the cyber bench also participated in other speaking engagements with the Department of Commerce, and community groups, such as the YMCA.

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## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Protection of Children and Human Trafficking**

#### **Constant Vigilance and Project Safe Childhood: Our Fight Against Child Exploitation**

Combatting child exploitation is a top priority of the Office. The myriad dangers facing children today, such as online enticement and commercial sexual exploitation, are frightening and regrettably too prevalent. The threat of sexual predators soliciting children for sexual contact is serious, and the danger of perpetrators who produce, distribute, and possess child pornography is equally disturbing.

Over the last several years, it has become increasingly clear that human trafficking, and particularly the sex trafficking of minors, is a form of modern day slavery. Despite the best efforts of law enforcement, this criminal activity grows apace with the proliferation of Internet marketplaces where sex with children can be bought and sold.

The Connecticut Human Trafficking Task Force is made up of law enforcement officers from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, the United States Department of Labor, the Connecticut State Police, and 16 local police departments around the state, along with representatives from various State's Attorney's Offices. The Task Force has multiplied the number of human trafficking investigations and prosecutions pursued in Connecticut.

We implore trafficking victims, and anyone who comes in contact with potential victims of trafficking, to call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline at 888-373-7888. The hotline is run by the Polaris Project under a federal grant. Hotline operators are trained to identify potential trafficking situations, and will immediately refer tips to law enforcement. Individuals can also send an email to [NHTRC@traffickingresourcecenter.org](mailto:NHTRC@traffickingresourcecenter.org).



Trafficking victims may also text “BEFREE” to receive immediate assistance from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center.

#### **Contact Information for Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinators**

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## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Protection of Children**

### **Meriden Man Sentenced to 15 Years for Engaging in Sex Acts with Minors and Producing Child Pornography**

Between 2012 and August 2015, Mark Irvin engaged in sex acts with three males under the age of 18. Irvin also installed a video camera at his residence to record the sexual activity.

On September 8, 2015, law enforcement officers searched Irvin's residence and seized several computers, hard drives, electronic storage media, and the digital video recording device. During forensic analysis of the seized evidence, law enforcement found videos that depicted Irvin engaging in sex acts with two of the three males. Law enforcement also found videos and images of naked minors that were taken with a hidden camera in Irvin's bathroom.

On November 23, 2016, Irvin was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment, followed by 15 years of supervised release.

### **Hartford Man Sentenced for Sex Trafficking a Minor**

On November 18, 2014, a case worker with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families informed Enfield Police that a 15-year-old girl had advertised prostitution on Backpage.com and that her location was listed as Enfield. Police contacted the number on the advertisement and engaged in a ruse to determine the girl's location. Police were directed to a local motel where they encountered the girl in one of the rooms. The room, which contained evidence of prostitution, had been rented by Romane St. Christopher McKenzie, who was present in a different room in the motel.

The investigation revealed that McKenzie knew that the victim was 15-years-old, that he paid for Backpage.com prostitution advertisements on behalf of the minor-victim and others, and that he trafficked the minor victim and others at motels in

Enfield and Windsor Locks. McKenzie also sold crack cocaine to the victim.

McKenzie pleaded guilty to sex trafficking of a minor. On November 14, 2016, McKenzie was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment.

### **East Hampton Man Sentenced for Using Computer to Entice Minors**

Between August 2013 and June 2015, Keith Haessly of East Hampton posed as a young female and used previously recorded videos of females to dupe young boys on video chat programs, including Skype and Omegle, to engage in sexual activity. Haessly recorded these interactions and distributed some of the images to an individual in Virginia.

Haessly possessed images and videos on his computer that depicted more than 950 child victims.

Haessly pleaded guilty to using a computer to entice minors to engage in unlawful sexual activity. On June 14, 2016, he was sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment.

### **New York Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for Sex Trafficking of a Minor**

On March 5, 2015, East Hartford Police encountered an underage girl in a motel room. The victim stated that she met Jordan Anate in New York and that beginning in December 2014 she engaged in acts of prostitution at Anate's direction in Hartford, Manchester, New Britain and East Hartford. The victim saw several clients, per week and gave all the money to Anate.

Anate pleaded guilty to sex trafficking of a minor. On September 15, 2016, he was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment. He also was ordered to pay \$42,000 in restitution to the victim.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Protection of Children**

### **Connecticut Man Sentenced to More Than 15 Years for Sexually Exploiting Three Minors**

Between October and June 2014, Daniel Jesse Conrad sexually exploited three minor girls. In February 2014, Conrad met one of the minor girls through the Internet chat service Omegle. At the time the minor was 15.

Conrad and the minor began communicating regularly through the Kik text messaging and photo sharing application. Between March and June 2014, they met six times. Conrad would pick the minor up and drive to his residence in Connecticut where they engaged in sexual intercourse. Conrad used his cellphone during some of the interactions to take videos and pictures of the minor engaged in sexual activity.

In addition to meeting in person, Conrad and the minor had video conversations. During some of the conversations, the minor engaged in sexually explicit activity, which Conrad recorded and saved. In addition, Conrad urged the minor to take sexually explicit photos of herself and send them to him.

Conrad had similar illicit communications with 15-year-old girls in New York and Nebraska.

Conrad saved approximately 200 images and 52 videos of the three minors engaged in sexually explicit activity.

Conrad pleaded guilty to production of child pornography. On December 12, 2016, he was sentenced to 186 months of imprisonment.

### **Middletown Man Sentenced for Possessing Child Pornography**

“Operation Pacifier” was an FBI investigation into Playpen, a global online forum used to distribute and access child pornography. On February 20, 2015, the FBI seized a computer server that was hosting the Playpen forum. From February 20, 2015 to March 4, 2015, the FBI

operated the website in order to collect information and identify the members of the Playpen forum. The FBI determined that the site hosted more than 150,000 members, contained tens of thousands of postings relating to child pornography, and had tips on how to groom child victims and to avoid detection.

Based upon the seizure of the website, the FBI identified Paul Hubbard as a Playpen member and determined that he accessed the site from a computer in his Middletown home for 13 hours during the monitored period. On July 16, 2015, the FBI searched Hubbard’s residence and seized two laptop computers and two external hard drives. Analysis of the seized hard drives revealed 354 videos and 6,851 images of child pornography, including many that portrayed prepubescent minors and sadistic and masochistic conduct.

Hubbard pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography. On October 13, 2016, he was sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment.

### **Participants in a Sex Trafficking of Minors Conspiracy Sentenced**

In September 2012, Edward Thomas, a pimp operating in New York and Connecticut, enticed a girl that he knew to be 17-years-old (MV1) to travel to New York to work as a prostitute. MV1 agreed and came with a second 16-year-old girl (MV2) using bus tickets that Thomas purchased.

When MV1 and MV2 arrived, Thomas took them to a hotel in Milford, introduced them to his codefendant Kayla Walters, and posted prostitution advertisements. Thereafter, MV1 and MV2 saw customers for commercial sex acts at Thomas’s and Walters’s direction. While MV2 escaped through a hotel room window after several hours, MV1 continued to work for Thomas and Walters for approximately one month, giving them the money she earned. When MV1 attempted to leave, Thomas forcibly restrained her. On November 8, 2012, law enforcement rescued MV1

## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Protection of Children**

and brought her home.

In July 2013, Thomas again enticed MV1 to return to Connecticut. Once again, law enforcement rescued MV1 from a hotel in Milford where Thomas had put her to work prostituting.

Thomas was convicted after trial of sex trafficking a minor. On November 2, 2015, he was sentenced to 210 months of imprisonment. Walter pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a minor. On April 6, 2016, Walters was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment.

### **Former Hartford Resident Sentenced to Prison for Sex Trafficking of Minors**

Between June 2013 and February 2014, Wellington Brown, with assistance from Sheena Dume, used manipulative tactics to recruit five minor victims to engage in prostitution. Brown lured victims by driving expensive vehicles, displaying jewelry and cash, and telling them that they would make a lot of money, possibly through modeling careers.

Brown photographed the minor victims and used the photos to advertise the girls as prostitutes. Brown and Dume covered the expenses of the prostitution operation, such as renting hotel rooms, providing transportation and condoms, and buying food for the victims. Brown also provided the minor victims with marijuana.

The victims gave Brown tens of thousands of

dollars they made working as prostitutes at his direction.

Both Brown and Dume pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors and six counts of sex trafficking of minors. On February 11, 2016, Brown was sentenced to 126 months of imprisonment. On March 8, 2016, Dume was sentenced to 72 months of imprisonment. Brown also faces immigration proceedings after he serves his prison sentence.

**In 2016, the Office charged five defendants with trafficking violations involving minors and obtained 10 year sentences for two others who were also involved in trafficking minors.**

**Federal authorities worked in partnership with 16 local police departments and the State Police to investigate a number of other trafficking matters.**

**The Department of Justice's Project Safe Childhood Initiative protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc).**

**To report cases of child exploitation, please visit [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).**

**The DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) serves an important function in the enforcement of federal laws protecting children from exploitation and prohibiting the distribution of obscenity. To view summaries of the federal laws that pertain to CEOS's subject areas, please visit: [www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-child-exploitation-and-obscenity-laws](http://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-child-exploitation-and-obscenity-laws).**

## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act**

It is a federal crime for an individual to knowingly fail to register or update his or her registration as required pursuant to the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA). For example, a sex offender is required to update their registration in each jurisdiction they reside, are employed, or attend school. Offenders convicted of this crime face statutory penalties.

SORNA provides a comprehensive set of minimum standards for sex offender registration and notification in the United States, and seeks to strengthen the nationwide network of sex offender registration and notification programs. SORNA requires sex offenders to register and keep their registration current in each jurisdiction in which they reside, work, or go to school. The United States Marshals Service coordinates SORNA investigations.

Sex offender registration and notification programs are important for public safety. Sex offender registration is a system for monitoring and tracking sex offenders following their release into the community. The registration provides important information about convicted sex offenders to local and federal authorities and the public, such as offender's name, current location and past offenses. Currently, the means of public notification includes sex offender websites in all states, the District of Columbia, and some territories. Some states involve other forms of notice.

#### **Hartford Man Sentenced to Prison for Failing to Register as Sex Offender**

On April 8, 2005, Edward Donaldson was sentenced in Hartford federal court to five years of imprisonment, followed by five years of supervised release, for engaging in sexually explicit conversations, from his computer in Maryland, with an undercover agent who he thought was a 13-year-old girl, and then traveling to Connecticut to meet the "girl" to engage in sex.

Donaldson initially complied with Connecticut Sex Offender Registry requirements while he resided in Hartford following his release from prison. However, federal investigators began looking for Donaldson in late 2013 after he failed to respond to an address verification request and a subsequent notice of violation sent by the Sex Offender Registry Unit.

On February 5, 2016, Donaldson was arrested in Hartford. He pleaded guilty to failing to register as a sex offender and, on January 20, 2017, he was sentenced to serve 18 months of imprisonment.

## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Identity Theft & Access Device Fraud**

One characteristic of modern life is our dependence on digital data, namely, passwords and personal identification number (PINS) rather than combination locks or keys, to control access to and protect our computers, financial accounts, ATMs, and other valuable personal identifying data. Unfortunately, with the advent of the digital world, criminals have become more sophisticated and have development means by which to acquire, transfer, and use credit-card and other symbolic data for a wide range of illegal activities that often span state or international boundaries. Identity theft is one of the most pervasive forms of white-collar crime in the United States. Every year, millions of citizens are the victims of identity theft. While this crime takes many forms — from local vehicle break-ins and trash theft, to international Web sites gathering personal data — it invariably leaves victims with the task of repairing the damage to their lives. We take these cases very seriously, and work closely with federal, state and local authorities to prosecute these crimes.

### **Jamaican National Sentenced to Prison for Passport Fraud**

In March 2011, Mark Gouldbourne, a Jamaican citizen, applied for a U.S. passport using a New York birth certificate and a Pennsylvania identity card that belonged to another individual. Gouldbourne posed as a U.S. citizen, presented the documentation to the passport acceptance agent and signed the passport application under oath. The application was flagged as potentially fraudulent so the passport was not issued.

In May 2015, law enforcement learned that Gouldbourne was an inmate at Hartford Correctional Center under the same identity used in the fraudulent passport application.

Gouldbourne was arrested and later pleaded guilty to making a false statement in a passport application. On May 2, 2016, he was sentenced to nine months of imprisonment. Upon completion of his federal sentence, Gouldbourne is subject to deportation proceedings.



There is a great deal of information about identity theft crimes, and how to avoid falling victim to them, on the Internet sites of the FBI (<http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety>), the Federal Trade Commission (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/menus/consumer/tech.shtm>), the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team ([us-cert.gov/nav/nt01](http://us-cert.gov/nav/nt01)) and the Internet Crime Complaint Center (<http://www.ic3.gov/preventiontips.aspx>).

## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Robbery**

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced for Committing Six Bank Robberies in Connecticut and New York**

On October 15, 2015, Juan Cruz robbed the Santander Bank on Grand Avenue in New Haven. On October 20, 2015, November 9, 2015, and November 21, 2015, Cruz robbed the Wells Fargo Bank on Church Street in New Haven. On November 9, 2015, Cruz robbed the Bank of America on Church Street in New Haven. And on November 20, 2015, he robbed a Citizens Bank in Albany, New York. During his robbery spree, Cruz stole \$18,830.

Cruz pleaded guilty to bank robbery and on December 22, 2016, he was sentenced to 84 months of imprisonment.

#### **New York Men Involved in \$2.5 Million Jewelry Theft Sentenced to Prison**

A group of friends who referred to themselves as the “Jedi Knights” committed numerous residential burglaries in Connecticut between February 2012 and November 2013. The Jedi Knights stole money, jewelry, and firearms during these robberies.

In February 2012, Jason Gatto and another individual stole approximately 250 pieces of jewelry valued at more than \$2.5 million from a residence in Salisbury, Connecticut. They then traveled to a hotel in New York where they met a third accomplice who identified the jewelry as being very valuable. The three accomplices then traveled to North Carolina, where they met with Miguel Mead. The conspirators gave Mead several pieces of the stolen jewelry which he then sold to a jewelry store for \$11,543.44.

Mead and Gatto pleaded guilty to conspiracy to transport stolen property. On February 16, 2016, Mead was sentenced to 41 months of imprisonment. On August 30, 2016, Gatto was sentenced to 40 months of imprisonment.

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced for Robbing ATF Informant and Obstructing Justice**

In August 2014, Shaquil Gary arranged to meet an individual in New Haven for the purpose of selling him crack cocaine. However, when Gary and the informant met, rather than complete the sale, Gary robbed the individual at gunpoint taking \$150 and a cell phone. Unbeknownst to Gary, the individual was an ATF confidential informant. Later that day, law enforcement officers apprehended Gary. At the time of his arrest, Gary was no longer in possession of the firearm.

While awaiting sentencing, Gary made copies of a non-public case report and attempted to send it to friends and family. Gary instructed them to post the confidential material on Facebook and to tell others that the individual identified in the report was cooperating with law enforcement officers.

Gary pleaded guilty to robbery. On January 14, 2016, he was sentenced to 96 months of imprisonment.





## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Burglary**

### **New Jersey Resident Sentenced for Role in Multi-State Burglary Spree**

In August 2013, Alionis Perez, Yoandrys Cue, and others traveled from New Jersey to Connecticut. The following day they broke into the Fossil store in Clinton and stole watches valued at \$250,000. Thereafter, the crew engaged in multiple commercial burglaries, including:

- An August 18, 2013, attempted burglary of the Movado store in Kittery, Maine.
- A September 19, 2013, burglary of the Fossil store in Miramar Beach, Florida, where they stole watches valued at \$170,000.
- An October 4, 2013, burglary of the Fossil store in Hagerstown, Maryland, where they stole watches valued at \$750,000.
- An October 24, 2013, burglary of the Fossil store in Grove City, Pennsylvania, where they stole watches valued at \$195,000.
- A November 22, 2013, theft of a van that was used the following day during a burglary of the Michael Kors store in Lee, Massachusetts, where they stole watches valued at \$500,000.

In addition, in 2014, Perez and others burglarized a Sunglass Hut in Leawood, Kansas, and stole sunglasses valued at \$113,000, and a RadioShack in Franklin, Tennessee, where they stole \$28,000 worth of smartphones. Perez and Cue were subsequently arrested in a hotel room in Nashville.

Perez and Cue pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit numerous multi-state burglaries. On August 18, 2016, Perez was sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment and, on November 1, Cue, was sentenced to 57 months of imprisonment. Perez and Cue also were ordered to pay \$1.8 million in restitution.

## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Environmental Crime**

### **Long Island Man Who Captured and Killed Federally Protected Hawks is Sentenced**

Red-tailed hawks and Cooper's hawks are birds of prey protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Thomas Kapusta and Adam Boguski, pigeon racing enthusiasts, maintained a pigeon coop in Stamford. They regularly let their pigeons fly outside of the coop for exercise. Kapusta and Boguski saw the hawks as a threat to their pigeons, so they systematically captured and killed the hawks.

Kapusta and Boguski pleaded guilty to conspiring to take, capture and kill red-tailed hawks and Cooper's hawks, and to actually taking, capturing, and killing these birds. On October 19, 2016, Kapusta was sentenced to one year of probation, fined \$5,500, and ordered to perform 90 hours of community service at an animal shelter. Boguski awaits sentencing.



## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Government Programs Fraud**

#### **Food Stamp Fraud**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service administers the federal Food Stamp Program, which is known as the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP recipients purchase eligible food items at retail food stores through the use of an EBT card, which is similar to an ATM card. SNAP benefits may be accepted by authorized retailers only in exchange for eligible items. Items such as alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, paper goods and soaps are not eligible for purchase with Food Stamp benefits, and it is a violation of the rules and regulations governing the food stamp program to allow benefits to be used to purchase ineligible items. SNAP benefits may not lawfully be exchanged for cash under any circumstances. The program is designed so that the total amount of each purchase is electronically transferred to the retailer's designated bank account.

During this approximately three-year period, the store's sales totaled \$2.8 million.

Kaya pleaded guilty to Food Stamp Fraud. On March 3, 2016, he was sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment and was ordered to pay more than \$1.8 million in restitution.



#### **Grocery Store Owner Sentenced for Food Stamp Fraud**

Salih Kaya has owned Green Apple Market since it opened on July 1, 2008. Between July 2011 and May 2014, Kaya illegally exchanged food stamps for cash and other ineligible items with customers at the store. The Food and Nutrition Service estimated that a reasonable sales figure for Kaya's store, given its size, amenities and location, should have been no more than \$60,000 per year. However, during

#### **Newington Man Sentenced for Stealing Social Security Benefits of Deceased Grandmother**

Cedric Newman's grandmother received monthly Social Security benefits until her death in October 1996. The Social Security payments did not stop at that time, however. From his grandmother's death in 1996 until June 2014, \$220,729 of monthly payments were made into her bank account. Newman used \$218,079 of the funds for his own benefit.

Newman pleaded guilty to the theft of public funds. On May 17, 2016, he was sentenced to six months of imprisonment and ordered to make full restitution to the Social Security Administration.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Government Programs Fraud**

### **Georgia Woman Sentenced to Prison for Unemployment Benefits Theft Scheme**

State unemployment insurance programs use employee wages (as reported by employers) to determine an employee's benefit amount when the employee files a claim for unemployment. Vicki Sue Cohran, with her two sons, utilized several state unemployment insurance program websites to register "businesses" that had no actual employees, business operations, or expenses. Cohran and her sons created and submitted fictitious wage reports that used names and other identifying information of individuals without their knowledge. Cohran and her sons then posed as employees from the fictitious companies who had lost their jobs and filed claims for unemployment benefits.

The names and identifying information of 27 individuals were used to steal approximately \$120,214 from unemployment insurance programs in Connecticut, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Washington, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and New Jersey.

Cohran pleaded guilty to identity theft. On January 5, 2016, she was sentenced to 51 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay full restitution.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Theft, Embezzlement & Fraud**

The Connecticut Financial Crimes Task Force is a multi-agency task force founded in 2009 by the United States Secret Service in partnership with the United States Postal Inspection Service and other federal agencies. This task force consists of both federal and local law enforcement agents/officers tasked with detecting, preventing, and investigating financial crimes to include bank fraud, credit card fraud, money laundering, and others. Through the relationships established with all levels of law enforcement and the financial industry, the Connecticut Financial Crimes Task Force pursues cases with significant community and economic impact and those involving local, multi-district and transnational organized criminal groups.

### **Sentencing for Man Who Defrauded Sandy Hook Related Charity**

After the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy in 2012, Robert Terry Bruce of Tennessee founded the 26.4.26 Foundation, which solicited charitable donations for a variety of purposes, including “to help raise funds for increased school safety, families of victims, memorials to teacher heroes, awareness, and prevention in schools across America.” Bruce also used the foundation to solicit funds for a Tennessee charity called “Cross Fit Cares.” However, rather than use the donated funds as promised, Bruce diverted \$28,657 for his own personal use.

Bruce pleaded guilty to wire fraud. On October 14, 2016, he was sentenced to six months of home confinement. The court also ordered Bruce to pay \$28,657 in restitution to the Sandy Hook Special Revenue Fund.

### **Avon Man Sentenced for Embezzling from Employer**

Maximum Human Performance (MHP) is a New Jersey-based company that provides supplements for bodybuilding, strength, weight loss, and fitness. In 2012, Craig Larsen became the head of MHP’s quality control. In that role, he had authority to approve the payment of bills submitted to MHP by its vendors. Between November 2013 and February 2015, Larsen presented approximately 40 fraudulent invoices to MHP that claimed that a company (which Larsen controlled)

had performed quality control services for MHP when in fact no services had been performed. Larsen then used his authority to approve the bogus invoices thereby paying his own company approximately \$204,000.

Larsen pleaded guilty to interstate transportation of money obtained by fraud. On November 4, 2016, he was sentenced to 24 months of imprisonment and ordered to pay full restitution.

### **Enfield Woman Sentenced to Prison for Embezzling from Credit Union**

Pamela Mallory, a lending manager at a federal credit union, had access to loan files and the power to authorize loans, including home equity lines of credit (HELOCs). From 2009 through 2016, Mallory opened five HELOCs in the name of a credit union member without the member’s knowledge and then increased the credit limit of those HELOCs at least 15 times. Initially, Mallory opened new HELOCs to pay off the earlier fraudulent loans. However, she then began increasing the credit limits on the fraudulent HELOCs to support her spending. Mallory attempted to avoid detection by making small, interest-only payments on the HELOC’s from her own checking account.

Mallory pleaded guilty to embezzling approximately \$840,000 from her employer. On August 17, 2016, she was sentenced to 21 months of imprisonment and ordered to make full restitution.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Theft, Embezzlement & Fraud**

### **Easton Woman Sentenced to Prison for Stealing from Greenwich Employer**

Dawn Mininberg worked for a financial services company in Greenwich. Mininberg was issued an American Express corporate credit card for business purposes. As part of her responsibilities, she prepared expense reports justifying the charges on all of the corporate credit cards, including her own. Over the course of two years, Mininberg charged \$380,000 in personal expenses to her corporate card.

Mininberg pleaded guilty to wire fraud. On August 23, 2016, she was sentenced to 12 months and one day of imprisonment, followed by 12 months of home confinement. She was also ordered to pay \$386,000 in restitution.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Extortion**

### **East Hartford Man Sentenced for Arson, Insurance Fraud, Gambling and Extortion**

In 2009, John Barile, co-owner of Enzo's Restaurant and Lounge in Middletown, was facing financial difficulty. Barile began planning to cause a fire at Enzo's in order to collect insurance. In November 2009, Barile told the co-owner of the restaurant about his plan and consulted others on how to start the fire and make it look like an accident.

On January 9, 2010, after the restaurant closed, Barile placed greasy rags around the stoves and applied grease to the kitchen walls. When a fire began in the kitchen, rather than extinguish it, Barile intentionally let the fire burn. As the fire raged, the co-owner of Enzo's was inside the restaurant.

After the fire, Barile sought payment from an insurance company for losses suffered as a result of the fire and he concealed his role in starting the fire. The insurer paid Barile \$189,787 to settle insurance claims.

In addition, Barile conducted an illegal sportsbookmaking operation for several years. The gambling business was Barile's main source of income between 2010 and 2014, sometimes grossing him more than \$2,000 per day. One bettor who owed Barile \$50,000 met Barile in a parking lot. During the meeting, Barile tased the bettor for neglecting to pay his debt.

Barile pleaded guilty to arson, insurance fraud, illegal bookmaking, and extortion. On June 9, 2016, he was sentenced to 71 months of imprisonment. He also was ordered to pay \$189,787 in restitution to the insurance company and to forfeit \$165,287 that the government had seized.



### **New Yorker Sentenced for Extortion**

In June and July 2015, Kevahn Thorpe made phone calls and sent text messages to a victim demanding money and a pair of sneakers. Thorpe threatened to publish information that he knew would damage the victim's reputation if he failed to comply with Thorpe's demands.

On July 7, 2015, the victim met Thorpe at a hotel in Manhattan and gave him an envelope with \$4,000 in cash. After Thorpe accepted the envelope, he was placed under arrest.

Thorpe pleaded guilty to extortion. On February 17, 2016, he was sentenced to 42 months in prison.

## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Tax Offenses**

#### **Two Public Employees Sentenced for Evading Taxes**

The IRS conducted an investigation into individuals who had little to no federal taxes withheld from their paychecks due to the submission of W-4 forms claiming fraudulent exemptions. For example, from 2008 through 2013, Troy Hester, a Metropolitan District Commission employee, had a total income of \$438,877. Hester utilized fraudulent W-4 forms to avoid paying \$70,480 in federal taxes and \$24,000 in state taxes.

Similarly, from 2010 through 2012, Michael Carter, a Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services employee, had a total income of \$282,000. Carter utilized fraudulent W-4 forms to avoid paying \$53,344 in federal taxes.

Both Hester and Carter pleaded guilty to tax evasion. On January 6, 2016, Hester was sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment. On January 7, 2016, Carter was sentenced to four years of probation, the first six months to be served in home confinement. Both defendants were ordered to pay back taxes and interest.

#### **New Haven Man Sentenced for Tax Fraud**

From 2005 through 2008, Willie E. McKay, a pastor at Love Temple Church, provided members of his congregation with income tax preparation services. In February 2007, McKay prepared and electronically filed a fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, for a member of his congregation. McKay inaccurately listed the address of the Church as the home address of the taxpayer and included a fictitious W-4 reflecting inflated wages and withholdings. The W-4 also included fictitious deductions for state and personal property taxes, which reduced the taxpayer's taxable income.

The fraudulent 1040 resulted in the IRS

sending a \$9,693 return—to McKay at the Church—rather than the \$363 that the taxpayer was actually due.

McKay pleaded guilty to making a false claim to the IRS. On January 26, 2016, he was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. He also was fined \$3,000 and ordered to pay \$9,693 in restitution.

#### **Danbury Flooring Company Owner Who Filed False Tax Returns is Sentenced**

Scott Benincasa and his brother David Benincasa were 50% owners in Goodhouse Flooring, LLC, a company that provides floor installation and flooring products. For tax years 2008 through 2010, the Benincasas intentionally understated gross receipts from their business and failed to accurately report expenses incurred in running their business.

During an IRS civil audit, Scott Benincasa submitted a false real estate log and business schedule in an attempt to improperly justify previously taken deductions.

Both Scott and David Benincasa pleaded guilty to tax evasion. In January 2016, David Benincasa was sentenced to three months of imprisonment and six months of home confinement and Scott Benincasa was sentenced to six months of home confinement. They were also ordered to perform 120 hours of community service, pay a \$15,000 fine, and make full restitution to the IRS.

## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Tax Offenses**

#### **Waterbury Tax Preparer Sentenced to Federal Prison for Filing Hundreds of False Tax Returns**

From 2009 through 2012, Marcus Fox prepared and filed more than 900 tax returns with the IRS for individual clients. Many of those tax returns contained fraudulent information, including false childcare expenses and credits, educational expenses and credits, American opportunity credits, itemized deductions, charitable contributions, and unreimbursed employee business expenses. The returns resulted in his clients receiving substantial refunds to which they were not entitled. Fox typically received payment of between \$200 and \$350 for his services.

In addition, Fox falsified a number of returns in order to obtain refunds for himself without his clients' knowledge. Fox would prepare a client's tax return containing falsified credits and/or expense deductions resulting in a substantial refund. Fox then e-filed the fraudulent tax return with instructions for the IRS to split the refund payment between the client and Fox. To hide his scheme, Fox would provide his clients with a tax return that did not contain the falsified information or reflect the large refund, claiming that it was a copy of the return e-filed with the IRS. As a result of this scheme, the Government lost \$2.2 million.

Fox pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the preparation and filing of false tax returns. On August 3, 2016, he was sentenced to 12 months in prison.

#### **Hartford Man Sentenced for Tax Evasion**

Shaukat G. Dalal was employed by the State of Connecticut as a Fiscal Administration Assistant. Dalal also owned and operated a tax preparation business, Tax Preparation SVS Inc. For the 2009 through 2011 tax years, Dalal prepared more than 250 tax returns, but did not deposit all of his gross receipts into his business bank account. He subsequently understated his gross receipts on his federal tax returns.

Dalal and his wife also operated Ameen LLC, a holding company that owned 25 rental units in an East Hartford condominium complex. Dalal did not deposit a substantial portion of rental receipts, often paid to him in cash, into Ameen LLC's business bank account and substantially underreported both the applicable income and taxes due on his 2009 through 2011 tax returns. Through this scheme, Dalal failed to report nearly \$400,000 in income.

Dalal pleaded guilty to tax evasion. On May 27, 2016, he was sentenced to four months of imprisonment followed by six months of home confinement. Dalal was also fined \$3,000 and ordered to pay \$97,289 in back taxes, plus applicable penalties and interest.



## **National Security and Major Crimes**

### **Tax Offenses**



#### **Veterans Services Organization Bookkeeper Sentenced to Two Years in Jail for Fraud and Tax Offenses**

Cynthia Tanner worked as a bookkeeper for the National Veterans Service Fund in Darien. The stated mission of the NVSF was to provide case managed social services and limited medical assistance to Vietnam and Persian Gulf War veterans and their families, with a focus on families with disabled children.

From approximately January 2009 through June 2014, Tanner used nearly \$800,000 in NVSF funds to pay various personal expenses for herself and her family members. She also altered records to conceal her scheme by falsely claiming that the stolen monies were being paid to veterans in need. In addition, Tanner failed to report \$794,768 in embezzled income, resulting in a tax loss of \$270,026.

Tanner pleaded guilty to fraud and tax evasion. On April 29, 2016, she was sentenced to two years of imprisonment and was ordered to pay full restitution to the NVSF, as well as back taxes, interest, and penalties.

#### **East Lyme Fisherman Sentenced for Tax Evasion**

From 2006 through 2011, Peter Torres failed to file tax returns or to report to the IRS that he

had earned \$1.27 million in gross income through his work as a commercial fishing boat captain.

To conceal his income from the IRS, Torres deposited checks he received as payment for his fishing services and, on the same day, withdrew cash or obtained multiple bank checks for amounts under \$10,000.

Torres pleaded guilty to attempted tax evasion. On September 8, 2016, he was sentenced to three months of imprisonment. He was also ordered to pay back taxes, interest, and penalties.



## **National Security and Major Crimes** **Hate Crimes and Protecting Civil Liberties**

As we aggressively pursue the investigation and prosecution of national security matters, we are also committed to reconciling the demands of security with the important goals of fairness, openness and tolerance in our society. Our nation is strengthened by the diversity of our people, and by the ability of disparate communities to come together, in spite of differences, to share the common values on which our country was founded.

While government has an important role, we also view our communities and community institutions as key partners in our counter-terrorism efforts. Accordingly, in conducting national security cases, this Office and our law enforcement partners rely on the support, cooperation and trust

of the communities we serve and protect to work together to combat national security threats.

To that end, our Office and the FBI engage in extensive outreach efforts with many different communities to improve our ability to perform our duties in a manner consistent with civil liberties, diversity and a commitment to freedom.

The Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Connecticut are committed to fighting threats to our national security and keeping our communities safe, while protecting and safeguarding civil liberties guaranteed under our Constitution.

### **Meriden Man Sentenced to Prison for Federal Hate Crime Offense**

On November 14, 2015, officers from the Meriden Police Department responded to a citizen complaint about shots being fired in the vicinity of the Baitul Aman Mosque. The next morning, a family attending the mosque noticed damage to the interior walls and the drop ceiling of the building and called the police. Investigators determined that approximately three rounds were shot from a high-powered rifle. Two rounds penetrated the building and the third hit an exterior area.

The investigation revealed that on November 13, 2015, after learning about a terrorist attack in Paris, Ted Hakey, Jr., whose house was located next to the mosque, posted the following on his Facebook account: "What is gonna be the breaking point to go "weapons free" against Islam?" The term "weapons free" is a military command to shoot at will. Hakey then fired the shots at the mosque.

Hakey pleaded guilty to intentionally damaging religious property through the use of a dangerous weapon. Prior to sentencing, the Baitul Aman Mosque community reached out to Hakey and offered to teach him about the peaceful tenets of their religion. Hakey agreed and thereafter participated in a number of events with mosque members, including speaking at the National Ahmadiyya Muslim convention in the summer of 2016. On June 17, 2016, Hakey was sentenced to six months of imprisonment.

### **CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT**

**Intake: Raymond Miller, Ray.Miller2@usdoj.gov.**

#### **Civil Rights Coordinators:**

- Criminal Division: Anastasia King, Anastasia.King@usdoj.gov.**
- Civil Division: Ndidi Moses, Ndidi.Moses@usdoj.gov.**

# **National Security and Major Crimes**

## **Hate Crimes and Protecting Civil Liberties**

### **A Statement from the US Attorney**

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Connecticut

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, July 6, 2016

### **The Fourth of July and the End of Ramadan**

On the Fourth of July, we celebrated our nation's independence founded on the principle that all people are created equal and able to worship freely. For centuries, religious freedom has been a pillar of American society and a beacon for those persecuted for their faith. This year, July 5th marked the end of Ramadan, the month of intense prayer, dawn-to-dusk fasting and nightly feasts for millions of Muslims. The juxtaposition prompts reflection on anti-Muslim threats and violence we have witnessed in our country.

Connecticut has not been immune to such shameful acts. On the night of the November 2015, just hours after the terrorist attacks in Paris, a man used a high-powered rifle to shoot into the Baitul Aman Mosque in Meriden. Four shots pierced the Mosque, one passed directly through the prayer area before exiting the building. No one was injured as the attack occurred late at night when no worshippers were inside. Law enforcement responded quickly, determined to restore a sense of security and calm to the Muslim congregation. Prosecutors from our office worked with the FBI, ATF and Meriden Police Department and quickly identified the shooter - Ted Hakey, a former Marine whose property abutted that of the Mosque. After executing search warrants of his house and Facebook account, which revealed evidence of hatred toward Islam and Muslims, he was charged with the federal hate crime of destruction of religious property. On June 17, Mr. Hakey was sentenced to six months in prison for assaulting the mosque's congregants in the peaceful practice of their religion.

Mr. Hakey's acts are not isolated. The Department of Justice has led more than 1,000 investigations and 45 prosecutions of anti-Muslim acts of hatred and bigotry. After the Paris attacks, an individual in Florida was arrested for threatening to firebomb two mosques in the St. Petersburg area, and sentenced to a year and a day in prison. In Utah, a man pleaded guilty to tearing a Muslim woman's hijab off of her head on a plane. This intolerance is fueled by rhetoric that incorrectly seeks to paint all Muslims with a broad brush when, in fact, the overwhelming majority of Muslims—including prominent Muslim leaders in Connecticut—condemn and stand against acts of terrorism that harm innocent people.

A remarkable thing happened in the Hakey prosecution. Mr. Hakey sought and received forgiveness from the congregation at the Baitul Aman Mosque. We applaud the congregation for their extraordinary grace and generosity of spirit - a gesture reflective of true Islam as the promotion of peace

## **National Security and Major Crimes**

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and harmony in the world. Last month, we honored the Mosque's leader at our annual law enforcement awards ceremony. More broadly, we deeply appreciate the dedicated efforts of our Muslim partners throughout the State to keep our communities safe and secure.

As the federal prosecuting office in Connecticut, it is the job of the U.S. Attorney's Office to secure and protect citizens of all races, religions, ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations. Our federal prosecutors have forged partnerships with Muslim leaders throughout the state, as well as with Sikh leaders who are often perceived to be Muslim, to help ensure the safety of all our communities and create an environment of trust that recognizes the humanity and dignity of all. We have trained hundreds of police officers about Islam and Sikhism; held anti-bullying workshops at schools and mosques; and launched a Multi-Cultural Advisory Council to gain insight from community members about how best we can serve all communities that we protect.

In the end, anti-Muslim vitriol itself undermines our security. Hateful and vicious rhetoric only strengthens the evil of terrorists who rely heavily on the narrative that America and the West hate Islam. We must rise above our anger to defeat the terrorists' message of violence, intolerance, and hate.

To the vast majority of our Connecticut residents who recognize that our diversity as a nation makes us stronger, make your voices heard: let the Muslim members of our community know that they are a valued part of our whole. It is the responsibility of all of us to lift up the voices of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding. We all must pledge to remove hatred and intolerance from our midst, and to stay true to the principles of liberty, justice and equality that define America at its best. The light of our nation shines brightest when its people reflect the promise and values of America.

Deirdre M. Daly  
U.S. Attorney, District of Connecticut



## **Civil Division** **Introduction**

The Civil Division is comprised of three units and handles cases where the United States and its employees are plaintiffs or defendants. The Chief of the Civil Division is John B. Hughes, who has responsibility for the supervision of all Civil Division AUSAs and the operation of the Civil Division.

The Affirmative Enforcement and Civil Rights Unit pursues claims on behalf of the United States in cases involving health care fraud, defense contractor fraud, False Claims Act violations, and asset forfeitures, as well as civil rights and environmental violations. The Unit has prioritized its Civil Rights enforcement program to enforce federal statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, religion, familial status, and national origin, and to recover damages for victims of civil rights violations. The majority of the civil rights cases are brought to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act. The Chief of the Unit is Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard M. Molot.

The Defensive Unit defends claims filed against the United States, including tort, medical malpractice, employment discrimination, immigration litigation, prisoner litigation, Freedom of Information Act claims, foreclosures, and social security disability appeals. The Defensive Unit also defends claims brought against individual federal employees (“*Bivens*” claims). The Chief of the Unit is Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle McConaghy.

The Financial Litigation Unit, headed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christine Sciarrino, is responsible for collecting debts owed to the United States, including criminal fines, judgments, and assessments, as well as civil penalties, judgments, and settlements.

In addition to the prosecutors already named, the Civil Division is comprised of paralegals, legal assistants, and other specialists, as well as the following AUSAs: Vanessa Avery, William Collier, Natalie Elicker, Brenda Green, Carolyn Ikari, John Larson, Ndidi Moses, Lauren Nash, David Nelson, Alan Soloway, Jessica Soufer, David Sullivan, Anne Thidemann, and Julie Turbert.

### **— Contact Information —**

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**Richard Molot:** [richard.molot2@usdoj.gov](mailto:richard.molot2@usdoj.gov).

**Michelle McConaghy:** [michelle.mcconaghy@usdoj.gov](mailto:michelle.mcconaghy@usdoj.gov).

**Christine Sciarrino:** [christine.sciarrino@usdoj.gov](mailto:christine.sciarrino@usdoj.gov).

## **Civil Division—Affirmative Enforcement**

### **False Claims Act**

The False Claims Act (FCA), 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729 - 3733 was enacted in 1863 by a Congress concerned that suppliers of goods to the Union Army were defrauding the government. In very general terms, the FCA holds liable any person who knowingly submits a false claim to the government or causes another to submit a false claim to the government or knowingly makes a false record or statement to get a false claim paid by the government. The FCA also has a “reverse false claims section” that provides liability where one engages in conduct to avoid having to pay money back to the government.

Qui tam lawsuits are a type of civil lawsuit whistleblowers bring under the False Claims Act, a law that rewards whistleblowers if their qui tam cases recover funds for the government. Qui tam cases are a powerful way for whistleblowers to help the government stop many kinds of fraud – Medicare and Medicaid fraud, defense contractor fraud and numerous other types of frauds that impact the government financially – and recover billions that have been stolen from the U.S. Treasury and taxpayers.

If you suspect health care fraud, you are encouraged to report it by calling 1-800-HHS-TIPS or the Health Care Fraud Task Force at (203) 777-6311.

### **Dentist Pays \$1.3 Million to Settle False Claims Act Allegations**

Dr. Jesus Villegas, DDS, a dentist operating pediatric dental clinics in Milford and West Haven, agreed in an August 2016 civil settlement to pay \$1,367,466 to resolve allegations that he and his two clinics had violated the federal and state False Claims Acts. Under Connecticut law, a licensed dentist may delegate to dental assistants the taking of dental x-rays if the dental assistant can demonstrate successful completion of the dental radiography portion of an examination prescribed by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). The certification provided by the DANB examination is important to ensure dental assistants are appropriately trained in the use of x-ray procedures and to ensure the x-rays are performed safely. The government’s investigation, conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Connecticut Attorney General’s Office, found that the majority of x-rays taken at Dr. Villegas’ dental practices were taken by dental assistants not certified by the Dental Assisting National Board.

As part of the settlement agreement, Dr. Villegas also agreed to enter into a three year billing integrity agreement designed to ensure future compliance with the requirements of federal healthcare programs.

### **Former Connecticut Group Home Operator Settles Overbilling Allegations for \$1.5 Million**

REM Community Services, Inc. (REM) operated various group homes in Connecticut that provided residential and day services to the intellectually disabled and at-risk youth. REM ceased operating in Connecticut 2014. The government’s allegations against REM arose from REM’s submission of Annual Reports of Residential and Day Services (“cost reports”) to the State of Connecticut related to its operation of group homes from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2014. The government contended that REM reported certain interest expenses as allowable costs that were not allowable under the State of Connecticut’s Cost Standards. As a result, the government alleged that REM received overpayments that it was not entitled to receive from the Connecticut Medicaid Program.



## **Civil Division—Affirmative Enforcement**

In this joint investigation with the State of Connecticut, REM entered into a civil settlement agreement with the federal and state governments in which it paid \$1.5 million to resolve the allegations that it received overpayments from the Connecticut Medicaid Program.

### **Medical Equipment Company Pays \$600,000 to Settle False Claims Act Allegations**

J&L Medical Services, Inc. (J&L) is a durable medical equipment company located in Middlebury, Connecticut. J&L provides Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) and Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure (BiPAP) devices and accessories to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries who have been diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea.

A former employee of J&L filed a *qui tam* complaint alleging that J&L regularly utilized the services of unlicensed technicians to provide respiratory therapy services to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, including setting up CPAP and BiPAP machines, fitting the patients with the masks used with those machines, and educating the patients about the use of the machines. Under Connecticut law, the respiratory therapy services in question could only be legally performed by licensed respiratory therapists. To resolve the allegations under the federal and state False Claims Acts, J&L paid \$600,000, which covers conduct occurring from January 1, 2008, through May 15, 2013. As part of the settlement, J&L also agreed to implement a compliance program intended to prevent and/or detect fraud, waste, and abuse in claims submitted by the company to the Connecticut Medicaid program.



### **URS Resolves Allegations It Overcharged on Niantic River Bridge Contract**

In 2007, Amtrak awarded a contract to Washington Group, International, Inc. (WGI) to provide construction management services for the replacement of the Niantic River rail bridge. In 2008, URS Corporation AES (URS) acquired WGI and assumed responsibility for the contract, which stated that the company would be compensated for its services according to a specific pricing schedule. The contract also fixed maximum labor rates for different classifications of employees.

The government's analysis of the charged labor costs revealed a distinct pattern of fraudulent overcharging.

On March 2, 2016, the government announced that URS had entered into a civil settlement agreement to pay \$580,000 to resolve allegations that the Rocky Hill based construction company violated the False Claims Act by overbilling the federal government on a bridge reconstruction project.

### **AquaSeNT and Its Officials Resolve Allegations of Misuse of NSF Grant Funds**

Starting in 2008, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded \$924,618 in federally-funded grants to Aquatic Sensor Network Technology, LLC (AquaSeNT), a business formed in 2007 by several University of Connecticut (UConn) employees for the development of underwater acoustic modems.

## **Civil Division—Affirmative Enforcement**

The federally-funded grants came under the NSF's Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Program, which is designed to increase incentive and opportunity for small firms to undertake cutting-edge research with potential high economic payoff. The program requires principal investigators (PIs) to certify that they are "primarily employed" by the SBIR company and to the accuracy of information submitted in proposals, including the existence, location, and size of the company's facilities.

On the basis of its preliminary investigation, the NSF Office of Inspector General concluded that the AquaSeNT PIs had made a number of false statements to the agency in their award proposals. For example, the PIs falsely certified that they were full-time employees of AquaSeNT when in fact they were employed full-time by UCONN's School of Engineering. The PIs also falsely certified statements they provided about the size and nature of the facilities where the SBIR research was being conducted, and they created false time records in response to an NSF investigative request for proof of research time spent on the SBIR awards.

On June 2, 2016, the government announced it had entered into a civil settlement in which the company and its officials paid \$400,000 to resolve allegations that they violated the federal False Claims Act and the common law in the management of federally-funded grants awarded to AquaSeNT by the NSF.

### **Newtown Psychiatrist Settles False Claims Allegations for \$422,641**

Dr. Naimetulla Syed is a psychiatrist with a solo practice in Newtown, Connecticut. An investigation revealed that on numerous occasions between July 2009 and December 2013, Syed billed Medicare and Medicaid for psychotherapy services using a code for individual psychotherapy

lasting 45 to 50 minutes, face to face with a patient, and medical evaluation and management services. In the vast majority of these cases, however, Syed saw his patients for between five and 30 minutes, at most, and did not perform medical evaluation and management services.

In May 2016 Syed entered into a False Claims Act settlement agreement with the State of Connecticut and the federal government in which he paid the government \$422,641.70.

### **CVS Pharmacy Settles Controlled Substances Act Allegations**

On October 20, 2016, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced that CVS Pharmacy, Inc., (CVS), agreed to pay \$600,000 to resolve alleged violations of the civil provisions of the Controlled Substance Act at their stores in Southington and New Britain.

Following an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration's Office of Diversion Control and the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, Drug Control Division, the government alleged that on at least 2,886 occasions, the CVS on Main Street in Southington failed to keep paper Schedule III-V prescriptions either in a separate prescription file or readily retrievable location away from other prescription records in violation of the law. On 31 occasions, the store failed to keep Schedule III-V purchase invoices in a readily accessible location separate from other records that are required to be kept under law.

As part of the agreement, certain CVS supervisors, district managers, regional managers and loss prevention managers are required to attend a training session where the U.S. Attorney's Office and DEA will provide information on federal regulatory obligations in relation to controlled substances.

## **Civil Division—Affirmative Enforcement**

### **Civil Forfeiture**

In 2016, the Affirmative Enforcement Unit handled several important forfeiture matters, including:

- *United States v. 10 TD Bank Accounts*: civil proceeding concerning an oxycodone distribution ring. The civil forfeiture judgment resulted in forfeiture of \$127,172.86, which was seized from the dealer's bank accounts.
- *United States v. 15 Mead Street, Stamford*: civil proceeding concerning a large scale marijuana distributor and firearms prosecution. A \$200,000 decree of forfeiture has entered in favor of the United States following a seizure from the Mead Street residence of 8.77 pounds of marijuana that was packaged in 16 large Foodsaver bags and four Tupperware containers, a heat sealing machine, a digital scale; \$1,548, a Smith & Wesson .32 caliber long revolver, a fully loaded (18 rounds) Winchester model 290 .22 caliber semi-automatic rifle, a Smith and Wesson .38 caliber model 36 revolver, a Colt .25 caliber automatic pistol, and 229 assorted rounds of ammunition.
- *United States v. 1 Chard Road, New Milford and Four Bank Accounts*: civil proceeding concerning a residence that was used in furtherance of extensive marijuana distribution. The target of the investigation admitted to law enforcement that he had been dealing marijuana since 2008 and that on average, he made \$60,000 a year selling marijuana. The target told law enforcement he would purchase marijuana for approximately \$2,750 per pound and sell it in smaller quantities for \$250 to \$300 per ounce. The United States recovered \$100,000 in lieu of the property and an additional \$64,000, which was seized from four bank accounts.

## **Civil Division—Civil Rights Enforcement**

### **The Americans With Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation. It prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in state and local government programs and services. Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, the ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities. To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. To file a complaint with the U.S. Attorney's Office, call 203-821-3700 or by visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov). More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at [www.justice.gov/crt](http://www.justice.gov/crt). Additional information about the ADA can be found at [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov), or by calling the Department's toll-free information line at (800) 514-0301 and (800) 514-0383 (TDD).

#### **New Haven Hotel Agrees to Comply with Americans with Disabilities Act**

In early 2016, the U.S. Attorney's Office reached a settlement agreement with Days Inn New Haven to resolve allegations that the hotel was not operating in compliance with the ADA. Under federal law, private entities that own or operate "places of public accommodation," which includes hotels, are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of disability. The ADA authorizes the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate and undertake periodic reviews to determine compliance by covered entities. The Justice Department is also authorized to commence a civil lawsuit in federal court in any case that involves a pattern or practice of discrimination or that raises issues of general public importance, and to seek injunctive relief, monetary damages and civil penalties.

As part of a compliance review survey, 12 randomly-selected New Haven area hotels were asked to complete and return a survey form. On-site inspections to confirm survey responses were then conducted and each hotel was reviewed for its compliance with federal law. Six of the surveyed hotels had ADA violations. The government then began working with the hotels to secure voluntary compliance. All six of the hotels entered into settlement agreements with the government, with Days Inn New Haven being the final hotel to

reach an agreement. The hotels all agreed to voluntarily comply with the ADA.

#### **U.S. Attorney's Office Settles ADA Matter with 360 Federal Credit Union**

In February, the U.S. Attorney's Office reached an agreement with the 360 Federal Credit Union to ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities at the credit union's many locations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The agreement resolved an ADA complaint filed by a hearing impaired individual who alleged that the credit union would not accept his video relay calls. The credit union agreed to compensate the individual for expenses incurred as a result of the credit union's failure to accept his video relay calls. The credit union also agreed to accept video relay calls in all of its locations and amend its policies, practices, and training to ensure the removal of barriers to access at its branch offices. For individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, auxiliary aids include qualified sign language or oral interpreters, use of relay services, computer-assisted real time transcription, and, for simple communications, the exchange of written notes.

## **Civil Division—Civil Rights Training & Outreach**

As part of our Civil Rights Enforcement program, our Civil AUSAs and support staff also regularly conduct trainings and outreach on a host of topics. Some of that effort in 2016 included:

- Connecticut Children’s Medical Center Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act to Sickle Cell Families (30 attendees)
- CT Hospital Association training on the American’s with Disabilities Act (80 attendees)
- CT Banking Commission training for banks and credit unions on the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (100+ attendees)
- Protecting Your House of Worship presentations at several mosques and two Sikh gurdwaras
- Women’s Inter-Religious Council presentation at the Meriden Mosque on Civil Rights Protections (30 attendees)
- Multi-Cultural Advisory Council launch
- Cultural Competency Trainings at Local Police Departments
- Law Enforcement Training on LGBT Issues (78 law enforcement officers attended)
- Produced It Gets Better PSA to encourage LGBT Youth (on going)
- Roundtables with LGBT leaders following mass shooting in Orlando
- Amistad Black History Month Program with Justice Richard Robinson and Appellate Court Judge Thomas Bishop
- School Security Officer Training in Stamford, New Haven and Bridgeport School Systems on drug abuse recognition, human trafficking, cultural competency and anti-bullying (180+ attendees)
- Connecticut Parks and Recreation Association Training on the ADA for summer camps (90 attendees)
- Anti-Bullying Programs
  - Madina Academy (40 attendees),
  - Islamic Center of Connecticut (250 attendees),
  - Baitul Aman Mosque (30 attendees)
- Roundtable with Colleges and Universities on Accommodations for Students and Staff with Disabilities, and Title XI, organized by Shipman and Goodwin
- CABA Conference, panel discussion on the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Yellow Ribbon Events to brief departing/returning troops (50-100 attendees)
- Stand-down Event at Veteran Affairs in Rocky Hill (1000+ in attendance)



*Cultural Competency training for Bridgeport school security officers at the Fairchild Wheeler Magnet School on January 6, 2016.*



## **Financial Litigation Unit**

The Financial Litigation Unit handles Foreclosures, Bankruptcy and Asset Recovery matters.

During 2016, we experienced the highest intake of foreclosure cases served on the United States Attorney's Office in recent memory—a total of 2,035. This represents a 35% increase from 2015. The flow of Section 2410 foreclosure cases (where the United States is the defendant) was steady throughout 2016. While there is no direct corollary between the potential for a monetary recovery and the actual recoveries of the foreclosure division, in 2016, the Office recovered \$661,092.00 through its foreclosure efforts.

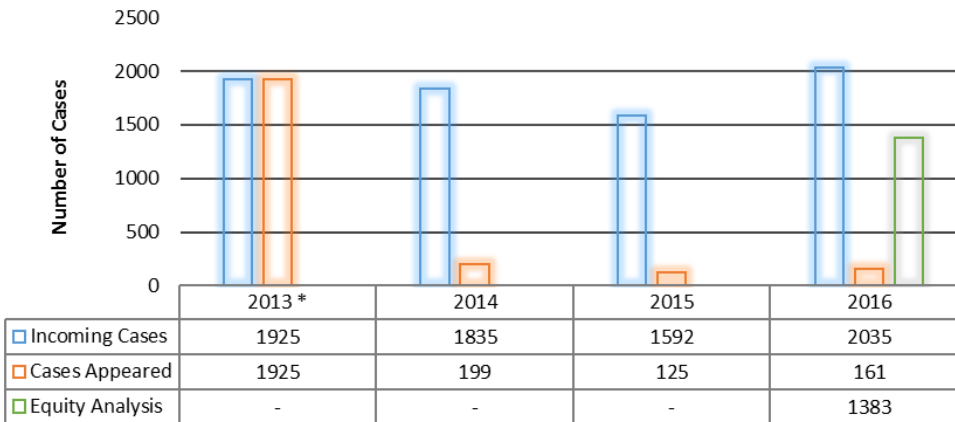
The Bankruptcy Division, led by AUSA Lauren Nash, ended 2016 with an inventory of about 60 bankruptcy matters, half of which are Chapter 11 reorganization matters. Reorganization matters require greater resources, as the debtors seek to negotiate various plans with their creditors, often with the United States (Internal Revenue Service) claiming one of the largest debts. Resolution of the United States' claim can often make or break a reorganization plan with the debtor and remaining creditors. Thus, a large portion of our attorneys' time is generally devoted to negotiating with debtors' counsel, the United States Trustee, and the client agencies. Due to all three bankruptcy judges revamping the policies and procedures of the Bankruptcy Court during 2016, their respective dockets have become more active and increasingly streamlined in 2016. The Office's prosecution of former bankruptcy attorney Peter Ressler, commenced in April 2016, was a significant factor prompting the Bankruptcy Court to change the way it had been doing business. *See United States v. Peter Ressler*, 3:16MJ88 (WIG). Peter Ressler maintained one of the largest bankruptcy practices in this District, and the unwinding of his practice and resolution of his languishing caseload have affected hundreds of pending bankruptcy cases involving interests of the United States.

The Asset Recovery Division devotes its resources to three primary areas: pre-judgment criminal matters; post-judgment criminal matters; and civil collection cases. Pre-judgment criminal activity was prioritized in 2016 since this stage of a criminal case presents the highest potential for recovery and is critical to the prevention of the dissipation of assets. To succeed at this stage, the Asset Recovery Division has worked to identify appropriate criminal cases and initiate asset investigations, with a goal of focusing on high-dollar cases where there are assets and an ability to pay. Consequently, the Asset Recovery Paralegal and Asset Investigator devote most of their time developing cases by mining the Office's press releases, independently researching the Criminal Division's weekly events, and making direct contact with Criminal Division AUSAs, case agents and probation officers. During the last trimester of 2016, the Asset Recovery Paralegal and Investigator reviewed 146 press releases of potential prejudgment cases and pursued initial discovery through Government databases in 72 cases. These initial activities led to the opening of 23 new pre-judgment cases where enforcement action was either commenced, or prepared to commence immediately upon the imposition of judgment.

# Financial Litigation Unit

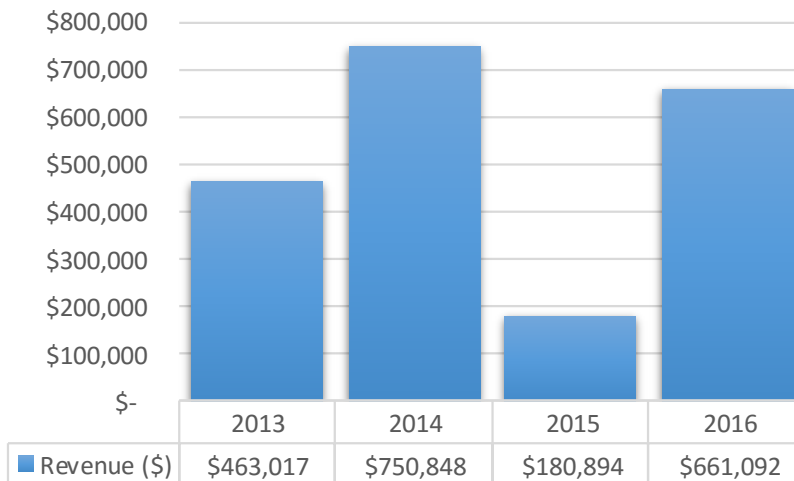
## Foreclosure

### State Foreclosure Cases (28 USC § 2410) Cases Breakdown thru 12/31/2016



Total Current Pending Cases: 299  
Tracking of net equity analysis began in 2016

## Foreclosure Revenue



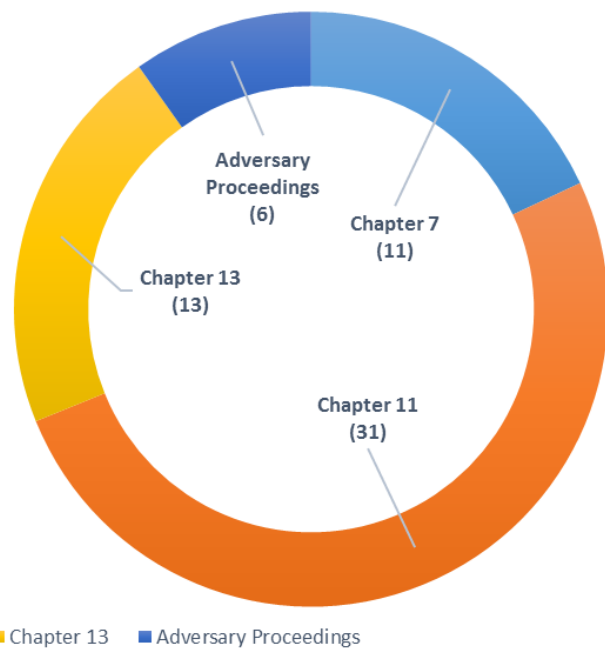
## Financial Litigation Unit

### Bankruptcy

The Bankruptcy Division ended 2016 with an inventory of about 60 bankruptcy matters, half of which are Chapter 11 reorganization matters. Reorganization matters require greater resources, as the debtors seek to negotiate various plans with their creditors, often with the United States Internal Revenue Service claiming one of the largest debts. Resolution of the United States' claim can often make or break a reorganization plan with the debtor and remaining creditors. Thus, a large portion of AUSA time is generally devoted to negotiating with debtors' counsel, the United States Trustee, and the client agencies.

### Pending Bankruptcy Cases

Chapter 7 – Liquidation  
Chapter 11- Reorganization  
Chapter 13- Debt Adjustment  
Adversary Proceedings- Lawsuit arising in Bankruptcy



# Financial Litigation Unit

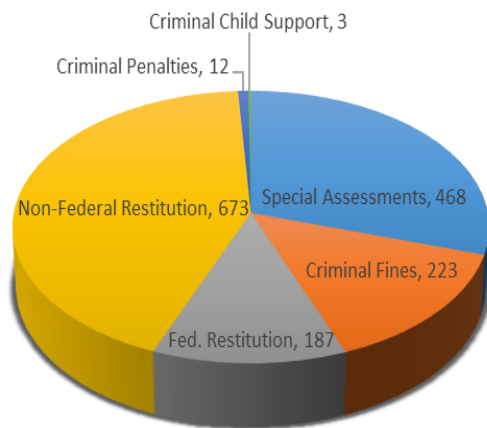
## Asset Recovery

Asset Recovery involves: pre-judgment criminal matters; post-judgment criminal matters; and civil collection cases. Pre-judgment criminal activity was prioritized in 2016 since this stage of a criminal case presents the highest potential for recovery and is critical to the prevention of the dissipation of assets. To succeed at this stage, we identify and focus on high-dollar criminal cases where there are assets and an ability to pay. These initial activities led to the opening of 23 new prejudgment cases.

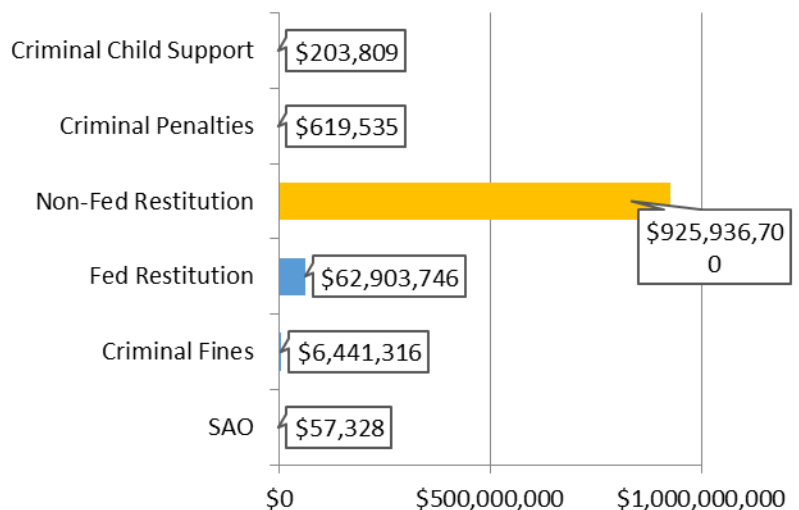
Post-judgment criminal cases numbered 1,566 at the end of 2016. Roughly 900 cases are deemed “active” at any given time, and require specific and immediate enforcement activity, which includes communicating and coordinating with victims, the clerk’s office, the probation office, law enforcement components and defendant/debtors.

Our civil collection caseload ended 2016 on a high note. We focused on the small, but important civil inventory throughout the year and reduced the overall caseload by about 30%, down to 80 active cases. We improved the percentage of civil cases that are in payment status (that is, where payment was made within the previous 60 days) to 74%, with a final goal in 2017 of reaching at least 90% re-payment status.

## Criminal Monetary Penalties as of 12/31/2016



Total Cases: 1,566



Total Debt: \$996,162,434

## **Civil Division—Defensive Unit**

**In 2016, the Office defended more than 13.5 million dollars in claims (excluding all amounts considered frivolous). These claims involved medical malpractice, tort actions, *Bivens* actions, employment disputes, and social security cases. These suits were disposed of either by trial, dispositive motion, or settlement. The amount paid on these claims by way of settlement was \$2,571,000.**

The Civil Division's Defensive Unit defends claims filed against the United States, federal officials, and federal agencies, including the Veterans Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, Postal Service, GSA, DEA, FBI, United States Marshal's, IRS, Federal Protection Service, Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. The claims can arise out of many facets of the law, including but not limited to, tort law, medical malpractice, employment law, immigration, regulatory law, and foreclosures. The Defensive Unit also defends claims brought against federal employees named in their individual capacity who are sued for alleged constitutional violations (*Bivens* claims). The following is a sampling of decisions received in the Defensive Unit in 2016.

***Francis v. Brennan*, No. 3:13-cv-359 (SRU):** United States Postal Service employee Ambrose Francis told a co-worker that if he had a gun, he would shoot his co-workers, including his supervisor. The Postal Service investigated the incident, concluded that Francis made the threat, and terminated his employment. Francis then sued the Postal Service and alleged discrimination and retaliation. The Postal Service prevailed against these claims after a jury trial.

***Knox v. United States*, No. 3:12-cv-1741 (SALM):** The plaintiff claimed that she slipped and fell while visiting her father at the West Haven Veteran's Administration Medical Center. The United States denied negligence, and argued that it lacked any notice of a defect in, or substance on, the floor. The case proceeded to trial. At the close of the plaintiff's case, the United States moved for judgment as a matter of law because there was no defect, but if there was, the plaintiff did not present any evidence that the United States knew of the defect. The Court agreed, granted the motion, and entered judgment for the United States.

***Huerta v. Haughwout*, No. 3:16-cv-358 (JAM):** This case concerned the investigatory authority of the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") with respect to small unmanned flying devices ("drones") owned by private citizens. The FAA sought to enforce subpoenas against the Haughwouts, who had posted videos depicting their drone shooting a firearm and using a flamethrower to roast a turkey. The defendants argued that the FAA could not regulate their drone use in their backyard. The Court rejected the defendants' argument and held that the FAA had a legitimate purpose for its subpoenas and that the subpoenas were appropriate in scope. Thus, the defendants were required to comply with the subpoenas issued by the FAA pursuant to a Court Order.

***Gray v. United States*, No. 15-cv-1016 (JAM):** The United States moved for summary judgment with respect to the plaintiff's claims for false arrest and imprisonment, malicious prosecution, negligence, and intentional/negligent infliction of emotional distress. Separate *Bivens* claims against three



## **Civil Division—Defensive Unit**

individual ICE agents had previously been dismissed. The United States argued that summary judgment should be granted because probable cause existed to detain the plaintiff. When detained, the plaintiff advised the agents that he was a citizen of Jamaica. The agents also learned that the plaintiff had a previous order of removal. The plaintiff pleaded guilty to illegal reentry, and it was only during those criminal proceedings that the plaintiff alleged for the first time that he might have derived citizenship from his parents. In granting summary judgment, the Court agreed that the agents had probable cause detain plaintiff and initiate prosecution.

***Demaj v. Zuchowski, et al*, No. 3:15-cv-1652 (RNC):** The plaintiff, a citizen and resident of Italy, sought an order compelling U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to reopen visa proceedings involving his ex-wife and the couple's children so that visas previously granted to them could be revoked. The plaintiff contended that revocation of the visas would greatly improve the odds of the children returning to Italy. The defendants moved to dismiss the action for lack of subject matter jurisdiction on the ground that the plaintiff failed to satisfy the redressability requirement of standing under Article III of the Constitution. Additionally, the defendants argued that the probability a ruling in the plaintiff's favor would remedy the plaintiff's injury - being separated from his children - was too speculative to support standing. The Court agreed and dismissed the complaint.

***Lucas v. United States Postal Service*, No. 15-cv-1754 (RNC):** The plaintiff filed a complaint seeking tort damages from the Postal Service because her husband had an affair with a Postal supervisor, Ms. H. The plaintiff, who is also a Postal supervisor, alleged that Ms. H used Postal property and her authority as a Postal supervisor to further the affair. The plaintiff sued both the Postal Service and Ms. H for negligent and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The plaintiff also sued a third Postal supervisor, Mr. M, for his role in covering up the affair between Ms. H and Mr. Lucas. The Postal Service moved to dismiss the negligence claims because that plaintiff could not pursue Federal Tort Claims Act damages until the Department of Labor determined that her injuries would not be covered by workers compensation. The Court granted the motion to dismiss, holding that when a "substantial question of Federal Employees Compensation Act coverage is presented in a case brought under the FTCA, the Secretary of Labor must be allowed to determine whether the claimed injury is compensable under the FECA."

***Tillackdharry v. Kerry*, No. 3:14-cv-611 (MPS):** The plaintiff worked as a Passport Specialist with the Connecticut Passport Agency of the U.S. Department of State from March 2007 until her resignation on January 9, 2009. The plaintiff alleged that her resignation was involuntary and discriminatory, in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e *et seq.* The United States moved to dismiss the complaint for failure to exhaust administrative remedies. In granting the motion to dismiss, the Court held that plaintiffs must initiate contact with a Counselor within 45 days of the date of the matter alleged to be discriminatory or, in the case of personnel action, within 45 days of the effective date of the action. 29 C.F.R. § 1614.105(a)(1). The plaintiff did not initiate contact until almost three years after the alleged incident and did not offer any evidence to justify tolling the time limits.

## **Civil Division—Defensive Unit**

***Bremby v. Secretary of HHS*, No. 3:15-cv-1397 (DJS):** The plaintiff, the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, initiated an action seeking review of a final decision of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services that the administration of intramuscular Vitamin B-12 injections to the Commissioner's subrogor did not qualify for coverage under the Medicare Act. In response, the United States moved the Court to remand the matter for further administrative proceedings pursuant to Section 405(g) of the Act. The Court granted the motion. On remand, the Secretary granted coverage for administration of the B-12 injections. The United States then moved to dismiss this complaint as moot. The plaintiff argued that the matter was not moot because the issue was capable of repetition. In granting the motion to dismiss, the Court rejected the plaintiff's arguments finding that the Revised Decision granting coverage did more than simply grant coverage for certain services. Instead, the Court found that the Revised Decision included language that affirmed the position that future injections will be covered. Thus, the Court agreed the complaint was moot. With respect to the voluntary cessation doctrine, the Court held that the Revised Decision clarified that the Secretary will approve future coverage of skilled nursing visits during which prescribed Vitamin B-12 injections. Given that view, the Court found that there was no reasonable expectation that the violation alleged in the Complaint would reoccur and the voluntary cessation doctrine did apply.

***Tucker v. United States*, No. 3:14-cv-1621 (VLB):** The plaintiff filed a negligence claim against the United States for a slip and fall that occurred in a United States Post Office. The United States filed a motion for summary judgment arguing that it lacked actual or constructive notice of the alleged defect which the plaintiff claimed caused her fall. The Court granted the motion for summary judgment agreeing that the plaintiff did not offer any evidence that the Postal Service was aware of any liquid on the floor in the lobby. The Court dismissed the complaint because a business owner has to know, or have reason to know, of the defect before it can be found negligent.

***Kennedy v. United States of America*, 3:14-cv-719 (VLB):** Patricia Kennedy was volunteering at a shooting competition that was hosted by a private range and organized by the United States Coast Guard Academy. During the competition, a bullet ricocheted and struck her in the head, causing a skull fracture and cognitive impairment. Kennedy sued the various entities associated with the shooting competition, including the Coast Guard Academy in the name of the United States of America. The parties reached a global settlement that involved the United States of America paying Ms. Kennedy \$1.7 million dollars.

***Brown v. Bureau of Prisons*, No. 14-cv-681 (RNC):** The plaintiff, a former inmate at FCI Danbury, sought damages for emotional distress that she claimed to have suffered when subjected on one occasion to a pat-down search by a male correctional officer in the absence of exigent circumstances. The plaintiff claimed that the search violated her rights as a devout Muslim. In *Turkmen v. Hasty*, 789 F. 2d 218, 236 the Second Circuit held that *Bivens* does not provide a remedy for violations of an individual's right to free exercise of religion. The court gave deference to the plaintiff's *pro se* status and interpreted her claim under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act ("RFRA"). In granting the motion to dismiss, the court held that at the time of the search, neither the Supreme Court nor the Court of Appeals had considered whether a pat-down search of a Muslim female inmate by a male guard violates RFRA. Thus, the Court found that the defendants were entitled to qualified immunity and dismissed the complaint.

## **Civil Division—Defensive Unit**

***Rosario v. Brennan and United States, No. 15-cv-1440 (JBA)***: The plaintiff, a driver for the United States Postal Service, filed a complaint alleging that she was sexually harassed by her supervisor. The plaintiff claimed that she was discriminated against based on her gender and then retaliated against her when she contacted the EEO Commission. The plaintiff also filed an intentional infliction of emotional distress claim against the United States. The United States moved to dismiss the intentional infliction of emotional distress claim as the plaintiff failed to exhaust administrative remedies. Based on Supreme Court precedent, the Court held that although the timely presentment of an administrative claim was subject to equitable tolling and therefore, not a jurisdictional defense, the failure to present a claim in the first claim did jurisdictionally bar the claim, *citing United States v. Wong*, 135 S. Ct. 165 (2015). The claim against the United States was dismissed.

## **Criminal and Civil Fines, Restitution and Assessments**

The Office collected \$792,906,133 in criminal and civil actions in Fiscal Year 2016. Of this amount, \$783,664,236 was collected in criminal actions and \$9,241,896 was collected in civil actions.

This year's recovery is particularly large as a result of a single criminal fine in the amount of \$772,290,000 paid by Alstom S.A., a French power and transportation company that has a U.S. subsidiary with headquarters in Connecticut. This Office in collaboration with the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice prosecuted Alstom for violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

In addition, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with partner agencies and divisions, collected \$5,375,890 in asset forfeiture actions in FY 2016. Forfeited assets deposited into the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund are used to restore funds to crime victims and for a variety of law enforcement purposes.

The Justice Department collected nearly \$15.4 billion in civil and criminal actions in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016. This amount in collections represents more than five times the approximately \$2.93 billion of the Department's combined appropriations for the 94 U.S. Attorney's offices and the main litigating divisions in that same period.

The U.S. Attorneys' Offices, along with the Department's litigating divisions, are responsible for enforcing and collecting civil and criminal debts owed to the U.S. and criminal debts owed to federal crime victims. The law requires defendants to pay restitution to victims of certain federal crimes who have suffered a physical injury or financial loss. While restitution is paid to the victim, criminal fines and felony assessments are paid to the Department's Crime Victims' Fund, which distributes the funds to state victim compensation and victim assistance programs.

The largest civil collections were from affirmative civil enforcement cases, in which the United States recovered government money lost to fraud or other misconduct or collected fines imposed on individuals and/or corporations for violations of federal financial, health, safety, civil rights and environmental laws. In addition, civil debts were collected on behalf of several federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Internal Revenue Service, Small Business Administration and Department of Education.

## Office Activities

### 16th Alumni Dinner

On June 7, 2016, more than 100 current and former members of the Office gathered in New Haven to celebrate the amazing careers and incredible dedication of six women whose combined service totals 232 years: Judi Dauria (39 years), Michele Genden (38 years), Judy Jackowski (44 years), Kathy Libby (42 years), Mary Prince (32 years), and Cheryl Sliva (37 years). The Office could not function without the devotion of our talented and unsung support staff and administrators.





## Office Activities

### *Volunteering*

In addition to personal and private charitable contributions and activities, members of the Office volunteer monthly at New Haven's Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen; contribute to an annual Feds Feed Families food drive; support Dress for Success by donating women's career clothing; attend National Night Out events around the state; and volunteer with Habitat for Humanity to build homes in New Haven.



*Habitat for Humanity Volunteers, April 2016*



*The Bridgeport Office donated items to the CFJCT on Three Kings Day. The donations benefit victims of domestic violence.*

## Office Activities

### *We Cook For You*



*Supervisors cook lunch for the Office*

### *Tour of Amistad Vessel, September 2016*



## Office Activities

### *Federal Invitational Tournament*

In March 2016, we convened our 2nd Annual FIT (Federal Invitational Tournament), a hotly contested basketball tourney that combines teams from the Office, law enforcement, the court family, and returning citizens.



*The HangTime team took home the trophy*



# IN MEMORIAM



It is with deep admiration and great affection that we dedicate this year's Annual Report to the memory of a true Connecticut son, Associate Deputy Attorney General David Margolis. Born in Hartford and educated in Hartford public schools, Loomis Chafee, Brown University and Harvard Law School, David began his legendary legal career as an Assistant United States Attorney working here in Connecticut under then-United States Attorney now-Second Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Jon Newman. In short order, David moved over to the Connecticut office of the Boston Strike Force on Organized Crime, then to Chief of the Organized Crime Strike Force in Cleveland, followed by being named the Strike Force Chief in the belly of the OC beast, Brooklyn, New York and eventually Chief of the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section at the Department of Justice.

After directing the law enforcement efforts that brought the LCN to its knees and resulted in the virtual dismantling of traditional organized crime in America, David moved on to Main Justice where he served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division before being selected to fill the highest non-political career position at the Department of Justice . . . Associate Deputy Attorney General. He continued to serve in that position -- being reverently referred to by many as the Department's Yoda because of his involvement in most every sensitive matter handled at Justice for decades -- until his passing last year at the age of 76.

During his career, David served under nine presidents and twenty Attorney Generals. He was uncompromising in his dedication to the cause of justice, relentless in his defense of the independence of the Department, and fearless in the face of political pressures being exerted from any and all sides. David's 50-plus years of service to his home state of Connecticut, the Department of Justice and the Nation is not likely to be matched by anyone in the future. He was and is the model of integrity, dedication and courage, a model everyone in law enforcement should seek to emulate.