

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA**



**ANNUAL REPORT
2017**

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Message from the Acting U.S. Attorney Corey R. Amundson



The dedicated men and women of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana continued to work tirelessly throughout 2017. Our efforts ranged from highly publicized enforcement actions and announcements to sensitive, ongoing criminal investigations and confidential national security matters. This report highlights some of our public work.

We experienced several leadership changes over the past year on both a national and district level, including the appointment of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions on February 9, 2017, and the departure of former U.S. Attorney Walt Green, now a partner at Phelps Dunbar LLP, on March 11, 2017. Throughout these changes, as detailed in this report, our office has remained steadfast and focused on ensuring fair justice and security for our district and country.

Over the past year, we successfully prosecuted those engaged in drug trafficking, violent crime, public corruption, major frauds, human trafficking, child exploitation, civil rights violations, immigration offenses, and various other federal crimes. We also protected the interests of the taxpayers by collecting debts owed to the federal government and representing the interests of the government in civil matters. Finally, we supported various outreach programs designed to prevent recidivism and violence and build community relations. We are extremely grateful to all those who contributed to our mission last year, including our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the decent and honest members of our community.

We hope you find this report informative and useful. Thank you for your interest in the important work that we do in the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana.



Criminal Division Overview

Background

The Criminal Division is the largest division of the United States Attorney's Office. As of December 2017, the Criminal Division includes twenty-two (22) Assistant United States Attorneys ("AUSAs"), seven (7) legal assistants, a Victim/Witness Coordinator, a Law Enforcement/Community Outreach Coordinator, and three (3) part-time student workers.

The Criminal Division is supervised by the Criminal Chief and four Deputy Criminal Chiefs. Alan Stevens serves as the Criminal Chief. Chris Dippel, Jennifer Kleinpeter, Rene Salomon, and Jessica M.P. Thornhill serve as the Deputy Criminal Chiefs.

Assistant United States Attorneys advise federal, state, and local 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 Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

We are fortunate to have a roster of talented and diverse prosecutors. Many are Louisiana natives from Baton Rouge and across the state, but we have prosecutors from ten different states as well. Our AUSAs received their law degrees at more than a dozen different law schools across the country, including schools here in Louisiana (LSU, Loyola, Southern, and Tulane), and top law schools in other states. Many of our AUSAs came to the office with previous prosecutorial experience as state and local prosecutors in Louisiana, Alabama, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, as AUSAs in other offices across the country, and as military prosecutors with the Army, the Marine Corps, and Air Force. Our AUSAs have served with distinction in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines; a few continue to serve. Several of our AUSAs have previous litigation experience at large, international law firms.

Criminal Division Overview

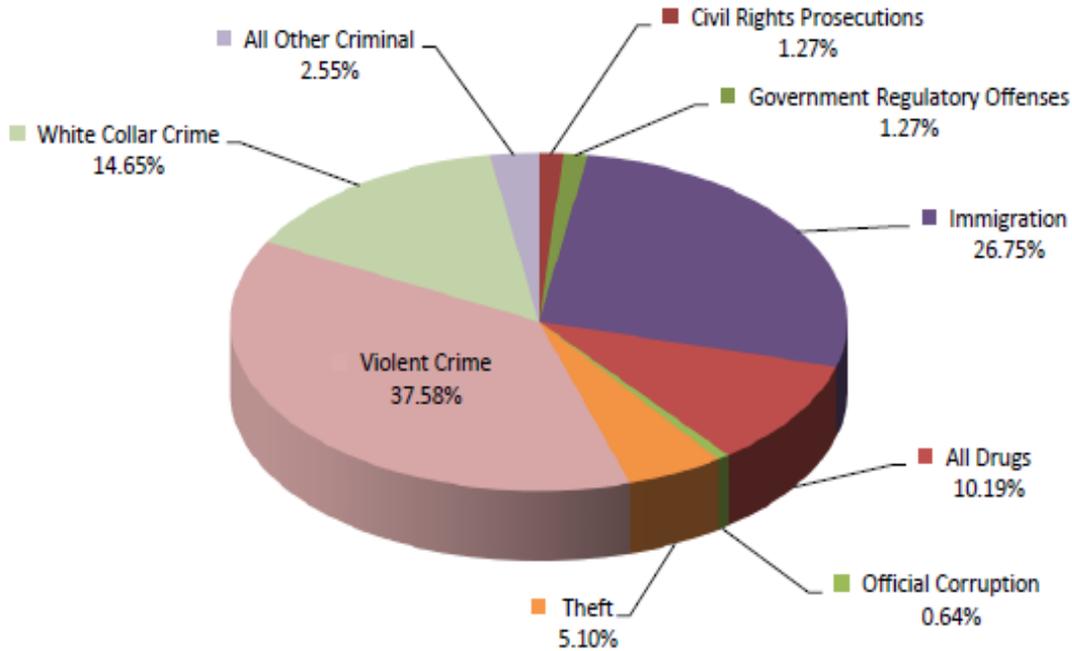
Highlights From 2017

- We prosecuted more than 200 individuals with a wide range of federal crimes, an increase from 2016, achieving a nearly 90% conviction rate,¹ while developing several new initiatives designed to help make our community safer.
- We prosecuted individuals from eight different states and the District of Columbia.
- We prosecuted individuals from nine different foreign countries, including New Zealand, the Republic of Georgia, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua.
- We prosecuted individuals from all walks of life, including corporate executives, medical professionals, owners and managers at insurance companies, a cosmetology school, a finance/credit company, and a record company, as well as a notary public, bank teller, and numerous law enforcement officers and U.S. Postal Service employees.
- In cases involving firearms, we have kept more than 80 firearms out of the hands of convicted felons and others who are barred from possessing the weapons under federal law. In cases involving stolen firearms, we have assisted the gun owners in having their firearms returned to them.
- In cases involving the trafficking of illegal drugs, we have helped to seize multiple kilograms of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine, and we worked aggressively in cases involving the illegal possession of marijuana, oxycodone, and anabolic steroids as well.
- In cases involving fraud and economic crime, we have identified and are seeking to recover millions of dollars in loss.

¹ Taken from data for the 2017 fiscal year (October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017).

Criminal Division Overview

The pie chart below illustrates the types of criminal cases we prosecuted in 2017,² by program category:



In 2017, we handled approximately 400 different criminal matters, including more than 250 new matters we received this year and other ongoing investigations.

Our priorities include the investigation and prosecution of cases involving national security violations, cybercrime, violent crime, narcotics and firearms violations, immigration, crimes against children and human trafficking, white collar fraud (such as health care fraud, financial institution fraud, and tax fraud), public corruption, and civil rights violations.

For more information about our priorities and program areas, please visit our website at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdla>.

² Taken from data for the 2017 fiscal year (October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017).

Criminal Division National Security

The district's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC) and Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) focus on preventing and investigating terrorism and national security-related crimes. These include terrorist financing offenses, including money laundering and bulk cash smuggling; the unlawful possession or trafficking of dangerous materials; making threatening communications and terrorism-related hoaxes; cases involving the export of restricted technology; cases involving illegal investments in certain foreign countries that have been designated as supporters of terrorism; and cases involving espionage and the loss or compromise of national security information and classified materials.

Our office works closely with the FBI and numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies who participate in the district's JTTF. Our office provides legal and investigative guidance in national security investigations; assists, as appropriate, in obtaining subpoenas, warrants, court orders, and other lawful processes to further such investigations; and stands ready to bring criminal charges when warranted. Through the ATAC and JTTF, our office also supports frequent training initiatives for federal, state, and local law enforcement officers throughout the district. By its nature, most of our work in this area is confidential.

The ATAC Coordinator is AUSA Adam Ptashkin, who previously served in the Counterterrorism Section of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division.



Criminal Division

Violent Crime and Firearms

This office is committed to reducing violent crime and prosecuting violent offenders. Many violent crimes, such as murder and rape, are state offenses handled by the local district attorneys. However, our office coordinates with state and local law enforcement officials to identify instances where federal prosecution would be appropriate. Working with federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, we recently created a new Violent Crime Strike Force, through which we are working to identify, investigate, and ultimately prosecute the most violent individuals and groups in our area. Second, through Operation Joint Endeavor, we work with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the BRPD, and the EBRSO to identify and prioritize violations of federal gun laws by violent offenders. Third, along with the ATF and various state and local agencies, we support Project Safe Neighborhood, a long-time federal program designed to facilitate the federal prosecution of felons in possession of firearms. Fourth, we work closely with the FBI's violent crime squad to aggressively investigate violent crimes committed in the district.

Some of the highlights of our efforts to fight violent crime and enforce the nation's gun laws in 2017 include the following:

Baton Rouge Man Sentenced to 25-Year Federal Prison Term for Spree of Armed Robberies of Local Convenience Store

In September, Keith Migual Williams, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 25 years in federal prison for conducting a string of convenience store robberies. Williams was also ordered to pay more than \$13,000 in restitution to the victims and will be required to serve a three-year term of supervised release upon his release from prison. Williams previously pled guilty to five counts of interference with commerce by robbery and one count of using, carrying, and brandishing a firearm during a crime of

violence. The convenience stores—including Circle K convenience stores and a Walgreens store—were located on Coursey Boulevard, Jefferson Highway, Nicholson Drive, and Perkins Road in Baton Rouge. The robberies occurred during a period of less than two weeks in August of 2016. Williams used multiple weapons to commit these robberies, including firearms, a hammer, and pepper spray. Williams forced cashiers to fill a large duffel bag with dozens of cartons of cigarettes, worth thousands of dollars, from the stores' inventories. Williams' spree ended after he was caught fleeing from police following a vehicular chase.

The USAO worked this case with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Baton Rouge Police Department, the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Department, and the Louisiana State Police. It was prosecuted by AUSA Ryan Crosswell (who has since moved to San Diego, where he continues to serve as a federal prosecutor) and AUSA Cal Leipold.

New Orleans Man Sentenced to 15 ½ Years For Series of Bank Robberies

In November, Gregory Chisolm, of New Orleans, was sentenced to serve 188 months in federal prison for a string of crimes in January of 2016. During the course of his crime spree, Chisolm robbed a JP Morgan Chase Bank in Baton Rouge and a Whitney Bank in New Orleans; in both instances, Chisolm presented the teller with a note demanding cash, and threatened to detonate an explosive device if the teller did not comply with his demands. Chisolm was apprehended while attempting to rob the Coushatta Casino and Resort in Kinder, Louisiana. AUSA Peter J. Smyczek prosecuted these cases, working with the FBI, and with valuable assistance from the BRPD and the LSP Crime Lab.

Three Defendants Convicted in Connection with Gun Store Burglaries

Throughout 2017, the U.S. Attorney's Office investigated, prosecuted, and convicted three defendants in a conspiracy to steal firearms, unregistered machine guns, and silencers from two local firearms dealers. O'Neal Thompson, Charles K. Evans, and Geno Eugene Lyons were convicted in the case.

The evidence established that in July of 2015, they unsuccessfully attempted to steal firearms from Hebert Guns, then drove to Meaux Guns, where they forcibly entered and stole approximately forty-three (43) firearms, including pistols, rifles, automatic machineguns, and silencers. All three then split up the firearms in order to sell them. Evans and Lyons also burglarized Bowie Outfitters in Baton Rouge that same summer.

This investigation was led by the ATF, with substantial assistance from the BRPD, EBRSO, and Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office, and was prosecuted by AUSAs Ryan Crosswell and Peter J. Smyczek.

United States v. Jeffrey Perry et al.
Leader of Violent Group Resentenced to Life Imprisonment Plus 30 Years

In October, Jeffery D. Perry was resentenced to a term of life imprisonment, followed by a term of 30 years imprisonment, for federal drug trafficking and firearm-related violations. Perry's re-sentencing followed his unsuccessful appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which affirmed his convictions and returned the matter to the district court so that Perry's sentence would be increased from life imprisonment plus 15 years to life imprisonment plus 30 years, consistent with federal law.

From August 2006 until September 2011, Perry led a drug-trafficking endeavor within Baton Rouge operating largely on Evergreen Street, Louisiana Street, and Delphine Street, which distributed kilogram and multi-ounce amounts of cocaine and crack cocaine. Customers used cash, stolen equipment, firearms, and food stamps to purchase varying amounts of cocaine and crack cocaine from Perry. In September of 2014, after a multi-week jury trial, Perry was convicted of conspiring to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine, distributing cocaine and crack cocaine, carjacking, possessing firearms in furtherance of crimes of violence and drug trafficking crimes, and possessing firearms while a convicted felon.

At his original sentencing hearing in 2015, the court found that Perry made his living trafficking drugs and that he did whatever it took to protect his drug trafficking enterprise. As an example of his danger to the community, the court noted that reliable evidence suggested that Perry had hired others to set an elderly man's house on fire and then stood by as one of the arsonists lay dying in his backyard from the burns he sustained in the fire Perry had hired him to set. Perry often used violence. The evidence at trial showed that Perry solicited the assistance of a conspirator to commit armed robberies of both a drug supplier and one of Perry's own customers. Perry rewarded the conspirator with crack cocaine and a semi-automatic pistol.

AUSA Robert Piedrahita led the USAO's successful prosecution of Perry and his violent group. AUSA Chris Dippel assisted with the prosecution at trial, and AUSA M. Patricia Jones led the USAO's effort in the appeal.

Through the re-sentencing in this case, the United States anticipates that Perry will spend the rest of his life in federal prison. This result was made possible by the great work and collaboration among the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Baton Rouge Police Department, and the Louisiana State Police.



Three Convicted Felons Sentenced to Lengthy Federal Prison Terms for Gun and Drug Crimes

In the first case, Leo F. Haymond, III, was sentenced to serve 116 months in federal prison following his convictions for federal firearm, drug, and other violations. On June 15, 2017, Haymond pled guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and possession with intent to distribute heroin. In his plea agreement, Haymond admitted that he sold significant amounts of drugs and that he illegally possessed a Glock, model 30, .45 caliber pistol to further his drug trafficking. He committed the offense while on supervised release following a 2011 conviction for distribution of cocaine base. AUSA Ryan Rezaei handled this matter, working with the ATF and the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office.

In another case, Tarzareo L. Jones was sentenced to serve 70 months in federal prison for possessing a firearm while a convicted felon. Last January, an officer

with the Louisiana State University Police Department attempted to conduct a traffic stop of a vehicle operated by Jones near the LSU campus, but the vehicle did not immediately stop. Instead, Jones led police on a brief car and foot pursuit, during which he discarded a 9mm pistol. After Jones was taken into custody, the officer recovered the pistol near the vehicle and later learned that the gun had been reported stolen from an evidence room at the old Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office. At the time of this arrest, Jones had been convicted of two prior felonies. AUSA Demetrius D. Sumner prosecuted the case, working with the ATF and the LSU Police Department and with the cooperation of the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office.

In another case, Jonathan E. Jouette, of Gonzales, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 15 years in federal prison for possessing a firearm while being a convicted felon. After being convicted of three violent felonies or serious drug offenses, Jouette illegally possessed a Russian SKS rifle in January of 2016. AUSA Brad Casey handled this case, working with the ATF and with assistance from the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office.

United States v. Timothy Courtney
Baton Rouge Man Convicted at Trial of Illegally Possessing a Firearm

In September, a federal jury convicted Timothy Courtney, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, after a two-day jury trial.

At trial, the evidence demonstrated that on August 9, 2016, the Baton Rouge Police Department executed a search warrant at a residence on Odell Street in Baton Rouge, where Courtney was believed to be living. While executing the warrant, officers encountered the defendant, a convicted felon, and from inside the residence recovered a loaded pistol, which was located within inches of the defendant's wallet. The evidence at trial also established that the defendant later made several admissions regarding the firearm, including telling a female acquaintance that once he became aware that officers were executing a search warrant at the residence, he did not have enough time to hide the gun before officers found it.

Courtney is awaiting sentencing on this gun charge. The case is being prosecuted by AUSAs Ryan Rezaei and Michael Jefferson, working with the ATF and the Baton Rouge Police Department, with valuable assistance from the U.S. Marshal's Service.

The U.S. Attorney's Office—Violent Crime Initiative

In October, the USAO launched a new initiative targeting violent crime in and around Baton Rouge. The initiative enhances the focus on federal gun prosecutions and places an emphasis on using federal tools to pursue violent offenders and drug traffickers. The initiative brings together resources from the ATF, FBI, DEA, DHS, the Organized Crime and Gang Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, the USMS, BRPD, EBRSO, LSP, the East Baton Rouge DA's Office, and the Constable's Office.

One key component of the new initiative is the U.S. Attorney-led Violent Crime Strike Force. Using the agencies' collective data and intelligence, the strike force will work to identify the most violent groups and individuals in our area. A team of federal prosecutors and federal, state, and local law enforcement agents will be assigned to each of the identified groups and will utilize all legal means at their disposal to pursue those groups in a series of thorough, long-term investigations.

The United States Department of Justice's commitment to reducing violent crime goes beyond criminal prosecutions, however. For instance, the Justice Department is funding myriad state and local efforts in this area. In September of 2017, for instance, the Justice Department awarded more than \$12 million to state and local agencies and organizations in Baton Rouge for a wide range of projects, including a grant to assist in the implementation of body-worn camera policies and funding for prisoner reentry and drug treatment. The Justice Department has also selected Baton Rouge as one of 12 cities to participate in the National Public Safety Partnership, which will assist our local law enforcement offices in implementing community policing concepts and improve our collective ability to collect, analyze, and share data.

To learn more about the USAO's efforts to combat violent crime in Baton Rouge, please visit our website at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdla>, or contact AUSA Chris Dippel, who serves as a Deputy Chief within the USAO's Criminal Division and coordinates Strike Force operations.

Criminal Division Narcotics & OCDEF

The office regularly handles significant narcotics prosecutions, often through the district's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDEF). The OCDEF program was established to target and dismantle the highest-level drug trafficking organizations operating within the United States. OCDEF is comprised of AUSAs and federal, state, and local agents who work together using the most powerful and sophisticated tools and techniques to attack these organizations. OCDEF attorneys also target significant local drug operations, including those involved in the illegal distribution of prescription drugs.



AUSA Jennifer M. Kleinpeter serves as our lead OCDEF attorney and as a Deputy Chief within the Criminal Division.

Some of the highlights of our efforts to fight illegal drug trafficking in 2017 include the following:

Five-Member Gulf Coast Trafficking Ring Successfully Prosecuted

In January, the USAO announced the fifth and final conviction in a series of federal prosecutions aimed at a drug trafficking ring that operated throughout the Gulf Coast states.

Kendall Lewis, of Lecanto, Florida, admitted that in early 2015, he and his co-conspirators made multiple trips to the Houston area, where they would obtain large quantities of cocaine. Lewis and his co-conspirators would use female co-conspirators to drive the cocaine back to Florida, while Lewis and

others would follow the females' car from a separate vehicle. On February 9, 2015, police arrested Lewis and his co-conspirators while driving through Baton Rouge with more than 4 kilograms of cocaine.

The USAO also convicted Kareem McKinnon, Arthur William Armstrong, Lamechia Richburg, and Shelby Collazo, all from Florida.

AUSAs Adam Ptashkin and Robert Piedrahita worked on this case with the DEA, BRPD, and LSP.

Heroin Traffickers Sentenced to Federal Prison for Roles in Multi-State Conspiracy

In 2017, the USAO convicted numerous defendants in a conspiracy to distribute heroin that had been pressed to resemble oxycodone pills, in California, and then shipped into the Baton Rouge area for distribution. In all, ten defendants were sentenced to prison in this scheme.

The leader, Logan Brannon, of Newport Beach, California, was convicted of conspiring to distribute heroin, distributing heroin, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. He was sentenced to serve 10 years in federal prison and forfeit no less than \$174,700.

This operation was identified by the DEA's Tactical Diversion Squad and the Internal Revenue Service—Criminal Investigation Division, with assistance from the Louisiana State Police, East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, Iberville Parish Sheriff's Office, and Baton Rouge Police Department. AUSAs Paul L. Pugliese and Frederick A. Menner, Jr. prosecuted the case for the USAO.

Armed Drug Trafficker Convicted at Trial and Sentenced to 15 Years

In July, after a three-day trial, a federal jury convicted Quinton Hall, of Baton Rouge, of various drug trafficking crimes, and illegally possessing a firearm in connection with the crimes, based on the defendant's efforts to distribute methamphetamine throughout Livingston and Gonzales in 2015.

As the evidence at trial demonstrated, Hall would obtain large quantities of methamphetamine from suppliers in Texas and California. Working with other individuals in Gonzales and Walker, Hall would distribute the methamphetamine to customers in Livingston and Ascension Parishes. When Hall was arrested on August 19, 2015, he was in possession of a Smith & Wesson 9mm pistol, which was concealed in a compartment behind the stereo of his vehicle.

In December, Hall was sentenced to serve 15 years in federal prison.

AUSAs Ryan Crosswell and Brad Casey handled this case, along with the DEA, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office, and the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office, and with valuable assistance from the Louisiana State Police.

Operation Third World: Violent Drug Trafficker Sentenced to 21 Years

The USAO's prosecution of the violent drug trafficking organization in *Operation Third World* continued in 2017. In January, Myron Chevelle Hart, of Baker, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 21 years in prison and ordered to forfeit \$199,441. Hart and 38 others have been charged by a federal grand jury with various narcotics trafficking and firearms offenses related to their involvement in a violent drug trafficking organization. Throughout the investigation, agents have seized numerous firearms, more than \$260,000 in cash, and cocaine. More than 20 defendants have been sentenced to federal prison.

In addition to distributing drugs, Hart's role in the organization was that of an enforcer, using violence and threats of violence to advance the organization's aims. As an example, court-authorized wiretaps captured several phone calls during which Hart and a co-conspirator planned to rob and kill someone because that person had talked negatively about them. During another conversation, Hart bragged to a different co-conspirator that he should watch the news the following morning because the killing would be a story. After learning of the plan, law enforcement intervened, preventing the plan from being carried out.

AUSAs Jennifer Kleinpeter and Adam Ptashkin are handling this case, working with the DEA, IRS-CI, the ATF, BRPD, LSP, the Sheriffs' Offices in West Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge, Ascension, Iberville, and Livingston Parishes, and the Gonzales and Baker Police Departments.

Operation Road Block: Leader of Drug Organization Sentenced to 27 Years

In June, Wilbert Mathes was sentenced to 27 years in federal prison, as the leader of a large-scale drug trafficking network operating in the Baton Rouge region. Mathes was also ordered to forfeit to the United States \$593,000, representing the drug proceeds generated during the conspiracy. Mathes had previously been convicted, at a trial in September of 2016, of conspiracy to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine and cocaine base, distribution of cocaine, possession with the intent to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine, and unlawful use of a communications facility. All 7 of the defendant's co-conspirators were also convicted.

AUSAs Jennifer Kleinpeter and Jessica Thornhill handled the case, working with the DEA, BRPD, LSP, ATF, and the East and West Baton Rouge Parish Sheriffs' Offices.

Multi-State Methamphetamine Ring Dismantled

In August, the final two defendants were sentenced after a long-term investigation targeting methamphetamine traffickers operating in and around Baton Rouge. The investigation led to charges against 15 individuals for federal narcotics and firearms violations.

The leaders of the organization received federal prison sentences. Randy Tibbits Brown, a/k/a Randall Brown, of Powder Springs, Georgia, was sentenced to serve 15 years in prison. Traymonda Owens, a.k.a. Traymonda Jarmichael Owens, of Houston, Texas, and Tonya C. Breland, a.k.a. Tonya Crawford, of Pride, Louisiana, were sentenced to serve 10 years and 5 years in federal prison, respectively.

AUSAs Robert Piedrahita, Kevin Sanchez, and Ryan Rezaei worked on this case with the DEA.

Opioid Enforcement

The USAO is working with its law enforcement partners and others to combat the opioid epidemic and deter and prosecute federal crimes related to the illegal use and distribution of opioids.

The USAO's efforts take a variety of forms, including the following:

- Working closely with federal, state, and local law enforcement to provide all necessary resources to opioid investigations;
- Partnering with HHS-OIG, the FBI, and the DOJ-Criminal Fraud Section in the district's Medicare Fraud Strike Force, to investigate opioid-related crime in the medical sector;
- Making opioid-related investigations and prosecutions a priority within the USAO; and
- Investing office resources in related training, education, and outreach.

For free and confidential information (in English and Spanish) for individuals and family members facing substance abuse issues, please call—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline, at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Criminal Division

Major Financial Fraud

The USAO works aggressively to investigate and prosecute individuals who commit bank fraud, wire and mail fraud, money laundering, theft of government funds, and a wide variety of other federal offenses. Major financial fraud and embezzlement have always been high priorities of the USAO and remain so today. These crimes can have devastating effects on individual victims, allow corrupt businesses to gain unfair advantages over their competitors, place financial institutions and other businesses in jeopardy, and erode public confidence in our economy, among other consequences.

Our prosecutors who work in this area bring decades of experience working in other federal, state, and local prosecutors' offices, clerking for federal judges, and working for large, national and international law firms in Washington D.C., Atlanta, and San Francisco.

Facts and Statistics for 2017:

- **More than 30 defendants charged with fraud/white collar offenses**
- **96% Conviction Rate**
- **USAO obtained restitution orders for victims and judgments totaling more than \$11.2 million**

Local Business Owner Sentenced to Prison For Multi-Year Bank Fraud Scam

In November, Carl D. Wright, of Central, Louisiana, was sentenced to prison for 6 years following his convictions for bank fraud and making false statements to financial institutions. Wright was also ordered to pay restitution of \$2,857,999 and forfeit all proceeds of the scheme.

Wright operated a company called Nevada Systems, Inc., which was in the business of renovating residential properties. From August 2004 until November 2010, Wright fraudulently obtained millions of dollars from 12 different Baton Rouge-area financial institutions by providing the banks with a false social security number, concealing his prior felony convictions, and fraudulently underreporting his liabilities, among other misrepresentations.

AUSAs Brad Casey and Peter J. Smyczek handled this prosecution, working with the FBI.

School Owner and CEO Convicted of Fraud and Money Laundering

In June, after a four-day trial, a federal jury convicted Alden Hall, of Baton Rouge, of numerous federal offenses in connection with her multi-year scheme to defraud the U.S. Department of Education and steal Pell Grant funds.

Hall owned and operated Alden's School of Cosmetology and Alden's School of Barbering in Baker, Louisiana. As the evidence demonstrated, Hall engaged in a scheme to steal government funds by causing misrepresentations to be submitted to the Department of Education. Hall caused false and forged documents to be submitted as part of students' financial aid packages, and caused misrepresentations to the Department about the number of hours that certain students had attended class and their standing at the school, when in fact the individuals had never attended class. The jury also unanimously convicted Hall of illegally laundering some of the proceeds of the fraudulent scheme.

On January 19, 2018, the court sentenced Hall to serve 30 months in federal prison and pay \$276,220 in restitution.

AUSAs Ryan Crosswell and Jessica M.P. Thornhill handled the case on behalf of the USAO, working with the FBI, DOE-OIG, IRS-CI, and the Louisiana State Inspector General.

Businessman Sent to Prison for Fraud and Money Laundering In Connection With Construction of Baker Elementary School

In October, Nathian D. Hossley, of Baton Rouge, was sentenced to serve 78 months in federal prison for defrauding a construction contractor out of more than \$800,000 during construction of the Impact Charter School in Baker, Louisiana.

Hossley was the owner and operator of First Millennium Construction ("First Millennium"), a local commercial construction company, and the co-owner of Spice Bistro, a local restaurant. In 2014, he submitted a bid to work as a subcontractor on construction of the Impact Charter School. In his application, he fraudulently represented that he had never been indicted or convicted of a crime, when, in fact, he had multiple federal fraud convictions. After Hossley's company was hired and construction began, Hossley defrauded the contractor by submitting false payment applications, concealing the fact that he was using construction payments on personal expenditures and on Spice Bistro, and forging signatures on checks.

AUSAs Ryan Crosswell, Rene Salomon, and Cal Leipold handled this prosecution.

Pennsylvania Man Convicted of Defrauding Baton Rouge Business

In June, the USAO announced charges against a Pennsylvania man who caused more than \$500,000 in loss to a company in Baton Rouge. Murray Carl Neeren, of Holland, Pennsylvania, was charged with defrauding Edgen Murray Corporation (“Edgen”), a global supplier of specialized products for energy and infrastructure markets.

Neeren worked for Edgen as an independent contractor and was based in Pennsylvania. Neeren intentionally misled Edgen with respect to the cost of materials he was purchasing, for instance, and caused Edgen to believe that it was making a profit on subsequent sales involving the materials, when in fact Neeren was reselling the materials at a small profit or even at a loss. Through Neeren’s scheme, he obtained more than \$150,000 in fraudulent commission payments and caused a total loss to Edgen of more than \$590,000.

AUSAs Peter J. Smyczek and Rene Salomon developed and prosecuted this complex matter.

Financial Manager Sentenced to Prison for Embezzling Over \$1.4 Million

In October, Wade Barbay, of Baton Rouge, was sentenced to serve 29 months in federal prison after defrauding his employer, Axiall, a subsidiary of Westlake Chemical, which is an international manufacturer and supplier of products derived from petrochemicals.

Axiall has a facility in Plaquemine, Louisiana, where the defendant had worked for more than 24 years. Most recently, Barbay worked as Axiall’s Director of Shared Services and oversaw the company’s corporate credit card program. For approximately five years, however, beginning in 2011, Barbay defrauded his employer by submitting fraudulently inflated business expenses in the names of other employees, causing his employer to pay the charges, and then directing American Express to credit his account with the funds. Barbay also negotiated and deposited more than \$280,000 in corporate refund checks into his personal bank account. In total, Barbay’s fraudulent scheme cost his employer more than \$1.4 million.

AUSA Jessica M.P. Thornhill handled this prosecution.

Husband and Wife Convicted of Offenses Related to Bank Loan Application

The USAO announced the convictions of Timothy and Shelly Bihm, of Baton Rouge, for making false statements in an application for a loan that was backed by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

After leaving his former company on bad terms, Mr. Bihm and his wife applied for a new loan to open a competing business in the same industry. Despite pending civil litigation related to the former company, the Bihms falsely represented that they were not involved in any pending lawsuits. As a result of their false statement on the loan application, the Bihms caused a local bank to incur a loss of more than \$190,000.

Both defendants were convicted. Earlier this year, Timothy and Shelly Bihm were sentenced to serve 8 and 7 months in federal prison, respectively. They were also ordered to pay more than \$190,000 in restitution.

AUSA Elizabeth White handled this matter.

Two Men Convicted of Multi-Jurisdictional Identity Theft-Related Crimes

In December, after a week-long jury trial, Walter Glenn, of Connecticut, was convicted of conspiracy to make and pass counterfeit checks, produce fraudulent identification documents, and use unauthorized access devices; access device fraud; and aggravated identity theft. On the first day of the trial, one of Glenn's co-conspirators, Thomas James, pled guilty. Both men are expected to be sentenced in 2018 and face significant terms of imprisonment.

The evidence at trial demonstrated that Glenn obtained and possessed the personal identifying information of more than 400 victims, and used the information to create fraudulent ID cards and counterfeit checks. Glenn and his associates then traveled across the country in rental cars and, using the fraudulent documents, attempted to cash almost \$2 million in counterfeit checks and defrauded various retailers out of almost \$1 million.

AUSAs M. Patricia Jones, Kevin R. Sanchez, and Jessica M.P. Thornhill are handling the case. The multi-jurisdictional investigation is being led by the U.S. Secret Service, with valuable assistance from the East and West Baton Rouge Parish Sheriffs' Offices, the Connecticut and Massachusetts State Police, and the police departments in Hartford, Connecticut and Garland, Texas.

Investigation and Prosecutions Of Insider Trading in Connection With 2012 Acquisition of the Shaw Group By Chicago Bridge & Iron

The USAO, along with the U.S. Secret Service, FBI, and IRS-Criminal Investigations, has been investigating suspected insider trading in connection with the acquisition of the Shaw Group by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company (CB&I) in 2012.

In 2014, a former Shaw executive, who served as Vice President of Construction Operations for the company's Plant Services Division, was convicted of insider trading. In connection with his guilty plea, the insider admitted that he received confidential inside information regarding the impending merger, prior to any public announcement of the transaction, and that he passed the inside information on to his brother-in-law, a Ruston dentist, with the understanding that he would use it to trade in Shaw stock.

In August of 2017, the Ruston dentist who received information from the former Shaw executive, proceeded to trial and was acquitted.

Meanwhile, in July, three additional individuals were charged with insider trading in connection with the merger. According to the indictment, one of the three, Kelly Liu, worked in Shaw's Financial Planning and Analysis Department at the time of the merger, obtained inside information about the merger, and passed the information to two others for their use in trading Shaw securities. The case is currently scheduled to proceed to trial beginning on April 30, 2018.

This case is being prosecuted by AUSAs Chris Dippel, Patricia Jones, and Adam Ptashkin.



Criminal Division Investment Fraud

Financial fraud and so-called “white collar” crime come in all shapes and sizes. Among all of the various cases in this program area, the USAO places special emphasis on investigating and prosecuting major investment frauds. Such cases have the potential to affect numerous victims, often with devastating consequences.

We are fortunate to have several law enforcement agencies in our district with the skills and experience to root out and investigate these frauds with us, such as the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigation Division, the United States Secret Service, the Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions, and the LSP.

In 2017, we announced the following two cases, among others:

Ethel Investment Adviser Sentenced to Federal Prison After Stealing Millions

In November, Bryan Lee Addington, of Ethel, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 159 months in federal prison as a result of his convictions for mail fraud and aggravated identity theft.

From in or about January 2010 through at least April 2016, Addington obtained more than \$9 million from a fraudulent scheme to defraud his investors.

Instead of investing the investors’ funds as promised, he used the funds for other purposes and sent the investors false account statements to conceal his scheme.

AUSA Ryan Rezaei handled the case.

Addis Man Convicted of Stealing Over \$250,000 from Investors

In another significant case, William Todd Cutrer was convicted of mail fraud and is awaiting sentencing. As Cutrer has admitted, from in or about January 2014 through at least November 2016, he executed a scheme to defraud investors through West Baton Rouge Credit, Inc., a Port Allen lending company that he owned and operated. Cutrer personally solicited funds from investors and guaranteed them interest, but then used the funds to write checks to himself and his family members and to make payments to prior investors who were due interest on their principal.

AUSA Ryan Rezaei is handling this ongoing prosecution.

Criminal Division Cyber Security

The U.S. Attorney's Office— Cyber Security Initiative

In early 2016, the USAO launched a new Cyber Security Initiative. The initiative brings together resources from the U.S. Department of Justice's Computer Crimes and Intellectual Property Section, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Cyber Division, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Treasury (including both the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations Division and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration), the U.S. Department of Education, the Louisiana State Police, the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office, and other federal, state, and local agencies.

Through a newly-created law enforcement working group, the initiative assembles agents and other personnel from across Louisiana and the region to assess and share information about incoming reports of cyber incidents affecting the Middle District, and evaluate law enforcement's response. The initiative also includes a significant investment in outreach aimed at fostering greater collaboration between private industry and law

enforcement and encouraging immediate reporting of cyber incidents. Team members routinely contribute to InfraGard Louisiana, a partnership between the FBI and the private sector that works to protect critical infrastructure.

For more information about the USAO's Cyber Security Initiative, please contact AUSA Ryan Rezaei at (225) 389-0443.

For more information about InfraGard Louisiana, please contact FBI-New Orleans at (504) 816-3000.

To submit any information to the FBI concerning suspected internet-facilitated criminal activity, please visit the website for the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), www.ic3.gov.





*Former Systems Administrator
Sentenced to 34 Months in Federal Prison For
Hacking Into Industrial Facility Computer System
at Georgia-Pacific Plant in Port Hudson*

Georgia-Pacific is one of the world's largest manufacturers of paper, pulp, tissue, packaging, building materials, and related chemicals. The company employs approximately 35,000 people in more than 200 facilities nationwide. One of Georgia-Pacific's facilities is located in Port Hudson, Louisiana, and the mill operates 24 hours a day, making paper, tissue, and paper towels.

Brian P. Johnson, of Zachary, Louisiana, worked for many years as the facility's information technology (IT) specialist and systems administrator. On February 14, 2014, Georgia-Pacific terminated Johnson's employment and escorted him from the mill. After being terminated, Johnson remotely accessed the plant's computer system and intentionally transmitted code and commands that caused significant damage to Georgia-Pacific and its operations. On February 27, 2014, the FBI executed a search warrant at Johnson's home and observed a virtual private network connection to the mill on Johnson's computer screen. Agents lawfully seized Johnson's computer, and a subsequent forensic examination of the computer revealed logs of Johnson's intrusion into the facility's system.

On June 25, 2015, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Johnson with intentionally damaging protected computers at Georgia-Pacific. On February 4, 2016, Johnson pled guilty, admitting that he had accessed the plant's computer system and intentionally transmitted harmful code and commands to the system.

On February 15, 2017, Johnson was sentenced to serve 34 months in prison. Significantly, the evidence established that Johnson had not only committed the February 27, 2014 intrusion, but in fact a series of intrusions, beginning shortly after his termination and continuing through the federal search. The court also determined that Johnson's criminal conduct caused a loss to Georgia-Pacific of more than \$1.1 million, and Johnson was ordered to pay restitution for the full amount of the victim's damages.

United States v. Brian Johnson was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Cybercrimes Squad. The case was prosecuted by AUSA M. Patricia Jones, who serves as the office's Appellate Chief, and AUSA Ryan Crosswell.



***Local Private Investigator
Convicted of Fraudulently Using
President's Social Security Number
In Attempt to Illegally Access Federal
Tax Information***

On December 11, 2017, Jordan Hamlett, of Sunset, Louisiana, pled guilty to false representation of a social security number, in connection with an illegal attempt to obtain the federal tax information of then-presidential candidate Donald J. Trump, weeks before the November 2016 presidential election.

During his guilty plea, Hamlett admitted that on September 13, 2016, he used the President's social security number to begin an online Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA"). After beginning the FAFSA, Hamlett obtained a Federal Student Aid Identification, a combination of a username and password that allows students and parents to identify themselves electronically to access the FAFSA.

After starting the FAFSA and creating the FSA ID, Hamlett accessed the Internal Revenue Service's online Data

Retrieval Tool, which allows student aid applicants to import federal tax information into their aid applications, after an on-line authentication process. In this case, while posing as Mr. Trump, Hamlett knowingly and falsely declared that the President's social security number was his own, in an unsuccessful attempt to use the Data Retrieval Tool to obtain the President's federal tax information from IRS servers.

The USAO launched its investigation in September of 2016, working closely with the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration and the U.S.

Department of Education's Office of Inspector General—Technology Crimes Division. Throughout the investigation, the USAO received valuable assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General.

AUSA Ryan Rezaei has led the investigation since its inception, and AUSA Alan Stevens serves as co-counsel.

Hamlett is awaiting sentencing.



Criminal Division Immigration



The office handles a significant number of criminal immigration matters with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other agencies. Such matters often include the illegal reentry of previously removed illegal aliens, the use and possession of fraudulent identification documents, and the illegal use and possession of firearms by illegal aliens. Some of the highlights of our work in this area in 2017 include the following:

Aggravated Felon Sentenced to More than 10 Years in Federal Prison

In October, Juan Carlos Rigoberto-Martinez, of Honduras, was sentenced to serve 130 months in federal prison for illegally reentering the United States after removal. The defendant had an extensive criminal history, which included convictions for burglary, robbery, theft, and several reentries into the U.S. after deportation. AUSA Brad Casey prosecuted this case for the USAO.

Illegal Alien Cocaine Trafficker Sentenced to Prison

Earlier this year, Silvestre Gutierrez, of Mexico, was sentenced to serve 78 months in prison for attempting to transport approximately 6 kilograms of cocaine through Baton Rouge in a rental vehicle. Gutierrez and his co-

conspirators were arrested on February 29, 2016 after law enforcement officers found fifteen (15) vacuum-sealed packages of cocaine floating in the gas tank of their rental vehicle. Officers realized that the defendant was illegally present in the United States and had been deported on two prior occasions. AUSA Jessica M.P. Thornhill prosecuted this case, working with the DEA and the BRPD.

Illegal Alien Sentenced to Prison For Illegal Possession of Firearms

In November, Octavio Bringas-Posadas, an illegal alien from Mexico, was sentenced to serve 24 months in federal prison for illegally possessing several firearms and illegal reentry into the United States by a removed alien. AUSAs Kevin R. Sanchez and Jessica M.P. Thornhill handled this case.

Criminal Division Civil Rights

This office is committed to pursuing civil rights violations, along with the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Civil rights cases typically involve situations when a person in a position of authority in state, local, or federal government uses his office to deprive another of his civil rights. Other instances involve hate crimes, where an individual has been victimized because of his/her race, gender, national orientation, or sexual orientation.

Three Former Correctional Officers Convicted of Beating Handcuffed and Shackled Inmate at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola

The Louisiana State Penitentiary located in Angola, Louisiana, is a state prison operated by the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the state agency responsible for the custody, control, care, and safety of inmates housed at the facility. In January of 2014, J.S., an inmate at Angola, was physically assaulted while handcuffed and shackled. J.S. suffered serious bodily injury from the assault.

Following the assault, the USAO, the Civil Rights Division, and the FBI launched a criminal civil rights investigation into the incident. AUSA Frederick A. Menner, Jr. is handling the investigation for the USAO.

In November of 2016, Scotty Kennedy, of Beebe, Arkansas, formerly a Captain at Angola, pled guilty for his role in the beating and cover up. As he admitted in connection with his plea, he was present while other correctional officers physically assaulted J.S. while he was handcuffed, shackled, and not physically resisting. Kennedy admitted that he did nothing to stop the beating, even though he had specifically been trained to do so. Kennedy also admitted participating in a conspiracy with other officers to cover up the beating, by devising a false cover story, preparing and filing reports documenting the false cover story, making false entries in LSP-Angola sign-in sheets and log books to corroborate the story, tampering with witnesses and physical evidence, and repeating the false cover story to anyone inquiring about the incident.

In September of 2017, a second defendant, former Captain John Sanders, of Marksville, Louisiana, pled guilty for his role in the crimes. Sanders admitted that he punched the inmate repeatedly in the head in retaliation for an earlier incident; that he witnessed other officers use excessive force against the inmate and failed to intervene; that he conspired with other officers to cover up the beating by engaging in a variety of obstructive acts; and that he personally falsified official prison records in order to cover up the beating.

In November of 2017, a third defendant, former Captain James Savoy, of Marksville, pled guilty for his role in the crimes.

A fourth defendant, former Major Daniel Davis, of Loranger, Louisiana, has also been charged in connection with the investigation and is scheduled to proceed to trial in late January of 2018.

This case is being investigated by the FBI's Baton Rouge Resident Office and is being prosecuted by AUSA Frederick A. Menner, Jr. and Trial Attorney Christopher J. Perras of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section.

Federal Officials Close Investigation into Death of Alton Sterling

In May, career prosecutors and investigators from the USAO, the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, and the FBI announced the closure of the federal criminal investigation into the July 5, 2016 fatal shooting of Alton Sterling. After a ten-month, comprehensive investigation into the events surrounding the shooting, officials announced that the investigation found insufficient evidence to support federal criminal charges against either of the Baton Rouge Police Officers involved in the shooting. The USAO, DOJ-Civil Rights, and the FBI each devoted significant time and resources to conducting a thorough, independent investigation. Ultimately, although Mr. Sterling's death was tragic, the United States concluded that the available evidence did not meet the substantial evidentiary requirements that would apply in a federal criminal prosecution for deprivation of rights under color of law, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 242. For a more detailed factual summary and a discussion of the applicable legal analysis, please visit www.justice.gov/usao-mdla/pr/federal-officials-close-investigation-death-alton-sterling and www.justice.gov/usao-mdla/pr/prepared-remarks-acting-us-attorney-corey-amundson.

Criminal Division Health Care Fraud

Our office places an emphasis on combating health care fraud. We work closely with several law enforcement agencies to identify and prosecute fraud against government and private health insurers/providers, false billing associated with drug diversion, fraud involving inappropriate or unnecessary medical care, and other fraudulent schemes affecting the health care industry.

In 2009, our office partnered with the Criminal Fraud Section of the U.S. Department of Justice to establish a Medicare Fraud Strike Force in Baton Rouge, which was, at the time, one of only seven in the nation. Strike Force teams bring together the resources of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Office of Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Criminal Division—Fraud Section, the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, and other law enforcement agencies, including, in Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. Over the past seven years, the team has continued working in Baton Rouge and expanded across southern Louisiana.

Since its inception, the Baton Rouge-based Medicare Fraud Strike Force has charged more than 80 defendants with health care fraud and related offenses, achieving a 95% conviction rate and sending nearly 50 of those defendants to federal prison.



Conviction in Major Health Care Fraud Conspiracy

In September, the USAO announced that Benjamin P. Landry, of Baton Rouge, had been convicted of conspiring to commit health care fraud. At his guilty plea, he admitted that from 2005 through 2013, while working at a pain management clinic on Bluebonnet Boulevard in Baton Rouge, he and others submitted fraudulent claims to Medicare and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana. The claims falsely represented that services that had been provided in a single day had actually been provided on consecutive days, a practice commonly referred to as “unbundling,” and the scheme involved the use of false entries in patient records and the practice’s electronic patient schedule.

Mr. Landry is awaiting sentencing, and others charged with participating in the conspiracy are awaiting trial. AUSA Adam Ptashkin is handling this ongoing matter with Dustin Davis and Jared Hasten of the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division – Fraud Section.

Patient Marketer Sentenced to Prison for Health Care Fraud

In May, Demetrias Temple, of New Orleans, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 10 months in federal prison for health care fraud. Temple was also ordered to make restitution to Medicare totaling \$100,000.

This criminal case began in October 2013, when Temple and her co-defendant, Ahaoma Boniface Ohia, were charged with perpetrating a scheme to defraud Medicare through Ohia’s company, All-Star Medical Supplies, which operated in Baton Rouge and Houston, Texas. Ohia proceeded to trial in June of 2014, where the evidence demonstrated that he had submitted hundreds of false and fraudulent claims to Medicare totaling more than \$1.2 million. Ohia was convicted and sentenced to serve 156 months in federal prison, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed his conviction and sentence. Temple assisted Ohia’s fraudulent scheme by recruiting beneficiaries and providing their personal information to Ohia in exchange for illegal kickbacks.

AUSAs Alan Stevens and Cam Le prosecuted the All-Star Medical case.

Criminal Division Public Corruption

The elimination of public corruption has long been one of the district's highest priorities. The USAO works closely with the FBI and various other law enforcement agencies to root out such corruption. We have successfully prosecuted numerous federal, state, and local officials for abusing their official positions and are uniquely situated and experienced to handle such matters.

Angola Colonel Convicted of Embezzling More Than \$100,000

In 2017, the USAO convicted Shirley Whittington, of St. Francisville, a former Colonel at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola and Treasurer of the AERC, a company organized to provide recreational activities and community events for its members. Whittington admitted that while serving as the AERC's Treasurer, from 2009 through 2016, she fraudulently diverted more than \$115,000 of the organization's funds for her own benefit and for the benefit of her associates through online and local retailer purchases, ATM withdrawals, "cash back" and counter check transactions, and by removing cash from rodeo concession sale deposits. The case was prosecuted by AUSA Chris Dippel, working with the FBI and investigative auditors from the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office.

Department of Health Official Pleads Guilty to Embezzlement of Medical Products

In March, the USAO convicted Troy Weaver, who pled guilty to participating in a conspiracy to embezzle, traffic, and sell stolen pre-retail medical products. Weaver was a technician at the Washington, D.C. Department of Health, a government agency that, among other things, operates a pharmacy warehouse to receive, store, and distribute prescription drugs for qualifying citizens of the District of Columbia. Incoming shipments occasionally contained overages of drugs, and the defendant began retaining many of these extra drugs, rather than shopping them back to the manufacturer. Eventually, the defendant and another individual then devised a scheme to begin selling the "off-inventory" drugs to others, for their own personal profit. AUSA Peter J. Smyczek is handling this ongoing matter.

Criminal Division

Tax Fraud



The USAO works closely with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigations Division and other law enforcement and private partners to identify, investigate, and prosecute tax fraud. Prosecutions range from large cases involving defendants who use business entities to commit tax fraud and/or launder the proceeds of their schemes to smaller cases involving tax preparers who submit numerous fraudulent tax returns to the IRS, often using stolen identities.

Former Chiropractor Sentenced to Federal Prison for Lengthy Tax Fraud Scheme After Being Arrested in Panama And Returned to the United States

In September, Steven Angle was sentenced to two years in federal prison for filing false tax returns and obstruction of the Internal Revenue laws. Angle was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$129,000 and a fine of \$50,000.

Angle owned and operated the Chiropractic Nutrition Clinic located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for approximately 20 years. From 2005 through 2009 and again from 2011 through 2013, however, Angle filed false federal income tax returns in which he reported no income or far less income than he actually earned. In 2011, for instance, Angle reported only \$26 in

total income. In 2012, he reported zero dollars in total income, although he actually earned more than \$100,000 that year. Throughout all of the false tax returns, Angle consistently represented that he owed no taxes, and he filed fraudulent 1099-MISC forms that had been altered to reflect no income, when, in fact, he was earning substantial income from his business.

Angle was indicted in June of 2016. By that time, he was living in Panama. In late 2016, Angle was arrested by Panamanian authorities and returned to Baton Rouge to face the pending criminal charges.

AUSA Brad Casey handled this prosecution for the U.S. Attorney’s Office.



Repeat Tax Fraud Offender Returns to Prison for Thirty-Month Sentence

Belvin F. Tyson, of Baton Rouge, was sentenced to serve 30 months in federal prison following her conviction for tax fraud. Tyson was also ordered to make restitution to the United States Treasury totaling \$100,077.

Tyson previously pled guilty to one count of impeding the due administration of the IRS laws and one count of access device fraud.

As Tyson, a professional tax preparer, admitted in court in connection with her guilty pleas last March, she fraudulently manipulated her clients' Schedule A deductions and Schedule C income amounts, and added fraudulent dependents to their returns, in order to decrease their tax liability and increase their tax refunds.

To add the fraudulent dependents, Tyson obtained and then sold the personal identifiable information of other individuals to her clients, and then

used the information in preparing her clients' tax returns. Tyson's fraudulent conduct in tax years 2011 and 2012 resulted in a loss of approximately \$100,077 to the United States Treasury. At the time she committed this offense, she was still on federal supervised release for a prior federal tax crime, which she committed in 2009.

AUSA Jessica M.P. Thornhill prosecuted this case on behalf of the USAO.

If you suspect or know of an individual or business that is not complying with the tax laws, please visit www.irs.gov or call the Tax Fraud Hotline at 1-800-829-0433.

Criminal Division

Theft of Government Funds

Theft of government funds—stealing funds from the Social Security Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other federal government agencies and benefit programs—is a serious crime. Such crimes deplete the U.S. Treasury, erode public confidence in the benefits programs they victimize, and jeopardize the availability of funds to those who are truly in need.

The USAO was active in 2017 in prosecuting instances of criminal government benefits fraud, as highlighted below:

Theft of Social Security Benefits

The USAO prosecuted two Baton Rouge residents for theft of Social Security benefits. In the first case, Lucille Williams admitted that she continued to collect her mother’s benefits for years after her mother’s death. Williams illegally collected almost \$80,000. In the second case, Doris S. Pitcher admitted that she, too, collected Social Security benefits intended for her mother—for approximately 15 years—after her mother’s death. Pitcher fraudulently obtained almost \$50,000.

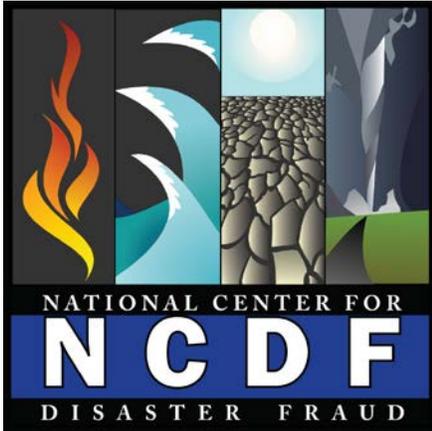
AUSA Paul Pugliese handled the Williams case, and AUSA Brad Casey handled the Pitcher case, both with the U.S. Social Security Administration’s Office of Inspector General.

False Statements to Obtain Federal Workers’ Compensation Benefits

In another case, the USAO prosecuted Cherlyn Beauchamp, of Prairieville, with making false statements to obtain federal workers’ compensation benefits. Beauchamp was employed by the United States Postal Service, and she sustained an on-the-job injury in July of 2015. In the documents she submitted to the United States Department of Labor’s Office of Worker’s Compensation Program, however, she falsely represented that she did not have outside employment. In fact, at the time, the defendant was actually working as a bank loan officer. Based on her false statements, the defendant received more than \$20,000 in federal benefits to which she was not entitled.

AUSA Jessica Thornhill prosecuted the case with the U.S. Postal Service’s Office of Inspector General.

Criminal Division National Center for Disaster Fraud



The USAO works closely with the National Center for Disaster Fraud (“NCDF”), located in Baton Rouge, to support the NCDF’s work as the national coordination center for all man-made and natural disasters.

The NCDF is the result of a partnership among the U.S. Department of Justice, various law enforcement regulatory agencies, and Louisiana State University to form a national coordinating agency within the DOJ’s Criminal Division. The NCDF works to detect, prevent, and investigate fraud, to assist with prosecutions of disaster fraud, and to advocate for the victims of such fraud. Since 2005, the NCDF has received more than 70,000 complaints from 50 states, 6 territories, and 4 countries.

Acting U.S. Attorney Corey Amundson serves as the NCDF’s Acting Executive Director, and the USAO contributes substantial resources to the NCDF’s mission. In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, the USAO has designated an AUSA to the Center to provide input and direction to the NCDF staff and serve as the primary liaison between the NDCF and USAOs across the country. AUSA Paul Pugliese currently serves in this role at the NCDF. The USAO has also assigned its civil investigator to assist at the NCDF on a part-time basis.

In 2017, the USAO also prosecuted several cases involving disaster fraud that occurred in the Middle District in the aftermath of the August 2016 flooding. Those cases remain pending.



Anonymous & Confidential

Criminal Division Human Trafficking

The USAO is deeply committed to investigating and prosecuting those who engage in human trafficking. The USAO leads a task force consisting of federal, state, and local law enforcement, and many non-governmental organizations who work in this area. This coalition of federal prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations not only endeavors to increase prosecutions of these crimes, but also to educate the public about these offenses so that victims may be identified more readily and assisted in rebuilding their lives. The Human Trafficking Task Force Chair is AUSA Paul Pugliese.

In May of 2017, Udraka Roberts-Bey, age 26, of New Orleans, was convicted of conspiring to engage in sex trafficking of a minor. The case resulted from a coordinated federal, state, and local law enforcement operation involving representatives of the HTTF, who had identified the defendant's prostitution enterprise and successfully rescued the victim from a Baton Rouge hotel. During the defendant's guilty plea hearing, Roberts-Bey admitted that, in June 2016, he conspired with others to knowingly provide, maintain, and solicit a 15-year-old to engage in commercial sex acts. He specifically admitted to having arranged on multiple occasions for the minor victim to engage in commercial sex acts with individuals who offered to pay for the sex acts. He also admitted to transporting the minor victim from Baton Rouge to New Orleans and then back to Baton Rouge to make the minor victim available to engage in commercial sex acts. The case was investigated by the FBI, EBRSO, and LSP, with assistance from the East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office and U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Homeland Security Investigations. AUSA Paul Pugliese led the federal prosecution.



Criminal Division Child Exploitation

In February 2006, the United States Attorney General launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online sexual exploitation and abuse. In May 2011, Project Safe Childhood was expanded to encompass all federal crimes involving sexual exploitation of a minor, regardless of whether they involve the internet. The expanded initiative encompasses the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, the prosecution of unregistered sex offenders, and other crimes.

Our office is also fortunate to collaborate with numerous law enforcement agencies who work on these cases, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—Homeland Security Investigations, the FBI, the Louisiana Attorney General’s Cyber Crime Unit, numerous sheriffs’ offices across Louisiana, and law enforcement agencies in other states.

AUSA Cam T. Le served as the USAO’s Project Safe Childhood Coordinator for several years, and AUSA Jamie Flowers, Jr. transitioned into the role in late 2017.

Some of the highlights of our efforts to deter child exploitation this year include the following:

Anthony T. Kurtz, of Livingston, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 25 years in federal prison for distribution of child pornography. As the court noted at sentencing, Kurtz had previously been convicted of sexual assault and indecent assault in another state, and therefore a statutory sentencing enhancement applied in this case. AUSA Ryan Crosswell led this prosecution, working with DHS-HSI, LA-AG’s Cyber Crime Unit, and Livingston Parish Sheriff’s Office.

Jerry R. Brown, of Greensburg, Louisiana, was sentenced to serve 15 years in federal prison for receipt and attempted receipt of child pornography. AUSAs Cam T. Le and Calvin A. Leipold, III handled this prosecution, which was investigated by the FBI, DHS-HSI, the Cyber Crime Unit and the Criminal Division of the Louisiana Attorney General’s Office, and the St. Helena Parish Sheriff’s Office.



The Jimmy Davis Investigation, Prosecution, and Sentence

In May of 2017, Jimmy R. Davis of Zachary was sentenced to serve 30 years in federal prison following his convictions for distribution of child pornography and transferring obscene material to a minor.

This criminal case began when sheriffs' deputies in Ventura County, California, based on information received from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, executed a search warrant at a residence in California. Forensic examiners with the Southern California High Tech Task Force discovered that a 15-year-old child, Child Victim A, had received child pornography from an individual with the online profile "BoomBoomPow." Forensic examination of Child Victim A's electronic devices revealed that BoomBoomPow was twenty-seven (27) at the time, lived and worked in the Zachary/Baker area, had a distinctive anime-style tattoo, and frequented local Wal-Mart stores.

Baton Rouge FBI Agents began distributing photographs of the relevant tattoo to Zachary-area businesses, including Wal-Mart. After seeing the FBI photo, a Wal-Mart employee recognized the tattoo, informed the FBI, and discussed the situation with her co-workers. Days later, another employee saw a man (Davis) with a matching tattoo and contacted the Zachary Police Department. Zachary Police informed the FBI, and Davis was interviewed and arrested. Subsequent investigation revealed that Davis had taken pornographic images of a very young child, Child Victim B, while she was lying in a crib, before distributing them to Child Victim A.

The case was investigated by the Baton Rouge Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, and the Southern California High Tech Task Force, with substantial assistance from the Zachary Police Department. AUSA Ryan Crosswell handled the prosecution, along with AUSA Chris Dippel, who also serves as a Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division.

Federal Jury Convicts Child Pornographer on All Counts

In October, a federal jury convicted Christopher G. Waguespack, of Baton Rouge, following a three-day jury trial.

The evidence at trial demonstrated that Waguespack used his computer to search for, download, store, categorize, and share images of children, under twelve years old, engaged in explicit sexual activity. Waguespack then took actions to conceal his misconduct and evade detection by law enforcement by employing anti-forensic software, wiping software, and encryption on his computer.

This matter was a joint investigation between the USAO, the Louisiana Attorney General's Office – Cyber Crime Unit, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Homeland Security Investigations, with assistance from the BRPD and EBRSO. AUSAs Jamie A. Flowers, Jr. and Cam T. Le are prosecuting the case.

Waguespack is awaiting sentencing.

Defendant Convicted of Using Xbox to Sexually Exploit a Minor

Erik Vincent Clark, of Chamblee, Georgia, was sentenced to serve 25 years in federal prison after pleading guilty in May of 2017 to sexual exploitation of a minor.

Clark had previously been convicted of two counts of sexual battery in the State of Georgia, and was required to register as a sex offender. In September of 2015, however, Clark became acquainted with Child Victim A, a minor child resident of Livingston Parish, Louisiana, through online gaming and social media. In his online chats with Child Victim A, Clark falsely represented himself to be a 16-year-old boy. After a few days, Clark obtained Child Victim A's address and mailed new Xbox headphones to Child Victim A for his use. As the online chats progressed, Clark asked Child Victim A to engage in sexually explicit conduct via live video chat, and expressed his intent to travel to Louisiana from Georgia to meet Child Victim A.

AUSA Cam Le handled this prosecution with DHS-HSI, DHS-ICE, and the Louisiana Attorney General's Office, with assistance from the DeKalb County (Georgia) Police Department, the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office, and the Sex Offender Unit of the Georgia Department of Community Supervision.

Criminal Division

Sex Offender Registration Crimes

The USAO investigates and prosecutes violations of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (“SORNA”), which provides a comprehensive set of minimum standards for sex offender registration and notification across the United States. SORNA aims to close potential gaps and loopholes that existed under prior law, strengthen the nationwide network of registration, and ultimately make our communities safer.

In 2017, among several other successful prosecutions, the USAO prosecuted a high-profile SORNA case involving a fugitive sex offender who was on the Texas Department of Public Safety’s “Top Ten Most Wanted” list. In that case, Johnny June Mason, Jr., of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Houston, Texas, was convicted of failing to register and updating his registration as a sex offender.

Mason was convicted on May 5, 1990, of aggravated rape and aggravated crimes against nature in Orleans Parish District Court, State of Louisiana, and was sentenced to serve 20 years in prison. Because of this conviction, Mason is required by state and federal law to maintain a sex offender registration in his place of residence. After being released from prison in Louisiana, Mason moved to Houston.

In June 2016, Mason left his residence in Harris County, Texas, traveled in interstate commerce and established his residence in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he lived through May 16, 2017. That month, the Texas Department of Public Safety issued a warrant for Mason’s arrest for a parole violation, and in October 2016, a second warrant was issued for his failure to register as a sex offender in Harris County.



After an extensive investigation, the United States Marshals Service in Baton Rouge located Mason living in an empty apartment off Sharp Lane and arrested him. At the time of his arrest in Baton Rouge, Mason was on the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Top Ten Most Wanted Sex Offender’s List. AUSA Lyman E. Thornton III is handling the case with the U.S. Marshal’s Service.

Criminal Division Appellate Litigation

The USAO's Assistant United States Attorneys routinely handle appellate litigation before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. M. Patricia Jones serves as the Appellate Chief and, in that role, AUSA Jones personally handles several appeals each year and provides input to AUSAs on issues raised in their appeals.

In 2017, Assistant United States Attorneys from the USAO were involved in 30 new appeals. AUSAs filed 11 appellate briefs and handled 4 oral arguments.

In many of our pending appeals, the briefing is not yet complete or we have yet to receive rulings from the appellate court. However, the United States has prevailed in 20 of the 22 decisions that have been issued this calendar year.

Some of the highlights of the USAO's appellate advocacy include the following:



United States v. Jeffrey Perry

Jeffrey Perry was the leader of a violent cocaine trafficking organization that terrorized Baton Rouge for years. In September of 2014, Perry was convicted at trial. Among other crimes, Perry was convicted of two counts under Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c) – knowingly possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug conspiracy (which ordinarily carries a 5-year mandatory minimum penalty), and discharging a firearm during and in relation to a drug conspiracy (which ordinarily carries a 10-year mandatory minimum penalty).

Federal law imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years for a defendant's "second or subsequent conviction" under Section 924(c). The

district court declined to apply this enhanced penalty, however, reasoning that it could not determine which 924(c) conviction was first and which was “second,” and therefore that the court should err on the side of a lighter sentence.

The USAO appealed Perry’s sentence, arguing that the statute required that Perry be sentenced to a 25-year sentence for discharging a firearm during and in relation to a drug conspiracy. The Fifth Circuit agreed, and vacated the sentence with instructions to re-sentence the defendant and apply the required 25-year mandatory minimum sentence. Upon re-sentencing, the defendant was sentenced to life imprisonment plus 30 years.

This significant victory will help ensure that Perry remains in prison for the entire time that the statute proscribes, and the Fifth Circuit’s decision will be valuable to prosecutors across the circuit as they appropriately use charges under Section 924(c) as key tools in the fight against violent crime and violent drug traffickers.

United States v. Eric Messer

Mr. Messer pled guilty to wire fraud arising out of a scheme to defraud his employer. At sentencing, the district court imposed a sentencing enhancement based on the defendant’s abuse of a position of public or private trust, and also determined that a sentence above the advisory *United States Sentencing Guidelines* was warranted based on the criminal conduct at issue, the defendant’s repeated lies to his probation officers, and other factors. The defendant appealed his sentence. The USAO successfully briefed and argued the case before the Fifth Circuit, which affirmed the defendant’s sentence.

United States v. Carlos Linares

Mr. Linares operated a grocery store and licensed money service business in Baton Rouge through which he cashed more than \$2 million in fraudulently obtained United States Treasury checks in 2012 and 2013. He was convicted at trial of aiding and abetting the theft of government funds, failing to maintain an effective anti-money laundering program, and two counts of obstructing a proceeding before a federal agency. Mr. Linares appealed his convictions, and the USAO successfully briefed the case before the Fifth Circuit, which affirmed the defendant’s convictions on all four counts.

Civil Division Overview

The Civil Division is responsible for protecting the interests of the taxpayers by representing the interests of the federal government in civil matters and collecting debts owed to the federal government and crime victims.

John J. Gaupp serves as Chief of the Civil Division. Mr. Gaupp's predecessor, Catherine Maraist, departed the USAO in September 2017 and is now a partner with Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, L.L.P.

The Civil Division represents federal agencies and officials as plaintiffs in affirmative civil enforcement actions (commonly referred to as "ACE" actions) and as defendants when sued. In ACE cases, we typically file civil lawsuits on behalf of the federal government seeking money damages and penalties arising out of federal program fraud.

In defensive actions, we represent federal agencies and officials as defendants in civil matters typically involving personal injury, employment discrimination, and challenges to administrative agency decisions. Over the past year, we have successfully resolved numerous matters involving our agency partners.

The Civil Division also represents the federal government in collecting debts owed to the federal government and crime victims. Such matters include filing lawsuits, obtaining and enforcing restitution and asset forfeiture orders in both criminal and civil matters, representing the government in bankruptcy proceedings, mortgage foreclosures, and tax matters. Over the past year, the Civil Division has collected nearly \$2 million in asset forfeitures and provided more than \$5 million to crime victims.

Civil Division Highlights

Some of the highlights of the Civil Division's work in 2017 include the following:

Home Health Company to Pay \$1.7 Million and Enter into Corporate Integrity Agreement to Resolve Civil Fraud Complaint filed by United States

In July, Charter Home Health, a Baton Rouge-based healthcare company, agreed to settle a civil fraud complaint filed under the federal False Claims Act by paying the United States \$1.7 million and entering into a Corporate Integrity Agreement. The settlement resulted from allegations that Charter paid Veronica Green and others for patient referrals from 2006 through 2012, in violation of Medicare's Anti-Kickback provisions.

As part of the settlement, Charter agreed to enter into a Corporate Integrity Agreement (CIA). The CIA promotes compliance with the statutes, regulations, program requirements, and written directives of Medicare and all other federal health care programs, specifically dealing with, among other things, proper billing and submission of reimbursement claims by Charter.

The investigation leading to this settlement also resulted in the conviction of Veronica Green for Social Security benefits fraud. Green had fraudulently concealed her receipt of the Charter referral payments from the Social Security Administration in order to continue receiving Social Security disability income. As a result, Green received \$152,627 in social security benefits to which she otherwise would not have been eligible.

The USAO worked this case with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General. It was handled by former AUSA Catherine Maraist.

Court Dismisses Lawsuit Concerning Administration of Tax Credits and Community Block Grants

In September of 2017, the Civil Division sought and obtained the dismissal of a lawsuit filed by a group of real estate developers against the U.S.

Departments of Treasury and Housing and Urban Development. In the lawsuit, the developers challenged the process by which the Louisiana Housing Corporation administered tax credits and Community Development Block Grants on behalf of the federal government. AUSA Susan Amundson handled this matter.

National Voter Registration Act Litigation Successfully Resolved

Last year, our office, together with the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, successfully resolved a six-year-old civil action under the National Voter Registration Act against the State of Louisiana and various state agencies and officials. The lawsuit sought to ensure that the state and its agencies satisfied their obligations as voter registration agencies to assist those with disabilities. AUSA John Gaupp handled this matter.

Asset Recovery Unit Distributes Over \$5.5 Million to Crime Victims and Collects Nearly \$2 Million

Over the past year, the Civil Division's Asset Recovery Unit collected nearly \$2 million in asset forfeitures and distributed over \$5 million in restitution to crime victims. We utilized various means and enforcement mechanisms to ensure collection of these assets in a sustained effort to bring justice to perpetrators and their victims. We also shared more than \$600,000 with 14 different law enforcement agencies through the U.S. Department of Justice's equitable sharing program. AUSA Jay Thompson serves as Chief of the Civil Division's Asset Recovery Unit.



Personal Injury Actions Against USPS Successfully Resolved

Over the past year, the Civil Division has successfully resolved numerous federal personal injury actions filed against the U.S. Postal Service. During the course of such matters, through diligent investigative work, our office uncovered significant information to mitigate the extent of the claimed injuries. By doing so, we were able to reach resolutions of the matters that were consistent with the facts and applicable law. AUSA Susan Amundson handled these matters.

Court Dismissed Employment Action Filed by Postal Employee

In June of 2017, the Civil Division successfully sought and obtained summary judgment against an employee of the U.S. Postal Service who asserted a retaliatory hostile work environment claim against her employer. In granting our request for summary judgment, the court found that the alleged activity did not result in an abusive work environment, thus necessitating dismissal. AUSA Helina Dayries handled this matter.



FEMA

Court Dismissed Employment Action Filed by Ex-FEMA Employee

In August of 2017, the Civil Division successfully sought and obtained the dismissal of a lawsuit filed by a former FEMA employee who was terminated after violating government ethics rules. The former employee had instructed subordinates to sell dinners to help fund his niece's trip to Disney World, resulting in his suspension without pay, followed by his termination. AUSA Susan Amundson handled this matter.

Victim/Witness Assistance

The goal of the Middle District of Louisiana's Victim/Witness Program is to ensure that victims of federal crime are treated with fairness and respect. 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 involving the crime or 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 treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy.
- 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.

Notification Services

When a federal criminal case reaches the prosecution phase of the criminal justice process, victims receive notices concerning the status of the case. 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, including post judgment hearings.
- 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).
- The opportunity to present to the court a victim impact statement containing information regarding 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.

The Department of Justice and the USAO are committed to advocating, assisting and enforcing the rights of federal crime victims. We faithfully provide all of the services described above, and additional services as the circumstances of the case warrant.

If you have any questions about our Victim Witness Program, please contact:

Lisa Stewart
Victim Witness Coordinator
United States Attorney's Office
Middle District of Louisiana
Email: lisa.stewart3@usdoj.gov

Administrative Division

The Administrative Division works to support the mission of the United States Attorney's Office in all of its criminal and civil matters. The seven members of the USAO's administrative staff handle all of the office's budgeting, procurement, contracting, human resources, and other logistical needs and support.

The Administrative Division also provides automated litigation support (ALS) services to criminal and civil AUSAs, including assistance with scanning, litigation software, and technical trial assistance.

Notably, four of the Administrative Division's seven members have served honorably in the military, including service with the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

In the fall of 2017, our long-time Administrative Officer, Miriam Fontaine, retired. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica M.P. Thornhill—who handles a wide variety of criminal investigations and prosecutions—is serving as our Acting Administrative Officer until a permanent replacement can be found.

Law Enforcement Coordination

The USAO's Law Enforcement Coordinator (LEC), Holly Sheets, supports the mission of the USAO, serves as the USAO's liaison to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, and promotes coordination and cooperation among those agencies.

The LEC's major areas of focus are:

- *Training.* Providing high quality training courses and opportunities for law enforcement officers and agents throughout the District, especially related to program areas and issues relevant to specific DOJ or USAO priorities. In 2017, the LEC sponsored 8 different training courses for law enforcement in the District, reaching officers from all across the state.
- *Conferences and Events.* Coordinating special events hosted by the USAO and participating in law enforcement meetings, conferences, and special events hosted by other agencies.
- *Information Sharing.* Providing information about USAO initiatives to state and local law enforcement agencies and facilitating collaboration of such initiatives.
- *Grants.* Identifying funding opportunities for law enforcement initiatives and distributing information regarding such opportunities to the appropriate state and local agencies.

If you are a member of law enforcement and would like information on how the USAO can be of assistance to your agency, please contact Holly Sheets at (225) 336-8887.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

We are fortunate to work with numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies that share our goal of making our community safer and stronger. In 2017, our Assistant United States Attorneys worked closely on the investigations and prosecutions highlighted in this report with all of the following agencies, among others:



Community Outreach

Many USAO employees volunteer for community outreach events. Some devote many hours to such events. Such outreach is critical to our mission, as it helps us better understand the needs of the communities we serve and provides us the opportunity to strengthen relationships between our office and other organizations who share our goal of a safer, stronger community.

Our staff are encouraged to participate in community outreach at every opportunity. They eagerly do so, and USAO staff can be found pitching in, virtually every week, in a wide variety of ways—serving lunch to the homeless, providing holiday gifts to children in need, assisting at numerous local schools, etc.

Highlights of the USAO’s community outreach efforts in 2017 include:

Louisiana Law Enforcement for Gun Safety (LLEGS) presentations



This project is a statewide public health and safety initiative led by law enforcement personnel. Its mission is to promote awareness and accident prevention in an effort to reduce the risks of childhood injuries and deaths due to accidental gunfire. To date, the project has taught more than 42,000 children and distributed more than 300 gunlocks to adults who own unsecured firearms. In 2017, the USAO led presentations to approximately 1,000 school-aged children in the District.

Holiday Star Project

For the past 11 years, the USAO has participated in the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation’s “Holiday Star Project,” which collects clothing and gifts for underprivileged children in the Baton Rouge area. The Baton Rouge Bar Foundation partners with several local agencies that serve the children who receive the gifts, including Children’s Hospital, Family Services of Greater Baton Rouge, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, HAART, Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired and many more. The project usually reaches more than 900 children each year. USAO staff traditionally “adopt” five children and purchase, wrap, and deliver much-needed clothing and gifts to children.

St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen. Each month, USAO staff volunteer to serve lunch to the homeless at a local soup kitchen.

Baton Rouge Multi-Cultural Advisory Council (MCAC). The MCAC Council was created in 2017 and is designed to build partnerships, promote understanding, and enhance dialogue among the Baton Rouge community, the FBI, and the USAO. Council members consist of community leaders from a variety of cultural backgrounds and faiths. The MCAC meets quarterly to discuss issues, questions, and concerns of the communities represented.

ICARE. The ICARE Program provides prevention education in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and violence, to all students and families within the Baton Rouge schools and community. Our Community Outreach Coordinator is an ICARE Advisory Council member. Through ICARE, our office participates in many events throughout the year teaching drug and violence prevention.

Law Enforcement Torch Run. Each year, the District joins federal, state and local law enforcement in the Torch Run to benefit the Special Olympics of Louisiana. The event shows appreciation to local law enforcement, while also raising awareness and funds for individuals with intellectual

disabilities. The 5K Walk/Run unites the community by bringing together law enforcement personnel and citizens all working towards the same goal of acceptance and inclusion.

OLOL Blood Drive. The USAO partners quarterly with the Our Lady of the Lake Blood Bank to provide all personnel of the Russell B. Long Federal Building an opportunity to donate blood and help replenish OLOL's area blood supply.

Reading Across America. Reading Across America is a nationally-recognized reading celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday. Thousands of schools, libraries, and community centers participate annually. Locally, our office reads to classrooms at Freeman-Matthews Head Start.

If you represent a community organization in our district and are interested in learning whether the USAO might be able to assist you with an upcoming event—providing a guest speaker, participating in a roundtable discussion, etc.—please do not hesitate to contact our Community Outreach Coordinator, Holly Sheets, at (225) 336-8887.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following law student interns who served in our office from the summer of 2016 through the end of 2017.

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Amber Cook

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Emma Moppert

These talented interns contributed significantly to many of the cases and initiatives discussed in this report. We wish our interns the best of luck as their studies and careers continue.



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This annual report is intended solely to highlight some of the 2017 casework of the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana, for educational purposes. Nothing in this report is intended to represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice or the United States Attorney's Office. This annual report has no regulatory effect and does not confer any rights or remedies.