



U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

Inaugural Newsletter

Message from U.S. Attorney Ariana Fajardo Orshan



The debut issue!

Welcome to the first issue of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida (USAO-SDFL) newsletter. Our hope is that you find the newsletter informative and helpful as we keep in closer touch with you throughout the year.

A little more than a year ago, I had the incredible honor of becoming the first woman to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the new U.S. Attorney for the SDFL. Since that time, our Office has welcomed more than forty new employees who are united in our unwavering commitment to the pursuit of justice. We continue to work tirelessly, alongside our federal, state and local law enforcement partners to reduce violent crime, protect our national security, combat public corruption, and defend the civil rights of all Americans. Our goal is to help curb addiction and overdose deaths by prosecuting those who feed the opioid epidemic. We continue to take illegal firearms off of our streets and out of the hands of dangerous mem-

bers of our community. We are directly engaged with our diverse community, talking with our local residents in order to prevent American seniors from falling victim to fraud schemes, inspiring our youth to denounce violence, and providing returning citizens with the resources they need to succeed. We are targeting child abusers, sex traffickers and individuals who endanger the lives of others as alien smugglers or unauthorized charter boat operators. In addition, we are able to combat international money laundering schemes with the long-arm of the American justice system.

Our priority is to enforce federal laws. Our hope is that by doing so, we can protect our great nation and enhance the quality of life of our families, friends and neighbors.

I am incredibly proud of the important work that the USAO-SDFL does, every day, for our safety and security.

If there is anything we can do, to better serve you, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Ariana

EXECUTIVE DIVISION

Juan Antonio "Tony" Gonzalez, First Assistant U.S. Attorney

Michelle Alvarez, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney

Harry Wallace, Counselor to the U.S. Attorney



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Money Laundering:

The USAO-SDFL recently formed a **Money Laundering Section** to investigate and prosecute money laundering associated with domestic and international financial crimes. The Money Laundering Section has a broad mandate to investigate the use of the South Florida banking industry and real estate markets to launder illicit proceeds. Recent money laundering investigations include: Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and kleptocracy, real estate and financial services fraud, cyber and virtual currency cases, trade based money laundering, Bank Secrecy Act violations, and business email compromise cases. The success of these investigations relies heavily on the close working relationship between money laundering prosecutors and specialized money laundering and corruption units at Homeland Security Investigations, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation and our Department of Justice colleagues in the FCPA section and Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (MLARS).

Protecting American Seniors:

In June of this year, Attorney General William P. Barr announced the establishment of the **Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force**, an effort designed to bring together joint law enforcement resources and expertise to investigate and prosecute international fraud schemes that disproportionately target American seniors. The USAO-SDFL was honored to be one of six Districts selected by the Attorney General to participate in this initiative. The Strike Force will seek to identify those responsible for foreign fraud schemes affecting American seniors, as well as those individuals and entities facilitating such schemes. These include telemarketing, mass-mailing, and tech-support fraud schemes. Our goal is to collectively target, investigate, and prosecute criminals abroad who prey on members of our South Florida community. The Strike Force will collaborate with the Federal Trade Commission and industry partners, who have pledged to engage with the Department of Justice to help end the scourge of elder fraud. It will further benefit from the help of Elder Justice Coordinators, including our own Assistant U.S. Attorney Lois Foster-Steers. Additional resources can be found at www.justice.gov/elderjustice/eji-brochures.

United to Combat Human Trafficking:

In August of this year, U. S. Attorney Fajardo Orshan and the **Federal South Florida Human Trafficking Task Force** hosted an event at Johnson & Wales University in North Miami to raise public awareness about the **National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888)**. The National Human Trafficking Hotline connects victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and support. The National Hotline also receives tips about potential situations of sex and labor trafficking and facilitates reporting that information to the Federal South Florida Human Trafficking Task Force in certain cases. Through information received by the National Hotline, law enforcement authorities can connect investigations that span jurisdictions across the country.

The Federal South Florida Human Trafficking Task Force, led by the USAO-SDFL, Homeland Security Investigations, Miami-Dade Police Department, and International Rescue Committee, works to increase public awareness, identify victims, ensure that survivors receive assistance, and prosecute traffickers. The Task Force is composed of federal agencies including, the FBI (specifically, its Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force), U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, and U.S. Department of Labor. Several other state and local law enforcement entities in South Florida are supportive task force members. Additionally, the Task Force collaborates with non-law enforcement entities, including the Florida Department of Children and Families, service providers, victim advocates, faith-based organizations, academic representatives and community members.

To learn more about the National Resource Hotline visit www.humantraffickinghotline.org.

To learn more about the Department of Justice's efforts to combat human trafficking visit www.justice.gov/humantrafficking.

Targeting Health Care Fraud and Thwarting the Opioid Epidemic:

The USAO-SDFL continues to partner with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to **target fraud and other criminal practices in the substance abuse treatment and medical industries**, including: money laundering; billing for treatment and laboratory testing not actually provided and not medically necessary; submission of claims that were solicited through the payment of kickbacks and bribes to patients; and the illegal distribution of opioids. We are aggressively targeting schemes that bill Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE and private insurance companies for medically unnecessary prescription drugs and compounded medications that often are never purchased and/or distributed to beneficiaries. We are also prosecuting individuals who directly contribute to the opioid epidemic, with a focus on medical professionals involved in the unlawful distribution of opioids and other prescription narcotics. Our goal is to save lives and prevent opioid-related overdose deaths.

Project Safe Neighborhoods:

The centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction strategy is **Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)**, a nationwide initiative that brings together federal, state and tribal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and community leaders to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in a community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. In order to amplify the impact of PSN, the USAO-SDFL spearheaded and continues to support the locally-based Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP). The VRP uses a holistic, community-based approach to violence reduction that focuses on enforcement, prevention, and the successful reentry of returning citizens into South Florida neighborhoods.

To learn more about the PSN initiative visit <https://www.justice.gov/psn>.

To learn more about the VRP visit <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdfl/violence-reduction-partnerships>.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Inspiring our Youth - DEFY Camp:

The USAO-SDFL VRP endeavors to create safer communities for our residents and our youth, by directly addressing gang and violent crime problems. The District's **Drug Education for Youth (DEFY)/VRP Leadership Camp** promotes this goal through a week-long, over-night educational and physical fitness curriculum that targets at-risk youth, ages 9-12, from high-crime, impoverished neighborhoods. This past July, Nova Southeastern University hosted the intensive leadership camp on their campus in Fort Lauderdale. More than 50 youth, from areas including, Homestead, Overtown, Goulds, Miami Gardens, Pompano and Lake Worth attended the camp. Since 2004, the DEFY Camp has helped students to defy the odds by providing more than 800 at-risk kids with the knowledge and tools they need to make the right choices, maintain self-confidence, lead a healthy lifestyle, and to resist drugs, gangs, bullying and violent behavior.



AUSA ALUMNI WHO RECENTLY TOOK THE BENCH



ALTMAN

In April of this year, former AUSA **Roy Altman** was confirmed as a U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida. Judge Altman currently sits in Fort Lauderdale.



LAGOA

In January of this year, former AUSA **Barbara Lagoa** became the first Hispanic women and the first Cuban American woman appointed to serve on the Florida Supreme Court.



MAYNARD

In June 2017, former AUSA **Shaniek M. Maynard** was appointed as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Fort Pierce.



BECERRA

In January of this year, former AUSA **Jacqueline Becerra** was appointed as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Miami.



LOUIS

In February 2018, former AUSA **Lauren F. Louis** was appointed as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Miami.



REID

In January of this year, former AUSA **Lisette M. Reid** was appointed as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Miami.



BELL

In March 2018, former AUSA **Carolyn Bell** was named to the Palm Beach County Circuit Court bench.



LUCK

In January of this year, former AUSA **Robert J. Luck** was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court.



WATSON

In January of this year, former AUSA **Robert Watson** was appointed to the Miami-Dade County Court.

USAO-SDFL LEADERSHIP

Appellate Division—
Emily Smachetti
Asset Forfeiture—
Eloisa Fernandez
Civil Division—
Wendy Jacobus
Criminal Division—
Joan Silverstein
Economic & Environmental
Crimes—Luis Perez

Major Crimes—
Daniel Bernstein
Money Laundering—
Peter Forand
International Narcotics &
Money Laundering—
Lynn Kirkpatrick
Public Corruption & Civil
Rights—Robert Senior
National Security—
Karen Gilbert

Special Counsel to the U.S.
Attorney, Community Affairs—
Miesha Darrough
Special Counsel to the U.S.
Attorney, Public Information
Officer—Sarah Schall
Special Prosecutions—
Barbara Martinez
Fort Lauderdale —Tom Mulvihill
FTL Narcotics & Violent Crimes—
Francis Viamontes

FTL Financial Crimes—
Bertha Mitrani
FTL Organized Crime & Com-
plex Cases—Josie Vaglianti
West Palm Beach—
Edward Nucci
WPB Financial Crimes—
Adrienne Rabinowitz
WPB Narcotics & Violent
Crimes—Ellen Cohen
Fort Pierce—Stephen Carlton