



*** STREET BEAT ***

NEWSLETTER OF THE MARION COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

SPRING 2010

HAMILTON AVENUE MURDERERS CONVICTED

Justice was served in December for one of Indianapolis' most horrific crimes: the Marion County Prosecutor's Office successfully convicted two men accused of killing seven family members, including three young children ages 5, 8 and 11, in their own beds.

On June 2, 2006, Desmond Turner and James Stewart committed the most vicious crime that the City of Indianapolis has ever witnessed. The two men entered the home of the Valdez/Covarrubius family

"Desmond Turner and James Stewart will spend the rest of their lives behind bars paying for what they did to the victims and their families," said Prosecutor Carl Brizzi. "Our office worked extremely hard to make sure that justice was served, and we just pray that this gives the victim's family some kind of peace."

Prosecutor Carl Brizzi, along with Deputy Prosecutors Janna Skelton and Jennifer Haley, tried both of these monumental cases. Prosecutors were able to prove their



at 560 N. Hamilton Ave. and began to rob them at gunpoint. When another family member arrived and interrupted their plan, Turner and Stewart opened fire. They are now convicted of killing all seven family members. Turner was sentenced to life in prison without parole (LWOP), and Stewart was sentenced to 425 years in prison.

case against Turner in the first of two trials leading to the maximum LWOP sentence for Desmond Turner.

"This case was solved old-school, through significant circumstantial evidence," said Prosecutor Brizzi. "We had to take the death

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A TRUE HERO: JASON FISHBURN

On July 10, 2008 IMPD Officer Jason Fishburn was in pursuit of Brian Reese in connection to a murder, when Reese allegedly shot Officer Fishburn twice as he chased the suspect on foot. Officer Fishburn suffered a direct gunshot wound to the head.

Fishburn was rushed to Wishard Hospital, and began a long, painful road to recovery.

On November 10, 2009, Reese was found guilty of attempted murder.

Officer Fishburn continues to recover from the trauma of the shooting, but he has returned to work with the IMPD in a desk position. Please join the Prosecutor's Office in acknowledging Officer Fishburn as a true hero. We thank him, for his service to the citizens of Indianapolis.

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COMMUNITY PROSECUTION UPDATES

Director of Outreach & Grants

The Marion County Prosecutor's Office has created a new position to more effectively seek and coordinate grant-funded projects in collaboration with the community at large. Diane Hannell was asked to take this position in September 2009 and now serves as the Director of Outreach and Grants. Diane was formerly the Administrator of Community Prosecution Division and was a member of the Division since 1996. True to her Community Prosecution ties, she will look for ways to address community concerns and link the office with the community, law enforcement and other agencies. If you would like to contact Diane please call her at 317-327-2646 or dhannell@indy.gov.

Beech Grove & Lawrence

The Beech Grove Police Department recently created an online informational newsletter. The Chief of Police and Deputy Chief produced the newsletter to keep citizens informed about community events, police activities and crime watch initiatives. BGDPD has a new website that allows citizens to log in and access "live" police activity in their city. The Lawrence Police Department started focusing on mobile home communities earlier in the year. Numerous citations were made in one specific trailer park through an inter-agency sweep. As a result, the area has been more compliant with agency regulations, code enforcement officers and the police department. The mobile home community sweep is deterring other communities from violating regulations and forcing them to clean up their properties.

Gangs

Chief Gang Prosecutor Stephen Parnell is training school personnel to recognize and report gang contacts pursuant to a federal grant. In conjunction with investigators assigned to the Grand Jury Division, he is also conducting a long-term gang investigation.

Southeast District

Southeast District welcomes a new Prosecutor, Meagan Dial. Meagan comes from Court 9 and worked in the juvenile division prior to that. Another change on the District is that Paralegal, Leah Spencer, is now Leah Weidner. The district has been dealing with more quality of life crimes this year such as graffiti and surprisingly, shopping carts. Due to economic times many of the local stores do not have the

time or the funds to allow employees to collect the shopping carts that are taken from the parking lots. Meagan and Leah collaborated with IMPD and took several days throughout the summer to collect carts and return them to their proper storeowners. The district collected 38 carts all together. Several TAG (Taking Away Graffiti) projects were completed this year. Community Prosecution continues to screen cases each day and keeps the cases that are most challenging to Southeast District neighborhoods.

Community Court

The Community Prosecution team conducted three Red Zone Diversion programs through Community Court this fall with a total of 54 defendants participating. The program targeted men charged with patronizing a prostitute and resulted in the offenders receiving STD testing, performing community service work, and participating in a panel with community members discussing the negative impact that prostitution has on neighborhoods.

Community Court financed detox and residential treatment for several habitual alcoholics as part of plea agreements. Several chronic offenders have been sober for many months now.

Community Court continues to pay back communities with defendants performing over 8,000 hours of community service

Faith Based

Keeping children safe at school bus stops was a top priority in 2009 for Marion County Prosecutor's Faith Based Coordinator Kevin Tichenor. In response to increasing concern about children's safety as they waited for their bus, Kevin coordinated the Crosswalk program. Sponsored by the Marion County Prosecutor's Office, Indiana Project Safe Neighborhoods and area churches, the program assigns volunteers to designated bus stops to protect children in the mornings. Kevin is looking for more volunteers who must pass a criminal background check. If you would like to learn more about Crosswalk, please contact Kevin at (317) 327-5641 or ktichenor@indy.gov.

East District

IMPD East District has had several changes in the last few months. We now have a new Commander, Chad Knecht, as well as a new Community Prosecutor, Dirk Cushing.

IMPD East District is working with apartment complexes to battle specific issues on their properties. Officers are working with management to better improve the trespass list on these properties. Director Cory Ladipo continues to coordinate the EKG (Educating Kids about Gun violence Presentations) Program. East District's Cory Ladipo and Northwest District's Heather Kistler are working together to update and improve the EKG Program with the assistance of Wishard Medical staff, IMPD and AIT in Bloomington.

Southwest District

Southwest District Community Prosecution Division is focusing on truancy and juvenile burglars. In collaboration with many agencies as well as a Juvenile Magistrate, we are working towards increased accountability for school attendance. In December, we addressed junior high school students in a presentation geared towards encouraging attendance and working towards college. Students were handpicked by their teachers for their outstanding potential, but lack of home guidance. Through an interactive presentation, we were able to introduce them to many facets of the juvenile justice system as well as engage them in conversation regarding their futures. We are also working on increasing truancy (and curfew) sweeps, including holding more parents accountable for their child's attendance and whereabouts. These sweeps focus not only on repeat offenders, but also on those juveniles who are on probation for burglary and related offenses. Our goal is to deter juveniles from committing future crimes, both as minors and adults.

Latino Services

Latino Services Director, Maria Wildridge, provided an essential service to the family of the victims of the Hamilton Street murders during the trials of the men accused of the worst mass murder in Indianapolis history. Each day, the Director interpreted witness testimony from English into Spanish and broadcast her interpretation to several family members in the courtroom who were listening through headphones. Several members of the victims' family did not speak English and would not have been able to understand the proceedings of the trial if Maria had not been available as an interpreter. She also provided emotional support to the family and helped the prosecution team communicate with them. Both men were convicted in separate

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICES

Can an ordinary person's opinion and insight make a difference? Can a service provider play a positive role in the criminal justice system? Yes! As a volunteer for a Community Impact Panel (CIP), or Defendant Accountability Classes (DAC), a citizen can make a huge difference in gaining control over crime in their community. The Marion County Prosecutor's Office is looking for volunteers who are ready to take that challenge.

If you would like to serve as a volunteer for the Community Impact Panels or would like to be a presenter at Defendant Accountability Classes please contact Mark Taxter at 327-2703 or mtaxter@indygov.org.



TEENAGE SEXTING: DANGEROUS AND ILLEGAL

One of the most dangerous trends that our community is dealing with is the issue of "sexting" among our youth.

"Sexting" is the sending of explicit messages electronically via email, text message or social media platforms like Facebook or MySpace. An increasing problem in Marion County and across the country is teenagers sending pictures or videos of themselves with little or no clothing.

Once photos like these are digitally transmitted there is no stopping them from being spread across an entire school or the Internet. If the person in the photo is under 18 years of age, there is the possibility of child pornography charges.

"It's important for our teens to understand the consequences of their actions in regards



to sexting," said Prosecutor Carl Brizzi. "Taking or distributing explicit photos of a minor can lead to serious child pornography charges. This is a scary trend that we must work hard to stop."

The Marion County Prosecutor's Office urges all parents to monitor your children's use of technology. Please contact Steve Parnell at the MCPO for more information on how to protect your children from this issue. He may be reached at (317) 327-5860.

"If you find an explicit photo on your child's phone it's important to confiscate the phone immediately," said Prosecutor Brizzi. "It's also important to not delete the photo or copy it to another device. It's important to act fast in order to keep the photo from spreading any further. Contact your local police department for what to do next."

COMMUNITY PROSECUTION UPDATES *(cont. from page 2)*

trials. Desmond Turner was sentenced to life in prison without parole, and James Stewart was sentenced to 425 years in prison.

North District

North District welcomes Paralegal Melanie Kerr who joined our division in October 2009. Melanie is a seven-year veteran of MCPO with previous experience in felony screening, domestic violence, and strategic narcotics and firearms divisions. Graffiti eradication remains a focus for the North District team. Please contact Melanie at 327-6115 or Mkerr@indy.gov to report new graffiti. MCPO and IMPD North continue to foster relationships with the many area apartment complexes by having regular meetings. At the meetings

we discuss common problems and offer crime prevention tips to the apartment managers. We are also expanding the Court Watch program to give citizens a voice about the crimes that are affecting their neighborhoods. North District is seeking volunteers to attend court and ensure that the judges see the impact that criminals are having within the community.

Northwest District

Drew Wignall and Heather Kistler, the Northwest District Community Prosecutor and Coordinator, have been very busy this past year. In order to combat graffiti they held 10 Take Away Graffiti (TAG) projects, and with the help of IMPD and the Probation Department they covered well over 100

graffiti locations. Drew has been busy screening cases with the Northwest District Detectives, especially residential burglaries. The Commander of the district formed a specialized burglary unit and mandated that fingerprints and photographs be taken at every burglary scene. These two acts led to much stronger investigations and, as a result, more burglary cases that Drew could file criminal charges on. Drew and Heather also worked with both Pike Township and Indianapolis Public Schools on several truancy sweeps during the year. Drew and Heather also attend neighborhood and business association meetings each month, to share information on cases of interest and work with IMPD and the residents on crime prevention strategies.

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penalty off the table even though this case, in my opinion, definitely called for that level of punishment for Desmond Turner. In the end our city is a safer place without these two men on the streets."

This tragic case garnered major attention from everyone in the community, and rightfully so. The community has rallied around the need for safety in our streets and inside our own homes. The Hamilton Avenue slayings are a blunt and brutal reminder of our need as a society to work together in the fight against crime and putting serious violent felons behind bars.

It's believed that several members of the Hamilton Avenue neighborhood could possibly have prevented the killings before they took place. Fortunately several young citizens were brave enough to step forward and testify in the trial in order to make sure that justice would be served. Our city needs more people to step forward in cases both large and small when a crime is witnessed.



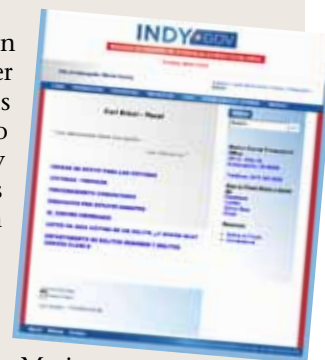
Prosecutor Carl Brizzi

If you are a witness to crime in your community, please contact Crime Stoppers of Central Indiana at crimestoppers.org or call 317-262-TIPS or 800-92-ALERT. You may remain anonymous and possibly receive a cash reward if your tip leads to a felony arrest.

MCPO LAUNCHES SPANISH VERSION OF WEBSITE

Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi is pleased to announce the newest feature of the MCPO website. The MCPO site now features a Spanish language section that includes full color brochures in PDF format. The Spanish speaking community will now have easier access to information by our office and contact information for Spanish speaking Prosecutor's staff.

"We've been striving to better meet the needs of the Latino community and believe this new addition to our website will be of great benefit," said Latino Services Director Maria Wildridge.



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