



SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

Summit County Prosecutor

Newsletter

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Message from the Prosecutor



Prosecutor
Sherri Bevan Walsh

The recent case of a Hudson middle-school teacher who confessed to showing a student pornography brought to the forefront for many of us how truly unprepared we are for this type of situation.

As parents, teachers, administrators and members of the community, we have all tried to prepare ourselves for this type of scenario. From a parent's point of view, the concern centers around our child: What if this happened to my child? Would I know? Would they tell me? How will the school and community respond? Teachers and administrators are shocked that the teacher may have done something inexcusable and abhorrent. Is the student making it up? What do we need to do to ensure the student and the teacher are treated fairly? How do we communicate with students and parents until the police investigation can be completed to determine whether the individual will be charged?

There are many factors that go into each unique situation when it comes to child predators. This edition of the newsletter will focus specifically on cases related to school personnel. Many of these tips, however, will help parents in any situation.

We are not helpless to prevent child sexual abuse. It doesn't matter if you are a parent, teacher, pastor, friend, or general member of the community - we can all work together to prevent child sexual abuse.

Get informed. I will review as much as I can in this space and will continue to look for opportunities to write additional information on this topic.

Did You Know?

- One in ten males and one in five females are sexually abused before they become adults;
- Children rarely lie about being sexually abused;
- Most sexual predators are male;
- Children often blame themselves for the abuse, and the predator usually tells them no one will believe them; and
- Most victims know their perpetrators; 29% are relatives and only 11% are strangers.

Prosecutor Walsh's Warning Tips

- Be aware of sudden changes in behavior. Is your child reluctant about going to school or day care, undressing in front of others, or refusing to participate in activities?
- Are they walking oddly, having pain when they go to the bathroom, or crying when they go? Pay attention to big changes - these are usually warning signs of something being wrong.
- Are they suddenly afraid of strangers? Or a single individual who they used to be friendly with? Are they quieter, more subdued? Again, check into it.
- Is your child suddenly more aware of sex? Using sexually explicit words and phrases? Are they displaying adult-like behaviors such as being flirty, seductive and just seeming "older." Kids do not learn these behaviors unless they are taught. This is a big red flag.
- Sexually abused children often have nightmares. Is your child having trouble sleeping? They may want to sleep with you again and have you check all the locks and doors. Again, are these sudden changes?

Get to know your child's teachers, principal, church personnel and anyone who has contact with your child. It is always better to have more than one person supervising one-on-one activities with your child. Ultimately, watch and listen and create a positive dynamic where they know they can tell you anything. **My mother used to tell me, "There is nothing you could ever do or tell me that would make me not love you." That is an important message for children to know.**

Tough Prosecution

David Porter, School Custodian, Victims 12 & 15 year olds.

Sentenced to 22 years in prison and labeled a sex offender.

Stephen Majercik, Teacher, Victims 12 & 14 years old;

Sentenced to 10 years and labeled a sex offender.

Mishelle Robinson, Private Cheerleading coach, Victim 15 years old;

Sentenced to four years in prison and labeled a sex offender.

Heather Boettner, School Bus Driver, Victims 15 & 16;

Sentenced to five years in prison and labeled a sex offender.

Renee Smith, Special Ed Teacher, Victims 17 & 19;

Sentenced to two years in prison and labeled a sex offender.

Claude Brown, Coach, Victim 16;

Sentenced to two years in prison and labeled a sex offender.

Questions? E-mail Laurie Cramer
cramer@prosecutor.summitoh.net

For more information, go to our website
www.co.summit.oh.us/prosecutor

Top Cop



Det. Shannon Davis,
Barberton Police Department

Nominated by: Assistant Prosecutor Jennie Shuki

Det. Davis has handled numerous child sexual abuse cases for the Prosecutor's office. She gives 100% on each case she investigates, often going the extra mile to interview an elusive witness or prepare her victim for a third-party consent call leading to a confession. In doing so, she builds strong cases resulting in successful prosecutions of sex offenders at trial.

Most importantly, in cases involving child sexual abuse victims, Det. Davis has the ability to build a solid, trusting rapport with children, many of whom are under the age of 13. In one case that stands out, Det. Davis helped in the investigation of a man who sexually abused his 12-year-old godchild for years. This victim was so fearful and overwhelmed by the court process that she could not even make eye contact with the prosecutor during meetings. With the help of Det. Davis, whom the child trusted and admired, Prosecutor Shuki was able to build a rapport with this victim and prepare her for difficult testimony at trial. The defendant in that case pled the day of trial and was sentenced to an indefinite term of 10 years to life in prison. Moreover, five years later, Det. Davis remains in contact with this victim and her family. That is true dedication.

Thank you, Top Cop!

GUILTY!!!!



Congratulations to Assistant Prosecutors **Beth Aronson, Jay Cole, John Green, Tom Kroll, Brian LoPrinzi (2), John Mascolo, Kevin Mayer (2), Greg Peacock, Angela Poth-Wypasek, Justin Richard, Mike Rickett (2), Brian Stano, Margaret Tomaro (2), and Mike Tripi**, who obtained guilty verdicts in trials during the month of February!

GREAT JOB, PROSECUTORS!

MEET ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR FELICIA EASTER

Position: Assistant Prosecuting Attorney,
Chair, Community Relations Committee

Hire date: 3/12/01

Hometown: Akron, Ohio

Law degree: Ohio State University, 2000



Background: I was born in Philadelphia, PA, and moved to Akron, Ohio at the age of three. I graduated from Buchtel High school in 1992, and in 1996, graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in Criminology. I took a year off and then attended law school at Ohio State University, graduating in 2000. I have one son, Marques Easter. He attends the University of Cincinnati as a second year sophomore.

Little known fact: I was born on the sidewalk. My mother was on her way to the bank when she went into labor. She was seven months pregnant. I was named after the lady who came across the street to help my mother until police arrived. The incident made the papers in Philadelphia, and the bank stated that had my mother delivered in the bank, they would have paid all her medical expenses. Felicia means "happy" in Spanish, and my last name is Easter — so, Happy Easter.

Most memorable case: Hersie Wesson, death penalty case. This defendant stabbed a husband and wife in their home. He killed the husband and tried to kill the wife, but she played dead. This case was memorable because of the heinous nature of the crimes the defendant committed. Also, during the entire trial, the defendant maintained his defiant and unremorseful attitude and continued to blame the victim. The defendant was found guilty on all counts and sentenced to death.

THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!



GROOMING is something that child predators do to gain a child and family's trust. It is confusing because it is supposed to make it more difficult to catch on to their real motives. Some of the grooming techniques used by school personnel in cases we have prosecuted included:

- Befriending a single mother, telling her he would watch her child.
- Giving gifts, such as money, cell phone, dinner, as "rewards for achievements at school."
- Giving alcohol, marijuana and showing pornography.
- Creating alone time with victim, such as a tutor, after school "friend" or other "mentor."
- Providing rides to and from school or after school activities.
- Talking about sex to desensitize victim to think conversations about sex with adults who are not their parents is normal. It's NOT!