

THE PROSECUTOR'S PROGRESS

AN UPDATE FROM THE VIRGINIA BEACH COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



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A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY



Virginia Beach consistently has the highest number of DUIs in Virginia. You may recall that in July 2014, my office began prosecuting all DUIs in General District Court. My dedication to prosecuting DUIs continues. In fact, beginning in January, my office will have an entire prosecution team devoted to DUI prosecutions. This will allow the attorneys on that team to develop expert knowledge on the intricacies of DUI laws. They will go to court every day to ensure that DUI

offenders are brought to justice.

With the holidays approaching, I'd like to take a moment to remind everyone about the dangers of impaired driving. It only takes the slightest bit of impairment from alcohol or drugs to take a life. Impaired driving is 100 % preventable with a little bit of forethought. Please ensure that you celebrate the holidays safely by arranging for a sober ride home. Also, be mindful of the heightened risk of other impaired drivers on the road.

I wish each of you and your loved ones a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,
Colin Stolle

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Message from the Commonwealth's Attorney: Changes in DUI Prosecution*
- *New App Alert: Wickr*
- *Featured Cases of the Quarter*
- *Consumer Corner: Holiday Shopping Safety Tips*

New App Alert: Wickr

Parents, you might recall in the Spring newsletter I mentioned that my office would continue to update our list of social media apps as new apps are developed and brought to the attention of law enforcement. Wickr allows users to exchange end-to-end encrypted and self-destructing messages, including photos, videos, and file attachments. Wickr features a file shredder which removes the messages stored on the recipient's device. Parents should be aware of the fact that teens may use this app to hide and send inappropriate text or photo messages.



FEATURED CASES OF THE QUARTER



Commonwealth v. Benjamin Madonia

Charges: Rape

Sentence: Life in prison

Facts: On May 29, 1987, Madonia and the victim were both at the ocean front area of Virginia Beach. The victim left her waitressing job and met some friends at a local bar. When she left around midnight, Madonia approached her and offered her a ride home. As soon as she entered Madonia's car, she noticed that the passenger door had been modified. There was no interior door handle. Madonia drove her to a dark parking lot and began hitting and choking her, then sexually assaulted her. DNA testing was not available at the time, but in 2014, evidence was resubmitted to the state lab and Madonia was linked to the crime through DNA evidence.

Commonwealth v. Justin Cornell

Charge: Second Degree Murder

Sentence: 40 Years



Facts: Between May 7 and May 31, 2015, Cornell killed Brianna Armstrong, a co-worker with whom he was in a romantic relationship. Armstrong was last seen on May 7; she went to Cornell's apartment that night. When she did not come home, her husband filed a missing persons report and a search ensued. On May 14, her car was found in a shopping center near Cornell's apartment. Police found Armstrong's clothing at Cornell's apartment. There were knives and swords all over the home, and there was a large stain on the carpet. Receipts for cleaning supplies and a carpet cleaner were later recovered from his apartment. On May 31, Armstrong's remains were found at the Great Dismal Swamp. Her body had been severed at the joints and decapitated. Cornell was a massage therapist who had undergone extensive training in the anatomy of the human body. He also had posters depicting diagrams of the muscles and bones of the human body hanging in his apartment. Multiple items belonging to Cornell were found with Armstrong's remains. A blood stain containing Armstrong's DNA was found on the carpet in Cornell's apartment. A search of Cornell's phone showed that just 7 hours before the discovery of Armstrong's body, he performed a Google Map search of the exact location where her body was found.

Commonwealth v. Alton Chavis

Charges: Second Degree Felony Murder

Sentence: 25 Years



Facts: On May 7, 2015, Chavis was home alone with his 3-year-old daughter, C.C., while C.C.'s mother was at work. Chavis became frustrated with C.C. and threw her into the bathtub, where she hit her head on the shower faucet. Chavis also picked up C.C. and dropped her on the floor several times. Finally Chavis placed a pillow over her face and held it down until she stopped moving. C.C. then had a seizure. Chavis called his wife and asked her to come home from work. Chavis and his wife took C.C. to the hospital where she was diagnosed with a skull fracture, retinal hemorrhages, subdural hemorrhages, and multiple bruises. She died on May 8, 2015. The cause of death was blunt force head injuries. Chavis admitted to police that he inflicted those injuries on C.C. because he was frustrated with her.

For more details on these cases and other Commonwealth's Attorney's Office news, visit:

www.vbgov.com/oca



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**TOGETHER, WE CAN
KEEP VIRGINIA
BEACH SAFE!**

The Office of the
Commonwealth's Attorney is
dedicated to serving our
community.

To request the Office's
assistance at your community
event, please e-mail Public
Information Officer
Macie Allen at
mpallen@vbgov.com.



The Consumer Corner

Holiday Shopping Safety Tips

The holiday season is a time when busy people can become vulnerable to theft and other crime. Make sure you follow these safety tips to keep your season joyous.

Online shopping:

Thieves have been known to steal packages off front porches, often during the day when homes are more likely to be empty and packages left unattended. If possible, have your online purchase delivered to a location where it can be received in person, such as your workplace (be sure to check with your employer first!). Ask a trusted neighbor to look out for or sign for your packages. Try to track the delivery status of your package online and meet the driver at your house or go home to retrieve your package after receiving a delivery notification. Consider sending the package to the store for pick-up if the retailer offers site-to-store shipping. If you believe you are a victim of porch pirating, first call the company where you placed your order. Also check with the delivery service to confirm delivery time and location. If your package still cannot be located, file a report with the police department.

Shopping:

Stay alert and aware of what's going on around you. Park in a well-lit space as close to the store as you can. Keep your vehicle locked, and hide your shopping bags and valuables in the trunk. Don't leave your purse or wallet in your shopping cart while you're shopping. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Avoid overloading yourself with packages. Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. Thieves may try to distract you in an effort to take your money or packages.

After opening gifts:

Don't make it easy for burglars to figure out which homes to target by putting out boxes from expensive gifts. Leaving boxes for new electronics and other items in a garbage pick-up location can make you an easy target. Instead, break down boxes and put them inside the trashcan. Consider keeping boxes inside until the night before your trash pick-up.

If your personal safety is ever threatened, **call the police right away**. Have a safe and happy holiday season!