

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



Each year, the Virginia Beach Commonwealth's Attorney's Office handles approximately 1,500 domestic violence cases. October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As a community, we must come together this month to honor victims of domestic violence, celebrate domestic violence survivors, raise awareness of resources available, and build support for those seeking safer relationships.

Domestic violence does not discriminate – it can affect men and women of every race, religion, and socioeconomic status. Unfortunately I have seen firsthand the impact domestic violence can have on children in the home. In the most serious and horrific circumstances, domestic violence can turn deadly. According to the attorney general's annual report, an average of 144 Virginians lose their lives each year to family or intimate partner violence, accounting for one in three homicides.

While cases that come before this office involve physical injuries, it's important to be aware of other forms of domestic violence as well. If you or someone you know is being hurt, abused, manipulated, threatened, or controlled, there may be services available to help you. The Samaritan House Crisis Response Hotline (757-430-2120) is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Those who are experiencing a medical emergency or are in immediate danger should always call 911.

No matter what the crime, we recognize that several factors may prevent victims from seeking assistance. Please take advantage of the resources available in Virginia Beach, including law enforcement, prosecutors, counselors, victim advocates, and service groups. Although it may seem insurmountable right now, there is hope and support available for those willing to reach for it.

Join me this October in raising awareness of domestic violence in our community. Having a safe community truly is a partnership between law enforcement and citizens. Thank you for helping me keep Virginia Beach safe.

Sincerely,
Colin Stolle

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Message from the Commonwealth's Attorney: October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month*
- *Social Media Safety Guide for Parents*
- *Featured Cases of the Quarter*
- *Consumer Corner: Be Smart when Using Buy and Sell Apps*



SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY GUIDE FOR PARENTS

With ever-changing technology, it's important for parents to be monitoring their children and teens' devices as well. Usage of tablets, cell phones, and e-readers should be closely regulated. New social media apps are released every day. Many of these apps can have unintended consequences when not used and monitored appropriately.

Below and in the pages to follow, find a list of apps that are currently popular with children and teens and should be monitored regularly by parents. This list is constantly changing and growing based upon a review of cases handled by the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, investigation by law enforcement, and additional research. Please keep in mind that apps are constantly being created, developed, and improved. Any app that is unfamiliar to a parent should be researched and examined closely.



Ask.fm: Allows users to ask and answer questions posted by others. It can be anonymous, which can result in teenagers exhibiting behavior they otherwise wouldn't. Parents should monitor any dialogue on this app.



Badoo: A dating and social media app where users can chat and share photos and videos based on location. Like other dating apps, users can falsify age and identity. Over 400 million users in 190 countries around the world. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Best Secret Folder: Specifically meant to hide photos, videos, audio files, and more. It is password protected, and allows users to set up a decoy password that sends decoy data to fool anyone who may be watching.



Bumble: Similar to Tinder, but requires women to make the first contact. It is not intended for use by children or teens but ages can be falsified. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Burn Note: A messaging app that erases messages after a set period of time. Teens may reveal more than they normally would since messages are "deleted." This may encourage users to say things they otherwise wouldn't. Cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content are possible. Usage of this app should be closely monitored.



Calculator Vault: Looks like a regular smartphone calculator, but is a secret way to hide photos, video, and information. The user can take photos from within the app. It is password protected. Parents should not allow their children to store photos or videos in this app. Children and teens do not have the right to privacy from their parents.



Grindr: A dating app geared toward the LGBTQ community. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Hily: A dating app where users can chat and exchange videos and photos. Based on the GPS location of a mobile device, strangers can arrange to meet up locally. Hily analyzes profiles, swipes, likes, and comments to identify suitable matches. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Holla: A video chat dating app that lets users meet people in seconds. Users can chat and meet up in a live fashion. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.

SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY GUIDE FOR PARENTS, CONTINUED...



Hot or Not: The app lets users rate profiles, check out people in their area and chat with strangers. This app will show users “how popular” they are and give a list of the “hottest” people nearby. Not only is cyberbullying prevalent, hooking up is encouraged. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



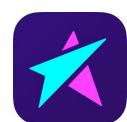
Kik: Allows user to send texts, pictures, and video. Users can be anonymous and talk with strangers. Users can also surf the web from within the app. Parents should monitor usage of this app if they allow their children or teens to have it.



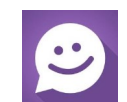
Kiwi: Teens can chat or exchange photos with people they know or with random strangers. Parents should consider limiting children and teens’ use by filtering sensitive photos and videos and preventing public questions. Because of the ability to be anonymous, this app can lead to cyber-bullying. There’s also the potential for profanity, crude humor, references to drugs and alcohol and sexual content. Parents should closely monitor this app.



Line: A text, video, and voice-messaging app that includes group chats and games. Texting and video calls are free (even internationally). Users can chat with over 200 friends simultaneously. Parents should closely monitor the usage of this app.



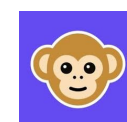
Live.Me: A live-streaming app that uses geolocation to share videos. Users “broadcast” about all types of things from fashion, music, gaming, art, and beauty. Users receive virtual “gifts” and convert them into real money rewards. If parents allow their children and teens to use this app, it should be closely monitored.



MeetMe: A dating social media app that connects people from around the world based on location. Users are encouraged to meet in person and video chat with strangers. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Mocospace: A free social networking and dating app. Users can connect with strangers worldwide via text messages or voice calls. Parents should be monitoring their children’s devices and ensuring that there is no communication with strangers.



Monkey: A live video chat app that connects users to random strangers worldwide, offering group chat and private message options. It claims to be rated for ages 12 and up but has “mild sexual content and nudity” and “mild profanity or crude humor.”



Musical.ly: A video karaoke app in which users can make videos of themselves lip-syncing and post them publicly. When a video is posted, anyone can “like,” comment, or message in response to your child’s post if his or her privacy settings are set to “public.” This means that minors may inadvertently be sharing content with adult strangers. Musical.ly allows users to search for friends nearby and receive notifications when friends come online. The app may contain sexual content, drug references, and swear words. Also, while Musical.ly does not allow nudity, it is possible that your child may stumble upon it before it has been discovered and removed. Parents, if you allow your child to use this app, make sure you are screening their content, put privacy settings in place, and talk to them about not sharing personal info on their profile.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR PARENTS, CONTINUED...



Omegle: An anonymous chat app that allows users to discuss anything they like. Users get paired up with strangers to chat. Parents should closely monitor this app.



Plenty of Fish: A popular free dating app and website that encourages chatting with strangers. It allows users to browse profiles based on location. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



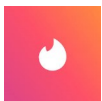
Skout: A location-based dating app that connects people around the world. Users can be exposed to strangers and predators because ages and identities can be falsified. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Snapchat: Lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear. Teens believe images go away forever; that is not true. Anything posted online never truly “goes away.” Parents should monitor usage of this app if they allow their children or teens to have it.



TikTok: Lets users create and share short videos. Users can be exposed to explicit or inappropriate content. If parents allow children to use this app, it should be closely monitored.



Tinder: Mainly used as a dating tool or anonymous hook-up locator by adults; helps people find others in their geographic location for chatting and photo-sharing. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.



Tumblr: Allows users to post pictures and short blog posts. While this is a fun way for teens to communicate, there are potential dangers if parents aren't monitoring their teens' usage. It is difficult to create privacy settings, so teens often post everything publicly. This also opens up teens to becoming victims of scams and security issues. There is a large amount of adult content available on Tumblr, including pornography and other sexually explicit material. Child pornography has also been reported on Tumblr. Remind teens that posting inappropriate material can get them in legal trouble, damage their reputation, and jeopardize their future. Once a post is made, it can never be taken back.



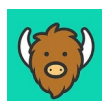
WhatsApp: A messaging app that allows send and receive messages, calls, photos, videos, documents, and voice messages. Parents should monitor content and check to see who their children are talking to.



Whisper: A “confessional” app that allows users to post anything on their minds without repercussions. Whispers can go public unintentionally and the content can be inappropriate for teenage users.



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.



Yik Yak: Geographically based anonymous chat app that allows users to send photos and texts to people near their location.



Zoosk: A location-based dating app and website similar to many others. This app is inappropriate for children and teens.

FEATURED CASES OF THE QUARTER

Commonwealth v. Tramonte Hines



Charges: First Degree Felony Murder, Robbery, Use of a Firearm (2 counts), Conspiracy

Sentence: Life in Prison plus 120 years

Facts: On December 19, 2010, Hines and Alex Jenkins entered the Junior Market on S. Lynnhaven Road wearing masks, gloves, and dark clothing. They robbed the cashier and a customer at gunpoint. Jeannie Murphy walked into the store during the robbery, and Hines shot her three times, killing her. Several years later, Hines was identified as a suspect. He was serving time in prison for other crimes. He confessed to his role.

Commonwealth v. Nancy Copeland

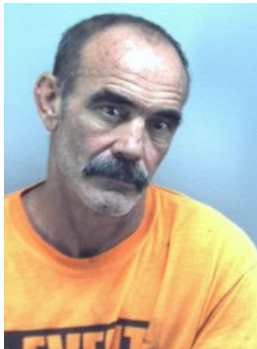


Charges: Second Degree Murder, Use of a Firearm, Shooting in the Commission of a Felony, Possession of Marijuana

Sentence: 19 Years

Facts: On December 1, 2017, Copeland and her roommate, David Gonzalez, got into an argument over Copeland's dog. The argument carried over into the afternoon. She armed herself with a revolver and confronted Gonzalez. As the two began to struggle over a door, Copeland shot him. She claimed she fired accidentally.

Commonwealth v. Troy Beacham



Charges: Child Cruelty/Neglect/Abuse – Reckless, Eluding Police – Endangerment, DUI, and Refusal of Blood/Breath Test

Sentence: 10 Years, 12 Months, and 30 days

Facts: On May 3, 2018, Beacham was driving on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel with an unrestrained baby in the front passenger seat. An officer attempted to stop him after he bumped another car at the toll plaza. He fled, driving at speeds up to 97 m.p.h. When he was finally stopped, police determined he was impaired. A half-empty liquor bottle was in the vehicle along with marijuana smoking devices. The child was unharmed.

Commonwealth v. Patrick Gil



Charges: Attempted Malicious Wounding (2 counts), Eluding Police, Reckless Driving, and Driving without an Operator's License

Sentence: 9 Years and 12 Months

Facts: On February 23, 2018, Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel police responded to a pursuit of Gil that began in Northampton County. Gil drove at speeds over 100 m.p.h., striking a tractor trailer in the tunnel. He almost struck several citizen and police vehicles and drove at multiple officers. Gil struck another vehicle in the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. Traffic in both tunnels was closed as a result of the pursuit. He eventually crashed and was apprehended by police.



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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.

Police precinct locations:

First Precinct

2509 Princess Anne Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Second Precinct

820 Virginia Beach Boulevard
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Third Precinct

926 Independence Boulevard
Virginia Beach, VA 23455

Fourth Precinct

840 Kempsville Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

The Consumer Corner

Be Smart when Using Buy and Sell Apps

Buy and sell apps and websites such as OfferUp, LetGo, and Craigslist have become a popular way to find great local deals on used items. In a matter of minutes, a seller can post an item for sale and have a potential buyer lined up. While it may seem simple and convenient, thieves and criminals have used OfferUp and Craigslist to prey upon unsuspecting victims. Right here in Virginia Beach, robberies and assaults have happened during sales originating from buy and sell apps. Here are some simple safety tips to keep in mind the next time you are ready to buy or sell an item:

- Do your homework. Look at the profiles of potential buyers or sellers. Check out their past ratings and photos. It's best to look for users who have a high rating.
- Before making a purchase, review the listing photo and description closely. Check out the condition of the item ahead of time. Don't be afraid to ask the seller questions about the item. Remember: if something looks too good to be true, it probably is.
- Do not share your personal information with others online. Using the communication methods in place on Craigslist and OfferUp should protect you from fraud and other security issues.
- Carefully select a location to meet. **All four Virginia Beach police precincts are considered "safe places" for buyers and sellers to meet.** There are cameras in those buildings for your safety. If possible, don't go to a transaction alone. Notify your friends and loved ones where you'll be. Do not meet in a parking lot or the home of someone you do not know. Never invite anyone to your home. If the buyer or seller won't meet you somewhere you feel comfortable, do business with someone else instead.
- Save all documentation, including the URL and screen shots of profiles and photos for people you do business with. In the event of a crime, this will help police investigate.

If your personal safety is ever threatened, call the police. Don't fall victim to predators who are looking to ruin your shopping experience!

