




Stephen B. Russell, State Attorney

The Russell Report



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Operation “Crooked Stamp” - 100% Conviction Rate

Michael Schnatter is the last person to be convicted in Operation “Crooked Stamp.” The Lee County Sheriff’s Office and the United States Department of Agriculture put the operation together to nab people illegally using EBT or food stamp cards.

Schnatter was the leader of the operation. His company, “Blue Ribbon Steak and Seafood” was the front for the fraud. He and his employees would run EBT cards for large amounts and give the owner of the card a portion back.

So if a person handed them their card and it had \$400 on it, the company would run it on a credit card machine and give the person \$200, making a 50% profit. The USDA was involved because the cards were run through one of their licensed machines.

In total 9 people were arrested and convicted for the fraud. Schnatter will receive 3 years in prison followed by 2 years of probation when he is sentenced on July 7th. Most of the defendants received prison or jail time.

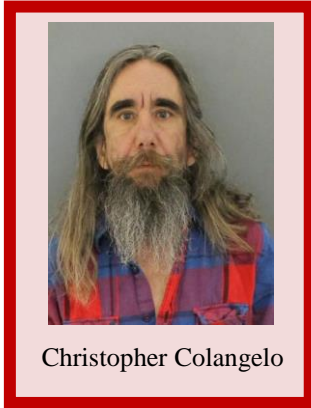
Prosecutors throughout our office handled the cases. Schnatter’s case was handled by J.D. Miller of our Economic Crimes Unit.

Child Pornography Case

Christopher Colangelo pled guilty and was sentenced for 17 charges relating to child pornography in a Charlotte County case.

The 52-year-old had 3 counts of Computer Pornography and 14 counts of Child Pornography. The judge sentenced him to 11 years in prison and he is also now designated as a sexual offender.

Assistant State Attorney Tracy Detzel handled the case.



Christopher Colangelo

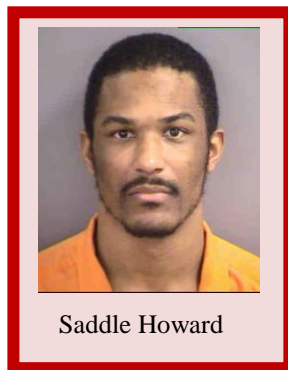


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Naples Burglary Case

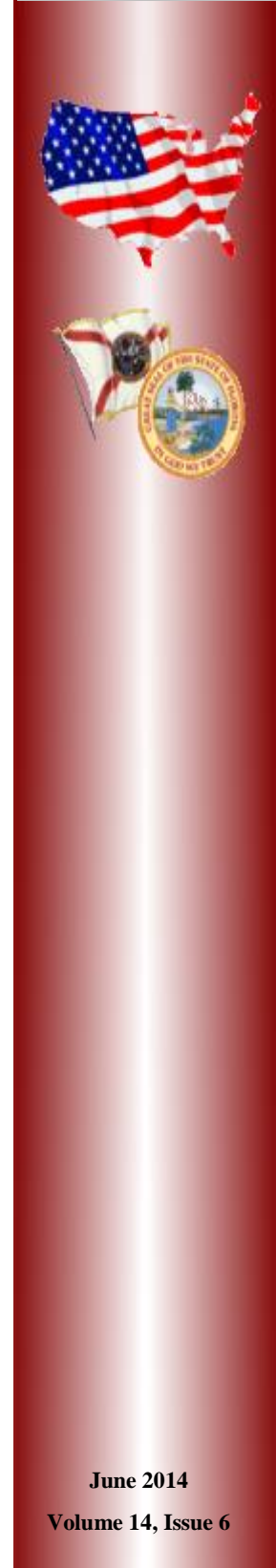
Assistant State Attorneys James Stewart and Erik Leontiv from our Naples office got a conviction against defendant Saddle Howard. Howard is designated as a Violent Career Criminal. In this case he was found guilty of Burglary of an Occupied Conveyance and Grand Theft. He opened an unlocked car door while the car was running and idling in a parking lot. The adult had run into a business and left her children in the car. Howard stole her purse in front of another adult witness. Due to his Career Criminal status, he will be facing some serious prison time when he is sentenced.



Saddle Howard

Learning About the State Attorney’s Office

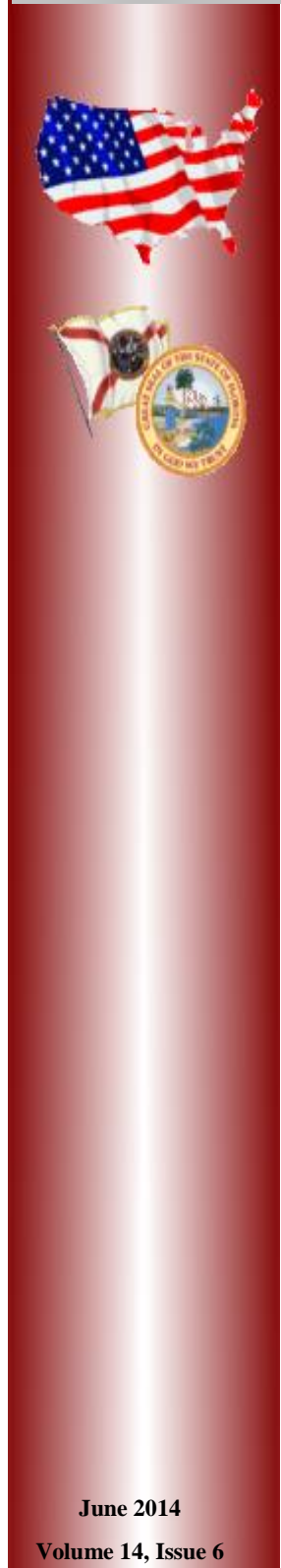
Staff members of the State Attorney’s Office are available to speak to local students. Throughout the year we visit local classrooms and teach kids about what our office does and how the law works in Florida. We also invite local college students to volunteer at one of our offices throughout Southwest Florida. We have many volunteers who get to work closely with our prosecutors and get a real life education about the criminal justice system. If you would like to learn more about our programs, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Nancy Cruz at ncruz@sao.cjis20.org or call her at 533-1000.





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New Distress Call Scam

There is a new trick by criminals that tries to get your money by thinking you are helping a relative or friend.

Criminals are going through Facebook looking for details about people’s travel plans. They take down all of the information about who is traveling where.

They then go through the persons friends on Facebooks to pick up some familiar names. They then contact a friend or family member they saw on Facebook via phone or email.

They pretend to be the traveler or someone “helping” them. They claim to need money wired to them or for credit card information due to something that happened on their trip.

They try to convince the potential victim by referencing the names of people they found on their Facebook account. They even sometimes reference other things in their lives they learned on Facebook so it will make the victim think the call or email is legitimate.

If you think the call may be real, ask for full address and contact details. Call the location and see if they will actually put your friend or relative on the phone if indeed you had not been able to contact them yourself.

Hotel Internet Scam

If you will be staying in a hotel anytime soon and using Wi-Fi computer access, this alert is for you.

Many hotels have free access but some still charge a fee. Hackers have been taking advantage of this by creating fake networks that look just like the hotel’s account.

When someone logs in to get the access, a screen comes up saying you need to provide a credit card to use the internet.

If this happens to you, it is likely a scam because the hotel usually uses the credit card on file you used to book the room.

If you have any doubt, be sure to check with the front desk where you are staying.





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GUILTY VERDICTS

ASA Chris Klink: Grand Theft

ASA Orion Wright: Aggravated Assault with a Firearm

ASAs Kyle Stublen and Martin Stark: Armed Trespass, Battery, Resisting an Officer without Violence, Escape from Custody, Tampering with a Witness/Victim

ASAs Danielle Butler and Abe Thornburg: Robbery

ASAs Bianca Bentley and Cameron Siggs: Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer

ASAs Andrew Woodliff and John Grochowski: DUI

ASAs Kate Horst and Stephanie Powers: Fleeing to Elude

ASA Abe Thornburg: Fleeing to Elude LEO with Lights and Sirens

ASA Leena Marcos: Burglary of a Dwelling, Grand Theft

ASA's Jennifer Toussaint and Will Grauel: Boating Under the Influence (3rd outside of 10)

ASA's Mara Marzano and James Stewart: Aggravated Battery, Petit Theft, Aggravated Assault

ASA's Sara Miller and Shannon Parrott: DUI

ASA James Stewart: Battery

ASA's James Stewart and Erik Leontiv: Burglary of an Occupied Conveyance, Grand Theft

ASA's Michael Colombo and Natoria Hubbard: Trespass of an Occupied Structure

ASA Jody White: Battery (Domestic Violence)

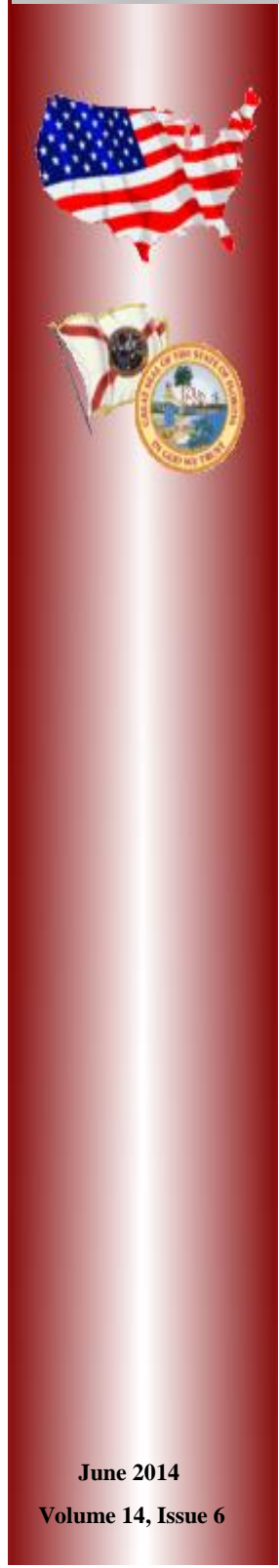




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Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties

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JUNE ANNIVERSARIES:

In recognition of service to the people of Southwest Florida, and dedication to their jobs with the State Attorney’s Office, a heartfelt thank you goes to the following people on their June employment anniversary dates:

- Amy Kosinski ‘02
- Andrea Canizares ‘03
- Patricia Hartman ‘03
- Jennifer Garczewski ‘05
- Lourdes Muina ‘05
- Jennifer Toussaint ‘10
- Pamela Fitzwater ‘11
- Kyle Stublen ‘11
- Michael McNeese ‘13
- Scott Miller ‘13

SOMETIMES THEY MAKE IT EASY

A West Palm Beach man had quite an emergency which made him call 911. His wife actually threw out his beer! The 49-year-old kept calling 911 even when he was warned to stop. He called a total of 7 times in four hours. He now faces charges of Reporting False Information and Misuse of the 911 Emergency System. Through it all he was adamant he was out of two beers due to his wife but when he went to jail no one seemed to care.



A 24-year-old Polk County man also used 911 for help, which landed him behind bars. He got lost in the woods and thought wild boars were chasing him, so he called 911. Police found him walking along a highway and discovered he had an open warrant for Driving With a Suspended or Revoked Driver’s License. When deputies searched his backpack, they also found a stolen GPS device, cellphones and earrings. So the good news is, he was not lost anymore. The bad news for him is even his GPS device is not going to show him a way to get away from all of the charges ahead.