



## Stephen B. Russell, State Attorney

### The Russell Report



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Anniversaries

<http://www.sao.cjis20.org/>

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#### Murder Sentencing

Manley Shane Sigman, 19, was sentenced to life in prison on charges of Second Degree Murder with a Firearm and Shooting At, Within, or Into a Dwelling or Building. Sigman was convicted by a jury on the charges last year.

In October 2015 in the Suncoast Estates area of North Fort Myers, Sigman approached the victim who was on a screened-in lanai and shot him multiple times. Sigman then fled the scene in a vehicle and was captured later. The victim was transported to the hospital with gunshot wounds to the hip, abdomen, chest, hand and shoulder. He later died.

The defendant's sentence will be reviewed in 25 years because he was a juvenile when the crime was committed.

Assistant State Attorney Andreas Gardiner of our Homicide Unit and Assistant State Attorney Jennifer Justham handled the case.



Manley Shane Sigman

#### Life in Prison

Michael James Russo, 29, was sentenced to life in prison for the 2015 killing of Kyle Farishian. Russo was found guilty as charged for Second Degree Murder and First Degree Arson by a jury in Charlotte County following a trial in June.

Russo's convictions came as a result of the November 1, 2015 incident where he entered a convenience store in Punta Gorda and shot and killed the 18 year old store clerk.

The entire crime was captured on the store's surveillance video which helped lead to identifying Russo. Assistant State Attorneys Shannon Doolity, Dan Feinberg of our Homicide Unit, and Kyle Stublen handled the case, working closely with the Punta Gorda Police Department to put the case together.

"This was a heinous crime and now a dangerous individual is off the streets for good," said ASA Feinberg.

Russo also received 30 years in prison for the First Degree Arson charge which will run concurrently to the life sentence.



Michael James Russo



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### **PACE Center Event**

The State Attorney's Office, along with the Public Defender's Office, hosted members of the PACE Center for Girls who were given an inside look into our justice system. PACE's mission is to provide girls and young women an opportunity for a better future through education, counseling, training, and advocacy.

During this event, the girls visited the Lee County Courthouse where they had the opportunity to learn how a case makes its way through the system. They participated in a mock trial where visiting members served as a prosecutor, a defense attorney, and jurors. They were also provided with assistance from mentors to help them through the process and in serving as the attorneys. Their trial was a petit theft trial which centered around an iPhone being stolen from Sears. The "jury" found the defendant guilty. Various members of both the State Attorney's Office and Public Defender's Office served as witnesses, defendant, and counsel mentoring the participants. Judge Paluck served as the Judge in the case.

They also had the opportunity to be a part of a "Finding Your Voice" Panel which gave them the opportunity to hear from various women in our legal system about what they do, how they got there, and how they found their voice. The Panelists included Chief Assistant State Attorney Amira Fox, the Honorable Judge Margaret Steinbeck, Public Defender Kathleen Smith, and Sergeant Jody Payne, a member of the FBI Task Force at the Lee County Sheriff's Office. The session was then opened up to the girls, providing an opportunity for them to ask the panelists questions.

During her time speaking, Amira Fox, Chief Assistant State Attorney, reminded the young girls to never give up regardless of how hard things get. This resonated as a theme throughout the panel.

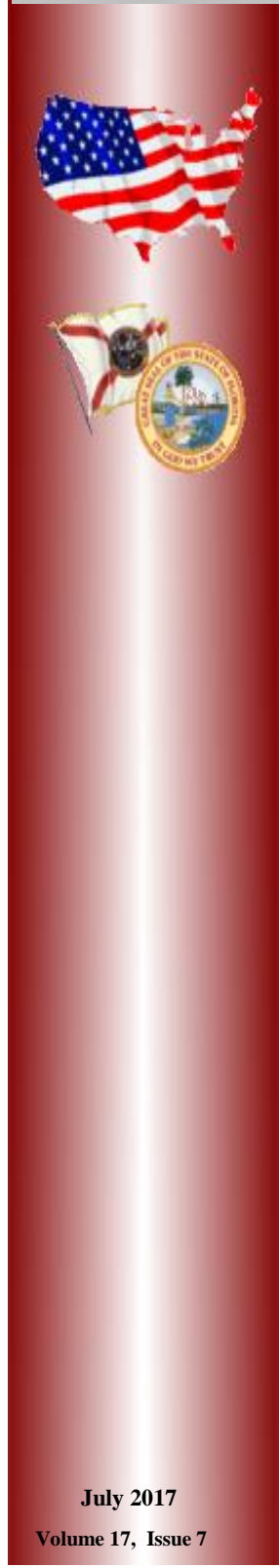
This event was organized by Assistant State Attorney Sara Miller of our Homicide Unit and Assistant Public Defender Veronica Batt.





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**Murder Plea**

Jonathan Raymond Ruffini, 19, entered a change of plea for his role in the murder of 58 year old Ted Lee in the Buckingham area of Fort Myers in July 2016.

Ruffini pled guilty and admitted guilt to charges of Second Degree Murder, Conspiracy to Commit Murder, Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card, and Grand Theft of a Motor Vehicle.

Ruffini's sentence of 25 years in state prison is contingent upon his continued cooperation with the State in the other related cases.

Co-defendant Hunter Tyson pled last month and was sentenced to 40 years in state prison. Co-defendant Lavaya May's case remains pending. Assistant State Attorneys Hamid Hunter and Mara Marzano of our Homicide Unit are assigned to the three cases.



Jonathan Ruffini

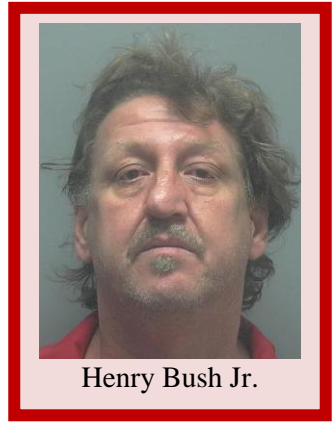
**Fraudulent Check Deposits**

Henry Bush Jr, 49, pled guilty on the second day of his trial to charges of Grand Theft and 5 counts of Deposit with the Intent to Defraud. He was sentenced to 5 years of probation and was ordered to pay restitution to the victim.

In March of 2016, the victim had a checkbook stolen out of his car. He did not use his checkbook often so he did not realize it was missing at first. He then noticed charges had been made from his account by check and contacted law enforcement. The fraudulent checks ranged from \$425 to \$950 and were written for various handiwork, such as plumbing.

Detectives were able to link Bush to the crimes through photos and video from the ATM machines where the checks were deposited.

Assistant State Attorney Laura Johnson handled the case.



Henry Bush Jr.





## **THE RUSSELL REPORT**

### **GUILTY VERDICTS**

ASAs Heather Searcy and Tyler Lovejoy: Sexual Battery on a Child less than 12 years of age, Lewd or Lascivious Molestation – 2 counts

ASAs Martin Stark and Joshua Fredrickson: DUI Manslaughter

ASA Natalie Heiderscheit: Leaving the Scene of a Crash (Attended Property)

ASA Michael Columbo: Improper Exhibition of a Weapon

ASAs Garrick Soja and Stephanie Powers: Petit Theft (Over \$100- Under \$300)

ASAs Natalie Heiderscheit and Deanna Vella: Driving Under the Influence (3<sup>rd</sup> within 10 years)

ASA Brenda Wade: Resisting or Obstructing an Officer Without Violence, No Valid Driver's License

ASA Olivia Ferrell: Driving Under the Influence (2<sup>nd</sup>), Refusal

ASAs Cameron Colledge and Jennifer Justham: Possession of Undersized Grouper

ASA Steven Vitale: Possession of Marijuana (Less Than 20 Grams)

ASA Dennis Kohlhoff: Resisting or Obstructing an Officer Without Violence

ASAs Nicholas Alberto and Jennifer Justham: Domestic Violence Battery

ASA Marilla Shoemaker: Criminal Mischief (Over \$200 but less than \$1,000)

ASA Olivia Ferrell: Possession of Paraphernalia

ASAs Robert Rodriguez and Nicholas Alberto: Battery





# Office of the State Attorney

*Twentieth Judicial Circuit, State of Florida*

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**Stephen B. Russell, State Attorney**

**Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties**

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### **JULY ANNIVERSARIES:**

In recognition of service to the citizens 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 July employment anniversary dates:

Betty Cefole '07

Eugenie Johnson '96

Brooke Wesley '16

Amira Fox '12 (17 years combined)

Robin McCarley '06

Wynn Whalen '04

Jason Glick '16

Lisa Mead '07

Dawn Greene '89

Leandro Navarro '06

Miranda Hagney '07

Linda Ouimet '12

Heidi Hazelcorn '05

Elaine Psaros '89

Erin Hughes '13

Meropi Souza '16

Tabitha James '16

Paul Thomas '13

### **Learning About the State Attorney's Office**

Staff members of the State Attorney's Office are available to speak to local students or groups. Throughout the year we visit classrooms and organizations to teach people 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 an 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](mailto:ncruz@sao.cjis20.org) or call her at 533-1000.

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