



Stephen B. Russell, State Attorney

The Russell Report



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Anniversaries

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Life in Prison

Leroy Taylor Jr., 59, was sentenced to life in prison for the 2012 brutal beating that resulted in the death of his father, Leroy Taylor, Sr..

Taylor Jr. was convicted by a jury in January 2017 of Second Degree Murder, after a six day trial.

The 91-year-old Air Force retiree and combat veteran died as a result of the blunt force trauma to his head and chest. He was also doused in gasoline, but the attempt to set him ablaze failed.

Friends of Taylor, Sr. found him in his Cape Coral home. The murder occurred while the defendant was in town visiting. He flew back to New York after the murder. He then returned to Cape Coral to take care of his father’s affairs. It was at that time he was arrested.

Assistant State Attorney Hamid Hunter of our Homicide Unit and the Cape Coral Police Department handled the case.



Leroy Taylor Jr.

Sexual Battery Case

Davian Ortega was sentenced to 20 years in prison for three counts of Sexual Battery on a Child by a person less than 18 years old and one count of Sexual Activity with a Child. Ortega was 17 at the time of the offenses and is now 19.

Following prison, he will also have 10 years of sex offender probation with a GPS monitor to track his location.

The State Attorney’s Office worked with the four victims on a plea agreement so they would not have to go through depositions or testify at trial to protect them from having to talk about and relive the incidents which happened in 2015.

Assistant State Attorney Deborah Cunningham of our Collier County office handled the case.



Davian Ortega



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Halloween Chase Ends in Prison

Christopher Wayne Sherrod was sentenced recently as a Habitual Felony Offender for a night of crime on Halloween 2014. The 26 year-old resident of Rotunda West entered a plea of no contest straight to the court as he did not want to have a jury trial. The law allows defendants to enter a plea and be sentenced by the judge. Sherrod was adjudicated guilty on all counts and was sentenced to;

Count 1: Aggravated Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer - 10 years in prison as a HFO; 5 years probation to follow

Count 2: Fleeing or Attempting to Elude with Wanton Disregard -10 years in prison as a HFO; 5 years probation to follow

Count 3: Aggravated Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer – 10 years in prison as a HFO; 5 years probation to follow

Count 4: Burglary of a Structure – 5 years in prison as a HFO

Count 5: Grand Theft – 5 years in prison as a HFO

Count 6: Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon –10 years in prison as a HFO; 5 years probation to follow

Count 7: Grand Theft of a Motor Vehicle – 5 years in prison as a HFO

Count 8: Grand Theft of a Firearm – 5 years in prison as a HFO

Count 9: Theft, Obtaining Credit Card Through Fraudulent Means – credit time served

Sherrod's sentences will run concurrently. The crime happened on October 31, 2014, Sherrod stole the purse and SUV of a friend he was staying with in Englewood. Charlotte County Sheriff Deputies tried to pull him over after seeing the vehicle he was driving speeding. He refused to pull over and took off leading deputies on a long chase.

Sherrod burglarized a convenience store in Englewood during a part of the chase when they lost sight of him. He was eventually stopped by deputies on U.S. 41 near Tucker's Grade. Assistant State Attorney Scott Patterson handled the case.

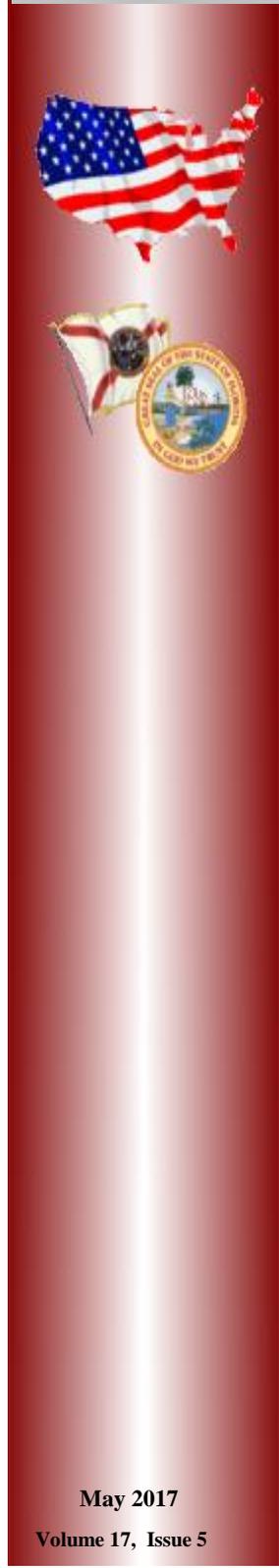


Christopher
Wayne Sherrod



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Road Rage

Lester Alexis Bermudez-Lozada, 22, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for Aggravated Battery thanks to the partnership of the State Attorney’s Office, the Lee County Sheriff’s Office and Cape Coral Police Department in putting the case together.

Lozada shot a tow truck driver in May 2016 in Lehigh Acres as the driver was unloading a car at an auto repair shop. The tow truck driver’s vehicle was partially in the roadway and the defendant was angry his path was being blocked.

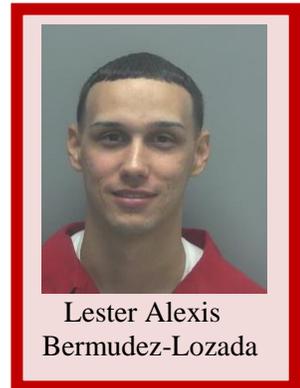
The defendant put down the passenger window of his car, exchanged words with the tow truck driver, and shot him. Luckily the victim survived the bullet wound.

A “be on the lookout” or B.O.L.O. was put out to law enforcement for the customized silver Nissan Altima. A Cape Coral Police officer started looking at car clubs on Facebook to see if he could locate the unique vehicle. He found a post about the car and was able to determine the car was registered to Lozada.

With that information, a detective with the Lee County Sheriff’s Office then located and interviewed the original owner. He provided information about the new owner, the defendant. Thanks to their work, a photo line-up was created and the victim identified Lozada as the man who shot him.

The Lee County Sheriff’s Office worked to get the evidence needed to get a search warrant for Lozada’s home. The car from the crime scene was found in the garage. Lozada has no criminal history.

Just as jury selection was getting underway, the defendant accepted a plea agreement. Assistant State Attorney Leena Marcos worked diligently with the agencies to put the pieces of this crime together as well as worked with the victim to get a resolution they were happy with.



Lester Alexis Bermudez-Lozada



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GUILTY VERDICTS

ASA's John Dommerich and Abe Thornburg: Aggravated Sexual Battery by Multiple Perpetrators, Aggravated Sexual Assault by Multiple Perpetrators

ASA Hanna Renna: Possession of Cocaine, Possession of Paraphernalia

ASA's Andrew Riordan and Brian Ashby: Culpable Negligence

ASA's Christine Cummings and Stephen Dommerich: Trafficking in Oxycodone, Possession of a Controlled Substance, Possession of Paraphernalia

ASA's Caitlin Sorenson and John Grochowski: Sale of a Controlled Substance within 1,000 ft. of a Public Park, Possession of a Cocaine

ASA Kate Horst: Grand Theft, Burglary of a Dwelling

ASA Will Dorman: Possession of a Controlled Substance – 2 counts, Possession of Paraphernalia, Driving While License Suspended or Revoked

ASA's Heather Searcy and Robert Rodriguez: DUI (2nd outside of 5 years), DUI with Damage (2nd outside of 5 years)

ASA Nicholas Alberto: DUI .15 or Higher

ASA Ron Dente: Burglary of a Dwelling While Armed, Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon

ASA's Jennifer Justham and Amanda Astor: DUI 2nd or more, Driving While Licensed Suspended





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MAY 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 May employment anniversary dates:

Erica Carr '13

Ketty Martinez '06

Michael Colombo Jr. '12

Rosemarie Mitchell '90

Amber Datko '13

Sara Schmidt '16

Shannon Doolity '04

Ronald Smith '05

Faith Hall '02

Brian Strand '16

Sean Hoover '16

Abraham Thornburg '09

Christopher Klink '03

Amanda Lasher '09

Erin Lee '10

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 or call her at 533-1000.

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