



NAPA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY NEWSLINE

A publication of the Napa County District Attorney's Office

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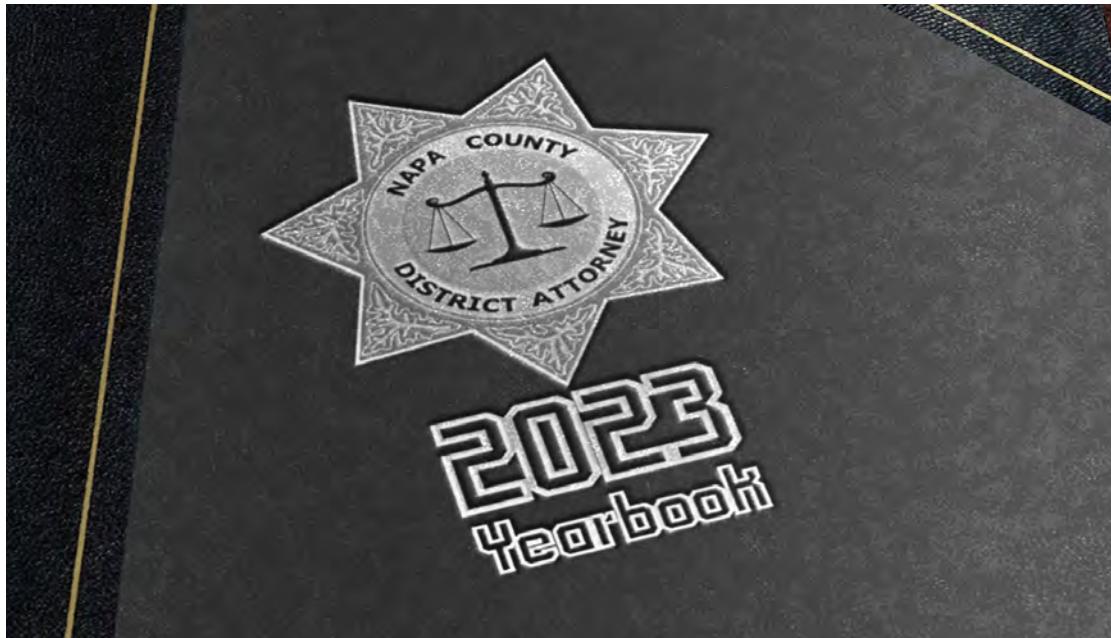
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Out and About in the Community

A Look Back at 2023



By Carlos Villatoro
Public Affairs and Media Officer

It was a year marked by a murder case, several office comings and goings, and new beginnings at the Napa County District Attorney's Office. The events of 2023 left an indelible imprint on everyone who works diligently towards our mission of keeping the community safe and being a voice and advocate for victims of crime in Napa County.

The trial of Christopher Young for the murder of 18-year-old Nathan Garza punctuates these moments. The trial

was a significant undertaking for the DA's Office, requiring hundreds of staff hours to obtain a guilty verdict against the defendant.

The work that went into trying the case against Mr. Young included locating and serving subpoenas on numerous witnesses; gathering, documenting and performing forensic evaluations on voluminous amounts of evidence; collaborating with multiple law enforcement agencies; writing motions, dealing with numerous continuations, getting expert witnesses to testify, and developing and employing legal

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FROM DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Allison Haley

Happy New Year and Welcome to 2024!

I seem to inevitably tumble into every January exhausted and harried from an overscheduled holiday season. But I had better shape up because we have a lot to look forward to this year at our office as we seek to better serve our community and increase access to our services. Here are some projects you can look forward to from our office in the coming months:

- The District Attorney's Office First Annual Elder Summit will be held June 28, 2024. While six months away, we are busy creating a meaningful agenda, cultivating speakers, and finalizing a location as we recognize the growing concern that elder abuse is harming our Napa community members.
- We are staffing a Human Trafficking taskforce to not only ferret out this criminal activity in our County with our law enforcement partners but to serve those trafficked with the kindness, compassion, and dignity they deserve with the help of the Monarch Justice Center.
- We are actively developing a Fentanyl Awareness campaign in conjunction with the Napa Opioid Safety Coalition. Our efforts will include public awareness programming that we can bring into schools to teach educators, students and their caregivers the dangers of fentanyl and steps they can take to recognize an impending overdose.
- We are almost ready to roll out a Sextortion Awareness Campaign with our partners at the FBI. This programming is designed to protect our youth from scammers on the internet who cajole them into compromising acts in exchange for money, gift cards or more photographs. The impact on a targeted child is profound and can result in self-harm and traumatic isolation.

These projects are in addition to a very full trial schedule for our office and our continued efforts to improve our responsiveness to crime survivors and their loved ones. We're ready for you 2024!



NAPA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWSLINE

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strategy that would prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Young killed Mr. Garza in cold blood.

The murder took place on the August 16, 2020, in the parking lot of Safeway in American Canyon.

Mr. Garza was fulfilling curbside delivery orders when the defendant shot him twice in the back and sped off in the Cadillac sedan he was driving. Police captured him near the scene of the murder, after receiving numerous reports of Mr. Young hopping fences and entering back yards of neighborhood homes.

The Napa County District Attorney's investigation into this murder did not cease from the moment that the crime took place all the way up until the numerous court appearances, explains Napa County DA Investigator Rachel Cardin. The collaborative efforts on the part of the Napa DA's Office, the Napa County Sheriff's Department, and the American Canyon Police Department proved instrumental for the Napa County DA's prosecution team.

Napa County DA's veteran prosecutors Diane Knoles and Taryn Hunter, poured over thousands of cell phone records, photos, video footage, jailhouse calls, and forensic evidence to build their case against the defendant.

Their efforts paid off as the jury read the verdict against Mr. Young finding him guilty of first-degree murder, shooting from a motor vehicle, felon in possession of a firearm, felon in possession of ammunition, and giving false information to a police officer.

The jury also found true the special circumstances of personally and intentionally



Napa County District Attorney Allison Haley reflects on the events of 2023 with the office during a recent all-staff meeting. Photo: Carlos Villatoro

discharging a firearm, firing a weapon from a vehicle with the intent to inflict death, and lying in wait. Mr. Young was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the murder of Nathan Garza.

In 2023, the Napa County DA's Office saw an influx of new deputy DAs, investigators, and various staff members, including the addition of forensic interviewer Jessica Solano, and Public Affairs and Media Officer Carlos Villatoro.

When all said and done, the DA's Office added deputy district attorneys Colleen McMahon, Amy Bailey, Lisa Sharkey, Max Warren, and Lauren Noga; investigators Joe Perry and Armando Sanchez; Victim Witness Services Advocate Adella Pinon-Diaz, and investigative technician Lindsey Foster to its ranks in 2023.

The year was also full of promotions including those of Lauren Weitz to Media Technician, John Lipanovich to Lieutenant, Veronica Vo and Colleen McMahon to Attorney IVs, Delfina Warren to Legal Office Manager and Karla Lopez to Supervising Legal Secretary.

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Along the way we lost colleagues to other district attorney offices and agencies and reflect on their time with the Napa County DA's Office with fondness and well wishes.

Meanwhile, our counterparts at the Monarch Justice Center added some staff and services of their own in 2023 including the installation of Shea Hunter as Monarch's Director. A California Victims Compensation Board grant of \$2.5 million grant enabled the Monarch Justice Center to begin providing trauma recovery services through its Trauma Recovery Center (TRC).

The grand opening of the TRC at the Monarch Justice Center signaled a new service for victims of crime to access designed to help them overcome the trauma often associated with crime

through trauma-informed mental health treatment and case management services, explains Kari Cordero, a psychiatric nurse practitioner and sexual assault nurse examine who is also the executive director of Napa Solano SANE-SART, the group that administers the TRC services.

Last year also marked new beginnings for the Napa County DA's Office. In 2023, we began doing a podcast called Sidebar. The podcast adds a new tool to our communication toolbelt to go along with this newsletter and increased social media presence.

The Napa DA's Office established its presence on Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn, and will continue finding innovative ways to communicate with the public in 2024 and beyond.



Building a Bridge to Sobriety



L-R: Todd Kadell, Adlahi Castillo and Aaron Mosley stand outside the residential treatment program called The Bridge in west Napa. Kadell and Castillo credit The Bridge for their sobriety, along with Mosley's mentorship. Photo: Carlos Villatoro

***By Carlos Villatoro
Public Affairs and Media Officer***

For many who are battling against drug or alcohol addiction, envisioning a better life in which they are free of their addiction can be a challenge.

Becoming sober can feel like an insurmountable goal, but then something changes – fear is replaced by hope, hope becomes grounded in faith, and futures free from addiction begin to materialize.

So it was for Adlahi Castillo, age 31, and Todd Kadell, age 51, two men separated by 20 years but bonded by the brotherhood they formed

in The Bridge, a faith-based residential drug treatment program that began in Monterey County and is finding success in Napa.

The two men each stand over 6 feet tall and have the look of working men, due in part to the various landscaping projects they toil in as a requirement of the program.

Aaron Mosley, a retired Napa County Sheriff's deputy who oversees Napa's The Bridge, explains that the men must earn their keep if they are to benefit from the year-long program. They are enrolled in vocational training that teaches them skills they can use to maintain steady employment, one of the program's main aspects.

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"We are landscaping right now, we are cleaning up Napa Valley churches, cleaning up parking lots, trimming bushes and landscaping," Castillo said.

"We do other odds and ends, we do moving jobs, hauling jobs, and paint," adds Kadell. "We do prep for building and stuff like that, a lot of front-end manual labor."

Kadell's journey to The Bridge is similar to the other 10 individuals enrolled in The Bridge. For several years, Kadell struggled with alcohol abuse which turned into heroin and methamphetamine addictions. He enrolled in The Bridge in Pacific Grove in 2020 after his parole from prison but did not complete it.

"My own thing leaves me living outside and getting in trouble with the law," he said. Kadell sought help from his pastor in Pacific Grove, who referred him over to Mosley in Napa, where he's been for the past eight months.

Castillo began his journey as a methamphetamine addict who began to dabble in fentanyl use before coming to The Bridge.

"For the past nine years I was in and out of jail, I was committing crimes, I was lawless," Castillo said. "I didn't have no stop, you know? I was just go, go, go for drugs, for money, all the things of the world that don't matter."

While incarcerated, Castillo met a graduate of Napa's The Bridge program who would visit inmates like Castillo to talk to them about the program and encourage them to participate in it to change their lives.

"For me, this is where God brought me, because God is absolutely real and he brought me out of the hole I was in, he chose me," Castillo said. "If it were up to me, I'd be on the street still doing what I was doing, you know? After I got out of jail, I had a choice you know? It was either I would go and try to change my life or go and try to make it on my own."

Now five months deep into The Bridge Castillo is seeing the benefits that being in a structured, faith-based program can bring. Aside from the vocation training the men receive at the Bridge, they are required to maintain and upkeep the 2,115 square foot west Napa home they reside in.

It's a home that is cleaned meticulously by its residents. The main home features a living room with the home's single TV, which is only allowed to be used for a few hours on the weekends, three bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms, a large back yard and patio area, and a kitchen where Castillo serves up deep-fried potato tacos for his housemates.

Aside from vocational training and daily chores, the men are required to attend Bible study group sessions and participate in devotionals. It's the faith aspect of The Bridge that has kept Castillo and Kadell enrolled in The Bridge, even when the going gets tough.

"That's the difference of this program," Kadell said. "People know, and we definitely know, how hard it is, and we are proud of that. The fact that we can toe the line and remain, persevere. Everyone who's graduated understands that, so they root for you and they love on you, and they pray for you. And keep it together and that's the camaraderie that's between us."

Kadell and Castillo have four months and seven months, respectively, left before graduation and they can choose to move on to Phase 2 of The Bridge, which entails residing in a sober living house where curfews, drug testing and other requirements are imposed, but other requirements such as the vocational training they are required to do in Phase 1 are lifted.

"There is still structure, there are still requirements and things on the guys that over there," Mosley said. "But they do essentially have their own life and go to work and come home and pay rent. We help them with personal finance management and help them when they get to that level."

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Sidebar Podcast: Revisiting a Famous Napa Cold Case Murder

In the latest edition of the Sidebar Podcast, I chat with Assistant District Attorney Paul Gero about Napa's most famous cold case and how it was solved, decades after the murder of Anita Fagiani Howard.

The murder took place on July 10, 1974, and the



Napa County Assistant District Attorney Paul Gero (L) and PIO Carlos Villatoro (R).

bar's owner, Muriel Fagiani, closed the bar, preserving the crime scene as it was on the night of the murder. The bar would become a popular tourist attraction in Napa as it was a monument to Anita Howard.

[Listen to the podcast on the DA's YouTube Channel.](#)

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With the goal of continued sobriety and employment in mind, both men have expressed their desire to continue to Phase 2 of The Bridge.

"What you are looking for when you come to this place is you want the heat off, you want to get sober," Kadell said. "What you receive is love and affection, you receive brothers and placement, and purpose and a job, and hope. Not only in Christ, but in a future."

For more information about The Bridge, [visit their website.](#)

DA Staff Updates



Amy Bailey, Deputy District Attorney III

Amy joins the Napa County District Attorney's Office from the Contra Costa County District Attorney's office, where she prosecuted felony domestic violence offenses and helped form a new wing of the office's law and motion unit.

Amy graduated from California State University, Fullerton where she was honored to represent CSUF on the nationally ranked Moot Court team. During her undergraduate studies, she also proudly represented Team USA at several international figure skating competitions. Amy earned her law degree from

Loyola Law School, Los Angeles. She competed on the nationally-ranked Byrne Trial Advocacy Team and earned the Outstanding Law Student Award by the National Association of Women Lawyers.

Amy began her legal career with a three-year grind in IP litigation, practicing before Federal District Courts across the nation. In her IP practice, Amy won two civil jury trials that reignited her interest in trial work and led her to join the Contra Costa County District Attorney's office. There, she worked her way through several different prosecution units before ultimately helping the office form an Advanced Litigation Unit. Amy is excited to join the Napa DA family. She is honored to be entrusted with the important work of keeping her neighbors safe and safeguarding victims' rights inside the courtroom.



Lisa Sharkey, Deputy District Attorney III

Lisa Sharkey joins the Napa County District Attorney's Office as a Deputy District Attorney III after having worked as a Deputy District Attorney in the Marin County District Attorney's Office and as an Assistant District Attorney in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office before that.

Lisa is a graduate of UCSD, where she studied Biological Anthropology. She attained her law degree from Whittier Law School. Prior to her arrival in the Bay Area, Lisa worked as a prosecutor in Southern California where she was a Deputy City Attorney in Los Angeles City, Hawthorne, and Inglewood. Lisa's expertise in criminal law makes her a welcome addition to the Napa County District Attorney's Office, where she will prosecute a variety of felonies as a member of the office's General Felony Team.

Out & About



VICTIM WITNESS ADVOCATE
COORDINATOR ACADEMY
12/7/2023



SHOP WITH A COP
12/09/2023



ADOPT WITH A DA
DECEMBER 2023



ADOPT WITH A DA
DECEMBER 2023

NAPA DA Case Updates



People V. MV Realty

The Napa County District Attorney's Office joined with the Office of California Attorney General Rob Bonta, and the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office in a consumer protection lawsuit against MV Reality, a Florida-based company that engaged in a predatory scheme to lock vulnerable homeowners into 40-year exclusive listing agreements and placed illegal liens on their homes.

Filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, the lawsuit alleges that nearly 1,500 California homeowners have signed these unlawful agreements with MV Reality, which lured homeowners with an immediate payment of anywhere from a couple hundred to a couple thousand dollars in exchange for being the homeowner's real estate agent should the homeowner sell their home in the future. According to the lawsuit, MV Reality misrepresented the significant downsides of its agreements, including that it places a lien on the homeowner's property that prevents homeowners and their successors from transferring their home without paying MV Reality 3 percent of the home's value, even if the company fails to provide diligent realty services.

MV Reality charges homeowners an illegal 3 percent penalty if they sell their homes without using MV Reality or otherwise cancel their agreement, and refuses to lift its liens unless homeowners pay this illegal penalty. In addition to blocking home transfers, this lien can also impede, delay, or prevent a homeowner from obtaining or refinancing home loans. DDA Patrick Collins is handling this case on behalf of the Napa County District Attorney's Office. Click the link for a [copy of the complaint](#).

People V. Delvón Isarah Bradford

Delvón Isarah Bradford, age 24, is charged with oral copulation of an unconscious person, sexual battery on institutionalized victim, and indecent exposure - unlawful entry. He is additionally charged with the special allegations of vulnerable victim, and increasing seriousness of priors/sustained petitions.

The defendant last appeared in a Napa County Superior Courtroom on December 27, 2023, for an arraignment hearing in which he entered a plea of not guilty to the charges. A jury trial has been set for April 8, 2024 and the case against Mr. Bradford is being handled by DDA Kecia Lind.

People V. Jayro Alexis Esparza

Jayro Alexis Esparza, age 24, is charged with contact with a minor for sexual offense, sending harmful matter, two counts of meeting minor for lewd purposes, two counts of child molesting, furnishing marijuana to a minor over 14, and two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

The defendant last appeared in court on October 18, 2023, for a pre-preliminary examination and examination of a motion to continue the preliminary examination. The Honorable Judge Monique Langhorne granted the continuance and Mr. Esparza is due back in court for a pre-preliminary examination at 9 a.m., on January 4, 2024, in Department 1 of the Napa County Superior Court.

Napa County Deputy District Attorney Kristen Orlando is prosecuting the case against Mr. Esparza on behalf of the People.

People V. Roberto Malimban Antonio

A petition to parole convicted child molester and child pornographer Roberto Malimban Antonio, age 72, was denied by the California Board of Parole Hearings during a November 28, 2023, hearing held via video conference at Valley State Prison.

Mr. Antonio stands convicted of possession of child pornography and failure to register as a sex offender, each charge carrying special allegations of prior convictions for strike offenses. He is currently serving a prison sentence of 50 years to life for those crimes.

Mr. Antonio has a lengthy history of sex crimes against minors and was convicted of lewd acts in San Francisco and Solano counties in 1986 and 1987, respectively. In 1992, Mr. Antonio allegedly kidnapped and raped a 9-year-old Napa girl and evaded law enforcement until his capture in March 2010, when advancements in DNA technology helped identify him as the person responsible for the crimes.

A forensic evaluation of Mr. Antonio's computer at the time of his 2010 arrest, yielded numerous images of child pornography. It was also discovered that Mr. Antonio was using an address that he wasn't residing at to register as a sex offender in violation of the law. He pled to possession of child pornography and failure to register as a sex offender, along with two special allegations of prior strike convictions in May 2011.

To spare the victim from testifying in court and with their full agreement, the Napa County District Attorney's Office dismissed the charges of kidnap and rape against Mr. Antonio, in exchange for his stipulation to a sentence of 50 years to life in prison.

Napa County Deputy District Attorney Kecia Lind and Victim Witness Advocate Alejandra Mendieta-Bedolla were both present at the parole hearing and assisted the victim and her mother in delivering victim impact statements to the Board.

During the hearing Napa County Deputy District Attorney Lind argued against Mr. Antonio's release based on his lengthy criminal history involving multiple convictions of child molestation, his lack of insight into his crimes, the egregious nature of his crimes, and the unreasonable danger he presents to the community should he be paroled.

People V. James Timothy Spencer

A Napa jury convicted James Timothy Spencer, age 49, of prowling and peeping after a multi-week trial that concluded in late November at the Napa County Superior Court. The Honorable Judge James Boessenecker also found that the defendant was in violation of probation.

The jury found true that Mr. Spencer harassed his neighbor over a period of two weeks. In one instance, the defendant walked over to the victim's house, lingered, knocked on the window and peered inside. In two separate instances, Mr. Spencer placed chairs directly under the victim's bedroom and bathroom windows, and knocked and peered through the bedroom window.

The defendant also left behind a \$20 bill under a small cactus placed near the window that was not previously there, and a Barbie Hot Wheels car on top of a chair in front of the victim's garage. The case against Mr. Spencer was prosecuted by DDA Lauren Kownacki. He is scheduled to be in court on January 12, 2024, in Department 4 of the Napa County Superior Court for a sentencing hearing.

People V. Noel Ruben Carreon

A Napa jury convicted Noel Ruben Carreon, age 51, of cruelty to child by inflicting injury, battery, and false imprisonment after an early December trial. In addition, the jury found Mr. Carreon not guilty on a separate charge of false imprisonment and deadlocked on a charge of domestic violence.

The jury found true that the defendant assaulted his minor son at their home after picking him up from a school on January 24, 2022. Napa County Deputy District Attorney Brittney Murray prosecuted the case against the defendant.

Mr. Carreon is due back in court at 9 a.m., January 11, 2024, in Department 3, of the Napa County Superior Court for a sentencing hearing.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

The Napa County District Attorney's Office has a new Podcast!

The Sidebar Podcast will encompass everything pertaining to the work the DA's Office performs on behalf of the People, both in and out of the courtroom. Subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel so you don't miss an upload!



Napa County District Attorney

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