



**CAMDEN COUNTY
PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

INTRODUCTION

In 2024, under the leadership of Prosecutor Grace C. MacAulay, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) continued its mission of ensuring the entire spectrum of criminal activity in the region is addressed uniformly and justly while maintaining a focus on building long-term relationships rooted in trust and respect with our communities.

During 2024, the CCPO was staffed by 280 employees committed to meeting the law enforcement needs of Camden County. These employees are made up of five groups: legal, investigative, agent, victim witness, and clerical.

There were 10,430 adult criminal cases referred to the CCPO in 2024 and approximately 49 percent of these cases were either remanded to municipal court or dismissed. The Office had 2,828 indictments returned in 2024 and resolved 3,064 cases. Of the 3,064 resolutions, 2,586 were resolved by way of plea agreement, 179 cases were dismissed, 271 cases resulted in Pre-Trial Intervention (PTI) admissions, and 28 cases went to trial. Of the 28 trials, there were 20 guilty verdicts and eight not guilty verdicts. This was more than double the number of guilty verdicts secured at trial compared to the prior year.

Detectives from the Homicide Unit responded to 32 homicides in Camden County in 2024, compared to 40 homicides in 2023. In 2024, there were 19 homicides in Camden City, compared to 31 homicides in Camden City in 2023. There were 13 homicides outside of Camden City within Camden County in 2024. Through the hard work and determination of the Detectives and Assistant Prosecutors involved, charges were filed and arrests were made in 20 of the 32 homicides. Additionally, 2 of the 32 were deemed non-criminal homicides. This equates to an approximate 71 percent homicide solve rate in 2024.

The Homicide Unit handled a number of high-profile cases in 2024, including the brutal homicide of a well-respected veterinarian in Cherry Hill. The Homicide Unit also worked closely with the Major Crimes Unit on the arrest of an off-duty NYPD officer who shot another driver on a Voorhees Township roadway.

The Major Crimes Unit continued to pursue justice in a wide variety of crimes in 2024 – from a shooting on the campus of Rutgers University-Camden to the mistreatment of horses in Winslow Township.

In 2024, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office HIDTA Narcotics Task Force made 250 arrests, executed 169 search warrant seized \$1,046,523 in United States currency, 87 firearms and 4 vehicles. The Narcotics Task Force was responsible for seizing \$5,955,447 worth of illegal narcotics.

The year 2024 marked Prosecutor MacAulay's third year serving as the Camden County Prosecutor, having been sworn-in on January 6, 2022, following her 25-year career at the CCPO, including many years with the Special Victims Unit. The Camden County Child Advocacy Center, which is run by the Special Victims Unit, received reaccreditation with the National Children's

Alliance in 2024. The Camden County Child Abduction Response Team (CART) continued to uphold its high standards in 2024 after receiving National Certification from the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College through the United States Department of Justice during the prior year.

In 2024, the Office continued to focus and expand on battling the opioid epidemic, implementing initiatives to protect children from opioids, and using innovative practices to enhance community outreach and engagement by the Office's Community Outreach and Engagement Unit (COE). The COE Unit made significant strides in building trust, enhancing public safety, and strengthening bonds between law enforcement and the community. The Unit actively participated in 45 Camden County Police Department Open Gym events, fostering positive interactions between law enforcement officers and youth in a fun, relaxed environment centered on sports and shared meals. In partnership with local municipalities, the COE Unit hosted 10 R.E.C. (Recognize. Educate. Change.) events, reaching additional youth populations in their own neighborhoods to deepen community ties. Additionally, the COE Unit conducted seven Operation Helping Hand (OHH) outreach events in municipalities across Camden County.

The CCPO High Tech Crimes Unit delivered 35 cyber safety presentations to students, parents, and educators across the county. To protect one of our most vulnerable populations, in partnership with the FBI Philadelphia Division, the Office conducted 21 Elder Fraud Prevention presentations at senior living facilities.

A highlight of the year was the street dedication ceremony held in April 2024 to honor the late CCPO Investigator Jack McLaughlin. In April 1995, Investigator McLaughlin and Haddon Heights Police Department Patrolman John Norcross were shot and killed during a child abuse investigation in Haddon Heights. The latter's brother, retired Haddon Heights Detective Richard Norcross, was wounded, but thankfully survived and spoke at the ceremony. Those visiting the Camden County Prosecutor's Office now travel to the facility on "Investigator Jack McLaughlin Way." This tribute emphasized the CCPO's commitment to honoring those who serve with valor and integrity.

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OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Camden County Prosecutor is the chief law enforcement officer and the Governor's foremost representative in Camden County. Appointed by the Governor to a 5-year term, the Camden County Prosecutor is authorized to use all reasonable and lawful diligence for the detection, arrest, indictment and conviction of offenders against the laws of the State. The State Office of Counterterrorism has also designated the Camden County Prosecutor as the coordinator of counterterrorism efforts for local police departments in Camden County.

Except for certain matters that are handled by the Attorney General's Office, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office oversees all criminal investigations and prosecutions in Camden County.

During 2024, the CCPO was staffed by 280 employees committed to meeting the law enforcement needs of Camden County. These employees are made up of five groups: legal, investigative, agent, victim witness, and clerical. The 2024 break down of personnel is as follows: one Prosecutor, six Upper Management (including one First Assistant Prosecutor, one Chief of Detectives, one Chief of Staff, one Deputy Chief, and two Deputy First Assistant Prosecutors), 80 Assistant Prosecutors, 82 Investigators, 25 Superior Officers, 64 Clerical, 13 Agents, 6 Victim Witness Advocates, 1 Victim Witness Advocate Trainee, one Victim/Witness Coordinator, and one SANE Nurse.

THE OFFICE IS ORGANIZED INTO THE FOLLOWING UNITS:

- **Administration:** Handles budget, personnel, and other administrative matters.
- **Civil Litigation and Records Management:** Handles requests for discovery, applications for expungement of criminal records, Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests, property returns, and asset forfeiture.
- **Community Outreach and Engagement:** Bridges the gap between law enforcement and the community by forming partnerships with community, grass roots, and faith-based organizations.
- **Crime Scene Investigations:** Operates the crime lab, which collects and analyzes physical evidence from crime scenes, including photographs, videos, fingerprints, weapons, ammunition, etc.
- **Domestic Violence:** Investigates and prosecutes domestic violence cases.
- **Grand Jury:** Investigates and prepares cases for presentation to the Grand Jury.
- **High Tech Crimes:** Responsible for utilizing cutting-edge technology to assist in criminal investigations, providing technological resources to detectives and accessing and searching technology that may have been used in the commission of a crime or could contain evidence of a crime, and applies a proactive approach to enforcing child sexual exploitation laws.

- **Homeland Security / Counterterrorism:** Responsible for investigating any terrorism-related threats in Camden County, coordinates counter-terrorism efforts with local police, as well as with the State Office of Counterterrorism, the FBI, and other agencies involved in homeland security, and acts as a liaison to national counterterrorism organizations.
- **Homicide:** Leads all homicide investigations and prosecutions in Camden County.
- **Juvenile:** Investigates and prosecutes cases involving youth under the age of 18.
- **Major Crimes:** Investigates and prosecutes organized crime and certain other serious felonies, responds to suspicious sudden deaths, non-fatal shootings, bank robberies, bias crimes, burglary rings, robberies, sexual assaults, aggravated assaults, arson, adult missing persons, fraud, threats against public officials, threats against police officers, serious crimes that occur in the Camden County Correctional Facility, human trafficking, and also responds when local police departments need assistance with investigations.
- **Megan's Law:** Administers Megan's Law registration of sex offenders who have completed their incarceration terms and prosecutes violations of Megan's Law registration requirements.
- **Motions & Appeals:** Prepares cases for presentation to Appellate panels and the Supreme Court, handles responses to federal court petitions to have state court convictions overturned and municipal court appeals, and handles Centralized First Appearances and Motions for Detention for adult defendants.
- **Narcotics:** Investigates and prosecutes cases involving illegal drug trafficking.
- **Special Prosecutions:** Investigates and prosecutes white-collar crimes and official corruption.
- **Special Victims:** Investigates and prosecutes child abuse and neglect cases.
- **Trial Team:** Receives indicted cases from all investigative units to prosecute.
- **Office of Victim Witness Advocacy:** Provides information, referrals, and assistance to victims of crime and their families, as well as to witnesses in criminal cases.

CIVIL LITIGATION & RECORDS MANAGEMENT UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Civil Litigation and Records Management Unit is responsible for all of the civil and ancillary aspects of criminal prosecution.

PERSONNEL

- Assistant Prosecutors 5
- Administrative Staff 8
- Agent 1 part-time

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EXPUNGEMENTS

The Civil Litigation and Records Management Unit reviews and processes all expungement petitions filed within Camden County, including the voluminous Recovery Court petitions. The expungement statutes have undergone numerous revisions, which have resulted in a dramatic increase in both volume and complexity of filings. The Unit works with members of the Office of the Public Defender and various private attorneys to assist petitioners with the expungement process. The Unit also participates in seminars each year throughout the County to help educate the public and attorneys on the topic. There has been an increase in the number of Expungement Events, during which volunteer attorneys advise and assist applicants in filing expungement petitions, both on-site and on later dates. Each event results in a significant number of additional filings, all on one date, for the unit to review and process.

ASSET FORFEITURE

The Unit is responsible for overseeing all aspects of asset forfeiture for all municipal departments in the County, as well as the Camden County Prosecutor's Office. This civil law practice allows authorities to seize property and money used by arrested persons in furtherance of illegal activity or which constitutes proceeds gained through illegal activity. The Unit appears before the Law Division – Civil Part and Special Civil Part to litigate these forfeitures.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION & RETURN OF PROPERTY

The Unit answers all requests for records and information, all requests for the return of property seized (with the exception of Domestic Violence Weapons), and all subpoenas for civil discovery related to the criminal matters being handled by the office. Requests for information can originate

from members of the public, the press, attorneys involved in related civil litigation, insurance companies, medical centers, and governmental agencies including both state and federal.

OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (OPRA)

The Section Chief and Deputy Section Chiefs of the Unit respond to all requests for information filed pursuant to the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) and Common Law Right of Access. These requests also originate from the various entities noted immediately above. OPRA requires requests be answered within 7 business days.

FILE AND EVIDENCE DISPOSITION

The Unit is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Records Retention and Disposal Act pursuant to New Jersey P.L. 1953, c.410, as amended, as well as the Attorney General's Guidelines on Evidence Retention, and handles all requests related to evidence disposition (i.e., return or destruction) for both the Office and all municipal police departments within the County.

U-VISAS

The Section Chief of the Unit also reviews and certifies U-Visa applications submitted by crime victims for non-immigrant status.

CIVIL LITIGATION INVOLVING CCPO

The Unit assists members of County Counsel and the Attorney General's Office in the handling and monitoring of all civil lawsuits filed against the Camden County Prosecutor's Office or its personnel.

REQUESTS FOR BODY WORN CAMERA

Pursuant to Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2022-1 and the Attorney General's Body Worn Camera Policy, the Unit receives notifications from law enforcement agencies in the County regarding requests for Body Worn Cameras and conducts conflict checks thereon.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT UNIT

OVERVIEW

The mission of the Community Outreach and Engagement Unit (COE) is to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community by forming partnerships with community, grass roots, and faith-based organizations. The Unit is in the community, participating in and sponsoring various community events, and holding community conversations. The Unit is focused on building long term relationships based on a foundation of mutual respect and trust. Through these relationships, the Office will accomplish its goals of prevention, intervention, stabilization, equity, and inclusion.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutor | 1 | • Detectives | 2 |
| • Lieutenant | 1 | • Agent | 1 |

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In 2024, the COE Unit continued to make significant strides in building trust, enhancing public safety, and strengthening bonds between law enforcement and the community. Through a comprehensive range of programs and partnerships, the Unit proactively engaged Camden County residents of all ages, demonstrating our commitment to collaboration, education, and service.

The Unit actively participated in 45 Camden County Police Department Open Gym events, fostering positive interactions between law enforcement officers and youth in a fun, relaxed environment centered on sports and shared meals. In partnership with local municipalities, the Unit hosted 10 R.E.C. (Recognize. Educate. Change.) events, reaching additional youth populations in their own neighborhoods to deepen community ties. The Unit also visited over 20 schools for Storytime sessions, promoting literacy and delivering messages of kindness, education, and positive values to young children.

Public safety education remained a core focus of the Unit. The High-Tech Crime Unit delivered 35 Cyber Safety presentations to students, parents, and educators across the county. These sessions addressed the dangers of social media, cyberbullying, and the importance of responsible online behavior. To protect one of our most vulnerable populations, in partnership with the FBI Philadelphia Division, the Unit conducted 21 Elder Fraud Prevention presentations at senior living facilities, equipping seniors with critical knowledge to safeguard themselves against scams and financial exploitation.

Recognizing the importance of inspiring the next generation, the Unit engaged with the community through 21 Career and Job Fairs. These events provided valuable information about employment opportunities within the Prosecutor's Office and Camden County government, encouraging public service as a rewarding career path.

A highlight of the year was the Street Dedication Ceremony honoring late Investigator John McLaughlin. Held in April 2024, the event commemorated Investigator McLaughlin's dedication and sacrifice, drawing hundreds of law enforcement officers, County officials, and community members. This tribute emphasized the CCPO's commitment to honoring those who serve with valor and integrity.

Beyond external outreach, the CCPO fostered a spirit of giving through multiple internal donation drives, collecting food and winter clothing such as hats, gloves, coats, and scarves for community members in need. These initiatives showcased the compassion and dedication of our staff beyond their professional duties. The Unit took an active role in combating pressing social challenges by participating in events focused on gun violence prevention, the opioid epidemic, wellness and health priorities, and fostering compassion and understanding within the community. These efforts underscore a comprehensive approach to public safety that extends beyond traditional law enforcement.

In sum, throughout 2024, the CCPO maintained strong partnerships with community organizations, schools, faith groups, and municipal entities. Our presence at dozens of community events reinforced our commitment to collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility for a safer Camden County.

OPERATION HELPING HAND (OHH)

In 2024, the COE Unit conducted 7 Operation Helping Hand (OHH) outreach events in municipalities across Camden County. Additionally, during August and September, the COE Unit, through its OHH Program, participated in National Night Out events throughout the County to support individuals affected by substance use disorder. These events were attended by staff from the Office, with support from Maryville, Volunteers of America, and the Camden County Office of Mental Health & Addiction.

The Office's OHH Program continued its mission to assist individuals struggling with substance use disorder and related challenges by employing innovative and creative strategies to connect law enforcement and social service professionals with individuals at risk of overdose or in need of treatment, recovery services or social support. The Office's OHH staff maintained its partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, as well as with the Center for Family Services, which provided Peer Recovery Specialists and essential resources to guide individuals toward appropriate treatment programs. In addition, the Office's OHH Program collaborated with Volunteers of America Delaware Valley to offer wraparound social services. These services supported individuals in need of assistance with housing, obtaining identification, accessing work-related resources, and other support programs.

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Crime Scene Investigations Unit responds to and assists with criminal investigations in Camden County's 36 municipalities.

The Unit is extremely versatile. In addition to responding to all homicide, suicide, and suspicious death investigations county-wide, the Unit also assists municipal police departments in the investigation of a variety of other offenses including sexual assaults, robberies, burglaries, and arsons.

The Unit receives numerous requests each year for other services, including but not limited to, latent fingerprint processing, fingerprint identification and comparison, aerial and surveillance photography, and graphic art production for trial.

PERSONNEL

- Lieutenant 1
- Sergeants 2
- Senior Detectives 2
- Detectives 4
- Agents 2

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Detectives respond to an assortment of cases throughout Camden County and process the scene accordingly. Depending upon the type of case, duties may include photographing and videotaping the scene or an autopsy, marking, collecting and processing physical evidence, preparing 3D scans of the scene, and preparing comprehensive reports. The Office's evidence custodian is also under the command of the Unit's commander.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Domestic Violence Unit investigates and prosecutes indictable domestic violence incidents that occur within Camden County, as well as disorderly person offenses involving violations of restraining orders issued under N.J.S. 2C:25-17, et. seq., the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 1991. In addition, the Unit handles all weapon forfeiture motions involving weapons seized from persons involved in acts of domestic violence, as well as disarming and rearming of law enforcement officers involved in allegations of domestic violence activity. A Detective and an Assistant Prosecutor are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide investigative assistance and legal advice to law enforcement agencies throughout the County. The Unit also provides training to law enforcement officers and law enforcement recruits, contributes to the State and County Domestic Violence Working Groups, and participates in seminars in an effort to educate groups likely to have contact with victims of domestic violence.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutors | 7 | • Sergeant | 1 |
| • Lieutenant | 1 | • Detectives | 5 |
| | | • Clerical | 4 |

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Domestic Violence Unit is devoted to investigating and prosecuting acts of domestic violence. The Unit consists of 7 full time Assistant Prosecutors, one Lieutenant, one Sergeant and 5 Detectives. The Unit investigates acts of domestic violence alleged in the 36 municipalities throughout the County. Both Detectives and Assistant Prosecutors are on call around the clock to respond to calls for investigative assistance and legal advice. The Unit then prepares these cases for prosecution, for presentation to the Grand Jury, and for trial.

The unit is also responsible for investigating and prosecuting violations of restraining orders, criminal contempt under N.J.S. 2C:29-9b, and civil weapons forfeiture actions pursuant to 2C:25-21 in Superior Court, Family Division. The Section Chief of the Domestic Violence Unit litigates civil weapons forfeiture actions involving weapons seized from persons involved in acts of domestic violence and makes decisions regarding the disarming and rearming of law enforcement personnel involved in allegations of domestic violence under the jurisdiction of the Office who are alleged to have been involved in acts of domestic violence.

The Section Chief and Deputy Section Chief of the unit participate in the Statewide Domestic Violence Working Group. The Section Chief, Deputy Section Chief, and Sergeant participate in the Camden County Domestic Violence Working Group.

Each Assistant Prosecutor within the Unit is responsible for maintaining both pre- and post-indictment caseloads. The Assistant Prosecutors are responsible for handling all pretrial detention motions and hearings, pre-indictment hearings, grand jury presentment, post-indictment hearings, post-indictment motions to dismiss, as well as trials and sentencing.

Successful prosecution of domestic violence offenses is often difficult because victims are likely to reconcile with their abuser for any number of reasons and subsequently, they often recant. The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 1991, N.J.S. 2C:25-17, et. seq., mandates arrest in incidents where there is probable cause to believe an offense has been committed and the victim displays visible injuries, as well as when there is probable cause to believe that a Domestic Violence Restraining Order has been violated.

The Unit follows a protocol of evidence-based prosecution, allowing for the prosecution of an abuser even in cases where the victim refuses to cooperate. To accomplish this objective, it is essential all admissible evidence be obtained while it is still available, such as photographs of injuries and the crime scene, identifying any independent witnesses and obtaining taped statements from them and securing 911 recordings and all available video surveillance, medical records, phone records, and social media materials. Without these investigative efforts, hundreds of cases involving violence between intimate partners and household members would be dismissed for lack of evidence.

Studies show society pays a high price for tolerance of domestic violence. Domestic Violence results in increases in the rates of truancy, drug addiction, alcoholism, and suicide among children growing up in abusive homes. Studies show these children often grow up to be abusers themselves. In response to this, the Office has devoted valuable resources to combat this problem through thorough investigation and prosecution. To that end, the Unit often provides education and training to police departments, recruits at the police academy, and the community in general.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. BRANDON FICKENSCHER

On March 7, 2024, Waterford Township Police responded to the victim's home regarding her ex-boyfriend Brandon Fickenschler refusing to leave. The victim disclosed to officers that the defendant had previously sexually assaulted her, strangled her, restrained her, and was coercing her to have continued contact with him. It was determined that the defendant had sexually assaulted the victim numerous times. Upon further investigation it was determined that the defendant had also sexually a second and third victim. The second and third victims reported a similar pattern of abuse and control, including having been sexually assaulted. Detectives searched the defendant's residence and his cell phone and found evidence corroborating what the victims reported. As a result, the defendant was charged with first-degree Aggravated Sexual Assault, second-degree Aggravated Assault, third-degree Criminal Restraint, and various weapons offenses as it relates to the first and second victims. The defendant was ordered detained pending trial and all 3 victims were granted Final Restraining Orders against the defendant.

STATE V. JOHN RUSSO

In October 2024, John Russo was served with a restraining order which prohibited him from having contact with the victim. Investigation revealed that after having been served with the restraining order the defendant then went to the victim's residence and made entry by smashing a glass door. He then forced the victim and their young child to exit the residence and enter his car, eventually arriving at a grocery store in Lawnside, New Jersey. As the result of a 911 call, officers responded to the grocery store and found the defendant holding the victim at knife point and the victim was hold their young child. Ultimately the hostage situation was resolved when the victim broke free from the defendant and officers were able to restrain the defendant. As a result, the defendant was charged with first-degree Kidnapping, second-degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child, third-degree Witness Tampering, and various weapons offenses. The defendant was ordered detained pending trial.

GRAND JURY UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Grand Jury Unit is the starting point for the majority of the cases that are referred to the Camden County Prosecutor's Office. In 2024, 10,430 cases were referred to the Prosecutor's Office for review at Centralized Judicial Processing (CJP) and the Unit reviewed approximately 58 percent of these cases. Approximately 49 percent were referred for pre-indictment resolutions and presentation to the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury Unit Assistant Prosecutors downgraded or remanded approximately 49 percent of all cases and dismissed less than 1 percent at CJP. The Grand Jury Unit handled approximately 57 percent of all the cases referred for prosecution by the Office after the CJP stage.

The Grand Jury Unit continues the investigation into complaints that are filed in the 36 municipalities in the County, as well as from informal referrals from the Board of Social Services, Department of Health and Senior Services, escapes from correctional institutions, absconding from Parole, and citizen generated complaints. The Unit does not, as a general rule, initiate independent investigations on its own.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutors | 7 | • Agents | 2 |
| • Sergeants | 1 | • Clerical | 7 |
| • Detectives | 8 | | |

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In general, every criminal complaint, whether on a summons or a warrant, issued within Camden County is sent electronically from a municipal police department to CJP. The municipal departments then scan their police reports directly into the Office's Infoshare case management system. This electronic screening program enables Assistant Prosecutors to make the initial screening decision within days (sometimes hours) after a defendant's arrest. Assistant Prosecutors evaluate the strength of each case and make the decision as to whether to refer the case for further investigation, downgrade the case and return it to the municipality or dismiss the matter.

Once an Assistant Prosecutor makes the screening decision electronically and refers the case to the Grand Jury Unit, the Unit Sergeant assigns each case to a member of the investigative staff. The Detectives and Agents review the reports, follow-up and supplement the investigation as needed, and obtain all statements, documents, photographs, and videos. They ensure that reports and statements are available prior to the Pre-Indictment Conference (PIC) so that meaningful

negotiations can occur. PIC dates are automatically assigned by the Court at CFA/CJP. PIC is the next stage in the judicial process. PIC provides an opportunity for a case to be disposed of early in the criminal justice process and it is held every Wednesday in Superior Court with approximately 80 to 100 cases scheduled. The Assistant Prosecutors review each case and make a plea offer for each scheduled defendant. In 2024, 139 accusations were filed on pre-indictment matters, which remains far below the pre-pandemic number of 635 accusations filed on pre-indictment matters in 2019.

The Unit's investigative and clerical staff play an important role in both CJP and PIC events. When victims contact the Office regarding CJP dates, the clerical staff informs them of the disposition of the matter and explains the process to them. They also track files throughout the process of PIC. Detectives generate letters to notify victims of the PIC date. All discovery is made available online to defense counsel for PIC through an electronic portal. Additionally, the clerical staff creates and sends out any discovery that must be in CD format to defense counsel in advance of PIC.

When a case is deemed appropriate for prosecution and does not resolve through either a pre-indictment plea or by admission to an alternative program, it is then completed by the Detective staff and an Assistant Prosecutor prepares the case for presentation to the Grand Jury. Clerical personnel schedule the matter and send out subpoenas for Grand Jury presentment. Currently, Grand Jury panels sit 4 days per week for 20 weeks. Pursuant to the Criminal Justice Reform Act, pre-indictment cases involving detained defendants must be indicted within 90 days of detention. If the State fails to do so, the Court must release the defendant from the jail.

Assistant Prosecutors present the cases to the Grand Jury, where officers from around the County, as well as our Detectives and Agents, are called to testify. If the Grand Jury returns a True Bill, the clerical staff generates the formal indictments. The indictments are reviewed by the Assistant Prosecutors and then the clerical staff coordinates the filing of the Indictments with Court personnel. Indictments are matters of public record and are frequently the subject of news releases by the Office. If the Grand Jury returns a No Bill, the matter is administratively dismissed, and the clerical staff notifies all appropriate agencies and interested parties.

The Grand Jury Unit is also responsible for handling the numerous pretrial motions filed by defense counsel. Probable Cause Motions and Motions to Dismiss are all handled by the Assistant Prosecutors in the Unit. They also handle requests for discovery and provide legal advice to state and local police departments as needed. After cases have proceeded through indictment, the matter is scheduled for post-indictment court appearances, and the prosecution of the case is transferred to the Trial Team Unit.

Another program that is administered by the Grand Jury Unit is the Pre-trial Intervention Program (PTI). PTI is intended to provide first-time, non-violent offenders with the opportunity to avoid the stigma of a criminal prosecution by diverting them prior to a finding of guilt. Those defendants agree to conditions of up to 3 years probation, fines, and community service and, if successful, the charge is ultimately dismissed. Grand Jury Unit Assistant Prosecutors are responsible for appearing at any hearings to argue appeals on denials of entry into the program, terminations from the program, and issues of restitution to the victims. In addition, the Assistant Prosecutors are also responsible for composing detailed letters to defendants regarding their acceptance into or

rejection from PTI. In 2024, there were 445 applicants for PTI, with approximately 55 percent being accepted into the program.

The Veterans Diversion Program (VDP) is also overseen and administered by the Grand Jury Unit. The purpose of this program is to identify eligible Veterans at their earliest contact with the criminal justice system and to provide them with vital services and support through a treatment based early intervention program. This program is open to any Veteran or active-duty military person who suffers from mental illness and is charged with specific non-violent offenses, including petty disorderly persons offenses and/or crimes of the third and fourth degree. The VDP includes supervision and monitoring of the Veteran's treatment by an approved treatment provider, the Veteran's Administration (VA), the Camden County Prosecutor's Office and a volunteer mentor. Participants must meet all diversion requirements to remain in the VDP, and the program must be successfully completed within 2 years of the date of the diversion. Participants who successfully complete the program, continue to make progress with mental health and/or substance abuse treatment, and have not been subject to any subsequent criminal charges, shall have their charges dismissed.

The Grand Jury Unit also administers the Recovery Court Programs – both Juvenile and Adult. Approximately 318 defendants applied for Recovery Court in 2024 and approximately 182 (57 percent) were accepted into the program. The Assistant Prosecutor assigned to Recovery Court coordinates alternative pleas, Recovery Court sentences and Violations of Probation. This same Assistant Prosecutor attends all Recovery Court team evaluations, weekly monitoring sessions, and state-wide meetings on behalf of Camden County.

The CCPO also now has a Mental Health Diversion Program (MHDP). This program is a prosecutor led program that represents the collaboration between the Office, the Superior Court, the Office of the Public Defender, Camden County Probation, Oaks Integrated Care, and other various community and system partners. The mission of this innovative program is divert eligible and clinically appropriate defendants with serious mental health issues away from the traditional criminal justice system and connect them with community based case management and mental health services in lieu of formal prosecution. By doing so the program addresses the specialized needs of the program participants, thereby promoting public safety, while simultaneously lowering incarceration and recidivism rates. Participants develop and maintain the resources necessary to achieve long term mental health stability in the community.

HIGH TECH CRIMES UNIT

OVERVIEW

We currently reside in an era dominated by digital technology that is constantly evolving. The use of computers and cellular devices has become ingrained in the daily lives of law-abiding citizens, as well as in the illegal activities of criminals. In this digital age, computers and cell phones have become the new crime scenes, where a simple text message can be just as crucial as a fingerprint.

In the past, investigations involving technology and forensic examinations of electronic evidence were handled by detectives on a case-by-case basis. However, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office recognized the need for a specialized unit to effectively manage the growing workload of these criminal investigations, leading to the creation of the High-Tech Crimes Unit.

Since its establishment in 2012, the Unit has been dedicated to combating the surge in computer-related crimes in Camden County. A significant portion of the Unit's efforts have been focused on addressing the production, distribution, and possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). Through proactive investigations, including the use of undercover officers in online chat rooms, the Unit has successfully recovered crucial digital evidence from the computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices utilized by these criminals.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutors | 2 | • Detectives | 5 |
| • Captain | 1 | • Agents | 1 |
| • Lieutenant | 1 | • Task Force Officer | 1 |
| • Sergeant | 1 | | |

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

INVESTIGATIONS

The Unit provides digital forensic support for all law enforcement agencies and investigates technology-related crimes within the County. This includes internet fraud, CSAM investigations, undercover chat operations, network intrusions, and email breaches.

FORENSICS

The Unit offers support to all law enforcement agencies in Camden County and assists all units in the Office with the search and seizure of digital evidence. The Unit conducts thorough examinations and analysis of computers, cellphones, and vehicle infotainment systems, using

cutting-edge tools and techniques. Specializing in computer evidence recovery, detectives in the Unit are responsible for retrieving photos, documents, text messages and videos from electronic devices, even if the data appears to have been deleted.

VIDEO RECOVERY

The Unit gathers and processes recovered video of crime scenes, such as images captured from surveillance cameras. Video or images can then be enhanced with the assistance of editing and visual/audio enhancement software.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The Unit conducts lectures for law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, community groups, and administrators on topics such as cybercrime, internet safety, and proper techniques of electronic evidence seizure, often through the outreach efforts of the Office's Community Outreach and Engagement Unit.

ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE

The Unit provides technical assistance and electronic surveillance equipment to the Office's detectives and other state and federal law enforcement agencies. This assistance also extends to matters related to the creation and maintenance of electronic surveillance operations.

ELECTRONIC SCENT DETECTION (ESD) K9

K9 Rookie, the CCPO Electronic Scent Detection (ESD) K9, is an invaluable resource in the recovery of electronic devices that may contain CSAM or other evidence of a crime. K9 Rookie completed the intensive 14 week training program at the New Jersey State Police K9 Academy and undergoes regular recertifications. K9 Rookie is trained to locate the scent of electronic storage devices including cell phones, hard drives, USB drives, and SD cards. As such, K9 Rookie plays a critical role in the execution of CSAM search warrants. K9 Rookie is 1 of only 3 certified ESD K9s in New Jersey.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Unit collaborates with outside agencies, including the New Jersey State Police's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, to conduct proactive investigations using advanced technology to identify individuals suspected of collecting, possessing, and distributing Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) online. Detectives obtain information through subpoenas, author sensitive search warrants, serve those search warrants, and recover evidence related to suspected CSAM traffickers.

Since December 2015, the Unit has handled national complaints reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, identifying internet activity that poses a threat to children in

Camden County. The Unit also conducts proactive investigations into social media platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, Kik, and other popular carriers used for exploiting children in today's society.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. TYLER KADEMIAN

A Detective working in an undercover capacity in Minnesota established a public Kik chat room. New users were required to verify in a manner which could be used to aid in their identification (a live video or photograph). Tyler Kademian provided a verification video and he was removed from the group and accused of being associated with law enforcement. In response, the defendant sent the undercover Detective a live photograph of his penis and a short video depicting CSAM. The defendant was identified as a paid fireman with a residence in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. A search warrant was executed at the defendant's residence and the Kik application was located on the defendant's iPhone, which also contained CSAM. The defendant resigned from his position as a fireman and pled guilty pre-indictment to third-degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child in exchange for a recommended sentence of 3 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison. The Judge reduced the sentence to 18 months incarceration New Jersey State Prison pursuant to a Warren argument made by defense counsel.

STATE V. BO BRANSTETTER

A Detective from the Unit, working in an undercover capacity, posed as a 14-year-old female high school student on the Whisper application. The undercover Detective was contacted via the private chat feature of Whisper by someone who identified himself as a 25-year-old man. They exchanged phone numbers and began texting each other. During the course of the conversation, the defendant turned the conversation sexual in nature and sent the undercover Detective multiple photos of his penis. Additionally, the defendant sent the undercover Detective photos of his face. Investigation confirmed that the telephone number provided by the defendant belonged to defendant Bo Branstetter and his identity was confirmed using the picture he provided and his driver's license photo on file. The defendant requested to meet with the undercover Detective in person for sexual purposes. The defendant requested that the undercover Detective bring an undergarment that he could keep and in exchange he would provide the undercover Detective with a t-shirt. They agreed to meet at Cooper River Park in Pennsauken, New Jersey, for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity. Upon arriving at the meet location, the defendant was arrested and found to be in possession of condoms and 2 t-shirts. As a result, the defendant was charged with second-degree Luring, third-degree Attempted Endangering the Welfare of a Child, third-degree Attempted Sending Obscene Materials, and fourth-degree Attempted Criminal Sexual Contact. The matter is pending presentation to the Grand Jury.

HOMICIDE UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Homicide Unit is the lead agency for all investigations into suspicious deaths and homicides that occur within Camden County. The Unit also oversees the Crash Response Investigations Team (CRIT), which investigates and reviews fatal and near-fatal traffic collisions throughout the County. The Unit also prosecutes and oversees prosecutions of criminal homicide cases, including murder, aggravated manslaughter, reckless manslaughter, and vehicular homicide.

PERSONNEL

- Assistant Prosecutors 3
- Lieutenant 1
- Sergeants 3
- Detectives 8
- Clerical 2

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Homicide Detectives respond to sudden deaths when there is obvious or potential criminal conduct. They conduct the initial and follow-up investigations in tandem with local police Detectives. In the post-investigative stages of the prosecution, they testify before the Grand Jury, assist the attorneys with trial preparation and testify at trial. Homicide Detectives work closely with municipal Detectives as well as Detectives from other units, such as the Crime Scene Investigations Unit. Detectives also review unsolved homicides that may be suitable for follow-up investigation. These cases are evaluated for solvability factors, such as potential for additional/new DNA analysis.

Homicide Unit Assistant Prosecutors provide legal advice and guidance to homicide investigations throughout Camden County. Assistant Prosecutors review search warrant and communications data warrant applications, consensual intercepts, and must approve the filing of charges in all the county's homicide cases. They also review investigations into fatal and near-fatal traffic collisions throughout the County. Assistant Prosecutors handle the pre-trial proceedings of homicide cases, including those involving juveniles charged with homicide offenses. Assistant Prosecutors also carry a caseload of post-indictment homicide cases. They work closely with the Victim-Witness Unit.

The Homicide Unit's clerical personnel are responsible for administrative functions, record keeping and record storage. They are also responsible for transcribing audio and video recorded statements of witnesses and defendants. Clerical personnel help Assistant Prosecutors to prepare cases for trial and send out subpoenas for trials handled by the Unit.

In 2024, the Homicide Unit conducted 32 homicide investigations and 18 sudden-death investigations in Camden County. Of the 32 reported homicides, 19 were committed in the City of Camden and 13 were committed in other municipalities (2 in Gloucester Township, 1 in Lindenwold, 1 in Somerdale, 1 in Mount Ephraim, 1 in Pennsauken, 1 in Lawnside, 1 in Voorhees, 1 in Pine Hill, 1 in Runnemede, 2 in Cherry Hill, and 1 in Gloucester City). Charges were filed in 20 of the 32 homicide investigations, and 2 of the 32 were deemed non-criminal homicide. Of those 32 homicide investigations, there were 20 shootings, 5 blunt trauma deaths, 3 stabbings, and 4 deaths by auto. To date, 23 defendants have been charged with criminal homicide offenses from incidents occurring in 2024. All open and unsolved cases from 2023, and prior years, continue to be investigated. In 2024, CRIT investigated and reviewed 89 motor-vehicle collisions, 37 of these collisions were fatal and 52 involved serious bodily injury.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE v. LESURE FUNARI

On November 28, 2021, officers responded to a reported shooting on Louis Avenue in Camden City. Upon arrival, officers located the 29-year-old victim who had sustained multiple gunshot wounds and was ultimately pronounced deceased. Detectives learned that the shooter had emerged from a vehicle and shot the victim as he was in the process of purchasing a pair of sneakers. At the conclusion of the investigation, Lesure Funari was charged with first-degree Murder and weapons offenses in connection with the victim's death. Trial on those charges commenced in May of 2024 and resulted in a verdict of guilty on all counts. The defendant was sentenced to an aggregate term of 60 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison.

STATE v. CRISTIAN CUSTODIO-AQUINO

On December 10, 2024, shortly after 7:00 a.m., police officers responded to a residence in Cherry Hill, New Jersey for a report of an injured male. Upon arrival, officers located the victim, who had sustained multiple penetrating wounds and was unresponsive on the front yard of the residence. He was subsequently pronounced deceased. Detectives investigated the homicide over the following months and, on February 7, 2025, charged defendant Cristian Custodio-Aquino with first-degree Murder in connection with Dr. Anthony's death. The matter is pending trial in the Superior Court.

STATE v. HIEU TRAN

On May 17, 2024, shortly after 11:00 p.m., police officers responded to a multi-vehicle crash in Voorhees. Upon arrival, officers found the victim seated in one of the vehicles. The victim had sustained a single gunshot wound and was transported to Cooper Hospital, where he was reported to be in critical and unstable condition. Detectives investigated the shooting over the following weeks and, on June 6, 2024, charged defendant Hieu Tran with first-degree Attempted Murder. Tran was an off-duty NYPD officer and testing revealed that his service weapon fired the gunshot that struck the victim. The matter is pending trial in the Superior Court.

JUVENILE UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Juvenile Unit handles offenses committed by persons who have not yet reached their 18th birthday as of the date of the commission of the charged offense. Most of the Unit's cases consist of charges that have been filed by one of the local municipal police departments or by another Unit of the Office, including but not limited to the Special Victims, Major Crimes and Narcotics Units. The primary responsibilities of the Unit include pre-screening, investigating, and prosecuting juvenile cases. The secondary responsibilities include responding to requests for assistance from municipal police departments, providing legal advice, offering instruction and training to members of law enforcement, and educating the public on the juvenile justice system.

The Unit is also tasked with fulfilling the core functions of preparing and prosecuting cases, but the Unit must also be proactive. The Unit partners with other investigative units within the Office and local law enforcement agencies to offer assistance and conduct joint investigations. The staff members also work hand-in-hand with the Office's Intelligence Services Unit to gather, share, and disseminate information necessary to combat violent juvenile gang crimes.

On December 3, 2020, the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General issued Directive No. 2020-12, which established policies, practices, and procedures to promote Juvenile Justice Reform. This Directive became effective on January 11, 2021. This Directive set forth 5 mechanisms that are available to police officers and prosecutors to divert youth from the juvenile justice system. The Directive lists these mechanisms as follows: Curbside Warnings, Stationhouse Adjustments, use of complaint-summons in lieu of complaint-warrants, presumption against pre-trial juvenile detention, and post-charge diversion by Assistant Prosecutors. This directive emphasizes that police and Assistant Prosecutors should start with the presumption that diverting juveniles, whenever possible, out of the juvenile justice system is best, as long as the diversion promotes accountability, advances the juvenile's rehabilitation, and does not pose a safety risk to the community. As a result of this focus on diversion, many more cases have been diverted and far fewer cases have been handled on the formal calendar.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutors | 5 | • Clerical Staff | 2 |
| • Detectives | 4 | • Victim Witness Advocates | 1 |
| • Sergeants | 1 | | |

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Juvenile Unit Assistant Prosecutors are tasked with a variety of responsibilities. They review cases for pretrial conferences, detention hearings, probable cause hearings, dispositions, and trials. They appear in court for all formal juvenile proceedings. If needed, they revise original charges to place each case in the proper legal framework for court proceedings, including trial. The Assistant Prosecutors negotiate the resolution of their assigned cases and they provide legal advice to law enforcement officers throughout the County. The Assistant Prosecutors are tasked with preparing and arguing motions, which include motions for waiver to adult Criminal Court. They frequently call victims to discuss the cases and to get their input. In addition, the Section Chief teaches at the Police Academy and also conducts training sessions for the police on juvenile issues. The Section Chief also attends and participates in various court and community organization meetings and committees relevant to juvenile justice issues.

The Juvenile Unit Detectives pre-screen cases to make the determination whether the case should be placed on the formal list or diverted to the informal list. They also complete investigative tasks necessary to prepare a case for full prosecution. They do this by obtaining all reports, discovery and evidence for court proceedings. If needed, the Detectives locate witnesses, interview them, and take recorded statements. The Detectives also instruct members of law enforcement on juvenile procedures and updates, and they also visit schools to do presentations to the students about the juvenile justice system. They work side-by-side with law enforcement to investigate and deter offenses, giving special attention to school threats and violent offenses.

The Juvenile Unit clerical staff are responsible for various administrative functions which require knowledge of the juvenile justice legal system. These tasks include preparing subpoenas and sending them accordingly to ensure effective service. They also type all forms of correspondence and draft various letters. They review all files for mandatory school notifications pursuant to 2A:4A-60 and 2C:43-5.1 and prepare the letters accordingly. These clerical personnel answer and direct all phone calls within the Unit. They also comply with Expungement Orders by deleting all information pertaining to juveniles whose records were expunged. In addition, they provide support to Assistant Prosecutors, Detectives and the Victim Witness Advocate in all aspects of their respective job requirements.

The Victim Witness Advocate has numerous responsibilities within the Unit pertaining to victims and witnesses. The Advocate sends notification letters to victims and also prepares restitution summaries. The Advocate is also responsible for responding to all victim and witness inquiries and educates victims and witnesses on juvenile court processes. Additionally, the Advocate accompanies victims and witnesses to Court and assists victims with applications to VCCO.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE IN THE INTEREST OF D.B.

On May 13, 2022, at approximately 3:01 p.m. in Camden City, New Jersey officers were flagged down by a bystander who informed them that shots were heard and that a male may have been

shot. The police located a 17-year-old victim who had been shot in the back. The victim was transported to Cooper Hospital for treatment. Investigation revealed that the victim met with juvenile D.B. to engage in a mutual fight in the park across from Camden High School. However, upon arrival at the park the victim noticed that juvenile D.B. was armed with a gun and as such the victim refused to engage in the fight. As the victim was walking away, juvenile D.B. shot the victim in the back. As a result, juvenile D.B. was charged with first-degree Attempted Murder and various weapons offenses. Juvenile D.B. pled to second-degree Aggravated Assault and received a disposition of 5 years juvenile incarceration in the Jamesburg Training School.

STATE IN THE INTEREST OF E.W.

On May 30, 2023, at approximately 10:06 p.m., Camden County Police Communications advised officers of a 7 round ShotSpotter activation in the area of Ferry Avenue in Camden City, New Jersey. Upon arrival at the scene, bystanders directed the officers to the entrance of an apartment complex. Officers found 3 victims who had all been shot and all 3 were transported to Cooper Hospital for treatment. Officers were able to obtain video surveillance from the area of the shooting. The video surveillance and investigation revealed that, as the result of a verbal dispute, juvenile E.W. exited the building with a firearm and shot all 3 victims. As a result, juvenile E.W. was charged with 3 counts of first-degree Attempted Murder and various weapons offenses. Juvenile E.W. subsequently admitted to 3 counts of first-degree Attempted Murder, 1 count of second-degree Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, and a Violation of Probation and received a disposition of 13 years and 6 months juvenile incarceration in the Jamesburg Training School.

MAJOR CRIMES / HOMELAND SECURITY UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Major Crimes Unit is responsible for investigating and prosecuting a wide variety of criminal offenses committed upon people and property. In general, the Unit functions as a reinforcement detective bureau to all law enforcement agencies operating in the County. The Unit's Assistant Prosecutors provide legal supervision on cases, as well as legal advice, subpoena preparation, review of Communications Data Warrants, Search Warrants, Dyal subpoenas, and approval for Consensual Authorizations for outside law enforcement agencies. Due to the complexity of the cases, the Assistant Prosecutors utilize vertical prosecution from charging to sentencing. The Assistant Prosecutors also assist out-of-state agencies with search warrant reviews, Material Witness Petitions, and out-of-state subpoenas for material evidence.

The Unit provides around the clock investigative response to non-fatal shootings, bank robberies, stabbings, burglary rings, robberies, sexual assaults, aggravated assaults, missing persons, threats against public officials, threats against police officers, serious crimes that occur in the Camden County Correctional Facility, and fraud. The Unit also investigates and prosecutes environmental crimes, animal cruelty, bias crimes, career criminals, fugitives, and human trafficking. The Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Major Crimes Unit also provide legal advice to the Camden County Police Department Shooting Response Team (SRT). SRT Detectives investigate all non-fatal shootings that occur in the City of Camden, as well as robberies and arsons.

The Unit's Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives are required to be on call 24/7. The Unit is responsible for fugitive matters, including but not limited to, setting extradition limits, properly identifying people to be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), preparing Governor's Warrants for fugitives who refuse to waive extradition, waivers and orders for out of state fugitives, and facilitating Interstate Agreements on Detainers (IAD).

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutors | 4 | • Sergeants | 1 |
| • Detectives | 7 | • Support Staff | 2 |

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Major Crimes Detectives conduct initial and follow up investigations with respect to a variety of crimes including, but not limited to, attempted murder, bank robberies, robberies, sexual assaults, missing persons, kidnapping, arsons, financial crimes, bias crimes, human trafficking, environmental crimes, weapons trafficking, and animal cruelty. Major Crimes Detectives and Assistant Prosecutors work collaboratively in determining the course of investigations and which

legal procedures need to be followed. In the post-investigative stages of the prosecution, the Unit Detectives testify before the Grand Jury, assist with trial preparation, and testify at trial. Major Crimes Detectives also work collaboratively with municipal Detectives, as well as Detectives from other units, such as the Juvenile Unit and the Crime Scene Unit. The Major Crimes Unit also has 1 detective assigned as a task force officer to the FBI and there are 4 Detectives assigned to assist Homeland Security Investigations.

Major Crimes Assistant Prosecutors provide legal assistance and guidance to the Major Crimes detectives. The Assistant Prosecutors also provide legal assistance and guidance to all 36 municipal police departments as well as New Jersey State Police, Camden County Sheriff's Department, Delaware Porta Authority Police, Rutgers University Police, Human Services Police, and New Jersey Transit Police. This legal assistance and guidance include reviewing search warrants, communications data warrants, subpoenas, and determining if probable cause exist for charging. Assistant Prosecutors also review extradition matters. Assistant Prosecutors prepare and present cases to the Grand Jury and argue detention motions before Superior Court Judges. Major Crimes Unit Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives are also the primary liaison between local, state, and federal agencies to ensure there is a coordinated response for assignments from the Pennsylvania and New Jersey United States Attorneys' Office Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council, Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force, Department of Homeland Security, and New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

The Major Crimes Unit's clerical staff are responsible for administrative functions, including triaging phone calls from municipal detectives who need to speak to either a Major Crimes Detective or Assistant Prosecutor. They also prepare and coordinate extradition requests and requests for Governor's Warrants. Clerical staff are also responsible for transcribing audio and video recorded statements of witnesses and defendants. They also prepare Accusations and Indictments and send out subpoenas for trials handled by the Unit.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. MALCOM JORDAN

In February of 2024, the Major Crimes Unit responded to a shooting hit that occurred on the campus of Rutgers University in Camden City, New Jersey. The victim walked into Cooper Hospital suffering from gunshot wounds. Unit Detectives and Rutgers University officers conducted a collaborative investigation, which revealed that Malcom Jordan was the shooter. As a result, the defendant was charged with first-degree Attempted Murder and various weapons offenses. The defendant was subsequently arrested in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by the United States Marshals Service. The defendant pled guilty to third-degree Aggravated Assault and was sentenced to 4 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison.

STATE V. CHRISTOPHER HYATT

In June of 2024, the Major Crimes Unit responded to a bank robbery that occurred at the Truist Bank located on the White Horse Pike in Lawnside, New Jersey. Investigation revealed that

Christopher Hyatt entered the bank and handed the teller a demand note, while intimating that he had a weapon. The defendant received a sum of U.S. Currency and fled the bank. Investigation As a result, the defendant was charged with first-degree Robbery. The defendant was subsequently arrested by the Deptford Township Police officers while he was attempting to commit the robbery of the Fulton Bank in Deptford Township (Gloucester County), New Jersey. This matter is pending in Superior Court.

MEGAN'S LAW UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Megan's Law Unit is responsible for implementing Megan Law's in Camden County. This includes overseeing sex offender registration, determining risk notification, handling court hearings, and conducting subsequent community notifications. The Unit also investigates and prosecutes registrants who are not in compliance with registration obligations.

Currently, the Unit oversees approximately 3,516 sex offender files. In 2024, the Unit sent more than 1,500 notifications to schools, day cares, and community organizations. The Unit prosecuted more than 120 individuals for Megan's Law and Community Supervision for Life violations. Currently, the Unit has 1,287 open cases of registered sex offenders. An average of 12 new cases are opened monthly, reflecting newly registered sex offenders living in the County. Camden County currently has the second highest number of registered sex offenders in the State. There were 2,032 re-registrations in 2024, reflecting the transitory nature of this population. Since the creation of the Sex Offender Internet Registry, the Unit has posted 896 offenders on the internet.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutor | 1 | • Sergeant | 1 |
| • Detective | 1 | • Clerical | 2 |

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Unit's Assistant Prosecutor determines the risk posed by convicted sex offenders and presents evidence at court hearings for initial and amended Megan's Law notifications. The Unit Assistant Prosecutor determines the scope of community notification and whether internet publication is appropriate. This also includes responding to Removal Motions from Community and Parole Supervision for Life requirements as well as Megan's Law registration requirement. The Unit conducted 189 tier hearings in 2024 and opened 204 new files.

The Unit's Assistant Prosecutor reviews investigations of instances of individuals who are not in compliance with Megan's Law registration requirements and when appropriate, indicts and prosecutes those individuals. The Unit works with designated New Jersey State Parole officers to investigate and prosecute violations of Community and Parole Supervision for Life requirements. The Unit Assistant Prosecutor approves all warrants that issue on these charges, as well as argues the initial detention hearings.

The Unit's Detective oversees sex offender registration and processes re-registrations from all of the County's municipalities and the Human Services Police. The Detective and the local police departments coordinate community notifications. In 2024, CCPO Detectives conducted six door-

to-door (Tier III) community notifications and served 199 individual Tier II notifications to the County schools and community groups. The Unit Detective also verifies addresses for offenders released from prison and investigates individuals who may not be following the registration requirements. The Detective personally serves all offenders in the County with documents required for court hearings. The Unit maintains an internal sex offender database and works with the New Jersey State Police to update the Sex Offender Internet Registry.

The clerical staff prepares all documentation to be served to offenders in advance of court hearings. The staff also prepares court orders, notification fliers, and notification maps. They update and maintain databases for schools, daycares and community organizations, and coordinate notifications with those agencies via local and municipal police departments. The Unit responds to inquiries about Megan's Law from the public and law enforcement. It also conducts information sessions with community groups and police departments upon request.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

THE MATTER OF REGISTRANT S.S.

S.S. was convicted of Endangering the Welfare of a Child on February 19, 2010, and sentenced to 3 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison. On the same date, S.S. was also sentenced on 3 counts of Sexual Assault committed upon 3 separate victims and S.S. received a concurrent sentence of 18 years New Jersey State Prison, 85 percent to be served without parole under the No Early Release Act. The Endangering the Welfare of a Child conviction was the result of S.S. have penetrated the first victim, a 15-year-old female child, while she slept. The sexual assaults occurred on various dates from October 2007 through April 2008 and all 3 of these sexual assaults were committed upon victims who did not know S.S., they were strangers. The second victim was an 18-year-old female who was walking home from high school when she was grabbed by the neck and punched by S.S., and then S.S. forcibly penetrated the victim. The third victim was an 18-year-old female who was walking home from work when she was punched by S.S., S.S. then put his hand over her mouth, forced her to a secluded area, and then S.S. forcibly penetrated the victim. The fourth victim was a 19-year-old female who was walking down the street when S.S. punched her twice in the head, brandished a gun and stated, "Don't move or I'll shoot". S.S. then forcibly penetrated the victim. S.S. was released to an address in a high-rise apartment complex in Camden County, in close proximity to a number of schools, including a middle school and a high school.

At his initial Tier Hearing in October of 2024 S.S. was found to be a Tier III offender with a score of 75. However, in November of 2024 S.S. would become eligible for a reduction in his score and thus a lowering to a level II offender due simply to the passage of time since his release. Based on S.S.'s sexually violent history and concern for public safety, especially in light of the proximity to schools and the ages of S.S.'s past victims, door-to door notification was immediately mobilized. Over 3,700 residents received door-to-door notifications, as well as 60 businesses in 2 adjacent towns. In addition, 2,000 letters were mailed to students attending the local schools. This notification took the full support of numerous Assistant Prosecutors,

Detectives, and clerical staff, as well as the assistance and coordination with local law enforcement and parole.

THE MATTER OF REGISTRANT R.S.

R.S. was convicted of Sexual Assault on January 3, 2017, was sentenced to 4 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison, and was found to be “repetitive and compulsive” by the Adult Diagnostic & Treatment Center (ADTC). The Sexual Assault conviction was the result of R.S. having sexually assaulted a 12-year-old female child over a 2 year period of time. After R.S. served his sentence at the ADTC, he was paroled on December 15, 2019. His initial Tier Hearing was held in August of 2024 and upon the State’s request the Trial Court found, in sum, that R.S.’s conduct was “repetitive and compulsive” using the “clear and convincing” standard, relying on the ADTC report and the discovery. R.S. appealed the Trial Court’s decision to the Appellate Court.

The Appellate Court affirmed in part and reversed in part directing the Trial Court to enter a new order classifying R.S. as a Tier I, low risk offender, based on a change in one of the RRAS factors, but because his conduct was found to be characterized by a pattern of “repetitive and compulsive” behavior, his information was to be included on the Sex Offender Internet Registry. Thereafter, the Community Notification portion of the Court’s decision was stayed pending appeal to the New Jersey Supreme Court. The New Jersey Supreme Court granted Certiorari and the ultimately the matter was remanded to the Trial Court to determine “whether an evidentiary hearing is warranted and, irrespective of that determination, to allow the Megan’s Law judge to make additional findings and conclusions in accordance with Rule 1:7-4(a)... if the registrant demonstrates that there exists a genuine issue of material fact about whether the registrant’s conduct can be characterized by a pattern of repetitive and compulsive behavior.”

On remand from the Supreme Court, the Trial Court granted a hearing that included testimony from a defense expert on the issue of whether R.S. was “repetitive and compulsive” or not. The Trial Court found that R.S.’s conduct was “repetitive and compulsive” by clear and convincing evidence; thus, R.S.’s information was included on the Sex Offender Internet Registry.

MOTIONS & APPEALS UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Appeals Section of the Unit is responsible for handling all appeals from convictions for indictable crimes entered by the New Jersey Superior Court, Law Division - Criminal Part, Camden County. This Appeals Section also handles all appeals under the Bail Reform Act, appeals from juvenile adjudications of delinquency, appeals from municipal court convictions and any appeals filed on behalf of the State. The Appeals Section also prepares answers, appendices and other appropriate motions in response to petitions for writs of habeas corpus filed in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, as well as those petitions that proceed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and the United States Supreme Court.

The Motions Section of the Unit responds to all post-conviction relief motions filed in indictable cases, all pretrial Fourth Amendment motions, as well as Centralized First Appearances and pretrial detention motions.

PERSONNEL

- Assistant Prosecutors 5
- Clerical 2

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

APPEALS SECTION

The Appeals Section is staffed by 7 Assistant Prosecutors. In preparing an appeal, the Assistant Prosecutors review the Trial Court record, research the legal issues, prepare any necessary motions and write a comprehensive brief advocating the State's position on the issues raised in the appeal. The Assistant Prosecutors also appear at the oral arguments scheduled in cases pending before the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division, on its plenary calendar and its monthly excessive sentencing oral argument calendar. In cases that reach the New Jersey Supreme Court, Assistant Prosecutors prepare the State's brief and appear before the Court for oral argument. Assistant Prosecutors also assist other units in the Office with legal issues that arise in cases pending before the Trial Court and provide support in the preparation and filing of interlocutory appeals from Trial Court ruling. Assistant Prosecutors also track developments in criminal case law and keep the Trial Team Assistant Prosecutors informed of changes in the law that affect pending cases.

In a de novo municipal court appeal, the Trial Court reviews convictions entered by the County's municipal courts for traffic violations, drunk driving violations and disorderly and petty disorderly criminal offenses. In response to a defendant's de novo appeal of a municipal court conviction, the Assistant Prosecutors review the municipal court record, write a brief in support of the State's position and argue the matter before the Trial Court.

Beginning on January 1, 2017, the Appeals Section of the Unit assumed the function of handling all pretrial detention appeals in Camden County under the comprehensive Bail Reform scheme in New Jersey. These appeals are conducted on an emergent basis, and the State may be appealing or responding to appeals of these discretionary rulings. Camden County, in fact, handled one of the first of these appeals in New Jersey's history, successfully establishing that the State does not need to produce witnesses in order to meet its probable cause burden, in a landmark decision before the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division. In this new area of law, the Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Unit advise on cases pending before the Trial Court, and, initiate and oppose emergent appeals before the Appellate Division, as well as the New Jersey Supreme Court, by filing briefs and conducting oral argument on these issues.

An Assistant Prosecutor within the Unit is assigned to handle all of the post-conviction relief motions filed with this Office. An application for post-conviction relief is typically filed with the Trial Court after a defendant's indictable conviction has been affirmed through the appellate process. In a post-conviction relief motion, a defendant may raise a variety of issues related to the conviction. In preparing the State's response, the Assistant Prosecutor assigned to respond to a petition for post-conviction relief reviews the trial court record and any appellate record, writes a brief in support of the State's legal position and presents the State's case at the post-conviction relief hearing. In the event the Trial Court orders an evidentiary hearing, the Assistant Prosecutor assigned to respond to a particular petition may be required to cross-examine witnesses presented by the defense and in some cases, will present witnesses on behalf of the State's position.

MOTIONS SECTION

Motions to Suppress evidence are assigned to all of the Assistant Prosecutors within the Motions Section. The responsibilities include researching, writing, and submitting the brief, discussing the case with the officer, and preparing for and handling the court hearing. The vast majority of the contested searches are done without a warrant which requires the State to file the first brief and carry the burden of proving the warrantless search/seizure was lawful.

An Assistant Prosecutor assigned to the Motions Unit will also handle CFAs as well as pretrial motions for detention. Under the Criminal Justice Reform Act, the timing of the first scheduled court appearance for defendants charged out of any municipality with an indictable offense depends upon whether the defendant was charged on a complaint-summons or a complaint-warrant. Defendants who are charged on a complaint-warrant and remanded to the Camden County Correctional Facility must have a CFA in front of a Superior Court Judge within 48 hours of arrest. At the CFA, a determination is made by the Assistant Prosecutor, based on his or her review of the case, whether a defendant may be released on their own recognizance, released at various levels of monitoring, or held over for a Detention Hearing.

If an Assistant Prosecutor files for detention at the time of the CFA, that defendant remains incarcerated until the Detention Hearing. Detention Hearings are typically held within 2 days of the CFA and are required to be held within 5 days of arrest. While some enumerated offenses, such as murder, dictate mandatory detention, the vast majority of crimes are categorized as "presumed detention," or "presumed release," and the State then argues the detention motion with the use of

case-specific facts. Assistant Prosecutors will move for detention based upon several factors including the severity of the offense, whether it was crime of violence, and a defendant's criminal history.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. SHLAWRENCE ROSS

In a unanimous opinion, the New Jersey Supreme Court affirmed the Appellate Division's decision remanding the matter to the Trial Court to determine whether the State had established probable cause for the issuance of the search warrant and the Dyal subpoena for defendant's medical records. The Court concluded that the bullet, which defendant elected to have surgically removed from his abdomen, was physical evidence, related to a criminal offense, and a search warrant was the proper means for the State to obtain the evidence. The Court rejected the defense arguments that the Fifth or Sixth Amendments precluded the issuance of a search warrant for the bullet in this case. The Court further ruled that the Trial Court had conducted the incorrect analysis, through the lens of reciprocal discovery, in concluding that the State was not entitled to the bullet because its extraction was precipitated by defense counsel's litigation choice.

NARCOTICS UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Narcotics Unit is responsible for proactively investigating and prosecuting offenders who engage in the illegal distribution of narcotics. The Unit is staffed by a Section Chief, a Deputy Section Chief, and 2 additional Assistant Prosecutors. The investigative staff include 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants, 11 detectives, 9 Task Force Officers (TFOs), a Supervisory Special Agent from the Department of U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and a Special Agent from the US Homeland Security Investigations. Much of this staff comprises the Camden County Prosecutor's Office Narcotics Unit. Task Force Officers are personnel assigned to assist the Narcotics Unit from local police departments on a long-term basis.

The Camden County HIDTA Narcotics Task Force consists of Detectives from the Camden County Prosecutor's Office and Special Agents from HSI as well as Task Force Officers from the following police departments: Evesham Township, Pennsauken, Winslow Township, Cherry Hill Township, Gloucester Township, as well as the Camden County Sheriff's Office. The development of this Task Force allowed for even deeper collaboration between local, state, and federal law enforcement partners.

The Camden County HIDTA Task Force was created in an effort to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations operating within the County of Camden. Task force officers have the opportunity to receive the same training and experience as CCPO Detectives and return to their departments with a new skill set. These partnerships resulted in a multi-faceted approach to combatting the opioid drug abuse public health crisis by dismantling drug trafficking organizations in both urban and suburban communities within the County. Additionally, the Task Force continued to assist local law enforcement agencies within the County on both short and long-term investigations of narcotics distributors and their drug trafficking organizations. These cooperative efforts target areas and offenders where there is a nexus between drugs and violence and have contributed to many drug and weapons seizures in 2024.

The Unit's Assistant Prosecutors authorize charges, review all Search Warrants, Communications Data Warrants and Wiretap Applications, issue subpoenas, and provide legal advice to outside law enforcement agencies on narcotics issues.

The Intelligence Unit falls under the supervision of the Unit's command staff and is staffed by 3 analysts. The Intelligence Unit cultivates valuable information from various social media resources relevant to active investigations for the Narcotics Unit, Homicide Unit, Major Crimes Unit, and other units that may require such assistance.

PERSONNEL

- Assistant Prosecutors 4
- Detectives 11
- Task Force Officers 9
- Lieutenant 1
- Sergeants 2
- Clerical 1

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Unit Detectives generate cases against individuals involved in major drug trafficking organizations in the County. These are organizations that import wholesale quantities of controlled dangerous substances and directly or indirectly supply the City of Camden and suburban drug sets. Detectives also cultivate informants, act in an undercover capacity, and execute largescale takedowns of narcotics distribution facilities. Detectives also monitor and document current drug trends within the County, such as packaging, pricing, and methods of ingestion for all illicit drugs sold by distributors and possessed by users. Detectives also provide drug identification training and education to other law enforcement agencies.

The Unit Assistant Prosecutors engage in a multitude of tasks, including providing legal guidance to the Narcotics Task Force, the Camden County Police Department Narcotics and Gang Unit, the HIDTA Task Force members, and other law enforcement agencies within the County. The Assistant Prosecutors also authorize charges, review Search Warrants, Communications Data Warrants, bank seizure applications and Wiretap applications, present cases to the Grand Jury, and litigate and handle first and second-degree cases after indictment. These Assistant Prosecutors also approve the use of confidential informants consistent with New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office HIDTA Narcotics Task Force made 250 arrests, executed 169 search warrants and seized \$1,046,523 in United States Currency, 87 firearms, and 4 vehicles. The Narcotics Task Force was responsible for seizing \$5,955,447 worth of illegal narcotics.

STATE V. DONALD GREEN, ET. AL. AND TYREE BARNES, ET. AL.

In January 2024, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office HIDTA Task Force began 2 separate wiretap investigations which led to the dismantling of 2 of the most violent drug distribution networks in Camden City. These 2 networks were responsible for shootings, homicides and distributing large amounts of illegal narcotics. Detectives focused on the criminal activities of Donald Green and Tyree Barnes. Both investigations utilized confidential informant buys,

undercover buys, covert pole cameras, GPS tracking devices, and culminated with the issuance of wiretaps targeting Donald Green and Tyree Barnes specifically. These investigations resulted in the execution of 17 residential search warrants, 7 motor vehicle search warrants, and led to the arrest of 13 individuals. The following was seized in total: 945 grams of cocaine; 470 grams of crack cocaine, 126 bags of crack cocaine, 20 vials of fentanyl, 4 pounds of marijuana, 10 firearms, 7 high-capacity magazines, and \$67,583 in U.S. currency. Multiple cellular telephones were seized and were turned over to the Camden County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Unit and Camden County Police Department Shooting Response Team detectives to be extracted for evidence of the violence these networks perpetrated. Donald Green was the victim of a homicide prior to being charged. Tyree Barnes pled guilty to second-degree Conspiracy Possession with Intent to Distribute CDS and was sentenced to 7 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison.

STATE V. ANGEL COLON

In January 2024, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office HIDTA Task Force began a long-term investigation into a source of supply for narcotics distribution throughout the Camden County area. The source was identified as Angel Colon. Over the course of several months, detectives made numerous confidential informant drug purchases, conducted extensive surveillance and utilized GPS tracking devices. In October 2024, Colon was arrested during the execution of 3 residential search warrants in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Pennsauken, New Jersey and Camden City, New Jersey. As a result, the following evidence was seized: 18 ounces of Cocaine, 104 Fentanyl pills, 1 handgun, and \$114,084 in U.S. currency. The defendant pled guilty to second-degree Certain Persons Not to Possess Weapons and is pending a sentence of 7 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison, with 5 years parole ineligibility.

SPECIAL PROSECUTIONS UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Special Prosecutions Unit handles allegations of misconduct and corruption by public officials acting in their official capacities. The official misconduct complaints typically involve allegations against police officers, including claims of excessive force, differential treatment, improper search, improper arrest, and harassment. The Unit also investigates allegations of fraud or misconduct involving tax clerks, firefighters, teachers, court personnel and elected public servants.

The Unit is also tasked with assisting the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (O.P.I.A.) of the Attorney General's Office in the investigation of all officer-involved shootings, death in custody investigations, and officer use of force investigations that occur within the county.

The Unit is responsible for investigating complaints against our Office staff members, as well as conducting the background investigations of all potential employees. In addition, the Unit is responsible for testing all potential employees for drug use and conducting unannounced random drug monitoring of all sworn officers.

The Unit also supervises the Internal Affairs Units of each municipal police department in the County. This includes gathering and maintaining the statistical information for each police department's internal affairs complaints and conducting annual audits of each department's Internal Affairs Unit. In addition, the Unit oversees the Brady Giglio function for the municipal police departments and our Office. The Unit is responsible for conducting the annual County-wide Internal Affairs training, use of force instruction for Conducted Energy Device (C.E.D.) operators and instructors training program, and the basic police academy recruit training in the area of Bribery and Corruption and Racially Influenced Policing.

PERSONNEL

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| • Assistant Prosecutors | 2 | • Detectives | 4 |
| • Lieutenant | 1 | • Clerical | 2 |
| • Sergeant | 1 | | |

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Assistant Prosecutors within the Unit guide and supervise the Unit's investigations, including the approval of subpoenas, search warrants, and communication data warrants. In addition, the Assistant Prosecutors approve the filing of criminal charges, negotiate case dispositions, present cases to the Grand Jury, and conduct pretrial motions, trials, and sentencing proceedings.

The Unit is an on-call unit with an Assistant Prosecutor, an investigative supervisor, and a Detective on call 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Assistant Prosecutors also provide legal advice

on internal affairs investigations for all municipal police departments in the County. The Lieutenant and Sergeant act as the Unit Commanders. They assign cases and direct the Unit's Detectives in their investigations. The Unit Commanders are called on to investigate cases as well, particularly officer involved shooting investigations and complaints or investigations involving municipal police chiefs.

The clerical staff within the Unit are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Unit, which includes documenting all internal affairs complaints received, as well as collecting and analyzing statistical data as required by the Attorney General's Office. The clerical staff maintain the efficient functioning of the Unit. Administrative responsibilities also include document storage and transcription of recorded investigative interviews. In 2024, the Special Prosecutions Unit opened 696 investigations and disposed of 682 investigations.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. CHRISTOPHER BUCCERONI

On July 2, 2024, off duty Gloucester Township Police Officer Christopher Bucceroni was charged with third-degree Knowingly Leaving the Scene of an Accident Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury. The investigation revealed that Bucceroni was driving the motor vehicle that struck a bicyclist who sustained serious head injuries. This matter is currently pending before the Superior Court.

STATE V. ROBERT NELSON

On October 7, 2024, Juvenile Detention Officer Robert Nelson the Camden County Juvenile Detention Center was charged with fourth-degree Criminal Sexual Contact. The investigation revealed that while on duty Nelson approached and assaulted the victim, who was also an employee. This matter is currently pending before the Superior Court.

STATE V. KANESHIA MALLORY-JONES

On July 23, 2024, an employee of the Juvenile Justice Commission, Kaneshia Mallory-Jones, was charged with fourth-degree False Reports to Law Enforcement Authorities. The investigation revealed that she provided false information to police regarding the escape of an individual in custody of the J.J.C. This matter is currently pending before the Superior Court.

SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Special Victims Unit (SVU) investigates and prosecutes all cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse, abuse and neglect of anyone under the age of 18, missing children, and child abductions. SVU cases are unique and present a variety of challenges that no other type of case presents. The majority of suspects are trusted authority figures such as a family member, neighbor, caregiver, teacher, or coach. Additionally, there are numerous challenges that arise from the complex psychological and social issues that exist exclusively in SVU cases. In no other type of criminal prosecution is the primary witness a child. Additionally, a significant number of SVU cases include delayed disclosures by the victim, often reported years later, when ability to secure corroborating evidence is much more difficult. Corroborating evidence such as a confession, eyewitness testimony, digital evidence, medical evidence, and/or DNA evidence is extremely important in prosecuting SVU cases.

In 2024, the Camden County Child Advocacy Center, which is run by the Special Victims Unit, received reaccreditation with the National Children’s Alliance. This accreditation validates the tireless work and commitment of the Camden County Child Advocacy Center and its Multi-Disciplinary Team to ensure that all children and families receive effective, efficient, and compassionate services.

PERSONNEL

- Assistant Prosecutors 5
- Detectives 9
- Sergeants 3
- Lieutenant 1
- Clerical 2
- Victim Advocates 1
- MDT Coordinator/Victim Advocate 1

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SVU Assistant Prosecutors guide and supervise investigations, approve search warrants and communication data warrants, approve the filing of criminal charges, review cases at CJP, direct plea negotiations, both pre-indictment and post-indictment, present cases to the Grand Jury, secure necessary court orders and conduct pretrial motions, trials, and sentencing proceedings. An Assistant Prosecutor is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days per week to provide legal advice and supervise child abuse investigations for all municipal police departments in the County.

The SVU Lieutenant is the Unit Commander and is responsible for the administrative and investigative management of the Unit and is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Lieutenant is also the coordinator of the Camden County Child Abduction Response Team (CART). The

CART is a highly skilled team, well trained in the investigation of missing and abducted children. The Camden County CART trains twice a year and continually updates best practices in missing persons investigations. In 2024, the Camden County CART participated in classroom training and a mock CART activation to maintain all of the requirements for National Certification that are required by the NCJTC.

Special Victims Unit Detectives collect all pertinent facts and corroborating evidence in all child abuse related matters. They conduct complete investigations of all Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P) and Institutional Abuse Investigative Unit (IAIU) referrals, some of which will result in criminal charges.

The SVU Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives are trained in forensic interviewing of children. SVU Detectives and Assistant Prosecutors complete a one-week intensive training, entitled Finding Words, which teaches the most current and state of the art forensic interview method. SVU Detectives also demonstrate expertise in suspect interviews. SVU Detectives must also secure and execute search warrants and communication data warrants, as well as memorialize victims' injuries and arrange for medical examinations and the collection of all physical evidence. There are always two SVU Detectives on call 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

The Section Chief and Lieutenant are also assigned to the Attorney General's Clergy Abuse Task Force and the Section Chief is the Team Leader for the Camden Diocese.

The needs of the victim are incorporated into every criminal investigation. As such, one of the victim advocates assigned to the SVU has a dual role as an advocate and a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Coordinator. The MDT Coordinator assists the Detectives and Assistant Prosecutors to ensure that the needs of the victim are met. The MDT Coordinator works in conjunction with DCP&P, various social services agencies, local law enforcement agencies, medical facilities, schools, and daycare centers and arranges bi-weekly case review meetings so that members of these agencies can discuss the specific needs of each child abuse case to ensure that cases are properly investigated, prosecuted, and victims and their families are provided follow-up services. The MDT Coordinator also meets with the state-wide MDT Coordinators Association monthly.

The Victim-Witness Advocates who work with the Unit also lend their expertise to the sensitive dynamics of the child abuse investigation, helping to ensure that victims and their families receive the necessary assistance, including medical (both physical and psychological), counseling, clothing, shelter, and state-funded monetary assistance.

The clerical staff within the Unit are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Unit, which includes receiving child abuse information and routing it to the appropriate personnel. They provide whatever support and assistance is needed by the Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives to successfully handle all Unit cases. Administrative functions also include transcribing recorded interviews of victims, witnesses, and suspects.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. DARYL MURRELL

On Monday, July 29, 2024, the victim, who was now is 33 years old, reported that Daryl Murrell had sexually assaulted her multiple times when she was between the ages of 11 and 17. Daryll Murrell also impregnated the victim when she was a minor, which resulted in the birth of a child. CCPO Detectives obtained DNA samples from the victim, the child, and Daryl Murrell and submitted them to the New Jersey State Police Office of Forensic Sciences, which confirmed that the child was the biological child of the victim and Daryl Murrell. In addition to the results of the DNA testing, Detectives were able to obtain other evidence corroborating what the victim reported. As a result, the defendant was charged with multiple counts of first-degree Aggravated Sexual Assault and multiple counts of second-degree Sexual Assault. The matter is pending in Superior Court.

STATE V. KASHIA FOYE

On August 7, 2024, SVU Detectives were notified of a missing 10-year-old female child in Camden, New Jersey. The child had not been seen since leaving the residence several hours prior and no one was able to provide any information about where she might have gone. A Tier 1 Child Abduction Response Team (CART) activation was made, with the response of dozens of law enforcement officers, search and rescue personnel, and bloodhounds to assist in the search. Detectives conducted a wide-ranging investigation, interviewed numerous individuals, and checked dozens of residences for the child. As a result of this thorough investigation, the child was located at an apartment nearly 1 mile away from her residence, approximately 12 hours after she had last been seen. Detectives interviewed the child, who disclosed numerous acts of physical abuse by Kashia Foye on both her and her 5-year-old cousin. Detectives interviewed the 5-year-old cousin who also disclosed being the victim of physical abuse perpetrated by Kashia Foye. As a result of the investigation, the defendant was charged with third-degree Aggravated Assault, second-degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child, third-degree Terroristic Threats, and related weapons offenses. The matter is pending in Superior Court.

STATE V. ALAURAH VIE

On Thursday, May 2, 2024, the Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU) of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) alerted SVU of a staff member at the YES Children's Shelter (Shelter) in Gloucester Township, New Jersey, having an inappropriate relationship with a child housed at that facility. The victim was found in possession of a cellphone, which is considered contraband in the Shelter. Alaurah Vie, a counselor at the shelter, was found to have photos of her kissing the victim. Upon further investigation, the defendant admitted to having a relationship with the child, giving him the cellphone, and destroying evidence of their relationship. Detectives also obtained videos of the defendant committing an act of sexual penetration upon the victim while the victim was housed at the Shelter. As a result, the defendant was charged with multiple counts of second-degree Sexual Assault, second-degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child, third-degree Possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material, third-degree Hindering, and fourth-degree Tampering of Evidence. The matter is pending in Superior Court.

TRIAL TEAM UNIT

OVERVIEW

The Trial Team Unit is responsible for prosecuting approximately 80% of all criminal matters indicted by the Office. The cases range from the most serious offenses, including homicides, aggravated sexual assaults, kidnappings, and first-degree distribution of narcotics to more minor offenses, such as theft cases. To adequately address these matters, the Unit conducts ongoing investigations to solidify proofs so a reasonable resolution can be reached either through a negotiated plea agreement or a trial. In addition, the Unit handles all sentences resulting from pre-indictment pleas and violation of probation hearings.

PERSONNEL

- Assistant Prosecutors 20
- Sergeant 1
- Detectives 8
- Clerical 4

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each trial team consists of 2 Assistant Prosecutors and all cases are divided among 8 trial teams with each team assigned to 1 of the 8 criminal judges. Each team is responsible for prosecuting to conclusion all criminal matters before their assigned judge. Typically, cases are listed for arraignment, initial case disposition conference, final case disposition conference, discretionary case disposition conference, or pre-trial conferences on Mondays. Sentencings and violations of probation are typically heard on Fridays. Trials are usually scheduled for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. When the Court does not have a trial scheduled for a particular week, the Assistant Prosecutors are often in Court handling post-indictment motions associated with their assigned cases, such as Miranda, Wade/Henderson, tender years, and suppression motions. This involves preparing legal memoranda, preparing witnesses, presenting testimony, and oral argument.

Initially, each case is scheduled for a post indictment arraignment conference (PIAC) before a trial judge. Prior to the PIAC the assigned Assistant Prosecutor reviews each case thoroughly so that he or she is prepared to conduct plea negotiations at the arraignment and act to strengthen the case through further investigation if necessary. If a guilty plea is not entered during the following case disposition conferences, the case is assigned a trial date. The Assistant Prosecutor again reviews the file to identify witnesses and evidence needed for trial and to advise the Unit Detective as to what action must be taken to correct any deficiencies and investigate defense claims. The trial,

sentencing, and post-trial hearings are conducted by the Assistant Prosecutor. In addition, Unit Assistant Prosecutors handle interlocutory appeals on their assigned cases.

Two more experienced Assistant Prosecutors, designated as floaters, work with all 8 trial teams. These Assistant Prosecutors assist newer Assistant Prosecutors with more complex cases by providing tactical advice, assistance with plea negotiations, assistance with trial preparation, and even sitting second chair with them during trial. These floaters are also available to cover lists as needed.

The Section Chief and Deputy Section Chief are responsible for supervising the Unit. Their duties include assisting with complex cases, monitoring performance and plea negotiations, providing legal and strategic trial advice, general supervision, and acting as liaisons with the judges assigned to the criminal division. If necessary, they can assume the position of a trial team member when the Unit is understaffed.

Typically, each trial team is assigned 1 Unit Detective. Additionally, a Unit Commander / Operations Sergeant is assigned to the Unit as the investigative supervisor. The investigative duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to securing attendance of witnesses at trial and motions (including subpoenas, telephone calls and transportation as necessary), securing physical evidence for trial, and securing documentary evidence (such as police reports, hospital reports, laboratory reports, certified convictions, and motor vehicle abstracts).

Pre-trial preparation, which is performed at the direction of the Assistant Prosecutor to develop additional evidence to use in the prosecution of the defendant and/or to refute the defense claims, is an essential responsibility of the detective. Based on the status of a case, a Detective may be required to further investigate the case, make additional arrests, collect evidence, process evidence, and conduct surveillance. This includes the identification and securing of additional witnesses as well as those witnesses that have previously been identified. A Detective must be able to develop rapport with witnesses and victims who are reluctant to come to court and testify. Reasons for such reluctance varies from being fearful of the defendant, apprehensive of the criminal justice system to those who are just indifferent, so an ability to connect with these victims and witnesses is essential.

Detectives can also be tasked with preparing Dyal applications, search warrants, communications data warrants, and wiretap applications. They are also assigned with security details, Central Judicial Process (CJP) rap sheet lookups, meeting with walk-in complainants and citizens, and Megan's Law notifications.

The duties of the clerical staff are secretarial and clerical in nature. Each clerical staff member is assigned to assist specific Assistant Prosecutors and detectives on Trial Team. They are responsible for transcribing a very large volume of statements, preparing correspondence, legal memoranda, briefs, subpoenas, and writs, as well as handling a large volume of telephone calls and file management. They prepare trial subpoenas for either personal service and/or service via regular mail or email. In addition, the clerical staff must have a working knowledge of the criminal justice system, as well as the personality and temperament to handle a wide array of public

inquires. They also order and distribute supplies for the Office and assist in the electronic packaging and sending of discovery for all units in the Office.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE V. ANTHONY SPEARMAN

The defendant entered a guilty plea to second-degree Aggravated Assault after the commencement of a jury trial. The victim, who reported she suffered from cognitive disabilities, met the defendant online and came to stay with him at his residence. The defendant then assaulted the victim in his home. The victim was located in the apartment's bathtub by first responders after the defendant's family member called 911 for help. The victim suffered serious bodily injuries including broken ribs and a broken jaw. The defendant was sentenced to 10 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison, 85% to be served without parole pursuant to the No Early Release Act. The defendant was also sentenced to a consecutive 3-year term of incarceration in New Jersey State Prison on a separate indictment for assaulting a corrections officer at the Camden County Correctional Facility.

STATE V. HENRY PARKER

A jury convicted the defendant of 2 counts of first-degree Aggravated Sexual Assault, 5 counts of second-degree Sexual Assault, 4 counts of second-degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child, 5 counts of third-degree Aggravated Criminal Sexual Contact, and 1 count of second-degree Engaging or Soliciting Prostitution of a Minor. The State presented the testimony of 2 victims who reported the defendant had been sexually assaulting them continuously for 8 years. The assaults occurred at the defendant's home. The victims testified the sexual assaults had been occurring since they were 8 and 7 years-old, respectively. The State also presented fresh complaint testimony from friends, as well as evidence from the defendant's phone extraction, including sexual text messages and photographs. The defendant was sentenced to 27 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison, 24 years of which is subject to 85% without parole pursuant to the No Early Release Act, and the defendant is subject to Parole Supervision for Life and Megan's Law.

STATE V. ADAM NATAL

A jury convicted the defendant of all 63 counts in the indictment against the defendant, including 56 counts of second-degree Sexual Assault, third-degree Aggravated Assault, third-degree Invasion of Privacy, and third-degree Witness Tampering. Evidence presented at trial demonstrated the defendant had been sexually assaulting the victim continuously for more than 4 years in the defendant's home. In addition to testimony from the victim and witnesses, evidence from the defendant's phone extraction, including videos of the sexual assaults, as well as telephone recordings were presented at the trial. The defendant was sentenced to 157 years incarceration in New Jersey State Prison, 150 years of which is subject to 85% without parole pursuant to the No Early Release Act.

VICTIM WITNESS UNIT

OVERVIEW

The mission of the Victim Witness Unit is to respond to the concerns of crime victims, regarding their personal safety and security following their victimization, to provide a safe environment for victims to tell their stories to non-judgmental advocates who are specially trained to validate the victims' feelings and reactions, to provide information, assistance, accompaniment and support to prepare victims for the criminal justice system process, and to make appropriate referrals to meet victims' physical, emotional, financial, and other needs as a result of their victimization.

The Unit is an on-call unit. As such, the advocates are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This allows local law enforcement and units within the Office to have immediate access to services and referrals available to victims.

PERSONNEL

- Victim Witness Coordinator 1
- Victim Advocates 4
- Bi-Lingual Victim Advocates (Spanish/English) 3
- Clerical 2

The Unit staff is supported by federal and state grants. The Victim Witness Coordinator is responsible for writing and monitoring those grants and providing statistical data to the State Office of Victim Witness Advocacy (SOVWA). For calendar year 2024, the Unit received federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds in the amount of \$705,434 which supported the salaries and fringe benefits, either in part or in full, for the victim advocates. The County matches a minimal percentage of the VOCA grant which helps cover salaries and fringe benefits as well. Additionally, the Unit received Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds in the amount of \$67,346 which supported having additional personnel for the SANE/SART program. The County matches a minimal percentage of the VAWA grant.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Unit's Victim Advocates assist all units within the Office, including the Homicide, Major Crimes, Domestic Violence, Juvenile, Grand Jury, Special Prosecution, Appeals, and Trial Team. The Advocates work closely with victims, victim survivors, Assistant Prosecutors, and case Detectives. Advocates prepare victims and their families for the criminal justice system process, answering questions about the status of each case, providing explanations of court terminology and proceedings, and accompanying child and adult victims to court for reassurance and support. The Advocates often provide transportation to enable victims to participate in or observe court

proceedings. The Advocates also assist undocumented immigrants, who have been victims of crime, in obtaining U-Visas and are cross-trained and available to assist all victims in all types of criminal offenses.

The Advocates provide assistance in determining amounts of restitution for losses, compensation for medical, counseling, emergency re-location, crime scene clean-up, lost wages, and funeral expenses. They often intercede with employers, landlords, and creditors in the event of financial difficulties as a result of victimization. They make referrals for counseling, housing, crime prevention, financial assistance, and other social services. The Advocates will assist victims and witnesses with temporary relocation for emergent cases. They assist victims with completing paperwork and forms as well as victim impact statements. They also advocate with judges, Assistant Prosecutors, law enforcement, the Probation Department, the Department of Corrections, and the NJ State Parole Board on behalf of crime victims to ensure that the criminal justice system is responsive to victims' needs and is in compliance with legislation such as the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, Megan's Law, and New Jersey's Constitutional Amendment for Crime Victims' Rights. The Advocates will assist victims of violent crimes regardless of whether there has been an arrest or charges were filed. They also assist Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives with making travel arrangements when victims and witnesses are needed for trials.

One Advocate serves a dual role as both an advocate and the MDT Coordinator. This Advocate facilitates meetings during which cases of child sexual abuse, serious child physical abuse, and endangering the welfare of children are discussed. Representatives from the Office, local law enforcement, the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), and various social service agencies attend the meetings to discuss the specific needs of each case. This ensures that each case is being properly investigated and prosecuted and that each family is receiving the proper services.

In addition to all the services provided above, the Advocates participate in a multitude of services to the public and other professionals throughout the year which include but are not limited to providing community outreach and education regarding criminal victimization and crime victims' rights and services, facilitating monthly meetings of the Camden County Domestic Violence Working Group, facilitating the Camden County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team Executive Board, working with county victim service providers such as the municipal Domestic Violence Crisis Intervention Teams (DRVT), and the Camden County Women's Center., providing training and education on child abuse reporting, child abuse, child advocacy centers (CAC), MDTs, trauma, and victimization to community partners, school personnel, and other agencies requesting information, providing on-going child abuse multidisciplinary team trainings and education on child advocacy centers and assuring national standards are maintained by the Special Victims Unit as adopted by the National Children's Alliance, of which we are Associate Members. Additionally, the Victim Witness Coordinator is responsible for instructing recruits and experienced law enforcement personnel at the Camden Police Academy and Division of Criminal Justice Academy about victim' rights, victim services, and death notification protocol.

The clerical staff is responsible for the day-to-day functions of the Unit. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to the answering and directing all phone calls from victims and the

public, ensuring all case status notification letters are mailed to victims on a daily basis, notifying victims of Excessive Sentencing Oral Argument Hearings, providing restitution information to the Camden County Probation Office, notifying victims of parole eligibility and release of defendants, registering victims for Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE), providing general information to victims and witnesses regarding court dates and various court proceedings, reviewing all Victim Impact Statements as they are submitted by victims, and providing support to the Advocates, Detectives, and Assistant Prosecutors.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

The Unit staff maintains information about victim demographics, crime types, and victim services in the newly developed Child Advocacy Center Module. This module has replaced the NCATrack program which was utilized previously. Additionally, The Victim Witness InfoShare Module, which was developed to replace the Victim Assistance Tracking System (VATS), continues to be utilized as a comprehensive tool to notify victims of court proceedings and collect data. This module allows the Advocates to document statistical data that is needed for grant reporting, as well as document services and interactions they have with victims.

In 2024, over 26,000 case status notification letters were sent to victims and witnesses. Advocates conducted additional services for victims such as walk-ins, child-care, transportations, VINE notifications and cancelations, and restitution investigations for the Trial Team Unit, the Probation Department, the Department of Corrections, PTI, and ISP. As well, 127 undocumented immigrants, who had been victims of crime, were assisted with U-Visa certifications. In addition to notification telephone calls, Unit staff provided over 41,000 units of direct service in 2024, to a total of 11,781 victims of crime or crisis. Victims were provided services such as VCCO, relocation, restitution, court accompaniment, meetings U-Visas, translation services, victim impact statement assistance, release notifications, court event notifications, and childcare.