

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➔ Arson Task Force

Since 1998 the Essex County Prosecutor's Arson Task Force has operated as a multi-jurisdictional Unit, utilizing the talents and resources of experienced and dedicated fire, police and prosecutorial personnel to maximize results. For the past two years, the Arson Task Force has been supplemented by full-time assignments of investigative personnel from the Newark and East Orange Fire Department Arson Squads. The contributions of these Detectives have made it possible for the Arson Task Force to maintain the reputation of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office as a nationally recognized leader in this challenging area of law enforcement.

2008-2009 Achievements:

Structure Fires:

In 2008, the Arson Task Force participated in the investigation of 121 structure fires in 16 municipalities within the County. Of these, 42 were determined to be the result of arson, 21 were accidental, and in 58 cases the cause remains undetermined. Fatal fires also continued to be a serious problem in Essex County in 2008 when 13 people died as a result of fires.

In 2009 the Arson Task Force investigated 78 structure fires in 15 municipalities, including 11 fatalities. Of these, 36 were determined to be arson, 18 were accidental, and 24 were undetermined.

Several notable cases were brought to a conclusion during this period, including the case of ***State v. Ernest McNeill***, arising from a devastating fire in a large mixed-use building in East Orange that resulted in the death of a 45 year-old female resident in April of 2007. A very difficult examination of the fire scene, expertly conducted by the members of the Arson Task Force, as well as the post-mortem examination of the victim's remains by the Medical Examiner's Office, determined that the victim had been killed when she was splashed with gasoline and intentionally set on fire. An intensive follow-up investigation by the Arson Task Force led to the arrest of the defendant for murder, felony murder, aggravated arson and weapon charges. In October of 2008 the defendant entered guilty pleas to manslaughter and weapons charges, and was sentenced in January of 2009 to 18 years in State prison, with 85% of the term to be served prior to parole eligibility.

In November of 2007 an early-morning fire destroyed an occupied residence on Grove Street in Irvington. Responding Arson Task Force personnel were able to determine from the ruins of the structure that the fire had been intentionally set, and the ensuing investigation resulting in the case of ***State v. Tamika Bateman***. Defendant Bateman, who was known to the residents of the burned building, pled guilty to charges of aggravated arson, terroristic threats and aggravated assault upon responding emergency service personnel. In June of 2008 she was received a State prison sentence of 7 years on these charges.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

Another notable arson case, ***State v. Ylli Jashari and Ciro Conti***, was brought after an investigation of a fire at a pizzeria in West Caldwell early on Easter morning of 2008. The proprietor of the store, defendant Jashari, had to be rescued by responding police officers who found him tied to a chair inside the burning restaurant. Jashari told the officers that armed robbers had ransacked the restaurant and left him tied to the chair before setting the fire and absconding. Arson Task Force personnel, working with Detectives from the West Caldwell Police Department, reached the conclusion that Jashari and his co-defendant had concocted the incident to obtain insurance proceeds in an attempt to save the failing business. In April of 2009 Jashari was sentenced to 5 years in State prison, and faces deportation, on charges of aggravated arson, insurance fraud and aggravated assault upon responding emergency service personnel. His co-defendant, who cooperated in the investigation, was convicted of conspiracy to commit aggravated arson and insurance fraud and received a sentence of three years probation.

Other dispositions during this period resulting from Arson Task Force investigations include:

State v. Ernie Rodriguez – In this case, the defendant was sentenced in August of 2009 to 5 years in State prison for setting a fire outside of a building in Bloomfield in September of 2008.

State v. Franciso Lozado, Jr. – This case arose from an attempt to set a fire in Newark in June of 2008 and resulted in the defendant being sentenced to 5 years in State prison in July of 2009.

State v. Dabney Vastey and Scardy Fleurissant – In which defendant Vastey was sentenced in December of 2008 to State prison for his role in tossing a Molotov cocktail into an auto-repair shop's lot in Irvington in August of 2007.

Vehicle Fires:

Essex County's geographic location and network of highways make it an easily accessible and inviting locale for individuals looking for a place to burn a vehicle. With the benefit of continuing financial assistance from the New Jersey Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor, the Vehicle Fire Initiative has continued its ground-breaking work in the investigation of insurance-related vehicle fires. This highly technical and painstaking investigative and prosecutorial effort has made the Essex County Prosecutor's Office the subject of several laudatory press reports. In the present



INVESTIGATION SQUADS

difficult economic climate, these efforts will be redoubled to identify and prosecute those cases in which fire is used to get out from under onerous lease or financing payments.

In 2008 and 2009 the cases initiated by the Vehicle Fire Initiative resulted in the return of 50 indictments. During this period 47 defendants entered guilty pleas or were convicted of related charges, and over \$150,000 was ordered to be paid as restitution.

One notable case brought by the Vehicle Fire Initiative is ***State v. Amanda Wright Stafford***, in which the defendant – a middle school principal – was charged with insurance fraud after her vehicle was burned while she was away on vacation. After a much publicized trial, the defendant was convicted of third degree insurance fraud and was sentenced to a probationary term.

➔ Child Abuse Unit

The Child Abuse Unit (CAU) was established by the Essex County Prosecutor's Office (ECPO) in 1983 in recognition of an urgent need to protect abused children and prosecute those that harm them. The Prosecutor's Office placed specialized law enforcement personnel with the desire, training and experience to service abused children. Unlike most child abuse units throughout the country, the ECPO Child Abuse Unit services all children up to the age of 18. The CAU is comprised of six Assistant Prosecutors, four Detectives, two superior officers who also command other units and support staff. The CAU maintains a twenty-four hour on-call service for all county municipal Detectives and Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) caseworkers.

The mission of the unit is to support an environment of lawful behavior, safety, security and justice for all of the people of Essex County. We recognize that the children of Essex County are our greatest resource and we are committed to their protection. To accomplish this mission, the CAU uses the most advanced methods to successfully identify, apprehend and prosecute those who commit crimes against children. When crimes against children occur, the CAU diligently pursues the arrest, indictment and conviction of those responsible. At the same time, all Constitutional safeguards of the accused are respected.



By their very nature, child abuse investigations and prosecutions are extremely difficult. The CAU uses a multi disciplinary team approach to investigations and victim services. The CAU is an integral part of the Winona M. Lipman Child Advocacy Center located in Newark, New Jersey. It may be the only child advocacy center in the country to have a

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

full-time prosecutor's office unit, child protective service caseworkers, juvenile trauma therapists, forensic pediatricians and multi-disciplinary coordinators all under one roof. The philosophy of the center is the "Child Comes First" and a multi-disciplinary approach is used to protect child victims from unnecessary trauma during the investigative stages of a case. Under this approach, a single interview of all victims of sexual abuse under the age of 12 years old is conducted by a highly skilled primary interviewer while professionals from other agencies view the recorded interview. The technique prevents multiple interviews by law enforcement officials and reduces trauma suffered by the victim. In addition, victim family members receive a wide range of services.

Cases are investigated either solely by the CAU or through joint investigations with municipal Detectives or staff of DYFS. The Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Unit handle a significant number of cases from the inception of the investigation to the case's ultimate disposition. The Unit is responsible for investigating or co-investigating cases involving children under the age of 18 who were victims of crimes which include:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Child Endangerment (abuse, neglect, cruelty and abandonment)
- Child Pornography
- Interference with custody/kidnapping
- Luring

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office's Child Abuse Unit handles the highest volume of child abuse cases of any county in New Jersey. In 2008, the CAU investigated over 700 child abuse and neglect cases. In 2009, a total of 824 cases were investigated.

In 2008 and 2009, the Unit was involved in a number of complex/multi-witness cases involving juvenile victims. The following are some significant cases from that period.

State v. David Vasquez – In April 2008 was the defendant was tried for kidnapping and sexually assaulting a 17 year old female. Defendant had forced the victim into his vehicle at gun point. At a remote location, the victim was vaginally, anally and orally penetrated by the defendant. Defendant was found guilty of multiple sexual assault counts.

State v. Big Val Volcy – From the age of 6 to 13, the female victim in this case was sexually assaulted by the defendant. In July 2009, a jury found the defendant guilty of committing multiple acts of aggravated sexual assault against the victim. The defendant is scheduled for sentencing in January 2010.

➔ Crime Scene Unit



On October 23, 2006, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office unveiled their new state of the art 2.5 million dollar Crime Scene Unit facility. The facility consists of a 15,000 square foot building which was designed to enhance the collection, processing and packaging of forensic evidence in Essex County. The new facility includes a vehicle processing room equipped with a hydraulic lift which allows the Crime Scene Detectives to examine vehicles from all angles; a forensic processing room designed to better enable a Detective to locate and identify fingerprints on various types of evidence; a drying chamber room designed for the processing and packaging of blood soaked clothing; a digital photography room as well as a new large evidence storage room capable of handling more than 50 times the amount of evidence which could be stored at the previous facility.

The Crime Scene Unit now enables the Detective staff to access the Internet via a high speed computer system thus allowing for instant communications with all law enforcement agencies. The computer system also features a 3-D animated Crime Scene Sketch and Reconstruction software to allow the Crime Scene Detectives the ability to visually reconstruct a crime scene. Also, the unit utilizes three fully stocked field vehicles for processing of evidence at any crime scene. These vehicles are equipped with portable lighting systems, alternate light sources which enable the Detective to view bodily fluids, hairs, fibers and latent fingerprints invisible to the human eye under natural light.

In 2009, the ECPO Crime Scene Unit became the central facility to process firearms recovered at all Essex County crime scenes. From July through December, the Unit processed 96 firearm weapons.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➔ Domestic Violence Unit



Domestic abuse is a social phenomenon that perpetuates itself, and thus continues to escalate if not addressed. Criminal sanctions are a key component of society's response to this crisis and the Domestic Violence Unit, which was established in 1992, addresses this need in Essex County. The primary function of the unit is to screen and prosecute domestic violence cases.

The Domestic Violence Unit arranges protection for victims and helps them regain their sense of personal safety and security. When appropriate, the unit will seek to incarcerate violent and persistent offenders. In other cases, it will provide batterers with opportunities to rehabilitate themselves. The Domestic Violence Unit, in collaboration with the Victim-Witness Advocacy Unit, offers victims assistance and appropriate referrals to shelters and counseling programs. Such interventions are necessary because domestic violence victims are often unwilling to testify against their abusers because of safety fears, and family and/or romantic relationships with the offenders.

The Domestic Violence Unit handles petitions for the forfeiture of weapons and firearm permits seized as a result of domestic violence incidents. It also makes re-arming determinations for law enforcement officers who are involved in domestic violence incidents. When an abuser violates a civil restraining order issued to protect the victim, a criminal contempt charge is filed. The unit's Assistant Prosecutors handle contempt cases in the Family Part court.

2008-2009 Achievements:

During 2008, the members of the Domestic Violence Unit processed 2,173 cases assigned to the Unit. Assistant Prosecutors presented 238 cases to the Grand Jury during this period. In addition, 32 forfeiture petitions were considered.

During 2009, the members of the Domestic Violence Unit processed 1,903 cases assigned to the Unit. Assistant Prosecutors presented 254 cases to the Grand Jury during this period. In addition, 40 forfeiture petitions were considered.

In 2008, the Domestic Violence Unit played a significant role in co-chairing Essex County's Domestic Violence Working Group. The group is comprised of members of law enforcement, the judiciary, victim service providers, probation officers and Domestic Violence Crisis Response Team members. The Domestic Violence Working Group addresses systemic problems in the criminal justice field, and endeavors to coordinate the efforts of the various member organizations. It is instrumental in implementing the dictates of New Jersey's Domestic Violence Procedures Manual.

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office has been instrumental in the plan to establish a Family Justice Center in Essex County. There are 45 operating centers in the United States, but this would be the first in New Jersey. The first phase of this Center is scheduled to open to clients in January 2010. The FJC model is recognized as a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention by the US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. The center will bring together, under one roof, domestic violence advocates, civil legal service providers and other community based organizations to provide crisis intervention, safety planning, counseling, self sufficiency services, as well as access to the criminal justice system through a liaison to the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

Members of the Domestic Violence Unit continue to appear at automatic bail reviews of defendants charged with crimes of domestic violence. These reviews are scheduled before a Superior Court Judge most weekdays. As part of this initiative, the Domestic Violence Unit has assumed responsibility for victim notification relative to this automatic bail process. Victim contact, at this early stage of the prosecution, enables the Assistant Prosecutor to better assess the merits of the case.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➔ Economic Crime Unit



The Economic Crime Unit is responsible for the investigation and supervision of all major fraud and “white collar” crime prosecutions other than those completed by municipal authorities. The term “fraud case” applies to all cases involving financial defalcation, manipulation and other schemes of a criminal nature.

Additionally, the Economic Crimes Unit handles identity theft, mortgage frauds, election frauds, insurance frauds, frauds in the court system, jury tampering, witness tampering, extortion, threats to members of the Superior Court judiciary and violations of the Open Public Meeting Act. While the majority of the investigations conducted by the unit are self-originated, some investigations are prompted by the receipt of formal signed complaints from municipal authorities.

The Economic Crimes Unit’s creation in the early 1970’s was due to the obvious need to investigate “white collar” crime cases on the county rather than municipal level. Municipal police departments are often not able to thoroughly investigate complicated economic crime. Indeed, in many cases, governmental, bank, and financial records can only be obtained by grand jury subpoena, court order or search warrant, and therefore are beyond the reach of a municipal police department. Many “white collar” crimes are multi-jurisdictional in nature. Beyond this, such cases are far more complex than the “average” case. They usually require review of voluminous records by an experienced Detective.

Because of the complexity of the allegations and investigations, close interaction between the Assistant Prosecutor and Detective is necessary throughout the investigation; especially since these investigations often involve assembling and reviewing complex financial and business records, preparing and obtaining court orders for in- and out-of-state records and witnesses (such as bank records, handwriting, toll records), and frequently present witness problems involving the 5th Amendment or attorney/client privilege.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

Significant cases included:

State v. Stephan Finley – The defendant, a New Jersey funeral director and owner of funeral homes in Newark, was sentenced in June 2009, to five years in prison for participating in an illegal body parts scheme that collected bones, tissue and skin from corpses to sell on the lucrative transplant market without the consent of the decedents' families. Finley allowed "cutters" to illegally harvest body parts from approximately 40 deceased individuals without the permission of the next of kin. Finley received approximately \$1,000 for each body. Finley and one other New Jersey mortician were linked to a ring that harvested body parts from more than 1,000 cadavers in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania between 2001 and 2005. The ring used forged documents that altered the ages of the elderly donors and concealed the fact that some had died of cancer or other diseases.

State v. Catherine Yanoschak – During a five year time period from October 1, 1998 to October 31, 2003, the defendant stole approximately \$136,234 from the Washington School Mother's Club of Nutley, NJ, while she served as Treasurer, and then later President, of the association. The defendant pleaded guilty and was sentenced on January 9, 2009 to four years in prison and required to make restitution in the amount of \$127,000.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➔ Extradition Unit

The Extradition Unit is responsible for executing interstate requests for out-of-state prisoners who are facing charges in Essex County and for responding to similar requests from other jurisdictions. After extradition, the receiving State adjudicates its charges and the prisoner is generally returned to the sending jurisdiction to complete any outstanding sentences. Following completion of the out-of-state sentence, the prisoner will then return to serve the additional time in the receiving State. The Unit coordinates its extradition activity with various statewide and federal task forces that address specific criminal concerns, e.g. narcotics trafficking and organized crime.

2008 - 2009 Achievements:

In 2008, the Extradition Unit processed 269 requests for extradition. It returned 215 fugitives to Essex County and 197 fugitives to other jurisdictions. In 2009, the Unit processed 304 requests for extradition. It returned 225 fugitives to Essex County and 227 fugitives to other jurisdictions.

➔ Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism

In early 2002, the State of New Jersey created the Office of Counter-Terrorism (O.C.T.) within the Department of Law and Public Safety. In early 2006, New Jersey formed the state Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) to replace O.C.T. OHSP, a cabinet level agency, is a multi-faceted organization whose primary mission is to coordinate New Jersey's anti-terror measures. OHSP communicates with the State's law enforcement agencies primarily through the twenty-one county prosecutors' offices. Each county-prosecutor has been required to designate a Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in their county. The Counter-Terrorism Coordinator is the primary link between all law enforcement agencies in the county and OHSP.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

The Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Unit continued to work with federal and state officials in 2008 to investigate tips and leads of possible terrorist activity in Essex County. The presidential election in 2008 brought a rise in leads of possible domestic terrorist activity throughout the United States. Additionally, the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have caused a number of reports of suspicious activity in this region and all such reports have to be investigated.

As we move further away from 9/11/01, the Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Unit has been tasked by OHSP officials to work with the municipal police agencies within the county to stress the importance of remaining vigilant. The RDT conducted several training exercises in 2008 and 2009.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➔ Homicide Unit



The Homicide Squad of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office is the oldest specialized unit in the office. The Squad is designed to ensure close cooperation between the local police departments and the Prosecutor's Office whenever a homicide occurs within the County. The Squad also investigates vehicular homicides and motor vehicle incidents resulting in serious bodily injury, in conjunction with local police agencies and the New Jersey State Police. The focus of the motor vehicle investigations is to determine if the incident resulting in death or serious bodily injury was the result of criminal conduct.

In addition to criminal homicides, the Homicide Squad is primarily responsible for investigating police-weapon discharges that occur within Essex County. If the shooting results in a fatality, an Assistant Prosecutor in the Homicide Squad presents the matter to the Grand Jury. Non-fatal discharges that result in injury or property damage are generally referred to the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Professional Standards Bureau. The Squad also responds to all incidents when a police officer is shot and is responsible for conducting special and/or confidential investigations as may be assigned by the Prosecutor.

The Homicide Squad handles matters designated as special investigations. For example, there are times when a death occurs under circumstances which do not immediately indicate that a homicide was committed, but nonetheless an investigation is required to determine if someone was legally responsible for the death.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

The Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Homicide Squad spend considerable time and effort assisting in the investigative phase of many cases, to assure that usable and relevant evidence is collected in a manner that will survive all possible challenges in the courtroom. Once an arrest warrant is issued, the Assistant Prosecutor works with a Detective to prepare the case for a Grand Jury presentation. If a homicide involves a juvenile offender, the Squad prosecutes the case in juvenile court or requests waiver of the offender to adult court when appropriate.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

During 2008, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Squad investigated 116 homicides; of that number, 2 were police-involved shootings. There were 101 fatal or serious motor vehicle collisions and 41 special investigation matters. Prosecutors assigned to the Squad were also responsible in 2008 for handling 8 juvenile waiver proceedings. These 116 homicides represent a 23% decrease in the homicide rate over 2007. In 2008, Homicide Squad Prosecutors and Detectives prepared, received and executed over 150 search warrants and additional communications data warrants.

A total of 142 homicide cases were prepared for Grand Jury presentation in 2008 with 119 cases indicted. The Vehicular Homicide Unit also presented 30 cases to the Grand Jury of which 12 were indicted.

During 2008, there were 54 adult dispositions, which reflects a 35% decrease over 2007. There was a 96% office-wide conviction rate of homicide cases disposed of by trial or plea. Homicide Squad personnel handled 60% of all homicide prosecutions in 2008, a decrease of 7% from 2008. Finally, the office had a decrease in the dismissal of homicide cases by Assistant Prosecutors from 8 cases in 2007 to 4 cases in 2008.

During 2009, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Squad investigated 121 homicides; of that number, 3 were police involved shootings. There were 98 fatal or serious motor vehicle collisions and 52 were special investigation matters. Prosecutors assigned to the Squad were also responsible in 2009 for handling 4 juvenile waiver proceedings. These 121 homicides represent a 4% increase in the homicide rate over 2008. During the same period, Homicide Squad Prosecutors and Detectives prepared, received and executed over 175 search warrants and additional communication data warrants.

A total of 93 homicide cases were prepared for Grand Jury presentation in 2009 with 87 cases indicted. The Vehicular Homicide Unit also presented 39 cases to the Grand Jury of which 14 were indicted.

During 2009, there were 75 adult dispositions, which equal a 39% increase over 2008. There was a 97% office-wide conviction rate of homicide cases disposed of by trial or plea. Homicide Squad personnel handled 71% of all homicide prosecutions in 2009, an increase of 11% from 2008.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

Significant cases included:

State v. Tiquan Whitehurst – On December 2, 2006, defendant was a backseat passenger in a car driven by Charles Jackson (victim) and front seat passenger, Joseph Cox (victim). They were traveling in the City of Newark in the evening hours when defendant produced a gun and shot both front seat persons to death. The car crashed, as a result of the shooting, and Cox died instantly. However, Jackson died within hours of the shooting. Based on one eyewitness and forensic testing regarding DNA and gunshot residue, a double murder conviction was obtained. Defendant received consecutive life sentences.

State v. Raynard Brown – On August 7, 2006, Det. Kieran Shields of the Orange Police Department responded to Hickory Street and Taylor Place on a report of a shooting. He spotted the defendant armed with a weapon run into the backyard of one of the homes on the block. He proceeded to the rear yards in pursuit of the defendant and was confronted by him in the stairwell in the rear of the house. Defendant fired the shotgun at Det. Shields and killed him. He exited the rear yard leaving the weapon behind. Eyewitnesses were able to identify the defendant along with fingerprints of Mr. Brown on the weapon. Prior to the beginning of the trial, defendant pleaded guilty to murder for a 40 year sentence.

State v. Mark Caldwell – On the evening of November 9, 2005, the female victim, Kerlissa Romeo, was heading home from work to meet up with her husband in the City of East Orange. Once they were together and walking home, the defendant approached them in order to commit a robbery. He had the victim lie face down on the ground and shot her to death. The husband and another witness were able to identify the defendant. At trial, defendant was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

State v. Edward Peoples – Edward Peoples was convicted of the January 20, 2006, killing of Rahmon Jenkins at the Baxter Terrace Apartments in the City of Newark. Both the defendant and the victim were rival drug dealers at the public housing complex and had become involved in a dispute as to the selling of drugs at the public housing complex. On the day the incident happened, the two had a verbal confrontation and defendant produced a handgun and shot the victim to death. Eyewitnesses were brought to court who eventually identified Peoples as the killer. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to 65 years, subject to NERA in State Prison.

State v. Anthony Clifton Short – On January 1, 2007, Vijay Kaura was found bludgeoned to death in a gas station office located in the City of Orange. He was a young student from India who was working part-time as a gas station attendant. Orange police found out that the next day a Dunkin Donuts store in East Orange had been robbed and the worker beaten severely with a hammer. A hammer had been taken from the Orange gas station killing the night before. Within hours of the Dunkin Donuts robbery, police came upon the defendant who fit the description of the perpetrator at the Dunkin Donuts. He was found to have a hammer that matched the Orange gas station

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

victim. The defendant went to trial and was convicted of murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

State v. David Conner – The victim, Benjamin Law, was inside the Chancellor Avenue Auto Repair Shop in Irvington on August 18, 2006, when he got into an argument with defendant, Mr. Connor. At one point, defendant produced a handgun and shot the victim to death. The defendant then fled the scene taking the body of the victim to a location in Jersey City where he buried it. The defendant fled to Washington, D.C. where he was eventually located. There had been witnesses at the auto body shop that identified the defendant as the shooter. Once the defendant was brought back to New Jersey, he led authorities to where he buried the victim. The defendant went to trial and was convicted of aggravated manslaughter and weapon offenses. He received an aggregate sentence of 35 years pursuant to NERA.

State v. Jermaine Sanders, Hafiz Josey and Quawee Jones – On July 3, 2004, Sanders, Josey and Jones went on a six-hour crime spree in which they perpetrated four carjackings and five robberies, an aggravated assault and the fatal shooting of Marquise Carter, Jr. A lengthy series of hearings culminated in the suppression of the statement of Quawee Jones but the admission of Jermaine Sander's statement. The Medical Examiner then amended her report and concluded that the fatal shots which killed the victim came from right to left, which signaled that Sanders fired the fatal shots. The information resulted in the plea of guilty by Jones and Josey. Jones received a 10 year sentence with 50% to be served without parole eligibility. Josey received a 12 year sentence with 85% parole ineligibility. Sanders refused an offer of 30 years without parole and elected to go to trial. Sanders was convicted on 23 of 24 counts, including the murder of Marquise Carter, Jr. and was sentenced to 100 years in State Prison.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➔ Juvenile Trial Unit

The Juvenile Trial Unit of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office vertically prosecutes juveniles for acts of delinquency for offenses that if committed by an adult would be indictable offenses. The goals of the Unit are to ensure public safety through swift and certain punishment of the violent repetitive offender, reduce juvenile recidivism, divert minor offenses from the juvenile justice system and seek to rehabilitate juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Trial Unit performs the functions of the Complaint and Intake, Central Judicial Processing, Special Remand, Investigative Squads and Trial Units of the Office for juvenile delinquency cases. The Unit also educates the public about the juvenile justice system and advises law enforcement agencies regarding juvenile laws.



The primary legal function of the Juvenile Trial Unit is to prosecute or resolve all complaints charging acts of juvenile delinquency. The New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice (N.J.S.A. 2A: 4A-23 et. seq.) defines delinquency to include the commission of an act by an individual under age 18 which if committed by an adult would constitute a crime, a disorderly persons offense, a petty disorderly offense or the violation of any other penal statute, ordinance or regulation excluding motor vehicle charges, curfew violations and smoking in public. Assistant Prosecutors from the Unit argue detention hearings, negotiate pleas, conduct bench trials and waive juveniles to the adult courts. Assistant Prosecutors screen and review every juvenile petition filed in the Superior Court. They investigate, analyze and litigate delinquency cases that are heard before the Chancery Division, Family Part. The State prosecutes these cases pursuant to the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice. One of the purposes of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice is, consistent with protecting the public interest, to remove criminality from children and substitute supervision, care, rehabilitation and a range of sanctions for accountability and protection of the public.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

In 2008, the Juvenile Trial Unit received delinquency complaints for 4,614 juvenile cases. They prosecuted 3,610 formal cases and violations of probation. In 2009, the Juvenile Trial Unit received delinquency complaints for 4,429 juvenile cases. The Unit prosecuted 3,415 formal cases and violations of probation. Assistant Prosecutors collected \$13,746 from forfeited drug transaction proceeds in 2008 and \$6,123 in 2009. In 2008, the Juvenile Unit support staff entered 4,614 informal, formal and violation of probation cases into the Juvenile Uniform Recordkeeping Information System (JURIS). There was a decrease in new complaints in 2009 with the support staff entering 4,429 informal, formal and violation of probation cases into JURIS. These numbers reflect new complaints only and not total charges.

The following offense types increased from 2007 to 2009: robbery, homicide, car jacking, criminal restraint, possession of firearms, and violations of probation. The offense type of narcotic possession and distribution, auto theft, assault, sexual offenses, bias incidents, thefts/burglary, other weapons possession, terroristic threats, harassment and criminal mischief decreased between 2007 and 2009. The number of homicides committed by juveniles in 2008 was 2 and 11 in 2009.

Juveniles who are 14 years of age or older and commit serious offenses such as homicide, armed robbery, aggravated sexual assault, aggravated arson and aggravated assault may be transferred or waived to the adult Criminal Division of the Superior Court. In 2008, 44 juvenile waivers were filed and 37 cases were waived to the Criminal Division. In 2009, 82 juvenile waivers were filed and 24 cases were waived to the Criminal Division. While the overall number of offenses committed by juveniles has decreased, waiver filings have increased due to the nature of the offenses committed by juveniles, namely armed robberies, carjackings, aggravated assaults with firearms and homicides.

Juvenile chronic offenders continued to plague the juvenile justice system in Essex County in 2008 and 2009. In 2008, 801 juveniles were reviewed for participation in the Juvenile Chronic Offender Program. Four hundred seventy-two juveniles were accepted for prosecution as chronic offenders. In 2009, 867 juveniles were reviewed for participation in the Juvenile Chronic Offender Program. Four hundred fifty-five juveniles were accepted for prosecution as chronic offenders. Thirty-eight of the juveniles committed to Jamesburg and 1 commitment to the Essex County Correctional Facility were enrollees in the Juvenile Chronic Offender Program in 2008. Fifty-two of the juveniles committed to Jamesburg and 1 commitment to the Essex County Correctional Facility were enrollees in the Juvenile Chronic Offender Program in 2009. Seventy-three of the 99 juveniles placed in Juvenile Justice Commission residential placements in 2008 were chronic offenders. Eighty of the 111 juveniles placed in Juvenile Justice Commission residential placements in 2009 were chronic offenders. One hundred one of the 115 parolees from Jamesburg in 2008 were members of the chronic offender program. Seventy-four of the 103 parolees from Jamesburg in 2009 were members of the chronic offender program.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

There were 44 males committed for incarceration to the Juvenile Justice Commission in 2008. One hundred nine juveniles were accepted into residential programs administered by the Juvenile Justice Commission in 2008. One hundred seven were males and 2 were females.

There were 58 commitments for incarceration to the Juvenile Justice Commission in 2009, 54 males and 3 females. One juvenile was committed to the Essex County Corrections Facility. There were 111 placements of probationers into residential programs administered by the Juvenile Justice Commission residential community placements in 2009. One juvenile probationer was placed in Juvenile Justice Commission residential placements twice in 2009 for a total of 110 juvenile probationers. One hundred seven were males and 3 were females.

For the past five years, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office through Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecutor Andrea Johnson has been represented on Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Statewide Steering Committee. The JDAI Steering Committee was convened by the Juvenile Justice Commission to create a Risk Screening Tool to be used by intake officers throughout New Jersey to determine whether a juvenile charged with an offense should be detained, or if not, what detention alternatives should the juvenile be placed into pending disposition of the matter. A Risk Screening Tool has been developed by a subcommittee of the JDAI state steering committee and was approved for piloting by the Supreme Court in 2008. Essex County is one of five pilot counties implementing the Risk Screening Tool.

In December 2008, the JDAI State Steering Committee's name was changed to the New Jersey Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement (NJCJJSI). This committee is a collaboration of juvenile justice partners including the Juvenile Justice Commission, Administrative Office of the Courts and the Judiciary whose mission is to institutionalize the core strategies of JDAI to examine juvenile justice in New Jersey systematically and to promote strategies that improve outcomes from arrest through adjudication and disposition. In 2009 the State of New Jersey became a JDAI Model Site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Essex County Prosecutor's Office plays an active and vital role in juvenile justice reform in the State of New Jersey as a member of the NJCJJSI and the JDAI Model Site Team.

➔ Megan's Law Unit



The Megan's Law Unit was established in 1995 in response to a state law designed to protect potential victims from convicted sex offenders who may pose a risk to the community. The law requires convicted sex offenders to register with local law enforcement agencies, enabling police and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office to locate and identify offenders, and to alert the public when necessary.

Our Assistant Prosecutors evaluate the degree of risk of re-offense that a convicted sex offender poses to the community. These evaluations are made in accordance with guidelines established by the Attorney General's Office. A three-tier classification system is used, which is designed to assess the level of risk for re-offense that a particular sex offender poses to his/her community. The evaluation process is triggered when a sex offender is released into the community from a custodial sentence, or is placed on probation. Once the Assistant Prosecutor has evaluated a sex offender, a motion is filed in Superior Court. A hearing is then conducted before the designated Megan's Law Judge, who decides the matter and issues a court order determining which tier classification level most accurately represents the degree of risk that a particular sex offender poses to the community. The tier classification determines who in the community will receive information regarding the sex offender.

Information about a sex offender is always provided to law enforcement agencies and, only when appropriate and court-ordered, to the public. Tier 1 offenders are deemed a low risk for re-offense, therefore notification is limited to the police departments and county prosecutor offices where the offender lives, works and/or attends school. Tier 2

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

offenders are considered a moderate risk for re-offense, therefore notification is sent to the appropriate schools, day care centers, women's shelters and registered community organizations within the geographic area where the offender is "likely to encounter" potential victims. Tier 3 offenders are considered a high risk for re-offense, therefore all individual residences, businesses, schools, day care centers, women's shelters and registered community groups within an offender's "likely to encounter" zone receive notification.

Notification flyers are in English, but are also provided in foreign languages if a particular notification area has a large number of individuals who do not use English as their primary language. Due to Essex County's population density, Tier 3 community notifications generally take about four weeks to plan and execute after the Tier 3 court order is obtained. Tier 3 notifications are labor intensive operations, and the Megan's Law Unit conducts them in cooperation with local police departments with the highest standards of excellence and professionalism.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

Our Megan's Law Unit is the busiest Megan's Law Unit in the State of New Jersey. Essex County has more registered sex offenders residing within it than any other County, generally between 1,200 and 1,500 sex offenders at any given time. As of November 6, 2009, there were 1,251 sex offenders registered in Essex County, with approximately 300 more incarcerated in state and county prisons as well as nearly 200 more housed in several state institutions under various civil commitment laws.

Due to the transient nature of a significant portion of the sex offender population in Essex County, the number of court hearings required and conducted can be voluminous. This is due to the fact that, even after the tiering process is completed by the issuance of a court order, a sex offender is entitled by law to a new court hearing every time he or she moves to a new address within Essex County, or moves into Essex County from elsewhere. The Megan's Law Unit must then conduct a new notification regarding the offender, encompassing his or her new area of residence.

During 2008, approximately 68 such offenders were afforded a new hearing, requiring community re-notification. Transient sex offenders also consume time, resources and manpower spent on locating, tracking and verifying their whereabouts on a continuing basis. Additionally, a Megan's Law file can only be closed if a registered sex offender dies, or is relieved by way of a court order of all Megan's Law obligations. Thus, the overall number of Megan's Law cases or files being handled by the Unit increases on an annual basis.

In 2008 and 2009 combined, the Megan's Law Unit designated 10 registrants as Tier 1 sex offenders, and obtained court orders for 65 Tier 2-Internet cases, as well as for 8 Tier 2 Non-Internet cases. The Unit also obtained 10 court orders for Tier 3 sex offenders, all of whom were posted on the Internet.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

Essex County's new Internet postings totaled 75 (including listings for each of an offender's aliases) during this time. Essex County's Internet numbers are the highest in the state. This is a significant achievement considering the tremendous volume of active cases handled by the Unit annually.

The Megan's Law Unit also indicted 132 cases at Grand Jury in 2008, and 121 in 2009. This number represents a continued increase in the number of violations sex offenders in Essex County have committed pertaining to Megan's Law and Community Supervision for Life.

In July of 2009, the Megan's Law Unit launched the Megan's Law Fugitive Initiative. This program is a collaborative and systematic effort by the Essex County Prosecutors Office, along with federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies, to make our communities safer from sex offenders. The Initiative is a team effort focused on the apprehension of Megan's Law offenders from Essex County with outstanding warrants, and those who are in violation of the statutes governing mandatory registration with the appropriate law enforcement agencies, as well as sex offenders who are non-compliant with the conditions of Community Supervision for Life where applicable. The initiative is modeled after the U.S. Marshals' Operation Falcon Fugitive Program which is based on the collaboration of various law enforcement agencies to achieve a common goal. Thus far, the Megan's Law Fugitive Initiative is credited with the location and apprehension of 18 Megan's Law fugitives in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Alabama, Puerto Rico and South America.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

➤ Professional Standards Bureau / Corruption and Bias Crime Units

The Professional Standards Bureau (“PSB”) consists of two branches. The prosecution branch is lead by a Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecutor, along with two additional Assistant Prosecutors with one who directs Bias Crime investigations. The Corruption Unit has one separately assigned Assistant Prosecutor entirely dedicated to cases involving public employees and servants. The investigative branch is lead by a Captain of Prosecutor’s Detectives who has overall command of the Bureau and is manned by 4 Lieutenants and 2 Detectives in the Professional Standards Bureau having shared responsibility of the Bias Unit, plus 4 Detectives assigned to the Corruption Unit.

The units are multi-tasked. The Professional Standards Bureau has primary responsibility in the investigation and prosecution of all police criminal misconduct in Essex County. The Bureau also conducts activities necessary to improve the administration and delivery of Police Internal Affairs services on a countywide basis. Additionally, it serves as the internal affairs unit of the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office. The Corruption Unit prosecutes and investigates criminal behavior regarding public servants and public employees.

The PSB and the Corruption Unit are “vertical prosecution” units. One unit exclusively handles all law enforcement criminal cases from inception through trial and the other handles all cases regarding public servants and employees from inception through trial. When the PSB or Corruption Unit receives an allegation of criminal conduct committed by a sworn law enforcement officer or public servant, each must determine if a criminal prosecution is warranted. If criminal prosecution is warranted, the appropriate unit presents the case to a Grand Jury. If an indictment is returned, that unit is responsible for the case through a trial or plea agreement. Internal responsibilities for the PSB include, but are not limited to, random drug screening, investigation of violations of rules and regulations, risk analysis management, and integrity testing.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

In 2008, the Professional Standards Bureau handled 323 investigations and 52 Bias Crime investigations. The Official Corruption and Economic Crimes Unit was split in January of 2009 into two separate units. As a result, the Corruption Unit is now separate, but is housed within the Professional Standards Bureau and the Bias Unit.

In 2009 the Professional Standards Bureau conducted investigations into 420 cases. The Corruption Unit has conducted investigations into 83 cases and the Bias Crime Unit has conducted investigations of 47 cases.

➔ Sexual Assault & Rape Analysis Unit

The Sexual Assault and Rape Analysis (SARA) Unit is one of the oldest investigative units in the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. It originated in the 1970's after the Newark Police Department became one of the first police departments in the nation to establish a sex crimes unit. The SARA Unit was developed to provide guidance and investigative support for all municipal police departments within the County.

The SARA Unit originally handled all cases of sexual abuse within the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. As the field of sex crime investigation became more specialized in the early 1980's, a separate Child Abuse Unit was developed.

In 2009, the SARA Unit undertook the additional responsibility of investigating and prosecuting cases involving Human Trafficking. One Assistant Prosecutor and one Detective in the unit are designated as liaisons to the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Task Force. As part of the Human Trafficking Task Force, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office became only the second office in the state to formalize a Human Trafficking Protocol.



Today, the SARA Unit handles only those cases involving adult victims of sexual abuse. The legal staff consists of an Assistant Prosecutor/Director and two Assistant Prosecutors. The three sex crimes Detectives assigned to the Unit are supervised by

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

an Investigative Captain and Lieutenant. Members of the legal and investigative staff are available 24 hours a day to assist local law enforcement in their investigations.

The SARA Unit is a vertical unit, handling its cases from inception through trial. This approach eliminates the need for repetitive investigative interviews and protects the victim from the need to continually relive the abusive act.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

In the year 2008, the SARA Unit investigated 176 cases of alleged sexual assault. 54 cases were presented to the Essex Grand Jury, resulting in 42 indictments. Eighteen cases resulted in pre-indictment pleas and 11 cases were downgraded and returned to the municipal court. There were 5 jury trials and 32 post indictment pleas. Six cases were resolved through Pre-Trial Intervention.

In 2009, the SARA Unit received 216 cases which included 103 original investigations. Forty-three cases were presented to the Grand Jury. Thirty-three cases were billed (i.e., indicted).

Significant cases in the SARA Unit included:

State v. Marion Sanders – The defendant, Marion Sanders, posed as a Fugitive Warrant Officer and used that status to gain access to the victim, requiring the victim to perform oral sex on him. Male DNA was recovered from evidence seized at the scene. Currently we are awaiting comparative DNA analysis. The defendant is awaiting trial in Passaic County based upon similar allegations.

State v. Nelson Keenan – Defendant was charged with first degree kidnapping; numerous counts of 1st degree sexual assault; and 2nd degree aggravated assault. On November 16, 2007 a 53 year old woman was forced at knifepoint into her home where she was sexually assaulted by the defendant. During a struggle with the defendant, the victim suffered a serious injury to her hand that resulted in permanent damage to her hand. At trial in October, 2009, the defendant was convicted of all counts. The defendant is scheduled for sentencing in January 2010.

➔ Vehicular Homicide Unit

The Vehicular Homicide Unit of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office was established in 2000 thanks in part to a grant from the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. The Unit was formed and designed to ensure the close cooperation between the local police departments, the New Jersey State Police, and the Prosecutor's Office whenever a motor vehicle collision occurs in the County that results in a death or serious bodily injury. The three



Detectives assigned to this unit are specially trained in collision investigation and reconstruction. The focus of the motor vehicle investigations is to determine if the incident resulting in death or serious bodily injury was the result of criminal conduct.

Two Assistant Prosecutors are assigned to the Vehicular Homicide Unit. The Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Vehicular Homicide Unit each received training in collision investigation and work closely within the Unit with the Detectives and local police departments to assure that all relevant evidence is collected and analyzed in a manner that will survive all possible challenges in the courtroom. Vehicular Homicide Assistant Prosecutors then work with the case Detective in the unit to prepare the case for Grand Jury presentation. If the case involves a juvenile offender, then the Unit will prosecute the case in juvenile court or request waiver of the offender to adult status when appropriate.

In addition to the investigation of vehicular homicides and serious bodily injury crashes, the Vehicular Homicide Unit participates in numerous educational and enforcement based programs.

2008 - 2009 Achievements:

During 2008, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office investigated 52 vehicular homicide and 49 serious bodily injury collisions. Assistant Prosecutors working with the Vehicular Homicide Unit presented 30 cases to the Grand Jury with 12 of those cases indicted. In 2008, 17 of the unit's cases were brought to a successful conclusion with the defendants either found guilty by trial or by a guilty plea in Superior Court. There were no "Not Guilty" verdicts for any vehicular cases in 2008. As a result of the Vehicular Homicide Unit's thorough and detail oriented collision investigation, criminal indictments of cases presented to the Grand Jury has increased from 37% to 40% in 2008.

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

In 2009, the Office investigated 46 Vehicular Homicide Cases and 52 Motor Vehicle Special Investigations involving serious bodily injury and resulting in criminal charges. Two Assistant Prosecutors who work extensively with the Vehicular Homicide Unit presented 39 cases to the Grand Jury, and 14 of those cases resulted in indictment. In 2009, nine of the Vehicular Homicides cases were brought to a successful conclusion with either a guilty verdict by trial or plea.

Significant cases included:

State v. William Rodriguez – On March 3rd, 2007, Newark Police Sgt. Tommaso Poplizio responded with other officers to a report of drag-racing along Doremus Avenue in Newark. Arrested at the scene was William Rodriguez, 22, of Cranbury, NJ. Rodriguez slipped his handcuffs and attempted to flee the scene in a Newark Police cruiser. During the attempt, Rodriguez crashed the stolen police cruiser into Sgt. Poplizio's police cruiser causing his death. On February 11, 2009, Rodriguez was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison with no parole.

State v. Natasha White – On April 9, 2007, White confronted her ex-boyfriend Zachary Sanders as he stood outside the Rubicon Pub. White used her car as a weapon by aiming it directly at Sanders and hit the accelerator, striking him and dragging his body several feet down the street. Sanders was pronounced dead at the scene. After a three-week trial and eight hours of deliberations, the jury convicted White on 10 counts, including murder, vehicular homicide, and aggravated assault. Natasha White was sentenced on March 24, 2009 to 40 years in prison.

➔ VIPER Unit

In the spring of 2008, pursuant to a directive from the Attorney General, Prosecutor Dow merged the Essex County Narcotics Task Force and Gang Investigation Unit into one unit known as the VIPER (Violence, Intelligence, Protection, Enforcement, Recidivism) Unit. The mission of the VIPER Unit is to investigate and prosecute crimes involving gangs, guns and violence. Since narcotics distribution is the primary revenue source for criminal street gangs, the VIPER Unit is still actively targeting mid to upper level narcotics distributors (i.e. those generally dealing in quantities of second degree weight or higher) operating in Essex County. In addition to initiating investigations and prosecuting those cases, the VIPER Unit also assists federal, state, county and municipal law enforcement agencies with their investigations. The VIPER Unit also has an intelligence section, which collects and analyzes information from a variety of sources and maintains databases of criminal street gang members. The Intelligence section of the VIPER Unit assists other units of the ECPO as well as all other law enforcement agencies in Essex County.

2008 – 2009 Achievements:

In 2008, the VIPER Unit initiated 142 investigations which culminated in 170 arrests. VIPER Unit investigations resulted in the seizure of over 12 kilograms (more than 26 pounds) of cocaine, more than 1.2 kilograms of heroin and more than 98 pounds of marijuana. VIPER Unit investigations also resulted in the seizure of 1,400 ecstasy pills, a quantity of anabolic steroids and a large quantity of liquid methamphetamine. The approximate street value of the narcotics seized by the VIPER Unit in 2008 is \$300,000 for cocaine, \$110,000 for heroin and \$100,000 for marijuana. VIPER Unit personnel also seized over \$113,048 in currency from drug dealers in 2008. VIPER Unit personnel also seized 16 firearms in 2008. This number is significant given the fact the VIPER Unit operates with a relatively small number of personnel. Additionally, given the increase in violent crime in Essex County, removal of illegal firearms from the streets is a very important step forward in the effort by law enforcement to reduce violent crime. The VIPER Unit obtained and executed more than 42 search warrants in 2008.

In 2009, the VIPER Unit initiated 81 investigations and arrested 146 persons. The VIPER unit seized approximately 6,000 grams of heroin and 1,200 grams of cocaine in 2009. VIPER Detectives also seized over 16,000 grams of marijuana, 10 pounds of crystal methamphetamine, 60 ounces of PCP and 1,141 MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets. VIPER Detectives also seized 20 firearms and confiscated more than \$104,000 in 2009. The VIPER unit executed over 30 search warrants in 2009 and the Assistant Prosecutors assigned to VIPER reviewed more than 600 narcotics and gang related search warrants for Essex County law enforcement agencies in 2009.

The VIPER Unit handled several cases of significance in 2008, including:

OPERATION TRIFECTA – A joint operation with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) targeting document gang members selling narcotics in

INVESTIGATION SQUADS

the central and south wards of Newark. This case resulted in the arrest of 24 individuals and the seizure of more than 650 grams of cocaine and 100 grams of heroin. VIPER Detectives also seized four handguns and over \$63,000 in US currency. This initiative continued into 2009.

OPERATION CRIP-KEEPER – This was joint investigation with the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), in which a number of documented members of the Crips were identified as major cocaine distributors in East Orange and Newark. Several people were arrested and charged federally in this case.

In February, 2008, the VIPER Unit conducted a joint-investigation with the Bloomfield Police Department that resulted in the seizure of over three kilos of cocaine and the arrest of three individuals.

In 2009, the VIPER Unit conducted a number of successful investigations, including:

OPERATION BLOODETTE – This was a joint investigation with the East Orange and Newark Police Departments and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) that focused on female gang members selling narcotics, including a highly volatile form of liquid phencyclidine (PCP). The investigation revealed that different sets of female actors were distributing this CDS in Newark, East Orange, Orange and Montclair. The investigation culminated with over 32 arrests and the seizure of first degree weight CDS.

OPERATION MOONSHINE / ORANGE CRUSH – This was an investigation started by the VIPER Unit into cocaine sales by known Blood members in Orange. As the investigation continued, the Orange, East Orange and Newark Police Departments as well as the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office and Essex County Sheriff's Office assisted the VIPER Unit. VIPER personnel obtained court approval for electronic surveillance (wiretaps) and intercepted the communications of several targets. VIPER personnel also used undercover operatives to successfully build a case against these individuals. The investigation concluded with the arrest of 33 individuals, 15 of whom were members of the Bloods. Seven firearms were seized during this case as well as 1,900 envelopes of heroin, 153 grams of cocaine and \$13,000 in US currency.

OPERATION RED-BADGE – This was a joint investigation conducted by VIPER personnel, the US DEA, US ATF, Newark Police and Essex County Sheriff's Office targeting CDS sales at Stephen Crane Village, a public housing complex in Newark. Sixteen individuals were arrested and three firearms were seized.

OPERATION CASH FLOW – This was a joint investigation with the ECPO Homicide and Fraud Units, along with the United States Secret Service and the Caldwell Police Department. Court-authorized wiretaps were used to infiltrate a group of individuals who were loaning money to restaurant owners. The "borrowers" were required to pay usurious interest rates and when the victims could not pay, they were forced to participate in fraudulent credit card transactions. The case concluded with 11 arrests and the execution of numerous search warrants.