



# OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND



*Anne Colt Leitess, State's Attorney*

## Anne Arundel Justice

A Monthly News Digest from the Office of the State's Attorney for Anne Arundel County

### A Message from Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Anne Colt Leitess

Welcome to the November edition of Anne Arundel Justice!

In this month's newsletter, we'll recognize the successful prosecution of a Brooklyn man sentenced to 20 years for driving the wrong way on U.S. Route 50 and killing two, a jury's conviction of a Severn man for sex abuse of a minor who testified using a comfort dog while on the witness stand and more.

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[AnneArundelSAO](#) on Instagram and Twitter and [Anne Arundel County State's Attorney's Office](#) on Facebook.

### Ramos Pleads Guilty to 23 Counts in Capital Gazette Shooting

On Monday, October 28, 2019, two days before the start of a three-week jury trial, Jarrod Ramos pleaded guilty to all 23 counts of the indictment for the shooting deaths of five employees of the Capital Gazette newspaper offices - Rebecca Smith, Wendi Winters, Rob Hiaasen, Gerald Fischman and John McNamara.

The 23 counts are five counts of first degree murder, one count of attempted first degree murder, six counts of first degree assault and 11 counts of firearm use in a felony or crime of violence.

Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Anne Colt Leitess and Assistant State's Attorney James Tuomey are prosecuting the case on behalf of the citizens of Anne Arundel County.

The second part of the proceedings is scheduled to begin on March 4, 2020 where a jury will determine whether the defendant was criminally

### **Jury Convicts Laurel Man of Assault, Sex Offenses of a Minor**

On October 31, 2019, a jury convicted Jonathan Benitez, 22, of Laurel of two counts of second degree assault, two counts of third degree sex offense for sexual abuse of an 11-year-old girl.

On July 29, 2018, Anne Arundel County police officers responded to a call from the victim's mother who said that her daughter was at a family party at a home located in the 31 block of S. Paula Drive when 22-year-old Jonathan Benitez, who lived next door, kissed and licked her 11-year-old daughter on her lips, squeezed her breast and buttocks and rubbed her stomach. The victim immediately told her mother about the inappropriate incident. The child's mother provided police with a photograph of the suspect and her brother corroborated details of the assault.

"The victim coming forward and telling her mother what happened led to a successful conviction in this case and likely stopped any further abuse," said State's Attorney Anne Colt Leitess. "I urge parents to have a

### **Jury Convicts Severn Man of Sex Abuse of a Minor, First Time Comfort Dog Used During Trial in State of Maryland**

On November 7, 2019, a jury convicted James Robert IV, 38, of Severn of all 20-counts that includes sex abuse of a minor, seven counts of rape and lesser included offenses. This case appears to be the first time where a comfort dog accompanied a victim when testifying during a trial in the State of Maryland.

"Testifying in court can be extremely traumatizing for survivors of sexual assault especially for a child. In this case, the use of a comfort dog provided the survivor with a sense of safety as she recounted the horrific details about the abuse she suffered," said Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Anne Colt Leitess. "With professional counseling and continued family support, I hope that she will continue to heal. I am grateful that the defendant will be held accountable for his crimes and can no longer hurt her. I would like to thank Caring Canines for providing

### **Judge Sentences Brooklyn Man to 20 Years for Wrong Way Crash That Killed Two**

On November 12, 2019, Terrance Sellman, 47, of Brooklyn was sentenced to the maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for two counts of negligent manslaughter for the wrong-way crash that killed two. Sellman entered a guilty plea to the charges on September 4, 2019.

"This is a devastating loss," said Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Anne Colt Leitess. "Sellman's reckless and illegal behavior resulted in the loss of two innocent lives. Donald Tyner and Janell McDougald had just finished enjoying a night out with friends when they were struck and killed by Sellman. I hope the sentence sends a clear message to those who choose to drive under the influence of alcohol that the Office of the State's Attorney will thoroughly prosecute those responsible to ensure the safety of our roads for the citizens of Anne Arundel County."

On September 2, 2018, Terrance Sellman, was driving a 1999 Ford Expedition traveling

continuous dialogue with their children to let them know no one has permission to touch them in a way that they do not like as well as teach them to recognize when someone is taking advantage of them. If it should occur, children should be reminded to tell a trustworthy adult."

Click [here](#) to read more.

this valuable service to those who have been traumatized."

On November 15, 2018, the Anne Arundel County Police Department responded to the 1700 block of Carriage Court to conduct a well-being check after receiving a tip from a sexual assault tip line. The tip stated that the defendant, later identified as James Robert IV, had raped the survivor. On November 20, 2018, the Anne Arundel County Police Department and the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services interviewed the survivor who revealed that the defendant raped her on four separate occasions and threatened to kill her. During one incident, she advised that he choked her and only stopped after she told him she was unable to breathe.

Click [here](#) to read more.

westbound in the eastbound lanes on U.S. Route 50 in the area of Rowe Boulevard. Donald Tyner and his passenger, Janell McDougald, were riding on a 2010 Harley Davidson motorcycle going eastbound when they were hit head-on by Sellman. As a result of the collision, Ms. McDougald was propelled onto the westbound travel lanes of U.S. Route 50 and Mr. Tyner onto the left shoulder on eastbound U.S. Route 50. Both were declared deceased on the scene. Sellman had a .14 blood alcohol level when he was tested at a nearby hospital as required under the law.

Click [here](#) to read more.

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## Happy Thanksgiving!

The SAO would like to wish everyone a safe and prosperous Thanksgiving!

As you gather with your loved ones, please take a moment to reflect on the many gifts we have as a community and country. As always, thank you for allowing me to serve as your State's Attorney.

Happy Thanksgiving!

