



SAO

FALL 2024 UPDATE

The Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office • State's Attorney, Ivan J. Bates

THREE LIFE SENTENCES LAPERE ACT

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JUDGE GIVES OFFENDER WHOSE CASE INITIATED THE PAVA MARIE LAPERE ACT A TOTAL OF THREE LIFE SENTENCES IN PRISON

State's Attorney Ivan J. Bates was joined by the SAO's Homicide Unit Team Captains, Elizabeth Stock, and Tonya LaPolla, along with survivor April Hurley and her attorneys William "Billy" Murphy and Malcolm P. Ruff, as well as the family of Pava Marie LaPere, to announce the sentencing of Jason Billingsley for one count of First-Degree Murder and two counts of Attempted Murder. The defendant was sentenced to two Life sentences to be served concurrently and an additional Life sentence to be served consecutive to the first two. Billingsley committed the offenses after being released early from incarceration for a first-degree sex offense.

"This defendant should have never been released into the community following a first-degree sex offense conviction to inflict immense trauma, pain, and sorrow on so many individuals in such a short amount of time," said State's Attorney Bates. "These cases inspired our legislation to eliminate diminution credits for first-degree sex offenders, and the brave testimonies from Ms. Hurley and the LaPere Family during the plea agreement hearings have reaffirmed my long-standing belief that the needs of victims, above all else, must always guide the actions of the Office of the State's Attorney. I am thankful to ASAs Stock and LaPolla for securing these pleas, ensuring that this defendant is incarcerated for the rest of his life while also protecting the victims and witnesses from the trauma of a trial."

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ECONOMIC CRIMES UNIT ANNOUNCES SEVERAL INDICTMENTS, LAUNCHES SECOND ANNUAL OLDER ADULT LUNCHEON & RESOURCE FAIR



In September, State's Attorney Bates joined his Economic Crimes Unit members to announce several indictments that prosecutors in the division secured. The announcement kicked off the resource fair and luncheon that the Economic Crimes' Older & Disabled Persons Unit hosted to educate older adults about avoiding financial scams and other crimes targeted to their demographic. Over 500 attendees participated in the program.

"It's critically important to me that our older adult population is supported by our office and educated on protecting themselves from financial fraud and abuse of all forms. Economic crimes tend not to make headlines in our city, but they happen daily, create financial ruin, and cause significant harm to our housing market and local economy," said the State's Attorney. "These crimes are especially heinous because they prey upon one of our most vulnerable populations in Baltimore. Under my administration, we will continue prioritizing victims in this demographic and ensuring accountability for offenses perpetrated against them."

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JUDGE GIVES OFFENDER WHOSE CASE INITIATED THE PAVA MARIE LAPERE ACT A TOTAL OF THREE LIFE SENTENCES IN PRISON

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On September 19, 2023, the defendant entered survivor April Hurley's apartment on Edmondson Avenue, identifying himself as maintenance staff, and attacked her and her male companion with a knife. He then poured an accelerant on the couple and the apartment and set it on fire.

"We sincerely appreciate the swift resolution of this case by the State's Attorney's Office, sparing April the trauma of reliving this horrific situation at trial," said William "Billy" Murphy Jr. and Malcolm P. Ruff, civil rights attorneys representing April Hurley. "April was tortured, raped, had her throat slit, set on fire, and left for dead by Jason Billingsley. These unspeakable crimes shocked the Baltimore community and the nation. Unfortunately, it was completely preventable and was enabled by the negligence of Edens Homes and Property Pals. Even though his background as a convicted sex offender should have been discovered, they instead gave him the opportunity to mercilessly violate April."

On September 22, 2023, the defendant was seen on security camera footage entering the W. Franklin Street apartment complex of Eco-Map Technologies CEO Pava LaPere. Days later, Ms. LaPere was found deceased by police on the roof of the apartment building. The medical examiner ruled her death as homicide by strangulation and blunt force trauma.

"It has been 342 days since our daughter and sister, Pava Marie LaPere, was murdered. Each one of those days has been extremely painful and difficult to endure. Pava's death has deeply impacted our family, her friends, EcoMap Technologies, the Johns Hopkins University, the City of Baltimore, and the State of Maryland. It was right here where she was making a significant impact on improving the lives, entities and communities which she so loved. Acceptable justice may be served today, but it will never fill the void, erase the grief, or replace the impact Pava would have had if given the full life that she deserved. That ALL innocent people deserve," said the LaPere family.

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In one of the indictments, defendant Karen McAllister was charged with Engaging in a Felony Theft Scheme Between \$25,000 and \$100,000 and Felony Exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult for Obtaining through Undue Influence \$25,000 and \$100,000. The defendant's grandmother is the victim in this case. The victim's daughter attended the Inaugural Older Adults Luncheon, where she reported her concerns.

In another case, defendant David Coleman was charged with a Felony Theft Scheme valued at over \$100,000, Obtaining Property of a Vulnerable Adult valued at over \$100,000, Acting as a Contractor without a License, and Selling Home Improvements without a License. Court documents allege that the defendant defrauded a 72-year-old disabled veteran and his wife out of \$105,700 with promises of remodeling their home. The defendant never completed the work and was never a licensed contractor.

Defendant Matthew Praglowski was charged with Vulnerable Adult Physical Abuse by a Household or Family Member and Assault in the Second Degree. The victim is Praglowski's grandfather, who was 77 years old at the time of the abuse. The victim reported being beaten about the face, placed in a choke hold, and forced to the ground. The victim sustained bruises and contusions to both arms, his head and neck, and stitches around his eye.

"Our team utilizes a network of organizations and local agencies to address the needs of older adult and disabled victims," said ODPU & Economic Crimes Chief Shari E. Greene. "We strive to provide versatile resources, ranging from a one-stop helpline dedicated to crime victims who are 60+ and persons with disabilities, transportation services for victims, and scheduling discrete interviews with prosecutors and partners at a remote site away from the courthouse environment. Recognizing the needs and circumstances older adults and persons with disabilities who are often preyed upon face, the ODPU is committed to ensuring equal access to justice and services for our most vulnerable population."

To contact the ODPU - please call our one-stop helpline (844.726.6378) or email odpuhelp@stattdo.org.



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OVER 1000 SCHOOL SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED AT BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT



Staff at the State's Attorney's Office spent the month of August collecting school supplies for the inaugural Back-to-School Cookout & School Supply Giveaway hosted at the Robert C. Marshall Recreation Center. The event provided over 1,000 school supplies to area students. State's Attorney Bates also announced the start of a new student art contest in partnership with City Schools called "Creative Justice" to encourage Baltimore youth to express themselves as the new school year begins.

"Our city has some of the most talented students in the country who are hungry and eager for the opportunity to showcase their skills," said State's Attorney Ivan J. Bates. "It is my privilege to host this contest and to have our young people's work displayed in the Office of the State's Attorney for all to enjoy."

The contest began on Saturday, September 7, and will close on Tuesday, November 12. Judges will evaluate the entries based on their creativity, originality, relevance to the 'Creative Justice' theme, and overall quality.

"We are excited that our students will have an opportunity to showcase their artistic talents and skill for a worthy cause," said Sonja Brookins Santelises, chief executive officer of City Schools. "We are thankful for this partnership with the State's Attorney. This is an excellent opportunity that will excite and energize our young people, allowing them to share their visions throughout the community."

State's Attorney Bates will display the contest winners' artwork on the 9th floor of the Office of the State's Attorney, located in the Trustist Building at 120 E. Baltimore Street.

To apply, visit statorney.org/external-affairs/youth-engagement/creative-justice-art-contest



COLD CASE UNIT CHIEF FEATURED ON DATELINE



The State's Attorney's Cold Case Unit Chief, Kurt Bjorklund, was featured on Dateline episode 43 this season, which covered his prosecution of Michael Robertson for the 2017 murder of Akia Eggleston and her unborn child. Ms. Eggleston's body has never been found. Robertson was given two consecutive life sentences. You can watch the episode on Peacock, the NBC App, or online at NBC.com.

L.E.A.R.N. TOUR RETURNS THIS OCTOBER



Join us at one of the following L.E.A.R.N. Tour dates & locations beginning at 6 PM:

October 15th - Stillmeadow Community Church
5110 Frederick Avenue

October 22nd - Dr. Bernard Harris Elementary School
1400 N. Caroline Street

October 29th - Hampstead Hill Academy
500 S. Linwood Avenue

The External Affairs Team of the State's Attorney's Office is launching their 2nd Annual L.E.A.R.N. Tour to connect residents with government agencies and resources to address their individual community's needs and concerns. Come by for a bite to eat, to ask your questions of the State's Attorney, and to partake in a 'one-stop-shop' of city resources and services. For questions, e-mail or call your community liaison, whose information can be found at statorney.org/external-affairs/ea



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In August, State's Attorney Bates attended a celebration for Ms. Millie Brown, founder of 'A Mothers Cry,' who serves tirelessly as an advocate for the families of murder victims.



The External Affairs Team at the State's Attorney's Office hosted a crime walk in the Old Goucher community. This was one of many walks hosted by the unit throughout the year.



The Maryland State's Attorneys Association held a meeting to discuss legislative priorities for 2025. Topics included stiffer penalties for road rage cases, misuse of A.I., truancy issues, and a future Prosecutor Academy.



The State's Attorney's Office sent a delegation to the National Black Prosecutors Association Conference this year. From left to right: Grant Administrator Alicia Davis, Deputy State's Attorney Gregg Solomon, ASA Michelle Battle, State's Attorney Ivan Bates, Chief of Staff Angela Galeano, ASA Rachel Adekanye, and Deputy Chief of Central Booking Jakisha Frierson.



ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY:

The mission of the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City is to create true public safety through partnerships with elected officials, law enforcement, and our residents. The Office fulfills this goal through the successful prosecution of all crimes in Baltimore City.

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