

# AREA RESOURCE GUIDE

(Services listed are provided free of charge, or have income-based scheduling)

## Homicide Support/Advocacy

Compassionate Families  
354-0007, 721-3326  
Life Is Valuable  
908-0989  
Parents of Murdered Children  
262-0866, 713-9683  
Victim Services Center  
630-6300  
Jax. Sheriff's Office Victim Advocate  
630-1764

## Abuse (Domestic)

24 Hour Hotline  
1-800-500-1119  
Hubbard House  
Emergency Shelter & Counseling  
354-3114  
Quigley House (Clay County)  
1-800-339-5017

## Compensation (victim)

Victim Services  
630-6300  
MADD Victim Services  
388-0664

## Consumer Fraud

State Attorney's Office  
630-4994

## City of Jacksonville

Consumer Affairs Division  
630-3467

## Detoxification

Gateway Community Services  
387-4661

## Family

Family Nurturing Center of Florida  
389-4244

## Guardian Ad Litem Program

220 East Bay Street, 6th Floor  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202  
(904) 630-1200

## Legal Assistance

Legal Aid  
356-8371

## Mental Health Resource Center

590 Ellis Road, Jacksonville  
(904) 786-1843

## Mothers Against Drunk Driving

(MADD)  
388-2455

## Rape

Sexual Assault  
Response Center  
244-RAPE (244-7273)  
Office  
244-4600

## RAPE Recovery Team

722-3000

## State Attorney's Office

630-2400

## Trauma Counseling

Women's Center of Jacksonville  
722-3000  
City Victim Services  
630-6300

## Youth Crisis

Youth Crisis Center  
The Safe Place  
766-3040

# The Slow Wheels of Justice



## Know Your Rights

by Atty.  
Jay C.  
Howell

We have all heard that "justice delayed is justice denied" and that "the wheels of justice grind slowly." These phrases refer, in part, to the unique timetable of the criminal justice system. When crime victims or their family members first encounter the criminal court system, it can be both confusing and frustrating.

The criminal incident and ensuing investigation begin a timetable that seems to lurch forward and stop - for unexplained reasons. Actually, we can get some clarity on the process by reviewing the significant factors that control the timing of events in our Florida criminal system.

There are two general provisions, or "Speedy Trial" rules, that can be invoked by the Defendant or the State. In a felony case, the Defendant has the right to have the case resolved in six months. The crime victim has a general right to a reasonably prompt disposition of the criminal case, as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of the accused. In reality, these provisions for speedy trial are rarely used by either the State or the Defendant. Instead, the following events often control the speed of the prosecution in a typical criminal case.

**The Investigation.** In the immediate aftermath of the crime, certain scientific tests to secure evidence may affect the process. Tests to determine DNA, the blood alcohol of a suspect, the cause of death, or other issues are necessary to determine the nature of the crime or the identity of the perpetrator. These tests can involve delays of weeks or even a month or more.

**The Arrest.** Once the police have what is known as "probable cause" to believe that the suspect committed a crime, they can make an arrest for a felony crime. If the crime is a misdemeanor not committed in the presence of the officers, then the victim must take the police report to the State Attorney's Office to initiate a prosecution. The police can make arrests for misdemeanors not committed in their presence for the crime of domestic violence.

**Bail Bond Hearing.** If the arrested suspect is unable to make bond and remains in jail, he will appear in front of a judge within 24 hours. The judge can change the bond and can place conditions on the release of the accused, such as, no contact with the crime victim.

**Arraignment.** The police place charges against the accused when he is arrested and booked in jail; however, the real decision on what charges are brought is made by the State Attorney after the arrest. This decision is usually made within three weeks, but may take longer under special circumstances. When the State makes the decision to charge an individual with a crime, the accused comes to

court to hear what the charges are and to formally enter a plea. The Defendant usually pleads "not guilty" at this first stage of court proceedings. Bail conditions and the appointment of an attorney to represent the Defendant are often considered at this arraignment hearing.

**Pre-Trial and Motion Hearings.** A most common designation for a future court date is a "pre-trial hearing." It is the general name for a hearing to determine the status of a case. There may be several pre-trial hearings in a criminal prosecution. The Defendant or the State may initiate court hearings as motions to ask the court for rulings on issues that are relevant to the case. A Defendant's attorney may move the court to suppress or restrict the use of evidence that has been gathered by the police, such as a confession or the taking of blood in a prosecution for drunk driving. Other subjects of motion hearings could include the judge's decision on whether to allow evidence of additional crimes at the trial of the accused.

**Plea of Guilty or Trial.** Perhaps the most significant event is a court hearing where the Defendant pleads guilty to criminal charges. This plea of guilty is often based on a negotiated sentence, approved by the Defendant and the State. Often, in exchange for the Defendant's plea of guilty to more serious offenses, lesser charges are dropped. If the Defendant maintains his plea of "not guilty," then a trial date is set. The approaching trial is often the catalyst that results in a negotiated plea.

**Sentencing.** Whether based upon a Defendant's voluntarily entered plea of "guilty" or a jury's or judge's finding of guilt after a trial, the Defendant appears in front of the court for formal sentencing. It is at this time that the Defendant should be ordered to pay restitution to the victim. The victim or a representative is allowed to speak to the court regarding the sentence of the accused. In most felony cases a pre-sentence investigation or "PSI" is prepared informing the judge of the background concerning the case. The victim is interviewed by the probation officer in the pre-sentence investigation and the comments are included in the materials given to the judge before the sentencing hearing.

In many criminal cases, there are very good reasons for delays in the system. In other cases, there are inexcusable delays with no real rationale. Some particularly sensitive cases, such as child abuse or sexual assault, are really hurt by unreasonable delays. Prosecutors and victim advocates should be more keenly attuned to difficulties faced by crime victims when the criminal case drags on and on for no real reason.

*Jay Howell, a Jacksonville attorney, has been a State Prosecutor, a US Senate Investigator, and the founder of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. He represents crime victims in civil claims for damages and advocates for the legal rights of all victims.*

# NASSAU COUNTY'S MOST WANTED

Sheriff Thomas Seagraves and the Nassau County Sheriff's Office endorse the efforts of the Justice Coalition to capture wanted criminals. We rely greatly on the public's participation in locating wanted persons and deeply appreciate their efforts.

## RUDY ALLEN TAYLOR

DOB: 11/2/71  
2103C Cortez Rd., Jax  
Violation: Lewd and Lascivious behavior



## CARRIE MARIE CLOER

DOB: 8/14/78  
9178 11th Ave., Jax  
Violation: Uttering Forged Checks



## MARYANN ROBERTS SPIVEY

DOB: 12/17/55  
1446 W 20th St #2, Jax  
Violation: Uttering Forged Checks



## CHRISTOPHER LEE VANCOONIS

DOB: 5/28/82  
29136 Pigeon Creek Rd., Hilliard  
Violation: Burglary/Grand Theft



## TIFFANY LATRICE GIBBS

DOB: 1/13/76  
2433 W 1st St #2, Jax  
Violation: Schemes to Defraud



## JERRY JENNINGS DICKSON

DOB: 8/25/60  
1283 Daphne Dr., Fernandina Beach  
Violation: Grand Theft



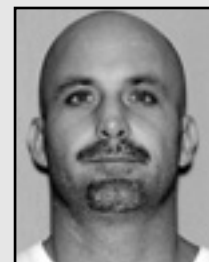
## JOHN THOMAS MICHAEL II

DOB: 2/23/78  
1454 Jones Rd., Jax  
Violation: Burglary/Grand Theft



## JAMES E. EDDINS

DOB: 6/28/75  
8038 Nussbaum Dr., Jax  
Violation: Grand Theft/Dealing in Stolen Prop.



IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE INDIVIDUALS, PLEASE CONTACT NASSAU COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Call the NCSO at (904) 353-7072 today!