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# JUSTICE COALITION'S VICTIMS' ADVOCATE

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## When It's a Federal Case



*By James Casey  
 Special Agent in  
 Charge, FBI's  
 Jacksonville Field  
 Office*

There is often confusion, sometimes

driven by perceptions from TV and the movies, about what exactly constitutes a "federal case." A favorite misperception is that somehow a federal criminal case is bigger or more important than other types of cases; hence the oft-used phrase, "don't make a federal case out of it." This perception is simply not true.

The facts are there are plenty of federal crimes that are minor, or misdemeanors, and there are many state offenses that are very serious. Murder, felonious assault and most of the robberies committed in Jacksonville are examples of serious violations of the laws of the State of Florida. So what constitutes a federal case and when does the FBI become involved in criminal investigations in Jacksonville?

Generally, a violation of federal law for which the FBI has jurisdiction must occur before the FBI gets involved. Some of the most common violent crimes the FBI investigates include bank robbery (because bank funds are federally insured), fugitive investigations (it is a separate federal crime to flee a state to avoid state prosecution), and kidnapping (federal law presumes a kidnapped person can be involuntary taken across state lines). The FBI also has specific authority to investigate drug violations under title 21 of the United States Code.

For a number of reasons, the crimes described above are almost always investigated by the FBI in close cooperation with our state and local law enforcement partners. Many years ago not all law enforcement agencies could afford, or had the expertise to provide, investigative training to all of their officers. Today, that is simply not the case and most agencies, including those here in Jacksonville, have highly trained crime scene and investigative personnel. State and local investigators are extremely qualified to investigate and prosecute all of the most violent offenders who commit crimes here in North Florida.

Thus, the single most significant factor concerning when the FBI gets involved in crimes such as these is whether we can lend something to the effort. The recent case of

FEDERAL CASE... CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Violent Robbery Backfires Victim shoots career criminal 6 times

*By Gary Hopkins*

*"You made me pull my gun when I knew one of us was going to die. I don't ever want to make that decision again."\**

On the morning of August 4, 2008, Klay Brickell was going about his own business at a house he had bought and was remodeling several blocks west of Main Street, just off 24th and Pearl Street. He was on the porch making a phone call when Cedric Battle walked up to him and changed both their lives forever.

Cedric Battle is a career criminal. He set out that morning to ply his chosen trade. His main tool was a small handgun, one that he had gained illegally, because by the nature of his criminal past, he is forbidden to own one. Cedric Battle was out looking for targets of opportunity and some easy money when he spotted Klay and decided that this would be his first crime of the day.

When Battle walked up on the



*Nancy and Klay Brickell with their adopted Haitian daughter, Christelle.*

porch, Klay noticed him and started to say that the house was under construction and not yet on the market. Battle cut him off by pulling out his revolver and telling Klay to give him his wallet and money.

Klay was, obviously, as any sane person would be, afraid for his life.

He had two grown children with grandkids on the way and a new addition to his life, five-year-old Christelle, his newly adopted daughter from Haiti. Not to mention Nancy, his wife of 26 years, and lots

ARMED ROBBERY... CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

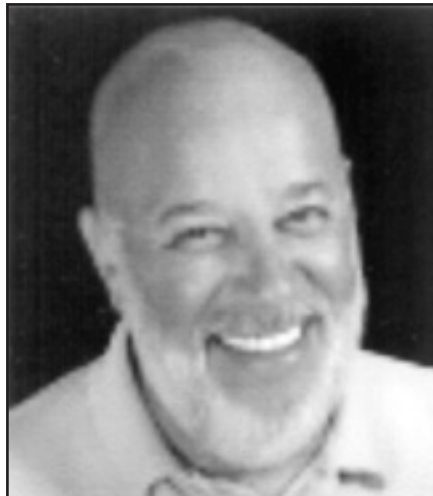
## Forensic Document Examiner supplies key evidence

Chinese proverb: Handwriting is a portrait of the mind

*By Shirley Shaw*

Among all the documents Richard Orsini has examined in his 20 years of experience as a forensic handwriting expert, several come to mind immediately, but there is one that especially stands out - a "suicide" note. Catherine Stelzl, a young nurse in Hudson, Fla., was found dead in her bathtub, the apparent victim of a self-induced drug overdose of GHB. Long suspicious of John Stelzl, his daughter's husband, David Riggsby was convinced she had been murdered and that the suicide note John produced was, at least in part, not written by Catherine.

Although John was never charged with his wife's death (he himself died



*Richard Orsini*

of a drug overdose a few years later), a court trial was held to determine the beneficiary of a \$100,000 insurance

policy on the young woman. Claude Lavaron, a private investigator in St. Petersburg, hired Orsini to evaluate the so-called suicide note, and his testimony that a crucial statement in the note was not written by Catherine persuaded the judge to rule in favor of her parents.<sup>1</sup>

Orsini is a busy man who works out of his home office in Jacksonville Beach. Trained in his craft by some of the country's most renowned handwriting experts, he has testified in 41 different states and several foreign countries. His first instructor, Daniel S. Anthony, taught in graduate schools such as Harvard and Princeton and was the expert witness in the Atty. Gen. John Mitchell case,

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