

<http://ncrj.org/john-stoll-awarded-5-5-million-dollars/>

## John Stoll Awarded 5.5 Million Dollars

inShare0

In Bakersfield, California, Kern County's Board of Supervisors has agreed to settle for \$5.5 million a federal lawsuit filed by John Stoll, now 66, whose molestation conviction was overturned in 2004 after he spent 20 years in prison. Michael Snedeker, President of NCRJ, together with attorneys for two California Innocence Projects, filed the case for Mr. Stoll in Fresno, California, in 2005. Stoll was one of 46 people charged in eight alleged "child sex rings" in Kern County between 1982 and 1985. He was the last in custody when his conviction was overturned. The cases fell apart as witnesses recanted their testimony and investigators' techniques were shown to have created rather than discovered the cases. At first, said Snedeker, we thought the cases were the product of overzealous but well-meaning people. But when we found tapes of interviews that supposedly did not exist, showing the use of techniques they swore were not used, we saw corruption, a deliberate trampling of Mr. Stoll's rights and wrongful deprivation of his liberty, as well as the infliction of harm on the very children defendants were charged with protecting.

Stoll's case along with the other Kern County "sex ring" cases were the subject of the documentary "Witch Hunt", produced and narrated by actor Sean Penn, released last fall and shown on MSNBC in April.

"It's a sad situation for everyone involved, particularly for a man who lost 20 years of his life," Kern County Supervisor Don Maben said of Stoll. "Hopefully we've learned enough that it won't happen again."

<http://williamlanderson.blogspot.com/2010/04/is-len-gregor-child-molester-according.html>

Thursday, April 29, 2010

Is Len Gregor a Child Molester? According to His Logic, He Is

[Update]: A friend of Kristen Jones Bradley has contacted me and wanted me to know that Ms. Bradley was working on school rosters and the like, not taking notes at trial. I have decided to take down that earlier post. As I have written before, she was one of my students and a very good one, and I will take her word for it, according to what her friend has said.

Len "The Man" Gregor has been involved in an interesting line of questioning with defense witnesses, acting semi-civilized during the cross-examination only AFTER someone from NBC's Today Show entered the courtroom. (Guess "The Man" did not want to look like "The Jerk" in front of someone who is going to put his picture on the TV tube.)

Over and over again, he has been screaming at the female witnesses that Tonya Craft is a "narcissist" because she goes to a gym and is a personal trainer. Other than simple character assassination, which in most courtrooms would not be permitted, this is an irrelevant and highly prejudicial line of questioning. Unfortunately, the court of Brian House no longer is a Court of Law, but rather a House of Judicial Horrors, the Ultimate Star Chamber.

Because Len Gregor's Facebook page no longer is available, I am once again going to post the image of an earlier FB page, the one in which Holly Kittle was shown to be one of his "friends."

If one looks at the woman on Gregor's right (who I guess is his wife), you will see she is wearing very low-cut shorts and a top, showing her midriff. Her left hand is at the top of the shorts as though she is pulling them down a bit for the camera to reveal something (the shorts already are very revealing and the photo makes it look as though she is giving the impression she wants to pull them down even more).

Obviously, the woman is attractive, and wanting to show off, and Gregor is standing there proudly, as though he were the cat that swallowed the canary. It is quite clear that the woman works out in a gym, and I suspect that Gregor spends some time there, too.

Folks, if you wish to see narcissism in action, here it is. I will go further. Gregor is claiming the following syllogisms: (1) People who work out in the gym or are personal trainers are narcissist; (2) Tonya Craft works out and is a personal trainer; (3) therefore, Ms. Craft is a narcissist.

Then, having established that Ms. Craft is a "narcissist," he demands that jurors and the public accept the following chain of logic: (1) Some narcissists have molested children; (2) Tonya Craft is a narcissist; (3) therefore, Tonya Craft definitely molested children.

Neither of these syllogisms actually work, at least when one applies real logic, as opposed to "The Man's" logic. However, since he has established in a "court" the previous chains of logic, and since Brian House has determined that the prosecutors' line of questioning on this matter as something that established "evidence" of child molestation, I simply am going to demonstrate how this logical chain -- that carries the force of Almighty Law in House's Star Chamber -- can be applied using Gregor's FB page:

(1) Len Gregor and his wife work out, and his wife has placed her hand to her very low-cut shorts in a provocative manner, making both of them narcissists; (2) Narcissists molest children; (3) therefore, Len "The Man" Gregor and his wife are child molesters.

Now, before all of the supporters start screaming at me that I have no right to bring Gregor's wife into all of this, all I am doing is just following the logical chain that the Great Brian House Himself has permitted to be established in his courtroom. If you don't like what I have said, ask yourself how I am wrong, given what has transpired this week, and given what Gregor is demanding that the jury believe.

Enough said.

[Update]: A number of people have said that the woman in the picture is NOT Gregor's wife, but rather one of the "Bud Girls" or someone like that. So, who is the narcissist? I cannot imagine having my picture taken next to a woman like this who is posing in a sexually-provocative manner.

However, apparently is OK for Gregor to pose with his arm around a woman who is posing like this, but not OK for a woman to be a fitness trainer. Talk about hypocrisy.

Posted by William L. Anderson at 7:34 AM

Labels: Judicial Misconduct, Narcissistic Prosecutors, Prosecutorial misconduct, Tonya Craft

177 comments:

Anonymous said...

As you said, enough said!!!!

April 29, 2010 7:53 AM

Anonymous said...

Keep bringing forth the truth Mr. Anderson. Your efforts are much appreciated.

April 29, 2010 8:05 AM

Anonymous said...

Has anyone seen the today show this morning? Just curious as to what was said?

Please inform those you are at work and no access to tv.

thanks

April 29, 2010 8:08 AM

Denise C. said...

Well, it was titled "Witch Hunt or Child Molester". They actually got their own legal analyst from LA. He was talking about the inconsistencies in the children's testimony. Just saw in twitter that more coverage on MSNBC at 10:40am and 11:45am.

April 29, 2010 8:15 AM

Anonymous said...

judging from the photo, i would have thought gregor was at a sporting event and the girl in the photo was simply a cheerleader who was outside the stadium doing photo ops. the reason i think this is because he is leaning in to get as close as he can without touching her. his arm is not around her... and she appears to be loving the camera, not "the man" beside her.

she also is holding an umbrella that is color coordinated to her outfit. just observations...

i would imagine that when gregor read this post, he stopped short at the thought that someone would actually think this girl is his wife... and undoubtedly paid no attention the the high points of the post that proceeded.

what this photo does show to me is a man who is married finding pleasure in the idea of being with the beautiful girl in the photo. again... just observations.

April 29, 2010 8:17 AM

Denise C. said...

Here is a link to the video from the Today Show.

<http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/36845265%2336845265>

April 29, 2010 8:21 AM

Dan said...

@ 8:17 - thanks Len.

April 29, 2010 8:30 AM

William L. Anderson said...

Thanks, Denise. I don't have TV, so I will watch it when I get to the office. We are on Hughes Net out here in Garrett County, and they penalize us if we download videos because of the MB involved, as we have limited MB every day.

If someone can confirm to me that the woman is NOT his wife, I will make a correction, and that will make the post even more interesting. I have a sense this story is about to escalate in a way that no one predicted.

April 29, 2010 8:31 AM

Kellie Graham said...

Yes, I immediately noticed the woman in Gregor's photo too and I found it interesting that this was posted as his profile photo, so obviously a proud photo for him (of course I may just be jealous b/c she's better looking than me:) Also noticed how few friends he has too (has nothing to do with case, but still amusing!)

April 29, 2010 8:44 AM

Denise C. said...

I can't help but wonder why he doesn't have a picture of him and his wife, if that is not his wife. I myself would be upset if my husband put a picture of him and another woman as his profile picture instead of me and him.

April 29, 2010 8:46 AM

Jason S said...

People go to the courthouse if you can. Only if it is an hr or so. Let's pick up the pace and show our support for Tonya.

We need to take this as far as it can go with the media. The coverage needs to turn to show the corruption by Outhouse and his puppets. This is going to get good!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

April 29, 2010 8:47 AM

Denise C. said...

Does anybody know what experts are supposed to be there and are they going to be there today?

April 29, 2010 8:48 AM

Anonymous said...

Not sure about the picture, but am a little worried about The Today Show segment. Not once were the 3 stooges referred to other than "overzealous prosecutors" by a blogger. I don't feel they threw Tonya under the bus, but I also don't think they "helped" her either. Maybe for once the media just reported what they were supposed to and will let the viewers decide.

The more I read about this case, the more I am afraid for Tonya. I remember watching the famous OJ trial and the world knowing he was guilty...it was "so easy to see"....we all know how that turned out. I just pray for Tonya, her children, her family, and her friends that is not what happens here with the verdicts reversed.

I pray Lord that you continue to give her strength but more importantly give her comfort. Wrap your arms around her and carry her through this ordeal. Lord I pray for her children and all the children involved that their little hearts be transformed and their minds be clear of this situation and that there be no lasting damage. I know that is a lot to ask, but I also know Father you can make it happen. You are in control and I trust that Your

plan is perfect. Lastly Lord, I pray for the prosecutors, the judge, and the accuser's parents. Lord, bring them to their knees. Make them so miserable they have to come to you for this to all get better. Make their beds hard as rocks and their stomachs sick. Change them Oh Lord, as only You can. Take their rest and convert their hearts. I pray Lord that you take away all anger they have and replace it with love. Because Your love, grace, and forgiveness is what we all must have in our lives. tpla

April 29, 2010 8:53 AM

William L. Anderson said...

Amen.

April 29, 2010 9:06 AM

Anonymous said...

Wow, I giggled a little. Can you imagine his reaction, once he sees this?

Personally, I would be mortified, Hypocrisy at its finest!

@ Denise...I too would be upset if my husband's profile pic was of him and another woman, especially if she looked like this!

Thank you Bill for your insight on this travesty. I also appreciate all the well-spoken, intelligent debate!

April 29, 2010 9:06 AM

Kerwyn said...

The Today show segment was even handed and fair. What it did do was expose this trial to the major media. That means the rest of the media is now going to be taking a hard look at this.

Unlike the vitriol that is posted on blogs and web sites (both for and against Ms. Craft), the media must (at least initially) stay middle of the road. It is a very delicate balance when there are children involved and it would be highly inappropriate for the media at this point to delve into specific testimony.

Hopefully, that will come.

Those of us who know this farce for what it is want nothing more than a scathing national media laying the smack down on the prosecutors in this case. That is not going to happen at first.

April 29, 2010 9:14 AM

tandt said...

Well Bill, your blog made the Today Show! I believe they just set the stage for the explosion that WILL come after this "trial" is over. It was unbiased, but they did show the Craft interview with WRCB. I was very happy about that. Luckily, they did not use their interview with Poston. I guess they didn't like the, "uh, I don't know, uh, all I've ever

wanted was love", bit. He's a joke & as I've said before, he not only practices as an attorney against these guys, but he is also paid by the same government by being a juvenile court judge.

All in all, I believe NBC just set the stage, which is all they can do right now. Either way this travesty turns out, Tonya will receive the justice she has deserved all along & it will begin with the "big guys" coming into little old Ringgold with no bias & nailing these jerks to the wall.

I also think the pic is with some cheerleader or other promotional type person. I think it's tacky. My FB pic is of my husband & myself, the majority of my friends have the same or with their kids and the others usually put something silly, like a pic of Tweety Bird. I agree with you, it actually makes him seem worse and conflicting with everything he is trying to portray about Craft.

Also, just posted that Today is staying put. I think they have their story & are ready to pounce!

April 29, 2010 9:14 AM

Kerwyn said...

Folks who are at the courthouse.

I received a private message from someone (anon) stating that one of the Jurors is telling folks outside the courtroom that Tonya is guilty.

Anyone know anything about this?

April 29, 2010 9:19 AM

tandt said...

Kerwyn, it would not surprise me. I think we all know there is at least 1 dirty juror in the bunch. More than likely the relative, but I believe there is probably more than one. Scary stuff!

April 29, 2010 9:32 AM

Anonymous said...

Hey Everyone just a thought. Down Home Days is in Chickamauga. I know you can't have any bumper stickers around the court house but who says they can't be plenty of them at that event. Judge Bozzo House can't do a damn thing about everyone showing up with shirts, bumper stickers or what ever they want to to show support for Tonya. It will be Saturday in big beautiful Down Town Area of the Big Mayberry City Of Chickamauga. Hey it was just a thought.

April 29, 2010 9:37 AM

Anonymous said...

Why didn't NBC touch on the prosecutorial misconduct and the judge's bias? This should have been the main topic. This report sounded like more of "the party line"

When will we get someone in the national press with the guts to tell the reality of how this trial is being handled?

April 29, 2010 9:40 AM

Anonymous said...

Not sure how to get a message to you that will not be posted here... but you should see the post made by Stephen Jones on the Truth for Tonya Facebook page.

April 29, 2010 9:41 AM

Anonymous said...

Touche!

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touché>

April 29, 2010 9:43 AM

Anonymous said...

Like Mr. Anderson, I am on Hughes Net. In my case in the wilds of Tennessee. I can only download something like this between 2AM and 7AM, otherwise it takes 24 hours to reboot. I'll look at MSNBC at the times mentioned above.

April 29, 2010 9:45 AM

tandt said...

Anon 9:40,

They can not touch on that right now. First of all, they haven't seen "everything" yet. Second, they did exactly what they can do for now, and that is get the interest in this story. Third, all of the above equals "kapow!" at the end of all this. Now that they are here, they can get a better peek. They can look at the tapes of the other days, where the stooges were grandstanding & showing their true sides. Now, they are all acting sweet & nice & pleasant & that is going to explode right in their faces.

Basically, they did well for what they can do at this point.

Patience is a virtue & all we can do now is be patient, keep praying & maybe take the Today Show people some cold beer. :-)

April 29, 2010 9:54 AM

Jason S said...

Outhouse and puppets are being nice now. What does that tell ya. Someone is getting scared of the outsiders. They must know that there is video from all the court proceedings and now they want to act nice for the national news. How stupid you look!!!

April 29, 2010 10:00 AM

Anonymous said...

I really wish you folks would stop referring to the Honorable Judge Brian House as "Bozo."



That is an insult to a wonderful childhood icon of mine. Besides that, you can't be the ringmaster and a clown in the same circus!!!

Just a little humor to lighten the burden on all of our hearts this morning.  
April 29, 2010 10:04 AM

Anonymous said...

Using this same "logic", maybe Arnt should go after Joal Henke. Sarah Bass Henke shaves her pubic area. If completely shaven, this would make her look like a prepubescent child. He must like young girls. Hence, he is a child molester.  
April 29, 2010 10:05 AM

Anonymous said...

TO ANON @ 9:40: It isn't quite that easy - they could, would, and should be accused of "playing judge" themselves if they took it upon themselves to do that. IMO, the segment was - uh - hate to use this - "fair and balanced" - HA!

TO DENISE C @ 9:21: Thanks!

TO ALL: This thread needs these links for a good look at the depravity to which supposed adults can sink:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wenatchee\\_sex\\_ring](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wenatchee_sex_ring)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day\\_care\\_sexual\\_abuse\\_hysteria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day_care_sexual_abuse_hysteria)  
April 29, 2010 10:06 AM

William L. Anderson said...  
To the 10:06

I linked those in my early posts. I agree with you.  
April 29, 2010 10:08 AM

ihatecatoosa said...

The lady in Len Gregor's profile pic looks like she is a pro-cheerleader. Maybe NFL? He doesn't appear to be touching her altho he is standing close & that is not an appropriate pic for a DA to have had for the world to see.  
April 29, 2010 10:09 AM

Anonymous said...  
Bill @ 10:08 -

You oughtta - we have been comparing notes for years - all the way back to your NGC

days - I gotta stay ANON here as my ties to the "legal community" are extensive, deep, and longstanding....

Keep the "skeer" on 'em!  
April 29, 2010 10:16 AM

Anonymous said...  
I don't give a rat's ass who Len Gregor had his picture made with. If his wife is okay with that picture being posted that is his buisness. I do however think he needs to go back to law school and quit acting like Barney five.  
April 29, 2010 10:17 AM

Kerwyn said...  
Anon thats Fife (I loved him!)  
April 29, 2010 10:19 AM

tandt said...  
LMBO anon 10:04! I think we all needed that. Bravo!  
April 29, 2010 10:20 AM

Kerwyn said...  
Can anyone out there confirm (factually) who was Tonya's ex husband lawyer in divorce. Debate on whether it was House or his partner.

Wrong either way for him to be sitting as judge imo since there is no way in a two man law firm he was not privy to information.  
April 29, 2010 10:23 AM

Anonymous said...  
Can someone please tell me if it is true that Tonya has another child from her first marriage? If so why did she not have custody of this child? Also why was her current husband and her separated for a while.  
April 29, 2010 10:26 AM

Denise C. said...  
The way I understand the situation is that House's partner actually represented the ex, but the partner was not licensed in TN. So, House was so he went to the actual court to represent the ex.

Just saw on Twitter that Inside Edition is picking up the trial.  
April 29, 2010 10:27 AM

Anonymous said...  
from WRCB Inside Edition saw our video on @TodayShow this morning. Guess what. Now they want to cover #TonyaCraft too. It begins...

April 29, 2010 10:27 AM

Kerwyn said...

Thanks Denise

April 29, 2010 10:29 AM

tandt said...

Kerwyn, his partner Mike Giglio, was the one actually representing, but House had to "show up" for Giglio one time when he was out. That is enough for him to have recused himself.

The earlier anon post about a comment by a Stephen Jones on the TFT site, where is it located?

April 29, 2010 10:29 AM

Kerwyn said...

If that is true, I believe that it is judicial misconduct for him to sit on a case where he was once the adversarial representative against her.

I am not a lawyer, but seems like common sense to me. Specially since apparently there were claims of infidelity ect...

April 29, 2010 10:33 AM

Anonymous said...

Just heard from someone from college who's daughter is doing her intern at Fox News. She has heard lots of talk this morning about this case. I will keep you posted

April 29, 2010 10:36 AM

Jason S said...

Train is picking up speed!!!

It is shameful to act that way in court around the people who voted you in and then change your demeanor, when the national people come in town. But guess what, we are the ones who vote. You 3 must not be that smart.

April 29, 2010 10:37 AM

Anonymous said...

Just remember they are all on video. All the news media who decide to show up can be shown how they acted before they got here. Just goes to show you. Momma always said don't get caught doing something you wouldn't want the whole world to see.

April 29, 2010 10:42 AM

Anonymous said...

Actually House had to stand in for Giglio, as Giglio was not licensed in Tn. However, he still is the lawyer of record, so agreed he should have recused himself.

What worries me in all of this, is that not only will other convictions and cases be looked at and well they should, but what if convictions of real criminals get overturned because of their unjust behavior. The prosecution has opened the door to having all their convictions being looked at. I guess because they convicted Sam Parker without a body (and I believe he killed her)they felt they were invincible. Bet they are wondering what they are going to do now!!!

April 29, 2010 10:43 AM

Kerwyn said...

Tandt it is on the tonya craft facebook page

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=362603869277>

April 29, 2010 10:45 AM

Anonymous said...

Okay what is all this about a secret wedding with Tonya and her now husband and then a real wedding? I never knew she had a child from a previous marriage is that true? Where is he at and who has custody of him? Why did she and her husband separate? I do think she is innocent but these are some serious issues coming out?

April 29, 2010 10:50 AM

Anonymous said...

Did I see somewhere that one of the kids had testified that she was molested by - pretty disgusting but I guess accurate terminology - "fisting"?

And if that is the case, didn't the prosecutions case blow up with the testimony from the expert from Emory?

April 29, 2010 10:51 AM

Anonymous said...

Just read the Truth for Tonya website. It states that she only had 2 children. What is this about a 3rd child that would be a teenager by now? Does anyone know about this?

April 29, 2010 10:53 AM

Anonymous said...

Wasn't Giglio's wives brother was married to Tonya at one time?

April 29, 2010 10:53 AM

Anonymous said...

ANON 10:50 she was married to Joel Henke then he had multiple affairs with which he is married to one of them now whom is much younger then he is. She had 2 children with this "guy" and they are the ones who have her children now. I am not sure of another child..not sure if this is right. Can someone confirm? Although really it does not matter.

April 29, 2010 10:57 AM

Anonymous said...

Yes, there was an allegation that Tonya inserted her entire fist in one of the incidents. How could anyone believe that could happen without some serious injury???? Yet somehow, they managed to never be seen by a doctor. Defies logic!

April 29, 2010 10:59 AM

Anonymous said...

This entire travesty reminds me of something I saw on Dateline. There was a "ring" of Child molesters, they went to jail, and 20 years later the kids, "victims", come back and say that they were told to lie and given gifts to do so by prosecutors and family members. Here is an article about it:

The McCuan and Kniffen Families

This was the first large Multi-Victim Multi-Offender (MVMO) child abuse case in North America. It was centered in Bakersfield and Kern County, CA. Two couples, Alvin & Debbie McCuan and Scott & Brenda Kniffen, were tried in 1983, found guilty, and given centuries-long jail sentences.

The McCuan/Kniffen convictions were overturned on appeal. The two couples were released from jail in 1996-AUG, after having spent 14 years in prison, isolated from each other.

During a supervised visit Brandon Kniffen was asked by his grandmother whether the charges were true. He answered "No. None of those things ever happened.". The grandmother was arrested for discussing the case with her grandchild; she was not allowed to testify at the trial, and had her visits terminated for years afterwards.

Brian Kniffen later recanted, and said that he had been told what to say at the trial and had been promised that he could be with his parents again if he cooperated. His brother Brandon has also recanted. They have stated that the abuse never occurred and that they were led and coerced to testify as they did.

April 29, 2010 11:01 AM

Anonymous said...

Anon 10:59 I agree. What it does say is there are some sick twisted parents making up some crazy stuff.

April 29, 2010 11:03 AM

Anonymous said...

The McCuan/Kniffen case was a complete farce. If you google it, you can read about how the woman that started the accusations was a complete nut job, in and out of psych wards, and anytime that someone spoke up for the McCuans/Kniffens, they were added to the "ring" of accused people.

April 29, 2010 11:09 AM

Anonymous said...

Here is another kicker... Mike Giglio was in the original jury pool, and was not immediately dismissed... He was not selected, but how in the world did he ever end up as

a potential jurer? Also, Mike Giglio was a candidate for Superior Court Judge in the same race as Brian House, AND Chris Arnt!!!! Yep, politics do make strange bedfellows!!! Also, why is it that the prosecution keeps asking witnesses about the truthfortonya website? and asking if they think there is a conspiracy with the judge and lead prosecutor?

It is almost a trick question... If they say no, well then the defense's own witnesses say they don't believe that there is a conspiracy. If they say yes, they can try to impeach the testimony because of the order for no media involvement (and I am sure the House would have no objection to that!)... My question is this? Should that not apply to all parties in this hearing? How do the prosecution know that we all think they are conspiring? Be careful sharpening your sword on both sides. You just might get cut yourself!!!

April 29, 2010 11:13 AM

Anonymous said...

Wow, I love how the defense objects to hearsay, and the judge overrules them, and then on cross, the prosecution objects to hearsay, and are overruled. Now Gregor is taking shots at Melydia Clewel... And looking at the tweets from her, she has taken it personally. I don't think he really wants to get her riled... She is fiesty, and will not hold back once she gets started, not to mention she has the nation's ears now!!!! Tread Lightly Counselor! You are skating on thin ice!!!

April 29, 2010 11:26 AM

Anonymous said...

should say prosecution objects and immediately is sustained!

April 29, 2010 11:27 AM

Kerwyn said...

I read the testimony about "inserting all her fingers" with a bit of dismay. Pardon me if I get a bit medical here guys.

Sadly, in 85 to 95% of child molestation cases there will be no physical signs of abuse. That's because in most cases there is not full penetration. That being said, if an adult placed all 4 fingers into the vaginal vault of a 6 year old, I would expect to see hymeneal tearing at the very least. However in testimony by a mother, she indicated her daughter told her that Tonya had done that anally. Once again if this were true, I know I would see physical injury in that particular situation. Yet the mother did not report any bleeding or injury that would (most likely) have been extremely evident.

Either way, the physical exam does not support that claim at a factual level.

April 29, 2010 11:36 AM

Anonymous said...

A little more from the Bakersfield Witch Hunt...sounds all too familiar:

Four children gave testimony. Child "A" answered that he didn't know or didn't remember to almost all of the questions raised by the defense attorneys. Child "V" admitted during questioning by a defense attorney that it is OK to lie, that it is OK to

make mistakes while testifying. He said that he did not know what the oath was. At one point, he denied that any sodomy had occurred. In violation of court orders, he spoke to his mother and to a prosecutor overnight. The next day, he "recalled" acts of sodomy. One of the children testified that he had been in the house five times. Actually, he had never been inside. Under cross-examination, he was unable to describe a single item in the house.

There was no physical evidence to support the charges. The children rarely agreed on the details of various alleged molestations (e.g. time, place, adults present, children present). Some of the acts that the children testified about were physically impossible to commit. The defense attorneys asked that the children be medically examined. The court denied their request. No medical examinations were ever performed on any of the boys. This was indeed unfortunate, because anal rape of a small child by an adult will cause obvious wounds that are easily detectable. A medical exam might well have proven that no sodomy actually occurred. The prosecution made many references to kiddie-porn -- photographs taken of the sexual molestations. As in other MVMO cases, no such photographs were ever found and introduced into evidence.

April 29, 2010 11:41 AM

Anonymous said...  
anon 11:26

Why was "The Man" taking shots at Clewell. From what I've seen, Channel 9 has been the only station taking the party line and not rocking the boat.

April 29, 2010 11:41 AM

Anonymous said...

Does anyone have a count on how many objections have been sustained by each side. All I seem to read is Defence OVERRULED.

April 29, 2010 11:44 AM

KeepingItReal said...

Tonya was married in an informal ceremony so that she could go on a cruise and have marital relations with him. She had become strong in her Christian faith and did not want to have sex with him prior to marriage. When they returned, they had the larger ceremony 7.7.07 for family (this is where the child was dancing) BOTH ceremonies were at the Lamb's household, but only the Lamb's were present the 1st time.

No, there is NOT a 3rd child. Just one son one daughter.

April 29, 2010 12:07 PM

Anonymous said...

joal henke committed acts of adultery many times, but he did not begin a relationship with his current wife until a few years after their divorce.

tonya does not have a child from her first marriage. she has two children from her

marriage to joal. that is all.  
April 29, 2010 12:07 PM

KC Sprayberry said...

Was the case you'e taking about in Bakersfield part of the Ed Jagels reign of terror?  
<http://www.truthinjustice.org/ed-jagels.htm>

I remember that when it was going on, and had to drive through the area to get from my base in Phoenix to my parents home near LA. Never stopped in Bakersfield. Made sure I had gas before entering the town. Why? Well, there was a saying about that place. Come here on a vacation, leave on probation. I'm afraid folks might start saying the same about Catoosa County. It's a shame a few ruin it for the rest.

April 29, 2010 12:10 PM

Anonymous said...

Tonya only had 2 children. I am absolutely positive of that fact.  
April 29, 2010 12:13 PM

Anonymous said...

KC-Yes I believe that Jagels was the judge on that case. I remember reading somewhere that one of the defendents saw the name on the court paper work and dreaded her day in court. Here is some more interesting stuff, it just sounds so familiar:

the Montel Williams Show interviewed two of Margie Grafton's sons: Alan and Donald who testified against their mother twenty years ago, along with two of their friends from the neighborhood: Eddie and Victor. They explained to Williams how they were pressured by the police to say that they were molested when they were six to eight years of age. They later testified in court even though they did not believe that any molestation happened. Victor, referring to the police interrogation, explained: "I just kept saying nothing happened. They just kept asking the same questions over and over."

Ed said: "...they kept on pressuring us and pressuring us and told us that, you know, 'This is a terrible man. You need to help to get him off the streets. And we'll just leave you alone. It'll all go away if you tell us you've seen something.' You know, and they kept on."

Donald said: "they--they explained to me that it would be over sooner. I'd get to see my mother sooner. I'd--it would all go a lot--a lot more smoothly for my mother if I went along with their story. Now, I was told my--by my dad to tell the truth. I told the truth in the preliminary hearing. As then dur--as soon as the preliminary hearing, I was took back with the--the--the prosecutors, and they said, 'We're going to have to keep putting you on that stand until you get it right'."

Margie Grafton and John Stoll mentioned that they took and passed a battery of psychological exams and polygraph tests. However, they did not seem to have any impact on the attitude of the police.

Montel Williams was able to persuade Donald to look his mother in the eye and to hold her hand while they were on the show. He had been unable to do either for the past two decades. 17



In our opinion, none were guilty of the crimes of which they were convicted. We suspect that no ritual molestation occurred. The human cost is enormous -- both to those who were incarcerated, the children who were convinced to testify that they had been abused, and the public who believed (and probably still believe) that they live in a society with enormous levels of child sexual abuse.

April 29, 2010 12:17 PM

Kerwyn said...

For the Attorney's among us

Georgia Code of Judicial Conduct

Canon 3D.(2)

Judge is required to report violations of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct

Canon 2

Appearance of Impropriety

Canon 3B.(7)

Prohibits ex parte communications without notice and hearing to opposing parties

Canon 3E.(a)

...bias (disqualify judge)

Judge House seems to meet or exceed all of these or am I simply uneducated in the law (admittedly so!)

April 29, 2010 12:28 PM

AJs said...

On the picture of Gregor... while it is tacky and classless to have that as a profile pic, it's really not that big of a deal. Even as a married man, it would not be beyond me to a picture like that in one of my photo albums if I snapped a picture with a cheerleader after an NFL game or something similar. There are plenty of reasons to slam on Gregor... this is not one of them. Doing so comes across as petty and really detracts from the underlying actual reasons to detest this man.

April 29, 2010 12:31 PM

Lookout Spy said...

Pathetic that because the quality level of Attorneys in the LMJC is so poor, that Tonya's parents felt it necessary to hire outside counsel. Outside counsel doesn't get to visit the judge in his office, because outside counsel, from where they come from, know such behavior is verboten. However, here, it's "part of doing business." In circuit Court sessions I have witnessed, the law doesn't matter, and the attorneys all have free access to visit with the presiding judges and have ex parte conversations with them, with the doors shut. This is where the envelopes get passed. It's not about the law, the truth, or justice,

it's about whose envelope is fatter. The judges take money from both sides. The State JQC should investigate, remove all doors to the judge's offices, and install security camera in the courthouses of the LMJC, which are tamperproof locally. Only then will this Circuit clean up.

April 29, 2010 12:35 PM

AJs said...

@Anon 12:17 & KC Sprayberry - They made a short documentary called Witchhunt highlighting a couple of the cases in Bakersfield. Ed Jagles was the prosecutor, not the judge. Although having lived in there during the time of those events and having it affect my family directly (and one of the reasons I left the area), I do suspect the judges were involved too. Actually, there is a running theory that quite a few officials were involved, including senior people from the local newspaper and city officials. There are a lot of similarities between what is going on here and what went on there.

April 29, 2010 12:42 PM

Anonymous said...

News crew from Inside Edition is at courthouse.

April 29, 2010 12:51 PM

Anonymous said...

I admit I was skeptical about the value of the Today show coverage because they said the local legal analyst would be used. I watched the show and it was fair, especially featuring a good length of the Tonya interview - though overall it was mild and did not mention the underhanded plays by the prosecution and judge. They definately should have mentioned the gag order on Tonya and the prevention of her defense from presenting certain evidence/witnesses in her defense.

I am happy to learn of this trial picking up interest by other news venues. Hopefully it will reach critical mass with all the in depth discussions these shows love to do and some higher authorities from GA will be pressured to intervene. Inside edition may be just the type of show that will show the sordid details of this case. I hope the light is shown upon this case.

April 29, 2010 12:59 PM

Anonymous said...

Cato blogged on the case again: <http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/2010/04/29/today-show-looks-at-the-tonya-craft-trial/>

April 29, 2010 1:08 PM

Anonymous said...

I wish you had not removed the post on Kristin Bradley. Regardless of what she was doing, there were to be no pens/pencils/paper in the courtroom.

April 29, 2010 1:30 PM

Anonymous said...

I think this morning's Today Show coverage was very neutral and stating the facts; which is the best way to introduce the trial, charges and Tonya Craft. Child Molestation is a seriously ugly charge and has a major negative connotation associated with it.

I read a previous post from WRCBTV that the Today Show is going to stick around for at least another day and cover more of the story. This is a very good sign!

Let's wait and see what the coverage is tonight/tomorrow morning from the Today Show. I'm sure with time they'll cover the corruption, perjury, the numerous ethics rules being broken etc. They were being neutral this morning which we all can/should respect because that's what we've wanted for Tonya the whole time - is a neutral, fair Judge and an ethical Prosecutor; so that she can have a fair trial that everyone in this FREE country is SUPPOSED to have!

I'm confident the Today Show will expose these cowards for what they are. I just pray the jury can see through their charade and know she's innocent.

In my opinion, I thought the coverage was respectful towards Tonya; even the inflection in Matt Lauer's voice when introducing the story was in Tonya's favor. That may sound crazy to some but you can tell a lot by someone's tone and the inflection they use when speaking on a subject. All in all, I think it went well for an introductory peice and a little over 7 minutes with Dan Abrams giving his thoughts on it?! That's pretty good! They obviously see it's worth the time and research.

Stephanie Y.  
Dayton, TN  
April 29, 2010 1:43 PM

Anonymous said...  
Just a Cool TidBit....

Tonya Craft is the # 5 most googled today! It's Comin' around!!!  
April 29, 2010 1:48 PM

Anonymous said...  
Just a Cool TidBit....

Tonya Craft is the # 5 most googled today! It's Comin' around!!!  
April 29, 2010 1:48 PM

tandt said...

I have to agree with anon 1:30. I felt you were just stating yet another favoritism by the judge. Others did turn it into something else, but the fact is, she should not have been able to do anything with paper & pen. I also feel she would have served her school better by being at the school & not at the trial. Maybe filling in for one of the teachers who was

testifying. I don't know her & my child has never nor would ever attend a school in Chickamauga. Ringgold is small town enough.

I think your blog was respectful to her, but truthful. It's too bad that it turned into mudslinging in the comment section. People are just really uptight right now.

Angle for tonight's blog? Maybe the witness who the detective called & told her he was returning her call, when in fact, she never called him? The attack on Melydia Clewell in the pool room? Yesterday's situation where the detective apparently "played" the defense into the prosecution's hands. I do believe the defense believed this woman was going to speak the truth, but she never planned on it.

April 29, 2010 2:00 PM

KeepingItReal said...

I agree about Kristen Bradley writing. It does not matter what she was writing (though I do not trust her at all). The fact is she was ABLE to write. How did she get pencils, pens paper etc. by the metal detectors etc. As part of the gag order there was to be NONE of that allowed - yet she got away with it. I think that is very important to know. The defense team is following the rules, but the state cronies get to do whatever they want to in Mouse's House.

April 29, 2010 2:06 PM

Anonymous said...

"tandt said...the detective apparently "played" the defense into the prosecution's hands." I don't think so, she testified that they "were a team" which shows they have no objectivity.

April 29, 2010 2:06 PM

tandt said...

I believe exactly the opposite & this is coming from a friend who has had to work with Cobb on cases. If they are acting as a "team", then their objective is to come to the same conclusion as one another. It was actually her demeanor & some of the other answers which went to the prosecution's "team". Heck, they grew up together.

April 29, 2010 2:13 PM

Anonymous said...

Can anyone verify if the jury is sequestered? I believe the biggest problem with this whole trial besides the judge, the prosecution, and the so called expert witnesses the State has called is that the jury is local, and from what I know has been exposed to TONS of publicity.

April 29, 2010 2:17 PM

Anonymous said...

i think its strange the pros. is not asking the defense's child witnesses questions. its as if he thinks he has this thing in the bag already....i think it could also mean he's letting the jury know the only child witness that is imp are the 3 from the state's side...imo.

April 29, 2010 2:18 PM

Anonymous said...

Mr Anderson~my child is a student at CES (which I am ashamed to say at this point after the way Bradley and some of her colleagues acted on the stand as far as rolling their eyes and such). I find it "funny" that during a court case she is working on the school roster that I would assume would be for next year since you have to apply to unless you live in the city limits of Chicktown which is a tiny area and they hand pick the kids they want outside of that area and unless your grades are high or you kiss the right persons butt you don't get in. This is way CCS always is the top in the state in grades and things of that nature bc they hand pick. Clearly there are quite a few of us moms that are afraid that bc of our support for Tonya that our child will not be "invited" back next year.

HMMMM...Interesting? Working on the roster based on who says what in court???

April 29, 2010 2:20 PM

Anonymous said...

\*child witness testimony that are important are the state's is what i meant

April 29, 2010 2:20 PM

tandt said...

anon 11:41,

Noticed no one answered you. Melydia is with Channel 3 now. Has been gone from 9 for a while.

April 29, 2010 2:28 PM

Anonymous said...

i was thinking the same thing tant...lol. she is not channel 9! im not even sure the point anon were trying to make!

April 29, 2010 2:41 PM

Anonymous said...

No the jury is not sequestered, but probably should have been!

April 29, 2010 2:41 PM

Anonymous said...

was trying. i cant type today! sry!!

April 29, 2010 2:42 PM

Anonymous said...

Mistrial; Prosecutorial

Misconduct

Allen v. State, A09A1737

In opening statements, the prosecutor stated that he suspected "the defense may call witnesses to testify on his behalf." The trial court granted a mistrial and thereafter,

appellant filed a plea in bar alleging prosecutorial misconduct, which the trial court denied.

When a prosecutor goads the defense into making a motion for a mistrial in order for the prosecution to avoid reversal of the conviction because of prosecutorial or judicial error or to otherwise obtain a more favorable chance for a guilty verdict on retrial, the Double Jeopardy Clause will stand as a bar to retrial. The Court stated that it is the objective of the prosecutor's conduct which is critical. Unless a prosecutor is trying to abort the trial, his or her misconduct will not prohibit a retrial.

Appellant contended that the "burden shifting" statement of the prosecutor was one not even a rookie prosecutor would make and that it was so egregious that intent should be presumed. However, the Court found that the comment did not rise to the level of prosecutorial misconduct. The Court noted that in the order granting the mistrial, the trial court stated that the prosecution "inadvertently and unintentionally" made an "improper inference" about the defendant calling witnesses to testify. The prosecution had witnesses present to testify at trial and was ready to proceed. The prosecutor believed the statement could be used to address possible defenses. Therefore, because no evidence existed of any intentional prosecutorial misconduct, the trial court's findings support its conclusion, and the denial of the plea in bar was affirmed.

April 29, 2010 2:42 PM

Anonymous said...

I wonder how many of the law enforcement officers, attorneys, and judges involved in these kinds of trials have had unfaithful marriages, multiple marriages, divorces, custody fights, watch television programs unfit for children's eyes and ears (with the child in attendance, or not), drug and alcohol use, "bad acts", etc. Seems to me, if you cannot manage your own household and urges, why are you allowed to serve in positions of judgement over others accused of the same behaviors or circumstances?

April 29, 2010 2:49 PM

tandt said...

anon 2:42,

Lol. It took a couple of reads, but I realized what you were talking about. No problemo, she was with them a long time though & a lot of people didn't know she was laid off & even more didn't know she was with channel 3 until recently. Don't be too hard on yourself.

April 29, 2010 2:54 PM

Jason S said...

What is the deal with the State having short cross examinations with the defense witnesses?

Are they trying to speed the trial up before this place is covered with media and citizens demanding the truth.

3 Stooges really getting scared now.

April 29, 2010 3:33 PM

Denise C. said...

Either that or they think that they have it in the bag.

April 29, 2010 3:40 PM

AJs said...

@Denise - Think or know...?

April 29, 2010 3:49 PM

Denise C. said...

I think that they think they know, but they might wind up with a surprise. Too many times I have seen people over confident of themselves or of an expected outcome only for things to go the opposite way. I wonder how long the jury will deliberate.

April 29, 2010 3:55 PM

Anonymous said...

I respect you taking down the post on Ms. Bradley, however, you are not suppose to be working on anything in the courtroom, no reading, no writing, nothing!!! If she needed to work on the school roster and since her testimony was finished or she wouldn't have been in the courtroom, she should have been at school.

April 29, 2010 3:55 PM

William L. Anderson said...

To 3:55

I agree, but I did it as a favor to her, and her involvement is peripheral, anyway. I know what you mean, but in the end, I decided on that course of action.

April 29, 2010 3:59 PM

Kerwyn said...

Now that the national media has left the court room, Gregor is at it again going on rant on

cross about media.

What a doofus

April 29, 2010 4:00 PM

Anonymous said...

I have heard the term narcissist used by both sides about this case. Guess who the only judge in the Lookout Mountain Circuit that has his photo on his page.

Please don't be shocked.

<http://www.lmjc.net/JudgeHousePage.htm>

April 29, 2010 4:01 PM

Kerwyn said...

Denise

I believe Ms. Craft will be convicted on all counts. Unless there are folks on that jury with (pardon my analogy) a pair on them, they will fall into party line.

Ms. Craft will go to prison. I have no doubt it will be reversed on appeal, but she will still have to go through the horrible process and years it takes to do that. I pray to god I am wrong, but I don't think so.

In the meantime, her daughter has been permanently damaged by this whether the retard that is her father and stepmother are aware of it or not.

April 29, 2010 4:02 PM

Denise C. said...

I guess I am just an optimist. A half full sort of person. I do agree that all the children have been permanently scarred from this whole thing. It is really sad.

April 29, 2010 4:07 PM

Anonymous said...

Blog in Huffington Post:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/29/tonya-craft-molestation-t\\_n\\_557250.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/29/tonya-craft-molestation-t_n_557250.html)

April 29, 2010 4:10 PM

Kerwyn said...

Denise, I get the feeling that the little actress is not scarred from this. I got the feeling from her testimony she was proud to be testifying. I know that sounds odd, but her demeanor was a stark contrast to the other two children who looked flat uncomfortable to be there and replied with I don't remember, I don't know, and I suddenly (during the trial) just remember far too many times for my comfort level.

April 29, 2010 4:12 PM

Denise C. said...



You are right, I forgot about her. Being on the stand was probably like an audition. One day it will catch up with her.

April 29, 2010 4:16 PM

Anonymous said...

I myself have children in the Chickamauga School System, however I am outraged by the behavior of our elem. school principal. It was a very unprofessional way to act, when you are a person of authority and children look up to you to obey the "Rules" and "Laws".

I believe some parents of the school system will be calling and questioning the superintendent with this type of behavior. This is teaching "Our" children that you can do as you will or please without having to have consequences of your actions.

April 29, 2010 4:17 PM

Anonymous said...

Kristen Bradley was in court yesterday showing the same support for her staff that was testifying for the defense as she did with the staff that testified for the prosecution. They place the students that live in the city and currently enrolled for the next year before school ends for the summer. Mr. Anderson...I'm glad you took the blog about Kristen down as there was a lot of unfair judgements in the comments.

April 29, 2010 4:27 PM

Doc Ellis said...

These are links to Jagel in Bakersfield at Will Grigg's ProLiberate blog

<http://freedominourtime.blogspot.com/2009/07/child-snatchers-and-life-stealers-pt-i.html>

<http://freedominourtime.blogspot.com/2009/07/child-snatchers-and-life-stealers-pt-ii.html>

Dr Anderson: please delete if these links are inappropriate.

Doc Ellis 124

April 29, 2010 4:28 PM

tandt said...

As I was driving to pick up my child at RHS, one thing hit me. DFACS shares the same building as Angel Ambulance. I wonder just how many people have been made to feel uncomfortable in this whole fiasco. That poor woman today has probably been spoken to more than once. Luckily, they stuck to the report she filed. Poor woman.

Kerwyn,

I'm actually going to disagree with you on something. I believe that God will be able to intervene with the jury and lead them to the right decision. Since the devil is in control of

evil & this courtroom, it is going to take a lot of prayer, but I think there are people praying for the right thing to happen.

I do agree with you on accuser 1 though. As an FNE, I totally respect your opinion and I want to ask you about something. Isn't it quite normal for a girl, even at a young age, to have an excessive amount of estrogen & be more curious than the norm? I can say that by age 8, I did and was very confused about feelings & thoughts I was having. This was 30 years ago & I lived in a very conservative home, so I was very terrified to speak to my mother about it. When I did, she took me to the dr. and he said it wasn't abnormal at all. Just wondering about your expertise in that area.

April 29, 2010 4:35 PM

Anonymous said...

The little child actress wasn't scared. She was getting what she wanted for Tonya to get in trouble for being mean to her because Tonya wouldn't let her do what she wanted to. She walks the halls of the school with a big smirk on her face.

April 29, 2010 4:55 PM

Anonymous said...

Just wondering Mr. Anderson are you also tracking web addresses for Kristen Bradley so you can let her know what parent's kids she needs to kick out of the school system. Seems she has won you over. You talk about special treatment!!! If it was anyone else would you have pulled your post?

April 29, 2010 4:57 PM

Kerwyn said...

Tandt,

All children mature at different speeds. Some as early as 8 and some as late as 14. I would not deem a young girl at 8 as having "excessive" estrogen but more, at the very early end of the maturation scale and completely normal. 30 years ago, that kind of thing got a young girl teased badly at school as I am sure you remember.

Children, from the beginning of time have always "experimented" with "sexuality". Little boys of 3 are found of running around with their hands down their pants playing with themselves. This would not be deemed "masturbation" as an adult would view that same term, but rather self exploration. The same is true with little girls.

Children at the age of 5 or 6 are in what behaviorists deem the end of the imaginary phase (age 3 to 5. These are overlapping phases btw) and the preoperational phase. Children at this age level have no ethical or moral values per se. Only what they have been told as do's and don't's by caretakers/authority figures. Hence they play "doctor" if you will with each other. This does include sticking fingers in each other, what we as adults would call fondling (its not) and other behaviors that adults perceive to be "sexual" in nature.

As we saw in testimony, I believe it was Ms. Lamb who "whipped" her girl with a belt

when she found her doing this with another girl. Rather than giving her a don't rule she instilled in her child a sense of "wow that was REALLY bad" and "I am in a LOT of trouble for it but I don't understand why." Mom then solidly reinforced the "you're bad" with a demand to know WHO SHOWED HER THAT!! (hearing the yelling in my head there). It doesn't take rocket science to figure out why the child named Ms. Craft since all she had had as a role model was Mom who was sweet and nice to Ms. Craft to her face and a vitriolic witch behind her back and most likely in her child's hearing.

Most children when faced with this not understood parental rage that includes a beating with a belt will do anything and everything to take the heat off of themselves. I mean duh.. any parent worth their salt can tell the DA this.

These parents (in re to the two girls touching each other and the writing on the sidewalk) have taken perfectly normal (albeit uncomfortable to the adult) behaviors and turned them into perversions. The children now have a perception of "Oh if I touch myself or let another touch me, I am bad."

Stupid parents. It is perfectly ok to touch yourself. It is not ok for someone to touch you if you say no. It is not ok for you to touch someone else. Easy rules that don't screw your kids head up eh?

April 29, 2010 4:59 PM

tandt said...

Thank you K! And yes, 30 years ago, it was even more awkward, but I remember everything very clearly. It's all so sad the emphasis people put on the whole sexuality thing. It really didn't "mean" anything to me at the time, just a curiosity.

Also, I have mentioned it before, but am wondering if the Chickamauga School System has the "Good touch, Bad touch" program. My soon to be 15 year old took it right after they implemented it in Catoosa County. That was 7 years ago. I just have a hard time believing that a child who has gone through that program would not know the difference, especially if they were smart enough to memorize lines for a movie. Another reason why I don't buy the "I don't remembers or I just remembered". Especially from 3 children. Kids are smarter than that.

April 29, 2010 5:09 PM

Anonymous said...

My children go to Chickamauga have been there since they started school. I can't remember ever having to sign anything or hearing about that program. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't teach our children that ourselves. My 10 year old had a yearly check up and the doctor was check her for a curve in the spine she had a dress on he ask her to bend over and touch her toes he started to raise her dress. It didn't take her but a second to raise up and ask him what he thought he was doing. I had to calm her down and explain to her that he was a doctor and that because I was in the room that it was okay. The doctor went on to add to what I said that if a doctor ever comes in the room and does anything anything like that without mom or dad in the room to yell loud.

April 29, 2010 5:15 PM

Kerwyn said...

Well, my "kids" are all in their mid 30's now and back then we didn't have public school teaching our kids morals and behavior. That is what I was for!

My kids knew from a very young age about touching. I never made a "big deal about it", I simple made rules about touching. My rules were simple. You may not touch others, you are to run to your teacher, me or a policeman if anyone else touches you wrong (I defined wrong).

No you may NOT pull on your brothers dingly (his term), that is his not yours. \*shakes my head\* that one made me laugh.

April 29, 2010 5:17 PM

John H said...

Uh oh...

GPS beware. Narcissist's are on your campus today. Apparently it was May Day and all those girls were in evening gowns. Someone should warn these girls that these photos can be used against you in the kangaroo court of Catoosa County.

Also, has anyone mentioned the unprofessional website run by the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit, [www.lmjc.net](http://www.lmjc.net)? When you go to it and click on the District Attorney's it plays the Star Wars Imperial March. I would bet that this is a copyright violation of the song as I doubt the folks at Lucasfilms would allow it to be used for free. Be nice for someone to report it and see what Lucas lawyers have to say. These guys are so cheesy and immature, nothing they do surprises me.

April 29, 2010 5:19 PM

Kerwyn said...

OO guys, courts out...

Incoming!

April 29, 2010 5:19 PM

Anonymous said...

Who the Hell do the Wilson's think they are. Tonya was at a private event outside of school. Who are they to decide how she is to dress or how much she is going to drink. So when you become a teacher everyone gets to decide these things for you. What you do on your own time is your buisness!!!!

April 29, 2010 5:20 PM

Kellie Graham said...

4:57, Mr. Anderson is giving Ms. Bradley the benefit of the doubt given that it's only assumed she was "taking notes". Get off of it, she's complied with questioning and has

done nothing inappropriate.  
April 29, 2010 5:23 PM

tandt said...  
anon 5:15, thanks for the info. I was just curious.

I did teach my daughter the same things, but coming from a stranger actually gave it more meaning for some reason. I guess that's kind of typical. You can tell them something and they might listen really well & they might not, but heaven help if someone else tells them, it must be true. LOL. Really that rings more true for the fact she is almost 15. Good kid though.

Kerwyn, I almost peed myself!!!!  
April 29, 2010 5:25 PM

Harmony said...  
I taught my kids that if someone touches them to scream and yell and kick, This was great until my mom being an ubercunt called DFACS and claimed my husband was molesting our girls. I took the girls to T.C. Thompsons that night to have them examined and it took 4 of us to hold down my oldest 2. It was a horrible ordeal to go through for all of us but I almost laughed when during the exam my daughter screamed and about kicked the doctor in the face. Everything was normal and the girls had no emotional signs of abuse so the case was closed with the claims being unfounded.  
April 29, 2010 5:25 PM

Kerwyn said...  
I agree with Kellie.. Folks let this one go please there are far more issues with this case.  
April 29, 2010 5:26 PM

Kerwyn said...  
ATTEN Anon poster:

I have 6 claims of a juror stating outside of court that Tonya is Guilty. Would one of you please email me with a name (please stay anon if you need to).

Thanks  
April 29, 2010 5:27 PM

Anonymous said...  
MSNBC Link!!!

[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36736360/ns/local\\_news-chattanooga\\_tn/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36736360/ns/local_news-chattanooga_tn/)  
April 29, 2010 5:36 PM

Anonymous said...  
Tonya Craft is the 15th most popular Google within the last hour!!!!

What goes up, must come down House, Gregor, Arnt and the crazy Mama's!!!!  
April 29, 2010 5:42 PM

Anonymous said...  
May I offer up for consideration.  
"Clewelled"  
a witness influenced by the act of twittering by a media reporter.  
verb

Burton's legal thesaurus ?  
Merriam-Webster?  
Wikipedia?  
Anyone?  
April 29, 2010 5:51 PM

Kerwyn said...  
Anon 5:51

Are you intimating that a reporter has influenced some how a witness (prosecution or defense? which) with a 150 character twitter?

Please expound  
April 29, 2010 5:57 PM

Anonymous said...  
I agree that everyone should boycott Wilson's funeral home, as well as Angel Ambulance Service. Hit this family where it will hurt them most, in their wallets.  
April 29, 2010 6:05 PM

Anonymous said...  
I have some tapes and documents that might be very interesting to all these ppl who doubt Tonya's innocence!!  
April 29, 2010 6:08 PM

John H said...  
I spoke with Lucas Licensing. Sharon in legal was not happy with the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit using their copyrighted property without permission. Maybe the DA's office should start by cleaning up their own act.

Also, why did Tonya not retain local counsel to prepare them for the local "traditions"?  
April 29, 2010 6:10 PM

Kerwyn said...  
Anon 6:08

Email Bill Anderson as your best contact with that information.

April 29, 2010 6:16 PM

Anonymous said...

Will someone please tell me what they think about the fact that when another case was tried by the same ADA, there was interviews done by the same ppl. In one of the interviews, a 3 yr old child said that he was being molested, but it wasn't the person they had in custody. This was IGNORED completely. Since it was not the defendant they had built thier bogus case against, they just let it go. The child is still in the care of this person he said 'touched' him. The sheriff, investigators, DFCS, CAC, or ADA will not even pull the child to question him now. I don't understand how that happens. They all have seen the video of the child saying this, but they will not go get him. So that is enough to tell me, they are not interested in what really happens. They just want thier conviction!!!! I have proof of what I am saying!!!

April 29, 2010 6:18 PM

Anonymous said...

to whoever has tapes and documents that show she is innocent...do share and if they are that much proof shouldn't you send it to the defense...she needs all the proof she can get since the trial is rigged and she is having to prove her innocence... don't hold back...

April 29, 2010 6:22 PM

Anonymous said...

you may remember bradley as a great student, but she was staring down teachers who are currently teaching and that was uncalled for. do not think for one minute that there will not be consequences for their testimony.

bradley allows her school to show favoritism toward the families with money. she does nothing to the teachers who treat the low income families poorly.

there was one child in particular who was in the school system when tonya was teaching who was poor, dirty and unruly.....a child who misbehaved often because NO ONE cared to be near this child, and no one was willing to give him a CHANCE at overcoming his difficulties.

BUT.....one teacher did care. one teacher cared so much about this child who was NOT even in her class. she worked with him.....more than his own teacher. and he was eventually transferred to her class. she gave him her time and attention. and as a result, this dirty, unruly, misbehaved little boy that no one wanted anything to do with.....was a completely different child by the end of the year!

his teacher that he loved so much.....the only one who cared enough to give him a chance.....was tonya henke.

April 29, 2010 6:23 PM

Anonymous said...

The purpose of a trial is not for the Defense to prove her innocent, it is for the Prosecution to prove her guilty.

I have yet to see that proof.

April 29, 2010 6:27 PM

Harmony said...

Anon 6:23 that brought tears to my eyes!!

April 29, 2010 6:28 PM

William L. Anderson said...

To 6:08

If you have material, let me know.

April 29, 2010 7:10 PM

Arlene said...

Mr. Anderson, I have thoroughly enjoyed your posts of the Tonya Craft Circus, I mean trial. It is only a good thing that Tonya has the best attorneys available, and it also helps that the Catoosa County folks on this case are not smart. Maybe they received the same kind of certification in law that their expert witnesses did. Keep the posts coming. Arlene

April 29, 2010 7:13 PM

Anonymous said...

The imdb page is not the only reference to the training of the child actress/1st accuser. There is an article featuring her in the "Walker County Messenger," on January 9, 2008. According to this report, she studied with Janet Milstein and Kwietha Bolden at the John Robert Powers School System of Atlanta.

April 29, 2010 7:13 PM

Anonymous said...

I agree we all need to in north georgia to boycott Wilson funeral Home and Angel Ambulance service, because of their untruths.

April 29, 2010 7:38 PM

Denise C. said...

I can see boycotting the funeral home, but how do you boycott an ambulance service? It's not like we have a lot of choices around here.

April 29, 2010 7:51 PM

William L. Anderson said...

Yeah, and for the funeral home, well it won't do much good to go to Noble Crematorium!!

April 29, 2010 7:53 PM

Anonymous said...



Wow...just can't stop the verbal assaults against CES and the staff. I do have to say Tonya was my daughter's kindergarten teacher and she loved her. Both of my children go to CES and I have to say that all of the teachers that they have had and Kristen Bradley are great! This goes for the administrative staff as well. I have never and I mean NEVER seen a child treated unfairly or beneath another child. To suggest that the teachers treat the lower income children badly is utterly absurd! I understand some teachers can't teach certain children (for example adhd child) as well as another teacher may be able to but that is normal at any school. Please lay off CES and the unfair judgements.

April 29, 2010 7:57 PM

Anonymous said...

First of all the employees of Angel EMS are not to blame for the things the owners have done and I have it on good authority that most of them are pulling for Tonya. Second of all you can't boycott Angel EMS because it is the only service in Catoosa Co. If you need an Ambulance they are the ones coming.

April 29, 2010 8:30 PM

Anonymous said...

Such a shame that we get side-tracked by discussions on boycotts and heated arguments about the school when we should stay focused on getting this lady a fair trial.

April 29, 2010 8:35 PM

Anonymous said...

Anon 8:35

Such a shame that it is because of these people that Tonya is living this nightmare.

April 29, 2010 8:51 PM

Dan said...

Yes. Outside of the general issue of malfeasance, there is the personal tragedy of Tonya Craft.

Imagine if YOU were unable to see your children.

One word in Arnt's Facebook post is correct. "Insane"

But the reality is that word is not attributed to the defense.

April 29, 2010 9:05 PM

Anonymous said...

The only legal way that we citizens have to punish dishonest people is to BOYCOTT their businesses. I do not believe that this distracts from our support of Mrs Craft in any way.

I also believe that we owe it to OUR judicial system to protect it from people like the Wilsons and the Lambs who lie so that OUR system can do their dirty work for them.

BOYCOTT THESE LIARS AND MAKE THEM PAY FINANCIALLY FOR THEIR MISUSE OF OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM. THEN TAKE ACTION TO IMPEACH THIS JOKE OF A JUDGE AND DISBAR THESE LYING DAs.

April 29, 2010 9:18 PM

William L. Anderson said...

To the 8:30

I think yours are wise words. I know some people don't like it that I took down the post regarding Kristin Bradley, but you have to remember that when she was a young teenager, she was one of my students and one of my runners on the track team.

You need to understand something about me, and that is that I am loyal to my students, the present and the past. I have long-term relationships with them and I want to see them do well. I'm very glad that one of my students has become a school principal, and I was not going to leave up a post with that information after I found out definitely that it was the same Kristin whom I taught how to run hurdles and who did well in my social studies class.

You can agree or disagree. This blog is not aimed at denigrating Catoosa County or the people there, but rather seeking justice for a woman who is falsely accused of a terrible crime, and who is fighting for her life. This blog is aimed at telling whomever will read it that what is going on in that courtroom in Ringgold is an abomination, in which the rules of evidence are trashed, the rights of the accused eviscerated, and all of the decorum and conduct that we expect in our courts is thrown out the window.

That is why I have this, and why I write on this case. It's the only reason I write on this case.

April 29, 2010 9:19 PM

Steve B. said...

Chattanooga.com reports:

The witness also testified that no one from the Catoosa County Sheriff's Office or the DA's office had contacted her until her name appeared on the witness list in January of 2010.

After ascertaining that she knew the allegations made against her friend, Mr. King asked, "Would you allow Tonya to be around (your child)?" "She can take him right now," said Ms. Lewis emphatically.

On cross-examination, Mr. Gregor asked the demure witness, "If you buried someone in your backyard, is she (Tonya) the person you'd tell?" Not getting an answer, he stopped his questioning at this point.

Now it might just be me folks, but I am thinking just when Gregor can't appear more barbaric and offensive, he fires this one off.

I think he'll probably live to regret pissing off the news crews like he did today.  
April 29, 2010 9:22 PM

saltypig said...

you write, "Neither of these syllogisms actually work, at least when one applies real logic [...]", yet the first syllogism's logically valid:

(1) People who work out in the gym or are personal trainers are narcissist; (2) Tonya Craft works out and is a personal trainer; (3) therefore, Ms. Craft is a narcissist.

that the major premise is false doesn't detract from the syllogistic form, which is correct. it does work, and its valid construction reaches a false conclusion. important to understand how "prosecutors" (i.e., tyrants) rape via feint.

April 29, 2010 9:24 PM

Kerwyn said...

Steve,

Do note he waited until the national media had left before reverting to being an ass to witnesses with unsubstantiated heresy comments.

I truly wish the national media had been there for the slut pre slut commentary he made  
April 29, 2010 9:26 PM

Anonymous said...

Steve B

Have you forgotten, he is "The Man" and "The Man" can do or say anything that he wishes in King House's kingdom.

April 29, 2010 9:30 PM

Steve B. said...

Kerwyn -

Yes, I noticed that. It's funny that he doesn't have a clue about his own behavior.

Of course, being enamored with self is not the only earmarks of narcissism. I am no expert, but I have done quite a bit of research on the subject. One of the more overlooked points is that narcissists generally are capable of little or no empathy for others. This also means that they have little regard for others or their feelings and beliefs.

It is also a well known observation that narcissists also tend to project their own failures

onto others. Maybe that would account for his personal history moments in the courtroom.

In addition, the self-centered behavior of a textbook narcissist causes his or her worldview to be very limited. You could sum up this view by the following:

“It’s [fill in the blank]’s world, all the rest of us just happen to live in it.”

Similarities?

April 29, 2010 9:45 PM

William L. Anderson said...

Notice how Gregor especially loves to bully women? I just made a new post about it.

April 29, 2010 9:47 PM

dmk said...

I am drafting a letter tonight to District Attorney Buzz Franklin. He has been getting off way too easy so far, after all he is the supervisor to Arnt and Gregor and as such is responsible for their actions. I plan keep my letter very respectful but point out in no uncertain terms that:

- 1) I vote
- 2) I have worked on political campaigns before and will be volunteering for whoever his opponent is as well as donating to their campaign
- 3) I plan to write letters to several attorneys I have a good opinion of asking them to consider running for District Attorney (Franklin has been unopposed several times),
- 4) Arnt and especially Gregor continually have exhibited juvenile, boorish, bullying behavior that reminds one of a legend in his own mind high school athlete swaggering around picking on smaller kids. This continued poor behavior by his subordinates, as well as other incidents like Arnt's Facebook issues, brings disgrace to the office and calls Mr. Franklin's management abilities into serious doubt. Who runs his office, himself or Arnt and Gregor?
- 5) Why has Mr. Franklin, as District Attorney, made an obvious choice to be publicly absent from this case?

Please join me in letting Mr. Franklin know that we are not happy with his performance as an elected official. In the interest of full disclosure, my letter will include that based on the evidence as reported, I do think Tonya Craft is innocent, but that may main concern is the behavior of his office in this matter and my belief that in the end it seriously undermines our criminal justice system.

District Attorney Herbert "Buzz" Franklin  
District Attorney's Office  
P.O. Box 1025  
LaFayette, GA 30728

April 29, 2010 9:48 PM

Steve B. said...

Saltypig:

If memory serves: is that what is known as one of the Aristotle fallacies?

April 29, 2010 9:52 PM

Steve B. said...

William, great job on the blog. I literally begged ABC 20/20 to cover the story, that is until I had a duh moment and realized that channel 9 IS ABC.

Glad to see its getting pressure from the media, and you have been instrumental in that.

Thank you, sir.

April 29, 2010 10:00 PM

KeepingItReal said...

to Kerwyn 9:26 - I "think" (don't know for fact) that all of those tapes and things were given to the Today Show (or at least the tirades were recorded so they CAN be available).

Okay, if any of you were in court today - I have one question (well, maybe a couple, but...) when Ding Dong Gregor was testifying about the wrongfully convicted Mr. Wade - was I the only one that did not get how his story proved anything - other than the notion that he might have rigged that trial too? He was trying to say how his supporters thought him innocent like we do Tonya, but that in reality he was found guilty, denied a new trial and is now rotting in jail...how in the heck was that supposed to "prove" that he was NOT wrongfully convicted? I'm not an attorney, but seems to be that using an example of...oh, I don't know -saying a man (or woman) was wrongfully acquitted and then went out to molest, murder whatever the case may be thus proving that the person was likely guilty the first time be more accurate? His story made NO sense to me at all. I really think the guy is cracking up.

In my life, I have met some arrogant people, but these three individuals are the most hypocritical and arrogant people I've ever seen in my life. They are disgusting. The only "authority" House appears to have is that he will sometimes look like, "Boys, fix this you are putting me in a position" when he wants to sustain but the defense actually has nailed him. (One of those rare circumstances where he ALMOST sustains a defense objection, but then somehow doesn't). I also thought it odd that he keeps asking the narcissist question and the "did you know Tonya was a fitness instructor?" I mean, he sounds like a fan drumming up business should she start teaching class again after this (I for one would love to take a class from her by the way - maybe she can turn the damn courthouse into a fitness center full of women dressed in workout shorts and maybe some of those Bud girl tops - I digress) Anyway, so he was asking those two questions, but then today started saying, "If you are a fitness instructor are you a child molester?" I haven't been able to go every day so maybe he's done that a lot, but to me sitting there....that made him sound like he was making his own point sound stupid. He asked those "did you know" things

then turned around and showed how that didn't prove anything. Also, since when is someone saying something "evidence"? He makes me dizzy. All I can say is they must be happy they came out of the womb Christians and have never sinned. it must be AWESOME to be qualified to throw all of these stones at these witnesses and people just offering love and support.

April 29, 2010 10:14 PM

Anonymous said...

I am hooked on this posting. Also, I wanted to state a point in reference to the children's memories. In my opinion, if this actually happened to them; they would remember in detail, especially if it happened numerous times. It is not like they are being asked what TV show they watched or what they had for dinner two years ago. I know that sometimes people block things out, but that does not seem to be the case.

April 29, 2010 10:19 PM

KeepingItReal said...

I should have said when he wants to overrule a defense objection, but the defense has a point...see, told you I was dizzy. :)

April 29, 2010 10:19 PM

Anonymous said...

Tonight I was at the Ringgold Elementary talent show and according to what Len Gregor says makes a child molestor, then heaven help us we have a whole generation of future child molestors in the making. There were little girls dancing that were wearing tank tops and even Judge House's daughter was there doing jump rope/hula hoop display and I guess she will be one too, since she is working out!!! Really, how ridiculous to say that someone who works out or wears clothes that allow a tan while mowing is a child molestor!!!

April 29, 2010 10:20 PM

Anonymous said...

i would like to ask why the district attorney's office took it upon themselves to call every single person on the defense witness list...

can someone explain this to me?

i was on the original witness list... before it was narrowed down.

i do not answer my phone if i do not know who is calling... and after repeated missed calls from a 706 number and restricted calls throughout february and march, i received a message the second week of march that said, "my name's steve rogers. i'm with the district attorney's office, ringgold, georgia. 706.965.9055." yes, i saved it. and no, i did not call the office of misfit attorneys.

before receiving this call, i was informed by others who were also on the witness list, that they had received calls from arrogant, smug men who asked questions that were very offensive.

is this ethical?

April 29, 2010 10:33 PM

Kerwyn said...

Keeping it real,

That tape response was to this poster :

Anonymous said...

I have some tapes and documents that might be very interesting to all these ppl who doubt Tonya's innocence!!

April 29, 2010 6:08 PM

I beg this poster if they indeed have material that would assist, either email Mr. Anderson, or you can email me (my address is my name). You may stay Anon.

April 29, 2010 10:34 PM

KeepingItReal said...

Kerwyn - oh yea, I was talking about the videos of how the dastardly duo was acting so that the Today Show could see that instead of Eddie Haskell and Wally. (Maybe they studied at John Powers too???)

I agree...whoever has anything that can help Tonya - it is time to stand up no matter how scary it is.

April 29, 2010 10:42 PM

Anonymous said...

Parents can call and complain about certain teachers at CES, GLMS, and GLHS all they want and it will not matter. Some there are completely untouchable. The principal of CES is one of those.

April 29, 2010 10:48 PM

KeepingItReal said...

The morons have removed the Empire Strikes Back theme from their website!

HAHAHAHAHAHHAHA! [www.lmjc.net](http://www.lmjc.net) :)

April 29, 2010 10:51 PM

John H said...

Nope the Star Wars Imperial March is still there. You have to go under the District Attorney's to hear it. It is kind of fitting for the type people they are.

April 29, 2010 11:03 PM

Lame said...

Listen up guys, the brain has two ways of dealing with a traumatic event: it either covers

up all memory of it or brings it back often, flash-back style. I have an aunt who was abused as a child--my mom witnessed it all--and the aunt remembers absolutely none of it. It is quite rare that a traumatic event in someone's life is vague, or that pieces come back over time, not without specific things triggering it--in other words, you don't "just remember" it is something else traumatic that triggers it. When it is a recurring flash-back style event, it will be very detailed. For instance, I'm 30 years old, but when I was 6 years old I witnessed a head-on collision between two cars. Nobody was seriously injured, but I can recall the colors of the cars, that it was a sunny day, the sound the two cars made, the exact location where it happened, that I yelled at them, "Cars, don't do that again!" and I can vividly see it happening. That was only something minor that happened that had no personal effect on me. Memory is a funny thing, but the way memory works is not the way these girls are working it. The prosecution asked a witness whether children are reliable sources of what happens to their own body. That is very UNTRUE. Children are highly unreliable, and there are studies upon studies that show that. Honestly, every score the prosecution has scored in this game has come off of testimony of people who don't read up-to-date research on anything. I recently read an article in an adolescent health journal that showed that when performing exams for determining sexual abuse you need to view the girl not just in one position but in two, because the one most commonly used can give a false positive reading...and yes, from the testimony the prosecution's witness gave, she viewed the girl in the one that give a false positive. There was another article that showed that among a group of trained evaluators, such as the prosecution's witness, something like 80% can't tell the difference between a girl who was the victim of sexual abuse and who had an accident. I didn't see whether or not the defense used these two articles. If not, I hope they do. I can find them for you if you want.

April 30, 2010 4:35 AM

Anonymous said...

DeWayne Wilson is the Coroner of Walker County. So there are several elected officials that can get the boot.

April 30, 2010 7:47 AM

KeepingItReal said...

John H - you're right. It won't play for me in Mozilla, but it plays in Internet Explorer. Okay...whew...thought they were doing something smart. Their moron status is safe!

April 30, 2010 7:55 AM

Anonymous said...

I believe while the ADA and the Judge in the Craft case need to be investigated. The childrens advocacy center in Dalton,Ga need to be investigated as well. These people allow others to use the legal system and our tax money for their own fun and games. We need PROFESSIONALS in this town for these cases. Who knows how many innocent people are sitting in jail because they are not doing their job and properly investigating the situation. Influencing children to lie about abuse is abuse in itself. I know someone personally who has been falsely accused and found innocent all because the Green House and Suzie Thorne in Dalton,GA Don't Do Their Job.

May 3, 2010 9:20 PM



Anonymous said...

I am seriously worried that the 3 little girls will remain with their parents (siblings to). Does anyone know what will be done about them? Surely someone in Atlanta will remove them from the care of these people. We know Catoosa, Walker and Dade aren't going to care.

May 3, 2010 10:41 PM

Anonymous said...

We have had hundreds of thousands of honorable service men and women give their lives to protect our judicial system that these three stooges and the accusers, are making a mockery of.

If Gregor and Arnt were so concerned about these little girls being molested then why have they never followed up in making sure they were receiving the help they needed? Why are the parents not being sought after for neglect by not following up with help for these little children?

As a child I was taught to have respect for a courtroom and a judge. I question what effect this is having on our young people in our community.

I pray the Federal Government takes control of this case and questions everyone who has even been indirectly involved. Please get this entire good ole boy system put away where they belong with the people who they have already railroaded.

May 3, 2010 11:22 PM

Anonymous said...

Possibly the photo of Len was taken at Wild In The Woods...you know the big drunk fest put on by District Attorney Buzz Franklin's attorney brother, Jim!

May 12, 2010 10:40 AM

[Post a Comment](#)

<http://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/bfl/john.html>

## John Stoll

John Stoll was convicted of 17 counts of child molestation and sentenced to 40 years in prison. He was convicted in 1984 after 6 children, ages 6 - 9 years old testified he and three other adults sexually molested them over a period of more than a year. One of the boys, 6 year old Jed, is John 's son.

In the mid 80's a wave of hysteria swept across the United States fed by people who believed that bands of child molesters were preying on small children everywhere. Nowhere was the problem greater than in Bakersfield California where a cadre of child protective services workers, sheriff's investigators and local district attorneys aggressively pursued prosecutions of what they called "child sex abuse rings".

In John's case, with absolutely no claim that he'd inappropriately touched any child, investigators approached six little boys and using interviewing techniques that have been demonstrated to cause false testimony, coerced them into testifying that John and 3 others had sexually molested them. Despite investigators claim that the children reported being sodomized repeatedly for more than a year, and as recently as three days before the arrest, they were not taken to a doctor to be examined. None of the alleged child pornography, photographs or picture taking equipment that investigators claim children said would be found in John's house, was ever found, even though police searched his house within hours of his arrest. He was tried and convicted based solely on the coerced testimony of the boys. John always maintained his innocence. He passed a polygraph test that was ruled inadmissible at trial. When asked at his sentencing if he had any comment on his 40 year sentence, John said "If I had done these terrible things that would be a fair sentence. But I didn't do anything; I 'm innocent."

The Northern California Innocence Project learned about John's case from a call in 2002 from Mark Sagin, an accomplished appellate lawyer now working for CAP (Capital Appellate Project).

It was clear right away that Stoll would be a particularly costly case - in time and money, both scarce resources.

Although there were clearly big hurdles, NCIP knew they had to take the case - there were so many problems and so many reasons to doubt John's guilt.

The testimony from the boys was compelling - each testified about how he 'd been forced to lie and growing up burdened by feelings of guilt. Some cried and some openly apologized to John from the witness stand. Ultimately John Stoll was cleared on all charges on April 30, 2004. He was released four days later. He was met at the gate by lawyers, students and press. John Stoll, an innocent man who served 20 years in prison was released with \$200 in his pocket and the clothes on his back. The prosecutor never apologized - her comment: "You win some, you lose some". John now lives with 2 of his lawyers while he's trying to rebuild his life.

<http://whatstheharm.net/satanicritualabuse.html>

## Margie Grafton, Tim Palomo, Grant Self and John Stoll:

These Kern County residents were accused of having formed a "sex-ring" to sexually molest boys over an interval of several months in the mid-1980's. John Stoll had rented his poolhouse at the back of his house to Grant Self, a homeless man. Unknown to Stoll, Self was a convicted child molester. John had recently been divorced after a long and bitter custody fight. His wife is reported to have spent time in a psychiatric institution and is alleged to have had difficulty separating reality from fantasy. In 1984, Stoll's ex-wife and a pastor that she was dating filed a complaint against him for allegedly abusing their son. An unrelated charge was made against Grant Self. Margie Grafton and her boyfriend Tim Palomo were also charged. They had often visited Stoll to enjoy his swimming pool. The prosecutors may have concluded that the four defendants might be involved in a sex-ring, because they all had apartments in the same property.

Children were interviewed and asked repeated, direct, leading and suggestive questions by Deputy Erickson. He did not follow the California Commission's "*Peace Officers Standards and Training*" manual on interview methods. He said that he had never heard of the POST manual; he had never taken the training courses recommended in the document. Recent research shows that the types of questioning used by Erikson will often cause the children to disclose details about events that never happened. <sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, these findings were not available to the Kern County officials at the time.

John Stoll was charged with 70 felony crimes; the other three defendants were charged with fewer. Their trial in the *Kern County Superior Court* started on 1984-SEP-24. Four children gave testimony. Child "A" answered that he didn't know or didn't remember to almost all of the questions raised by the defense attorneys. Child "V" admitted during questioning by a defense attorney that it is OK to lie, that it is OK to make mistakes while testifying. He said that he did not know what the oath was. At one point, he denied that any sodomy had occurred. In violation of court orders, he spoke to his mother and to a prosecutor overnight. The next day, he "*recalled*" acts of sodomy. One of the children testified that he had been in the Stoll house five times. Actually, he had never been inside. Under cross-examination, he was unable to describe a single item in the house.

There was no physical evidence to support the charges. The children rarely agreed on the details of various alleged molestations (e.g. time, place, adults present, children present). Some of the acts that the children testified about were physically impossible to commit. The defense attorneys asked that the children be medically examined. The court denied their request. No medical

examinations were ever performed on any of the boys. This was indeed unfortunate, because anal rape of a small child by an adult will cause obvious wounds that are easily detectable. A medical exam might well have proven that no sodomy actually occurred. The prosecution made many references to kiddie-porn -- photographs taken of the sexual molestations. As in other MVMO cases, no such photographs were ever found and introduced into evidence. The prosecution produced at court numerous erotic magazines such as Playboy and Penthouse. Some were found in rooms not rented by the defendants. This probably had the effect of prejudicing the jury. In fact, the magazines could have been used as an indicator that the defendants were **not** pedophiles. If an adult male enjoys "girlie magazines" they are probably sexually attracted to adult women; this would make it more probable that they were not attracted to little boys.

The defense attorneys were not allowed to present the POST manual as evidence. They had hoped to demonstrate the flawed nature of the child interview techniques. Stoll's defense was poorly prepared; his lawyer only had 24 days to assemble the defense; he was unable to locate two defense witnesses and to obtain copies of some records in time for the trial. The judge denied the lawyer's request for a delay in the trial. During the trial, John Stoll ran out of money. His lawyer repeatedly asked to be relieved of the case; these requests were denied. Dr. Roger Mitchell, a clinical psychologist, had conducted psychological tests on Graton and Palomo. He would have been able to give expert testimony on whether these defendants were sexual psychopaths, but his testimony was not allowed.

Following the trial two children, "J" and "C," admitted in public statements that they had lied during the preliminary hearing and the trial.

*"As early as 1986, a yearlong investigation of the Kern County cases was done by the California Attorney General's Office. The investigation concluded that local authorities had used 'suggestive' questioning that led children to give answers that they wanted. At that time, the 'attorney general said there was both a shortage of corroborating evidence and that some alleged victims were simply parroting what they were told in questioning or what they heard other children say'."* 15

All four defendants were convicted and received long sentences. Margie Grafton and her boyfriend Tim Palomo had their convictions overturned after eight years in jail by a *California Appellate Court*. The basis for dismissal was that a psychiatric profile which suggested that she was innocent was kept from the jury. They have not been retried. If they were retried at this time, the result would undoubtedly be an acquittal. The children's testimony could be easily shown to be suspect; there is no hard evidence to show that they are guilty, and no hard evidence to show that abuse actually occurred. Grant Self and John Stoll continued to rot in prison. 6,7

By 2004-MAR, Grant Self had been released from prison and is now "*...in a state hospital for mentally ill offenders. He can be kept there until authorities decide he is not a danger to others.*" <sup>16</sup> John Stoll remained incarcerated until 2004-MAY.

# 'Kids Don't Lie'

**Los Angeles Times Magazine/August 10, 2003**

[http://www.rickcross.com/reference/false\\_memories/fsm71.html](http://www.rickcross.com/reference/false_memories/fsm71.html)

KITS DON'T LIE

Los Angeles Times Magazine/August 10, 2003

Faith in This Assumption Led to Dozens of Unjust Molestation Convictions in Bakersfield. Today One Man Remains in Prison Even After Four of His Original Accusers Said He Never Touched Them.

John Stoll wasn't particularly concerned when cops roused him from bed in Bakersfield on a chilly June night in 1984. He figured the deputies were simply taking him downtown to sort out the latest back-and-forth between him and his ex. They'd been at each other's throats again. And collars and ankles and kneecaps. Figuratively, of course. There was never any violence, just constant recriminations and complaints to authorities about their contrasting parenting styles. He let their son, Jed, run wild at his house, she said. Well, you're trying to poison his mind against me, he complained. And on and on. A familiar story of a bad marriage that turned into a worse divorce.

A muscled carpenter with the self-assurance of a man with skilled hands, Stoll had barely sat down in the interview room when the deputy told him he wanted to talk about "the molestation of your son."

"By whom?" Stoll asked, alarmed. He'd spent thousands of dollars fighting to get custody of Jed, a precocious 6-year-old who loved to play with model cars and swim in the pool behind Stoll's rented house on Center Street. He loved that kid to death.

"By yourself."

The 31-page interview transcript is old and fuzzy with duplication. But it's not hard to hear the voice of the accused echoing over the years. Stoll went ballistic. More like hyper-ballistic. It's the "most insane thing I've ever heard," he said. "I swear to you this is just absolutely crazy. I just can't, oh, Lord almighty, I just can't believe this. This is absolutely crazy. This is absolutely crazy. My God, why would he say something like that? Oh, my God, Jesus Christ."

Even then, he didn't know how bad it was. It wasn't just his son. They believed he'd molested five of Jed's playmates. And molestation, as ugly a word as that was, was far too mild for the depravity they suspected. There was oral copulation, sodomy and group

sex between kids and adults, including the mother of two of the victims, who allegedly was such a wacko she liked to have sex with her 7-year-old and then have her picture taken with him like a great white hunter with a shot-up gazelle. The way the cops had it, John Stoll, carpenter, Bud drinker, and, yeah, occasional weed smoker, was running a grotesque child porn ring out of his suburban tract house.

Stoll offered to take a lie detector test. He swore. He cried. He blamed his ex-wife. That's where they stopped him.

"These allegations are coming from your son," said an interrogator.

"Well, why would he say that? It's not true."

"Well, he says it because it is true," the deputy said. Six-year-olds "are not gonna lie about this kind of stuff . . . they just don't lie about sexual matters." It was a statement that became an axiom for child-abuse investigators across the nation in the '80s. Kids don't lie.

Stoll handed over his cigarettes and lighter, \$19 in cash, a belt and his freedom. He didn't know it, but he'd been swept up in one of the most ambitious law-enforcement campaigns against deviant behavior in American history, with Kern County leading the way. By the time it ended two years later, hundreds of the county's working-class people would be investigated and dozens sentenced to prison, some for terms longer than the lifespan of some civilizations. Stoll's 40-year sentence was far short of the toughest.

It has, however, proven to be the longest served. Stoll watched as appellate courts released many of the others convicted in the eight Bakersfield child molestation "ring" cases, which came to be known as the "Bakersfield witch hunt." Some were freed on technicalities, others for prosecutorial misconduct. Judges issued stinging opinions harshly critical of the local justice system. In fact, of all the alleged molesters whose crimes were "uncovered" during the child-care panic that gripped the nation in the mid-'80s - from the infamous McMartin case to the Wee Care scandals in Massachusetts - Stoll is believed to have been held the longest.

Today, John Stoll is 60, bald and has little of the easy charm with women that helped him tear through three marriages back in the '60s and '70s. He's serving out what's left of his middle age in a dusty Central Valley prison that he asked not to be identified because he fears that if other inmates find out he's one of the Bakersfield molesters, they'll grind him into the cracked hardpan. Like his wariness and excessive politeness, this fear has become a part of the institutional personality that helped him survive.

"The first five years were really the hardest," he says in an interview in the prison's air-conditioned visitor room. Over time, he adjusted. "One thing you do in here, you don't think about out there." It was a good strategy, and it worked, until now. Stoll is once again thinking about "out there."

A small group of female attorneys working out of a creaky Victorian house in Santa Clara has promised to try to get him out. During the past year, Northern California Innocence Project lawyers have pored over thousands of pages of legal documents and tracked down witnesses scattered over more thousands of miles. They also talked to five of the six former child victims, who are now adults with their own families.

None remember any abuse at Stoll's hands. The sixth, Stoll's son, won't speak to the attorneys.

Victims say they were manipulated, bullied and even threatened into telling anatomically impossible tales of abuse that reflected the imaginations of investigators obsessed with exposing a vast child-abuse underground for which no hard evidence was ever found. These grown child victims tell of lives tormented, not by molestation, but by the legal system's efforts to wring stories of victimization out of small children.

"It screwed me up; the guilt of thinking I put my mom in prison for the worst offense possible," Donald Grafton says in an interview. He claims he was forced to falsely testify that his own mother had sex with him as a child. His mother, Margie, endured hellish treatment from other inmates. "Mom got black widow bites and they pushed her hands into machinery and busted them up because she was a child molester. It was directly on me because I lied and put her there."

Even though he left Bakersfield for Idaho, whenever he sees his own children running around the house naked, Grafton panics. He can't help worrying that someone will snatch them away, as he was snatched from his home.

"I have had to live with this terrible thing most of my life," Edward Sampley said in a recent statement to Stoll's lawyers. "I have always known it didn't happen. . . . I am bothered constantly by the thought that I was responsible for putting John Stoll in prison. I wish I could get all those people together today and ask them what gave them the right to do that to me when I was 8."

Despite the new evidence, there are no assurances Stoll will be cleared. The Kern County district attorney's office still believes he's guilty. Prosecutors explain away the recantations by saying victims change their stories for many reasons, including family pressure. The D.A. also has an ace in the hole—Stoll's son. Jed is the one victim who wouldn't talk to the women from Santa Clara. According to legal documents filed in opposition to Stoll's recent request for release, Jed says it all happened, just the way he testified back in 1984.

As for any harm the children suffered, "I didn't molest them, and nobody in this office molested them," says John Somers, a career prosecutor in Kern County.

Whatever the outcome of Stoll's case, it serves as a coda to one of the more controversial chapters of American legal history. Children telling unverifiable tales of animal and human sacrifice, movie star rooms and trips to outer space sent adults without previous



criminal records to rot in prison for astonishing lengths of time. Some legal experts looking back on the era with a profound sense of shame maintain that the only things missing from the trials were the fire and the stake.

"The type of hysteria that swept the nation in the '80s . . . where were the leaders saying, 'Let's be cautious?' " demands Chuck Sevilla, a San Diego appeals attorney.

One irony is that this is all happening just as Stoll's Jan. 15, 2005 release date approaches. He will be free that day to buy a Budweiser and learn to use the strange communication devices called cell phones.

So does that make the strenuous effort to find out what really happened unimportant? Not to people who believe it's more than a matter of tidiness for the legal system to correct mistakes. Not to the Kern County D.A.'s office, which is reeling from the string of reversals in the "ring" cases and is all the more determined to prove it wasn't hysterically chasing phantom molesters.

And not to John Stoll, who still hopes to convince his son he's not an animal. "If on the 14th of January, I'm released rather than go out with parole, I'll be happy," Stoll says.

There are three kinds of people in Bakersfield: those who want to leave and can; those who can't; and those who prefer its row-crop-mottled vistas, its proximity to the ageless sequoias and the stark beauty of the Kern River gorge to any place on earth. The summers are brutal, but the land is big and rich, and there is an authenticity in the people that makes the place feel a lot smaller and friendlier than you'd expect in a city of 257,000.

They take pride in their essential Un-L.A.-ness. One thing they most despise about L.A. is its tolerance of boundary-pushers, line-cutters and law-breakers. Law enforcement is respected in Bakersfield, not mocked. And for two decades, the face of the law in Kern has been Dist. Atty. Ed Jagels, a trim man with a mane of handsome silver hair and a voice so soft you have to lean in to hear him. The office Web site boasts that Kern County sends more people to prison per capita than any county in the state.

Jagels won his job in 1983 after a scandal enveloped his opponent, a local judge, over his lenient treatment of a child molester. His election coincided with a growing belief that child abuse, once thought to be a one-in-a-thousand crime best left for families to resolve, was far more common. In 1973, just before Congress passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to spotlight the problem, there were 167,000 reports of child abuse in America. By the end of the '80s, as lawmakers nationwide turned up the heat on teachers and police to pursue abusers aggressively, 2 million abuse reports were filed each year.

This cultural kindling was set ablaze in Bakersfield, where the first of the "ring" cases came to trial in 1983. Ten people were accused, including a Bible school teacher and a county welfare worker. Children were supposedly forced to watch snuff films, including one where "a little girl who told" had her arms and legs cut off. Setting a pattern seen

throughout the ring cases, no hard proof was found. But four of the defendants were convicted and each sent to prison for more than 240 years, then the longest terms ever imposed in California for any crime. All were later exonerated and set free.

Despite lurid headlines in the local paper, few people outside the San Joaquin Valley paid much attention. It took the disastrous McMartin preschool prosecution in Manhattan Beach to make child molestation ring cases a national phenomenon. In the McMartin case, a 25-year-old preschool teacher was arrested just as the first Bakersfield case went to trial. Attorney Michael Snedeker, co-author with investigative journalist Debbie Nathan of the book "Satan's Silence," says the timing was no accident. Bakersfield authorities were friendly with investigators in L.A. The Kern County cases, he says, were a dry run for McMartin.

There were many similarities. The children made the same often hard-to-believe allegations. The defense made the same objections that the children were programmed by child-care workers who wheedled, threatened and planted false suggestions.

But there were two differences. In McMartin, the interviews with the children were videotaped, allowing the jury to see the questioning. Kern County made no videotapes. Jurors had to rely on assurances from prosecutors that the children had freely volunteered their information.

The other difference? After seven years, and \$14 million, the McMartin case collapsed with no convictions on any of the hundreds of counts against seven teachers - not to mention dozens of uncharged suspects - whose reputations had been ruined. Afterward, jurors said the taped interviews were "too biased, too leading."

In Bakersfield, the prosecution got one conviction after another.

By 1984, four other molestation rings were under investigation in Bakersfield. The atmosphere was poisonous. Adults quivered at being around strange children. Parents asked their lawyers to tape record their children saying their parents never touched them, just to be safe, according to the 1999 book "Mean Justice," by Edward Humes, about crime and punishment in Kern County.

"I moved here in 1981," says Kern County Counsel Mark Nations, who negotiated lawsuit settlements with many of those later set free, including a \$4.25-million payout in May to seven people who served a combined 34 years in prison. "I was appalled" by what was happening.

John Stoll is the only child of a West Chester, Pa., leather-goods salesman and a housewife. He served four years in the Army and made sergeant before jumping headlong into the sex-and-rock-'n'-roll lifestyle of the '70s. He wore his hair long and managed a nightclub. Times were fast and he was faster.

At 5 foot 8, he's hardly intimidating, but even in prison, it's possible to see in his hazel eyes the combination of directness and confidence that attracts the opposite sex. He was too young for his first marriage in 1964, he says. His second lasted 11 years and produced a child, and no charges of molestation. His third marriage, in 1977, was to Ann Reinhold, who was 14 years younger.

They moved to California a year before she gave birth to Jed. "Things were fine until Jed was born," he says. Afterward his wife fell into a funk he now believes was postpartum depression. He says he would come home from work to find Ann listless and crying that the baby hated her. When Jim Jones and his cult followers committed suicide in the Guyanese jungle, he says, his wife told him, "Jed and I are going to do that."

Stoll says he took her to a mental hospital, where she stayed five days. Reached by phone in Pennsylvania, Ann Karlen refused to talk about her marriage to Stoll, other than to deny being institutionalized.

According to Stoll, after her release, she decided she didn't want to be married. They separated in July 1983. Ann got custody of Jed and Stoll got two weekend visits a month.

Stoll rented a house with a pool in a nice neighborhood for \$600 a month. Because carpentry work was sporadic, he sublet rooms to make ends meet. Some renters had children, and neighborhood kids were in and out of the house. Stoll says Jed loved the free-flowing environment, where he could eat ice cream on the couch and watch videos like "Dragonslayer" that might be a little more violent than he was allowed at his mother's home. Asked in court if he liked going to his dad's house, Jed said he did.

Jed may have enjoyed the visits, but his mother hated her ex-husband's lifestyle. Stoll believed Ann was telling the boy his father didn't love him. He fell behind on his child support payments. Jed was put in the middle. On the first weekend in June 1984, Stoll later told a probation officer, Jed invited his father to his kindergarten graduation. You better pay Mommy, Stoll said the boy told him, "because she's going to put you in jail."

Two workers from child Protective Services went to see Ann in mid-June to talk about Stoll's accusations that she was brainwashing Jed. During that visit, one of the workers asked whether Stoll could be a child molester, according to old court documents. Ann said she'd never considered it, but added: "He's so weird, maybe."

The documents appear to show that the first allegation didn't come from Jed, or even Ann, but the agency itself, which seems to have thought it was on the trail of another ring of molesters. Kern County authorities had developed a theory to explain the presence of all these molestation rings: occult practices in the Ozarks that were brought to California by Dust Bowl refugees.

The chief investigator on Stoll was Conny Ericsson, a recent transfer into the sex crimes unit from the sheriff's transportation department. Stoll was his first case. "He was never,

ever qualified for this post," says Ron Jackson, a Ventura attorney who represented Stoll at trial. "He was a bus driver."

The lead Child Protective Services worker was Velda Murillo, whom most of the victims remember as the one pushing them hardest to implicate people. Carol Ann Bittner, a former child victim in another Bakersfield case, has written that Murillo was a demanding woman intent on winning convictions. Bittner said that when she didn't testify the way Murillo wanted, the woman called her a name and threatened to slap her.

Victor Monge, one of the children in the Stoll case, recalls being fearful that if he didn't say what Murillo wanted, his mother, an illegal immigrant, would be deported. "I was scared they were going to take my mom away," says Monge, now 26. "They kept pushing and pushing until they got the answers they wanted."

As had happened to Donald Grafton, the experience made him fear showing love to his own son. "I couldn't even give my son a shower like normal dads do," Monge says. "Someone may say, 'You're touching him.' "

Police reports show that when Jed was asked about being abused, he "had difficulty talking about his father." Eventually, however, Jed did accuse his father. Within days, the investigation grew to include three other suspects and a total of six boys. The youngest was Jed, 6, the eldest Allen Grafton, 9.

Besides Stoll, deputies arrested a man who rented his pool house, Grant Self, and Margie Grafton, mother of Donnie and Allen. Grafton's boyfriend, Tim Palomo, was also arrested.

Grafton was a vivacious young woman who sold insurance and played in a darts league under the nickname "Marginal." She met Stoll through a co-worker who dated him. Because Margie's two sons were about the same age as Jed, the couples double-dated. In response to allegations that they were sex fiends cavorting behind closed curtains at Stoll's house, Grafton said they spent hardly any time there.

While Grafton was at work, Murillo and Ericsson picked up her children and took them to the Jamison Center, a juvenile facility where many of the "ring" children were housed. The Grafton boys were held 10 days and repeatedly questioned about whether their mother molested them. Only when they finally agreed, Grafton says, were they released to their father. She recalls that close friends abandoned her. "People who knew me from years and years and years told me, 'How could you do that?' "

As rings go, this was one of the smaller ones. The only defendant with a history of similar crimes was Self, who had recently been paroled from Atascadero State Hospital on a child-abuse conviction, something Stoll says he didn't know when he let him bunk in the pool house. Stoll believes Self's record was a major reason the investigators pursued so aggressively. "Guilt by association," he says.

At a pretrial hearing, the Grafton boys denied their mother touched them. Asked if he told "Officer Conny" she had, Allen said, "Velda kept asking me and I said she didn't, and she kept telling me that she did. And she finally got to me."

When another victim, Chris Diuri, was asked how he, at 4 feet, could sodomize an adult taller than 6 feet, he said, "I stand on my toes."

The long-term effects on Diuri may be the most profound. "Look at my attitude," he told lawyers last year. "I've been like this my whole life. I've had a lot of behavior problems in school, with the law. This, basically, screwed up our lives growing up."

Kern County Superior Court Judge Allen E. Klein noted "obvious inconsistencies" in the children's testimony, but held all the jailed defendants for trial.

Testimony at trial was more cohesive. The defense team had little to work with other than the inconsistencies in testimony. There were no tapes of the interviews to dissect. Even though Jed testified he had been sodomized by his father only two weeks before Stoll's arrest, he was not examined by a doctor.

Linda Starr, one of Stoll's new attorneys and a former sex crimes prosecutor, says she cannot imagine not taking the children to a doctor. "Your first responsibility is to the health of the child. You don't know what diseases they may have been exposed to."

Defense attorneys felt they had discredited the prosecution case. Instead, the jury convicted all the defendants. Some jurors were across the street in a bar when the crushed defense team walked in.

"We were being restrained in our comments because we felt like fighting them," says Ron Jackson, Stoll's lawyer. Jurors told them they didn't believe what the kids said was actually true, but thought something unseemly must have happened. After all, kids don't lie.

Like many pat statements of faith, that maxim turned out to be flat wrong. Nobody knows why it came to be so widely accepted. But it joined "fer shur" as one of the catch phrases of the '80s.

The truth is that children are as fallible as any human, and because of their vulnerability, far more susceptible to the blandishments of adults, particularly those with the status of police officers and welfare workers. In the past decade, study after study has shown that children can be manipulated to lie and even to create false memories they then energetically defend as truth.

Experiments show "children subjected to biased interviewers or suggestive tactics often make false reports," attorney Robert Rosenthal argued in a 2002 article in the psychology journal *Developmental Review*.

Examples of interviewer bias include telling the child you know what happened, all you need is for him to confirm it. Or repeating the same question until the child figures out what you want him to say. Or using threats and rewards, saying "good girl" when she makes the right accusation, or withholding approval if she doesn't. Lastly, there's "stereotype induction," telling the child the accused is a bad person who needs to be somewhere where he can't harm any more children.

All those methods were used in the Stoll case, according to the Innocence Project. Diuri told attorneys that he was interviewed 12 times. "During the first few interviews, I kept telling [investigators] that I had not been molested," he said in a deposition. But interrogators persisted. "She would ask a question in a way like, 'Did John do this, this and that to you, because the other kids, Donnie or Jed, said this happened.' At some point, I couldn't take the pressure. I was just a little kid. To avoid the pressure and so I could get back home to my friends, I began to answer, 'Yeah, that is what happened.' "

He said he was offered ice cream for cooperating. He also was told, "If I don't say what the other kids said happened to me, then I would be taken away from my home and sent to juvenile hall."

As the Stoll "ring" went off to prison, the child molestation investigation in Bakersfield was about to metastasize one last time. After one girl reported doing bad things in a "bad church," deputies launched the so-called "Satanic church" cases, encompassing 80 suspects and 22 child victims telling of blood-drinking rituals, animal and human sacrifice and cannibalism.

Yet after dragging two lakes and digging up property as far away as San Luis Obispo County, none of the bodies of 12 children the victims said were killed in rituals were ever found.

People in the community began to suspect investigators had gone around the bend. Horrified at the sight of children too young to talk being ripped from their families and by the explosion of apparently hysterical claims against parents, the county's grand jury appealed to the state attorney general to investigate the investigators. That inquiry produced a 1986 report critical of Kern County law enforcement for the same kinds of abuses that would later doom the McMartin investigation: poor interview techniques, sloppy reports, failing to try to gather independent evidence showing a crime took place.

There was a strange epilogue to the Satanic church cases. Despite the unwavering belief that kids don't lie, when children accused a prosecutor and a deputy of abuses, the accusations "were discarded with no serious investigation," the report noted.

Despite the Satanic church fiasco, the attorney general did not review Stoll's and other earlier cases, even though the same discredited techniques were used by the same investigators. To appeals attorney Sevilla, this failure to look back is as troubling as the abuses were in the first place. "The system is content to say, 'Ho hum, that's over.' The result is the destruction of individual lives."

There was no one event, no Eureka moment, when the nation began to grow skeptical of the Satan hunters. Oh, there were times when we all heaved a collective "What?" As when Geraldo Rivera's 1988 special, "Devil Worship: Exploring Satan's Underground," trotted out obviously disturbed women who claimed to be mothers of sacrificed babies. It was more a cumulative process. Over time, as no mass burial grounds turned up, the pendulum began to swing the other way. Some observers believe authorities, feeling chastened, are reluctant to pursue even good cases.

In Bakersfield, after the dust settled, 40 mostly blue-collar people had been convicted, according to author Humes. Beginning in the late 1980s and over the next decade, cell doors started swinging open as appellate judges turned up errors and legal misconduct. Many of those appeals, including the one that freed Margie Grafton and Tim Palomo, were mounted by Snedeker himself. Altogether he has freed 18 Bakersfield prisoners.

"Mike's dedication is nothing short of amazing," says Kent of the Innocence Project. "It's incredible how much he's fought for these people."

To Snedeker, it was a matter of simple justice. "Those were not reasonable times," he says.

Snedeker says he has always been "haunted" by Stoll's case. He believed in his innocence, but didn't feel he had the legal tools to take on his case. He couldn't use the tactic he employed to free Grafton—that the trial judge erred by refusing to admit a psychological test showing she was normal. Even though Stoll recalled taking and passing the test, his attorney had failed to offer it as evidence.

The Innocence Project, which is attached to Santa Clara University's school of law, agreed to take on the case last year. But Stoll wasn't so quick to warm to his saviors. Over the years, he'd tried unsuccessfully to draw the interest of Melvin Belli and other big-name attorneys. Every few years, some do-gooders would write to say they knew he was innocent. Nothing came of it, and Stoll pulled further into himself.

"How can these people ignore me?" evolved into "Just keep your head down and count your paces in the yard." Each day he walked five miles, without fail. He watched television and shot the bull with inmates he could trust with his secret about the nature of his case. He forgot about the outside world.

He says he "programmed" himself to not think about the injustice, of being free. "Now it's all back. I appreciate the fact somebody believes me," but it's not helping him sleep at night. "I'm dredging it all out again."

Going against his hard-won prison yard wisdom, he's beginning to hope. And there's no ache like unrealized hope. "My mom died while I was in here," he says. "She never believed for a minute that I did this. I'd have liked to get out and say, 'See, Mom, you were right.' "

The new attorneys filed a habeas petition last year saying the recantations prove Stoll is innocent. These petitions are legal tools of last resort for the desperate and often fail. In this case, there are several hurdles, not the least of which is Jagels' decision to fight Stoll's release. Deputy Dist. Atty. Lisa Green filed papers last month claiming that even if you believe the victims who said they were manipulated, Jed has not done so. A declaration by Jed, now 25 and living in Maryland, denies he was pressured by investigators and insists "the testimony I gave was truthful at the time I testified in 1984." Efforts by the Los Angeles Times to reach Jed were unsuccessful.

Allen Grafton gave statements to both sides offering insight into his particular personal torment. He told the Innocence Project he remembered being programmed, but he informed the prosecution that he had told the truth in 1984. He told both sides he has no memory of being molested, only of childhood sex play with Jed and Donnie. Even though he can't remember what it was, he has for years had counseling "as a result of something happening in my childhood."

Margie is most worried about Allen. "He's not doing as well as Donald," she says. "Mentally, he's having a lot of problems."

Kent claims these are the kinds of things you'd expect to see when victims suffer from implanted memories. Jed, the youngest, was the most vulnerable and susceptible to the influence of zealous investigators and a mother embroiled in a bitter struggle with her ex-husband.

In the next few weeks, Kern County Superior Court Judge John Kelly could order a hearing to question the recanters, as well as Jed. The result could be a bizarre replay of the 1984 trial, only in an atmosphere much changed from the frantic fear and paranoia that gripped Bakersfield two decades ago.

What is the landscape of truth? Where are its borders? John Stoll looks you straight in the eye and says he didn't do it. But there's Jed. "That's the part that hurts more than anything, to be truthful," Stoll says, his eyes flooding and his careful crustiness cracking.

The last time he saw Jed was at the trial. "I wrote him once when he was in a boys home," Stoll says. Jed replied he didn't want to have anything to do with his dad.

Stoll looks around the visiting room, filled with wives and laughing children clinging to fathers in blue prison garb. "All I want to do is get out of here. People in here are some lousy people." He pauses. But if you go by his record, "I'm the worst in here. That hurts."

What happened in Bakersfield may never be known. Some on the prosecution side insist everything occurred exactly as the sheriff's department said, down to Satanic cults with roots in the Ozarks. The defense says it was all the fantasy of inexperienced investigators seeking glory at the expense of working-class families.



But there is a middle ground. Some think that in many of the cases something likely did happen: An uncle touching a young girl inappropriately. A convicted child molester living in a pool house who may have rubbed the front of a young boy's bathing suit.

Deputy D.A. Somers says he believes "real molestation took place, but maybe exaggerations occurred."

The fact that no big ring cases emerged after 1985, says Kern County Counsel Nations, is "a very persuasive argument" that garden variety molestations, as revolting as those are, were twisted into something more perverse and pathological.

Friends and allies of the wrongly convicted use words such as "evil" and "craven" to describe the behavior of everyone from Child Protective Services workers and sheriff's deputies to prosecutors. But it's also possible that at that time and in that peculiar place, they were doing the best they could.

More problematic is the bunker attitude that has developed since appellate courts started kicking prisoners loose to file civil rights lawsuits against the county. Reached by phone in Redding, where he now works for the state Department of Justice, Conny Ericsson insists that Stoll "is where he belongs. I had absolutely not one doubt about his guilt, or the others."

Velda Murillo lives in a newer tract house in a nice Bakersfield neighborhood. She retired several years ago, but when she answers the door in a green pantsuit, she's as tidily put together as any 9-to-5er. Small and birdlike, with big glasses, she says curtly that she won't answer any questions about the Stoll case.

Any regrets about what she did?

"None at all," she says.

The only certain thing left over from the ring cases is the "black mark on the community," Nations says. It will take more time than Stoll has left on his sentence for that to go away, or for the alleged victims to forget.

The ensuing years have not been kind to Allen Grafton. "Every time I talk to the kids, they're feeling bad," Margie Grafton says in a phone interview from her home in Sacramento. She spent time in prison, yet she sounds most concerned about what her children suffered.

"I didn't get to see my kids when they were growing up," she cries softly. "There's nothing I can tell them except it's not their fault."

In the seventh grade, Donnie wrote a poem expressing his personal tragedy:

**Who Am I**

I get good grades  
But still others get the parades  
Never me!  
But still it comes up, who am I?  
As I cry!  
My mother imprisoned innocently for seven years  
Here come the tears  
As (I) cried and lied and put her there  
She didn't do it  
I was forced to lie  
Here I go to cry, cry, cry  
But I lie to myself as the question  
Comes again  
Who am I.



## John Stoll

From 1984 through 1986 at least 30 defendants were convicted of child sex abuse and related charges and sentenced to long prison terms in a series of inter-related cases in Kern County, California, and an additional 8 defendants accepted plea bargains that kept them out of prison. Over time, 20 of the defendants who were sentenced to prison were exonerated, the earliest in 1991 the latest in 2005. In most of these exonerations the children who had testified that they had been abused recanted their testimony. In all of the exonerations there was evidence that the complaining witnesses – some as young as four years old – had been coerced or persuaded by the authorities make false accusations.

The Kern County cases are the oldest and largest of several groups of prosecutions that occurred in a wave of child sex abuse hysteria that swept through the country in the 1980s and early 1990s. Some (but not all) of these cases included allegations of satanic rituals. Many focused on day care centers. Nationally, there have been dozens of exonerations in child sex abuse hysteria cases.

John Stoll first fell under suspicion on June 10, 1984, when his ex-wife, Ann Karlan, called the Kern County Sheriff's Department and said she believed that on a recent visit with Stoll, their 6-year-old son Jed had been molested by Grant Self, who rented Stoll's pool house. Stoll and Karlan had gone through a bitter divorce, and Karlan was angry that a judge had granted joint custody over Jed.

When Kern County officials questioned Karlan, they asked whether she suspected Stoll of abusing their son. At first, she said she never considered that he would do that, but she later hinted that it was possible. At this time, hysteria over child-sex abuse had become widespread throughout Kern County. Based on Karlan's statements, police launched a full-fledged investigation to determine whether Jed had been sexually involved with John Stoll and other adults, and whether there were any other victims – despite the fact there was absolutely no evidence to suggest this.

Kern County officials interviewed Jed as well as five friends his who were known come over to Stoll's house to play. All of the boys were between six and eight years old at the time. When interviewed by investigators, Jed said that he had been forced to perform sexual acts by Margie Grafton, Grafton's live-in boyfriend Tim Palomo, and Grant Self. He was reluctant to talk about his father at first, but eventually, he also accused Stoll of sexually abusing him.

Using highly suggestive questioning techniques, investigators also elicited allegations of abuse from other boys. One friend of Jed's said that he had been molested by Stoll because he was afraid that if he didn't the authorities would deport his mother, an undocumented Mexican immigrant. The other boys initially denied that they had been sexually assaulted by anyone, but after being questioned repeatedly and at length – and being promised that if they admitted being abused, everything would be all right and they'd be able to go home – they gave statements saying they too had been sexually abused by Stoll, Grafton, Palomo and Self.

**State:** California

**County:** Kern

**Most Serious Crime:** Child Sex Abuse

**Additional Convictions:**

**Reported Crime Date:** 1984

**Convicted:** 1985

**Exonerated:** 2004

**Sentence:** 40 years

**Race:** Caucasian

**Sex:** Male

**Age:** 41

**Contributing Factors:** Perjury or False Accusation

**Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration?** No  
:

There were major inconsistencies among the children's statements. Nonetheless, all four defendants were arrested in June of 1984 and charged with child sex abuse.

Prior to the trial, the defense requested that medical examinations be performed on the children, but the prosecution argued that this would be an unnecessary violation of the children's privacy, and the judge agreed. The defense also attempted to present testimony by a psychologist named Dr. Roger Mitchell, who had conducted psychological examinations of Grafton and Palomo that apparently showed they did not fit the profile of a sexual predator, but the judge refused to allow this testimony.

On September 24, 1984, the defendants' joint trial began. Six boys testified against Stoll, claiming that he and his co-defendants had sexually abused them. Much of their testimony was contradictory and there was no other evidence to support their claims. Nonetheless, based on the children's testimony, in September 1985 a jury convicted all four defendants of a total of 36 counts of child molestation. Stoll was convicted on 17 counts and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

Shortly after the trial, at least two of the children recanted their testimony.

On December 18, 1989, the Supreme Court of California reversed the convictions of Grafton and Palomo, concluding that the psychological exams conducted by Dr. Mitchell had been improperly excluded at trial, and that, given the inconsistencies in the children's testimony and the lack of physical evidence, Dr. Mitchell's testimony could easily have affected the jury's decision. They were released, and charges were dismissed in 1990.

Stoll remained incarcerated, however, because Dr. Mitchell's testimony was not at issue in his case.

Stoll's attorney eventually persuaded the Northern California Innocence Project to investigate his case. Innocence Project investigators tracked down the child witnesses (now adults), and in interviews, four completely recanted their testimony and one said he did not remember being abused. Only Jed Stoll stood by his original testimony.

On December 26, 2002, Stoll filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus in Kern County Superior Court, arguing that his conviction was based on false testimony. He also alleged that Kern County CPS workers and police used coercive and manipulative interviewing techniques that resulted in unreliable testimony of the child witnesses. At his evidentiary hearing, all of the child witnesses testified; again, four recanted, one reported having no memory of being abused, and Jed maintained that he was abused by his father. Stoll's attorneys argued that Jed's mother had prejudiced him against Stoll.

On April 30, 2004, the Honorable John Kelly of the Kern County Superior Court vacated Stoll's conviction, finding that the techniques investigators used to question the children resulted in unreliable testimony. Four days later, on his 61st birthday, Stoll was released from prison after prosecutors dismissed all charges. He served 20 years in prison – the longest sentence of any of the wrongfully convicted child sex-abuse defendants who were exonerated in Kern County.

The California Attorney General and State Board of Control investigated the case, and on May 18, 2006, announced their determination that Stoll had not committed any of the crimes of which he was convicted, and he was awarded \$704,700 as compensation for the years he spent in prison. Separately, in 2009, Kern County agreed to pay Stoll \$5 million for his wrongful prosecution and imprisonment.

- *Alexandra Gross*

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