

**The 45th ANNUAL H. THOMAS GUERRY AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE
IN LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

Detective Brian Larson, Santa Barbara Police Department

On Tuesday, February 19, 2013, uniformed police officers responded to a Suspicious Circumstances investigation on Olive Street when residents in the neighborhood reported that they had heard shots fired and a person yelling. When police officers arrived on scene they located a male who had been shot and murdered in the street. Officers immediately protected the crime scene and began interviewing the neighbors attempting to locate additional information to assist the Detectives that were being called in to investigate. The officers quickly discovered that additional information was limited as the victim had no known ties to Santa Barbara and the neighbors had not seen anything suspicious prior or after the shooting.

Detective Larson was assigned as the lead investigator and soon discovered that he had a daunting task ahead of him because there were no additional leads and at the time of the incident the only information he had was that the victim was from Ventura when he was walking down the street and was shot. As one might expect cases involving the death of a human being are extremely labor intensive and time consuming which are only exacerbated when investigators have no leads.

Detective Larson immediately reached out to law enforcement agencies in Ventura County and led a team of detectives to interview over a hundred people who knew of or were friends with the victim. Detective Larson also authored over 20 search warrants attempting to locate additional leads in the investigation. Detective Larson quickly discovered that the victim had various connections to gangs in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

Detective Larson then led a team of detectives to conduct searches and interviews on gang members from Ventura and Santa Barbara counties attempting to locate additional leads and a suspect. After several months Detective Brian Larson had exhausted all leads and learned that gang members from Ventura and Santa Barbara counties were less than forthcoming in providing information to the Santa Barbara Police Department investigators to solve the murder on Olive Street.

Throughout his investigation Detective Larson had collected evidence to show that the Santa Barbara gang and its members had been indirectly involved in the murder on Olive Street and that they were functioning and using tactics associated with a highly organized criminal street gang.

Detective Larson's persistence and tenacity led him to contact the FBI and the DEA attempting to use additional resources to solve the murder on Olive Street. Detective Larson provided evidence to the FBI and DEA that showed that the Santa Barbara gang and their members had been indirectly involved in several recent attempt murders in Santa Barbara and the murder on Olive Street. Detective Larson was able to demonstrate that all standard means of police investigations had been exhausted and unsuccessful in attempting to solve the attempt murders and the murder on Olive Street. His

investigation also led him to establish that the Santa Barbara gang and its members were terrorizing and they were an ongoing threat to the Santa Barbara community.

After presenting his evidence to the FBI and the DEA, Detective Larson was able to access the resources of the federal government to conduct a Proactive Community Impact Project hoping to collect evidence to show that the Santa Barbara gang and its members were directly involved in the recent attempt murders in Santa Barbara and the murder on Olive Street.

In collaboration with the FBI and the DEA the Santa Barbara Police Department began a joint operation called "Falling Dawn" which used various federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and collect evidence showing that the Santa Barbara gang and its members were responsible for the recent attempt murders and the murder on Olive Street.

Detective Larson was instrumental in providing the documentation and coordinating the efforts of the operation with the FBI, the DEA, and other law enforcement agencies.

Detective Larson's hard work and long hours completing applications, search warrants, and arrest warrants with the various law enforcement agencies and the courts to conduct operation "Falling Dawn" led to the arrest and charges against 68 individuals. These individuals were associated with or directly involved in the Santa Barbara gang that had committed the recent attempted murders and the murder on Olive Street.

In addition to the arrests, "Falling Dawn" led to 195 felony charges, \$72,000 in asset forfeiture from drug sales proceeds, and the seizure of 12 firearms. This operation also led Detective Larson to identify the two main suspects from the Olive Street murder. Detective Larson coordinated the efforts of the federal and state law enforcement agencies to arrest the two suspects. One suspect was arrested after the deployment of a high risk SWAT team and the other suspect was arrested in Longview, Washington after he had fled Santa Barbara. Once the suspects were in custody, Detective Larson was able to get a confession from the suspects implicating them in the gang murder on Olive Street.

This is just one of many examples that could be used to exemplify the tenacity, dedication, and efficiency that Detective Larson uses on a daily basis as a Crimes Against Persons detective where he goes to great lengths to keep the community safe. Detective Larson also continues to be recognized by the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office for his professionalism and efficiency. As a result of Detective Larson's efforts there are still several ongoing gang investigations that will further the ability of the Santa Barbara Police Department to dismantle the Santa Barbara gang criminal organization.

Sgt. Andy Feller and Officer Carl Kamin, Santa Barbara Police Department

Sergeant Andy Feller began his law enforcement career in January of 1997 and has held many positions within the Santa Barbara Police Department. He was promoted to Sergeant in May of 2012 and currently serves as a Patrol Supervisor as well as supervisor of the Special Operations Team.

Officer Carl Kamin began his law enforcement career with the Santa Barbara Police Department in January of 1996. Since his hiring he has worked two tours as a P2 Motorcycle Officer and has also served as a member of the Department's Drunk Driver Enforcement Team.

On the evening of January 28, 2014 Sergeant Feller was contacted by dispatch and informed of a request to check on the welfare of a possible suicidal subject. Sergeant Feller was able to speak to the brother of the suicidal subject, who stated that the subject had been experiencing depression and had left a note at his home in Nevada saying his "goodbyes". To make matters more difficult, the suicidal subject was a Correctional Officer in the State of Nevada and was believed to be armed. Sergeant Feller, Officer Kamin, and several additional officers from the Santa Barbara Police Department responded to the Best Western Beachside Inn in Santa Barbara (where it was believed the subject was staying) to check the subject's welfare.

The Officers were able to determine that the subject was staying in room 320 of the hotel, but unable to establish if the subject was in the room. Wary of the subject's emotional state and the fact that he might have a handgun, Officer Kamin knocked on the door of the adjacent hotel room and was granted access to the outdoor balcony. From this vantage point, Officer Kamin was able to look into room 320, where he saw the subject unconscious and in apparent medical distress. Officer Kamin contacted Sergeant Feller, who attempted to open the door of room 320 using a pass key. Unfortunately, the subject had secured the door from the inside using the security bar. Without hesitation, Sergeant Feller forcefully kicked open the secured door, gaining access to the room.

Once inside the room, Officers found the subject completely unresponsive. Sergeant Feller initiated Code 3 medical response, and then moved the comatose subject to a position that allowed him

to better breathe. The subject was transported to the emergency room for immediate medical treatment. It was determined that the subject had ingested a large quantity of narcotics and was near death when contacted by Sergeant Feller and Officer Kamin.

Several months after the above incident, Sergeant Feller received a telephone call from the family of the above individual who indicated that he had completely recovered (both physically and emotionally) and thanked the Officers for saving his life.

The above incident is one of many examples where the officers of the City of

Santa Barbara work diligently to insure the safety of the members of our community. Thanks to the decisive work of Sergeant Feller and Officer Kamin in a time of crisis, a human life was saved.

Officer Beth Lazarus, Santa Barbara Police Department

Officer Lazarus is currently assigned to the Patrol Division as a Crime Scene Investigator. The daily duties of a patrol Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) are to assist patrol officers with needed Crime Scene Investigation on their initial investigations. These investigations include but are not limited to homicides, violent assaults, domestic violence, sexual assaults, burglaries, major traffic accidents, vandalism, and graffiti. The duties of a patrol Crime Scene Investigator also include responding to calls for service as a primary or backup officer. CSI officers are also expected to engage in proactive activity. In essence, a patrol crime scene investigator has a dual role. They have to be a patrol officer and collect and preserve evidence. In order to do this well, an officer has to pay attention to detail and be enthusiastic about serving and protecting the community. Officer Beth Lazarus exemplifies these traits.

In 2013 Officer Beth Lazarus completed 413 crime scene investigations. This was in addition to responding to 480 calls for service, issuing 34 misdemeanor citations, and writing 85 traffic citations. Her crime scene investigations are thorough and include the detailed information helpful for investigators. Examples of this are comments that were made in 2013 by her peers and supervisors. The following are only a few examples. "I wrote Officer Lazarus a letter of appreciation for her work on a residential burglary. Her work on the case allowed detectives to quickly identify and arrest the suspect. The suspect received ten years in state prison, in large part because of the work that Officer Lazarus did."

"Detectives were assigned to a petty theft case in which Officer Lazarus had done the CSI. Detectives e-mailed a note with their appreciation for her diligence on this investigation. In this case, Officer Lazarus recorded the surveillance video, which was extremely important because when Detectives went to the store to view the video it had already been recorded over." "It is appreciated that Officer Lazarus measures all the graffiti making it a lot easier for detectives to categorize it as a misdemeanor or a felony (an example of her attention to detail). Her narrative follow-ups are precise and explain what the graffiti actually is. In addition to this, she is one of the few that will record video when video is not readily available and book the recording of the video into evidence. This helps us in expediting our follow-ups. I think her work ethic, attention to detail, and passion for the job would be great assets to the investigative division."

Officer Beth Lazarus was also instrumental in improving the Crime Scene Investigator's locker making equipment readily available and easy to find. I was informed by the department's lab technician that Officer Lazarus goes above and beyond what is expected in her duties. He advised me that Officer Beth Lazarus identifies when equipment needs to be replaced not just for herself but also for the entire team. Recently she became aware that a camera needed replacing. Instead of just advising her supervisor of the equipment need, Officer Lazarus researched what it would cost to repair the camera. In doing so, she was able to ascertain that the department would be better off replacing the camera with a more modern one at nearly the same cost. Once the camera was purchased, she took the initiative to learn how to properly use it and then train the rest of the Crime Scene Investigators.

Officer Beth Lazarus assisted in the creation of the new Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) drying room. This room is utilized to securely dry items of evidence that have been exposed to bodily fluids.

In addition to assisting with the creation of this room, Officer Lazarus authored a checklist and protocol to improve the way in which evidence was collected and booked. Organizing the Crime Scene Investigator's locker, assisting with the research and appropriation of equipment for CSI officers, and assisting in the creation of the CSI drying room was not enough for Officer Lazarus. She worked with other department members to create a stockpile of baby clothes and supplies that can be used by officers when dealing with babies on cases. This was another need that she recognized and helped address. All of these were accomplished by Officer Lazarus while still remaining available for her regular daily duties!

Officer Beth Lazarus is an extremely positive influence on her co-workers. She is always willing to do whatever is asked. She has assisted with the training of several of our new officers and can also be counted on to create a positive learning environment for veteran officers on how to improve evidence preservation and collection. While all of these aspects of her daily work product are extremely important, it is her interpersonal skills that set her apart. As part of her duties Officer Lazarus responds to various death investigations or investigations where people have been critically injured. She has provided the proper amount of concern and attention for each victim, witness, or involved family members she has come in contact with. Officer Beth Lazarus shows the same attention to her teammates and peers. She makes it a point to make a person feel special on their birthday, the birth of their child, an officer's completion of their probationary period, putting together group outings, or just by simply arriving on-scene to an incident and asking her peers how she can be of assistance while having a smile on her face.