



UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL S.E.C.U.R.E STRIKE FORCE

FY 2021 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE UTAH LEGISLATURE

In 2009, the Utah legislature tasked the Utah Attorney General to “administer and coordinate the operation of a multi-agency strike force to combat violent and other major felony crimes within this state that are associated with illegal immigration and human trafficking.” U.C.A. § 67-5-22.7. Today, a team of elite Special Agent Investigators, highly qualified prosecutors and support staff carry out this mandate in the form of the S.E.C.U.R.E (Statewide Enforcement of Crimes involving Undocumented Residents) Strike Force.

The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force partners with many Federal and State law enforcement agencies to ensure the directive of the legislature, including the U.S. Attorney’s Office, U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE/ERO), U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and state and local law enforcement agencies. S.E.C.U.R.E prosecutors are cross-deputized as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys, allowing them to prosecute in both state and federal court. Through these partnerships and its own independent investigations, the S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force capably investigates and prosecutes hundreds of cases involving illegal immigration, human trafficking, and associated offenses each year.

The S.E.C.U.R.E Team of Investigators, Prosecutors and support staff are active participants in the Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force (UTIP). In this role, they work with non-governmental organizations, victim service providers, educators, and other stakeholders to combat human trafficking throughout Utah. The S.E.C.U.R.E Team has become recognized experts in the human trafficking field, presenting on the topic across the state and at major national human trafficking conferences.

The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force also hosts and helps facilitate the Utah Identity Theft Task Force (ITTF). The I.T.T.F targets criminals who obtain and create false identification to perpetrate large-scale fraud and theft operations across the state. Crimes associated with identity fraud often cross jurisdictional boundaries and affect hundreds of victims. The total loss amounts associated with these crimes can be astronomical. The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force pursues these cases statewide and federally, to ensure these offenders receive sentences appropriate to the scale of their crimes.

By nurturing and building these strong statewide partnerships, S.E.C.U.R.E continues to carry out the mandate of the legislature by targeting criminal enterprises associated with human trafficking, identity theft, fraudulent documents, illicit narcotics and firearms. The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force's unique ability to thoroughly investigate these large-scale crimes and follow-up with a large-scale prosecution of these offenders helps ensure the safety of Utah's communities and protect the rights of all Utahns.

S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force Agents generated **225** investigations in FY 2021.

Approximate break down of investigations/arrests:

- 47 Arrests
- 32 Fraud/Forgery/Counterfeiting
- 28 Narcotics Distribution / Drug Crimes
- 88 Sex Offenses / Human Trafficking
- 9 Weapons
- 63 Search Warrants
- 65 Misc. Cases, Citizen Assist, Police Assist, etc.

S.E.C.U.R.E prosecutors filed **49** criminal cases in various jurisdictions through the state of Utah and U.S. Federal District Court in FY 2020.

- **45** State cases filed
- **4** Federal cases filed
- **47** Arrest Warrants

These cases include, but are not limited to, charges for:

- Sex Offenses/Rape/Human Trafficking of a Child
- Enticing a Minor by Internet or Text
- Identity Theft/Fraud/Forgery/Counterfeiting
- Narcotics Distribution / Drug Crimes
- Sale/Possession of Dangerous Weapon
- Kidnapping
- Aggravated Exploitation of Prostitution/Aiding Prostitution
- Sale of a Child
- Human Smuggling
- Threats of Violence
- Communications Fraud
- Pattern of Unlawful Activity
- Money Laundering
- Assault

Notable FY 2021 Human Trafficking Related Prosecutions

*Note: our practice in recent years has been to report only on cases where the defendant has been convicted and sentenced. However, due to the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on courts, many of our cases in this fiscal year are in a holding pattern. Therefore, we are including public information about some ongoing cases that were filed during fiscal year 2021 to give a better sense of the work we performed this year. *NOTE: Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

**It should be noted that Human Trafficking investigations do not always result in specific charges of Human Trafficking, for various reasons, including, but not limited to, the protection of the victim(s).*

- **State v. Mackey, Gomez, and Jones – Multi-Defendant and Multi-Victim Human Trafficking of a Child Prosecution**

On March 23, 2020, the SECURE Task Force charged **David Mackey, Chandra Jones, and Andre Gomez** with two counts of Aggravated Human Trafficking of a child, each First-degree felonies and two counts of Aggravated Exploitation of Prostitution Involving a Child, each Second-degree felonies. Mackey, a registered sex offender from Nebraska, was also charged with Unlawful Sexual Conduct w/ a 16- or 17-year-old, a Third-degree felony; Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, a Second-degree felony; and Failure to Register as a Sex Offender, a Third-Degree felony. Gomez, a convicted felon from Georgia, was also charged with four counts of Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, each Second-Degree felonies, and one count of Dealing Materials Harmful to a Minor, a Third-degree felony. The charges arose from a scheme wherein the Defendants recruited, instructed, and facilitated the sexual exploitation of two child victims in Weber County. The defendants instructed the child victims on how to obtain “clients” through posting ads for commercial sex online, purchased hotel rooms where the sex acts would take place, and collected money from the sexual exploitation of the child victims. The case was litigated throughout 2020, during the midst of the pandemic. Ultimately, all three defendants pleaded guilty to serious felonies. On March 9, 2021, MACKEY was sentenced to 3 consecutive terms of 1-15 years in the Utah State Prison. GOMEZ, per plea agreement wherein he agreed to testify against MACKEY, was sentenced to 351 days in jail, 100 hours of community service and he is required to register as a sex offender and complete sex offender treatment. JONES, per plea agreement wherein she agreed to testify against MACKEY, was sentenced to 364 days in jail and 48-months’ probation.

[Deseret News Story About Mackey, Gomez and Jones case](#)

- **State v. Paul Petersen – International Human Smuggling, Fraud, and Sale of a Child Prosecution**

On October 8, 2019, the Utah Attorney General’s Office charged former Maricopa County Assessor **Paul Petersen** with: one count of Pattern of Unlawful Activity, a Second Degree Felony, four counts of Human Smuggling, a Third Degree Felony, three counts of Communications Fraud, a Second Degree Felony, and three counts of Sale of a Child, a Third Degree felony. The charges arose from an investigation into an illegal adoption scheme Petersen

ran wherein he recruited pregnant women in the Marshall Islands to place their children for adoption to couples in the United States. The Marshallese women were offered payment and transportation to the United States in exchange for following through with the adoptions. The Human Smuggling and Sale of a Child counts were based on Petersen recruiting, paying, and transporting the Marshallese women into the United States for purposes of adoption in violation of international law. The Communications Fraud counts were based on Petersen's misrepresentations to the American couples adopting the children, who were never informed about the unlawful nature of the adoptions. There were elements of trafficking victimization involved as well, as some of the Marshallese women alleged they were defrauded and coerced into participating in the scheme.

Petersen was also charged with several felony offenses in Arizona and Arkansas, for crimes related to the same scheme. In July of 2020, Petersen pleaded guilty to crimes in all three cases. In Utah, he pleaded to one count of Communications Fraud and three counts of Human Smuggling. He admitted to transporting women into the United States for purpose of adoption and for profit, in violation of an international compact. He also admitted that he never disclosed the international adoption restrictions to American families who adopted the children involved.

[Fox13 News Story About Paul Petersen Case](#)

- **State v. Jackson Ballard – Combined Internet Crimes Against Children and Human Trafficking of a Child case**

On January 27, 2021, the Utah Attorney General's Office filed a criminal information in Salt Lake County, alleging **JACKSON BALLARD** had engaged in an improper relationship with a 13-year-old female he met through the social media app "SnapChat." The charges filed against **BALLARD** include Human Trafficking of a Child, Sexual Exploitation of a minor, and Enticement. After **BALLARD** met the minor he solicited her for oral sex in exchange for vape pens. **BALLARD** also requested and received multiple nude/semi-nude photographs of the minor after requesting photos. On July 1, 2021, Mr. **BALLARD** pled guilty to 2 counts of Human Trafficking of a Child, 1st Degree Felonies; Sexual Exploitation of minor, enticement, and dealing materials harmful to a minor. The state dismissed remaining counts and agreed to forego removal of the case to federal court and filing additional enticement counts in the state court system for multiple other conversations discovered on **BALLARD'S** cell phone. **BALLARD** was sentenced to 5 years to Life in the Utah State Prison on the 1st Degree Felony HT of a Child; Sentenced to 1-15 years on 2nd degree Entice a Minor By Internet or Text; Sentenced to 1-15 year in USP for Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, 3rd Degree Felony; and 0-5 years in USP for Dealing in Materials Harmful To a Minor, 3rd Degree Felony. Count 1 to run consecutive to all other concurrent counts.

[Deseret News Story About Jackson Ballard Case](#)

- **State v. Dustin Andrus – Combined Internet Crimes Against Children and Human Trafficking of a Child case**

On February 14, 2021, the Utah Attorney General’s Office filed a criminal information in Davis County alleging Dustin Giles Andrus, a registered sex offender, had engaged in a sexual relationship with a minor he met through SnapChat. Andrus had repeated sexual contact with the minor, provided the minor with alcohol and drugs in exchange for sexual acts. When the minor attempted to end her relationship with Andrus, after discovering his age, Andrus threatened to share the sexually explicit photos and videos of the minor he had obtained. Andrus was charged with Human Trafficking of a Child, Rape, and Aggravated Sexual Extortion of a Minor, each first-degree felonies; Sexual Exploitation of Minor and Distribution of a Controlled Substance, each second-degree felonies; Unlawful Sexual Conduct with a 16 or 17 year old, a third-degree felony; Enticement of a Minor, a Class A Misdemeanor. He is currently awaiting trial in Davis County on his state charges and in addition he has now been successfully indicted on Federal charges.

[ABC4 News Story Re: Dustin Andrus](#)

- **State v. Gregory Earls – Exploiting Prostitution and Distribution of Narcotics.**

On March 11, 2021, the Utah Attorney General’s Office filed a criminal information in Salt Lake County alleging Gregory Earls engaged in a pattern of exploiting commercial sex workers and distributing narcotics. Agents began investigating Earls after receiving multiple tips that Earls was involved in trafficking females and coercing them through manipulating their substance use addiction and mental health struggles. Earls sold narcotics to undercover officers on four separate occasions. A female victim told investigators that she was a Earls’ girlfriend and lived with him. The victim told agents Earls provided her with narcotics, booked her “dates” with clients, transported her to those “dates” knowing she was engaging in commercial sex, and managed the money she received from commercial sex. Earls was charged with Exploitation of Prostitution, a Third-degree felony; multiple counts of Aiding Prostitution, each Class A Misdemeanors, Distribution of a Controlled Substance, Unlawful Possession of a Dangerous Weapon by a Restricted Person, and multiple misdemeanor DV Assault Counts. Earls was served with a protective order and put on pretrial release. In the days after his release, Earls contacted the victim at her place of residence and place of employment. After reviewing the Defendant’s jail calls, Earls was re-arrested on pretrial release violations. New charges were filed including violation of a protective order and witness tampering. Earls remains in custody pending trial

- **State v. Raffi Daghlian – Serial Rape and Human Trafficking.**

On June 28, 2021, Utah Attorney General filed a criminal information in Salt Lake County, alleging Raffi J. Daghlian of Salt Lake City sexually assaulted two female complainants. These assaults occurred in 2013 and 2020. In summary, it is alleged that Mr. Daghlian committed seven separate criminal acts, including Rape, Human Trafficking of a Child, Exploitation of Prostitution involving a Child, Forcible Sexual Abuse, and Dealing in Material Harmful to a Minor. Mr. Daghlian met the victims online and solicited dates in exchange for money and ultimately

engaged in forcible, non-consensual activity with each victim over their objections. For further details related to the alleged assaults, we would direct you to the publicly filed criminal information and affidavit of probable cause. Subsequent to this filing, investigators were made aware of another victim of Daghlian's from January of 2021. Upon review of the evidence from that incident, prosecutors filed an amended information to include one count of Forcible Sodomy. [KSL News Story Re: Raffi Daghlian](#)

Other Notable FY 2021 S.E.C.U.R.E. Investigations and Prosecutions

- **State v. Francisco Diaz-Barreras** - An undercover operation by the SECURE Task Force in October 2020 led to the arrest of Francisco Diaz-Barreras. A confidential informant had alleged that DIAZ-BARRERAS was drug trafficking under the moniker "Flaco." The undercover operation confirmed this, when DIAZ-BARRERAS sold methamphetamine to undercover officers on multiple occasions. He also offered to sell firearms, although none was ever produced. On December 14, 2020, DIAZ-BARRERAS pled guilty to second-degree felony distribution of a controlled substance; he was to be turned over to federal authorities after he is released from jail. He is ordered not to remain in or return to the United States illegally.
- **State v. Juan Galaviz-Roman** - On May 1, 2020, the SECURE Task Force was informed by Unified Police and ICE ERO officers that Juan Galaviz-Roman had been stopped for a traffic violation and provided a Mexican passport and Mexican driver license with someone else's name on it. ICE ERO was able to determine Galaviz-Roman's true identity using his fingerprints; the associated name did not match the name on the documents. Post-Miranda, GALAVIZ-ROMAN admitted he had purchased both documents for \$800 in Tijuana, Mexico. On December 8, 2020, GALAVIZ-ROMAN pled guilty to third-degree felony possession of a forged writing and was to be turned over to federal authorities after a short jail term. He is ordered not to remain in or return to the United States illegally.
- **State v. Brandy Ontiveros** – Brandy Ontiveros has a long history of fraud, forgery, and theft-related crimes, and had been to prison previously. West Valley City Police Department, through the statewide Identity Theft Task Force, referred their investigation of ONTIVEROS to SECURE for prosecution. In July of 2020, ONTIVEROS was arrested by the West Valley City Police Department on multiple felonies including three counts of second-degree felony identity fraud and WPCPD referred to SECURE for prosecution through the statewide Identity Theft Task Force. ONTIVEROS was alleged to have used several people's names, bank accounts, and other information to rent apartments, open bank accounts, and write checks. The victims suffered loss of rental income, property damage, and income-impacting credit damage; the monetary losses were in the thousands of dollars. In June 2021, Ms. Ontiveros entered guilty pleas to second-degree felony identity fraud and other felonies and was ordered to pay over \$25,000 in restitution to the victims of her crimes.
- **State v. Ricardo Cruz-Paredes** - On June 10, 2021, deputies of the U.S. Marshals Service had arrested Ricardo Cruz-Paredes on a felony warrant. It was determined by the Marshals Service

and SECURE Task Force officers that CRUZ-PAREDES was carrying identification with a false name and a false Social Security card with a number that had belonged to a person now deceased. Biometrics check confirmed CRUZ-PAREDES' name, date of birth, and his residency status as a Mexican national who had been removed from the country previously. On July 15, 2021, CRUZ-PAREDES pled guilty to third-degree felony possession of a forged writing and an unrelated domestic violence case and was to be turned over to federal authorities after completing a jail term. He is ordered not to remain in or return to the United States illegally.

- **State v. Jorge Alberto Pantoja-Lozano** In February 2021, the SECURE Task Force placed JORGE ALBERTO PANTOJA-LOZANO under arrest following an extended undercover investigation. He was subsequently charged with multiple felonies in state court, including Distribution of a Controlled Substance, Possession of a Controlled Substance with the Intent to Distribute, Obstruction of Justice, and Possession of Forged Writing. It was alleged that PANTOJA-LOZANO sold heroin on multiple occasions to undercover officers, and that PANTOJA-LOZANO admitted to trafficking narcotics full-time for about a year. Furthermore, it is alleged that a search warrant led to the discovery of large amounts of heroin at PANTOJA-LOZANO'S residence, trafficking-related paraphernalia like digital scales and packaging material, and false identification cards. The state case against PANTOJA-LOZANO was subsequently dismissed and refiled in federal court, where it is currently pending.
- **State v. Christina Alexandra Grijalva and State v. Oscar Alonso Gonsales** A series of undercover operations by the SECURE Task Force in November 2020 led to the arrest of CHRISTINA ALEXANDRA GRIJALVA and OSCAR ALONSO GONSALES. It is alleged that GONSALES, working from a location well-known for drug trafficking, sold methamphetamine to undercover officers. It is further alleged that GONSALES later arranged for and participated in meetings between an undercover officer and GRIJALVA, in which GRIJALVA and GONSALES sold methamphetamine and a handgun to the officer despite both of them being statutorily restricted persons. GONSALES was subsequently charged with one count of second-degree felony Possession of a Firearm by a Restricted Person, three counts of second-degree felony Distribution of a Controlled Substance, and one count of Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute; GRIJALVA was charged with one count of second-degree felony Possession of a Firearm by a Restricted Person and two counts of second-degree felony Distribution of a Controlled Substance. The cases remain pending.
- **State v. Hector Noel Orozco Armenta** As one facet of a year's long, broad investigation by the SECURE Task Force, compiled evidence led to the execution of search warrants at the residence and vehicles of HECTOR NOEL OROZCO ARMENTA. He was subsequently arrested and charged with two second-degree felony counts of Possession of a Controlled Substance with the Intent to Distribute. According to the allegations against OROZCO ARMENTA, he was found to be in possession of large amounts of heroin at his residence and in one of his vehicles, as well as trafficking-related paraphernalia like digital scales and packaging material. Furthermore, it is alleged that over \$25,000 in U.S. currency was found at his residence, which OROZCO ARMENTA admitted was intended for purchasing additional heroin to sell, and that OROZCO

ARMENTA told officers that he had wired a further \$30,000 to associates in Mexico just minutes before his arrest. The case remains pending.

- **State v. William Daniel Branstiter** In February 2021, the Utah Attorney General’s Office charged WILLIAM DANIEL BRANSTITER with two counts of second-degree felony Identity Fraud, two counts of second-degree felony Theft by Deception, six counts of third-degree felony Forgery, and third-degree felony Possession of a Forged Writing. The charges arose from criminal activity spanning several jurisdictions throughout Salt Lake and Tooele Counties that were brought to SECURE’s attention through the statewide Identity Theft Task Force. BRANSTITER is alleged to have entered multiple branches of Mountain America Credit Union and presented checks and withdrew cash from several victims’ accounts, while posing as the account holders. The case remains pending.
- **State v. Jian Rong Long** An investigation into several “massage” parlors in Salt Lake County, owned and operated by JIAN RONG LONG, started with a citizen allegedly entering one parlor for a legitimate massage, and then being solicited to pay for acts of prostitution. The lengthy investigation spanned before and after the pandemic lockdowns. During the investigation, undercover officers were offered sex for money by several workers and by Long herself. The primary investigation concluded in December 2020 with the execution of search warrants on three parlors, the residence of their owner, and related bank accounts. Execution of the search warrants resulted in the discovery of financial records and large sums of cash. Multiple counts of second-degree felony Money Laundering, third-degree felony Exploitation of Prostitution, and misdemeanor Prostitution were subsequently filed against Long. According to the allegations, it is asserted that Long admitted to police that some clients want “us” at the parlors to perform sex acts, and that she personally has done so to earn additional money. The case remains pending.

[KSL News Story Re: LONG](#)