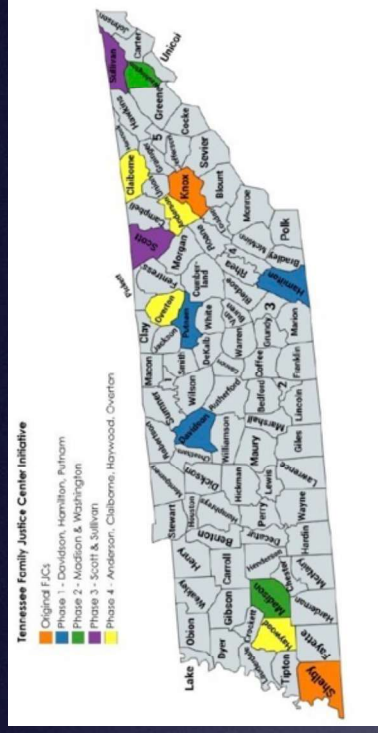


Bringing Elder Abuse out of the shadows and into the spotlight: A Teamwork approach to Investigation & Prosecution



Chattanooga, Tennessee

May 7th, 2026

Presented by

Paul Greenwood,
Somewhat “retired” Deputy District
Attorney,
San Diego County, California



Who needs to be part of
the effort to combat the
escalating crime of elder
abuse?

Let's start with Tennessee's
mandated reporters...

Everybody!

Background...

What I learned in law
school in UK..

From UK lawyer to
California prosecutor

Joined a civil law firm for 2
years

Then in 1993...



25 years..



My decision to step away
from the office...

Advice that my late father
gave me..

And then great advice from
one of the elected DA's
that I served under...



\$37 billion

How Criminals Steal \$37 Billion a Year from America's Elderly

Telephone pitchers, online scammers and even family members target the most vulnerable among us. And it's about to get worse.

[More stories by Nick Leiber](#) May 3, 2018, 1:00 AM PDT

I also decided it was time
to share some of the
lessons that I have learned
about elder justice...



And then AARP came
calling...



From prosecution to
prevention..

My Elder Abuse journey began

January | 1996

All because of a call from
APS...



1260
DISTRICT
ATTORNEY

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Family Protection Division
Sex Crimes and Stalking Division

This became my
assignment for the next 22
years...

Why?

Back in 1996 I had an office,
a phone, a computer but....

No cases!

Just silence!



Break the Silence

Report Elder Abuse

1-800-252-8966 (Voice and TTY)



ALBERTA
ELDER ABUSE
AWARENESS
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*Elder abuse thrives on silence. The time has
come to bring this tragic secret out in the open.*



“ Elder abuse has been called the silent epidemic of our time.

It is a crime that too often operates in the shadows. ”

- Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt, NAAG President

Soon I began to
understand what my
mission was...

Forgotten

Victims

No More!

Putting

ELDER ABUSE

in the Spotlight

And it was APS who helped
to frame that mission...

Why so much silence
especially among victims?

6 reasons for failure to self report

Impairment





Isolation

**Shame or
embarrassment
AND
Loyalty to
abuser**



Fear of losing independence



Reliance on abuser



Fear of retaliation



Then I discovered that it
was not easy for others to
make a report if abuse,
neglect or exploitation
was suspected

Making the telephone
number more accessible
was one of my first
objectives...

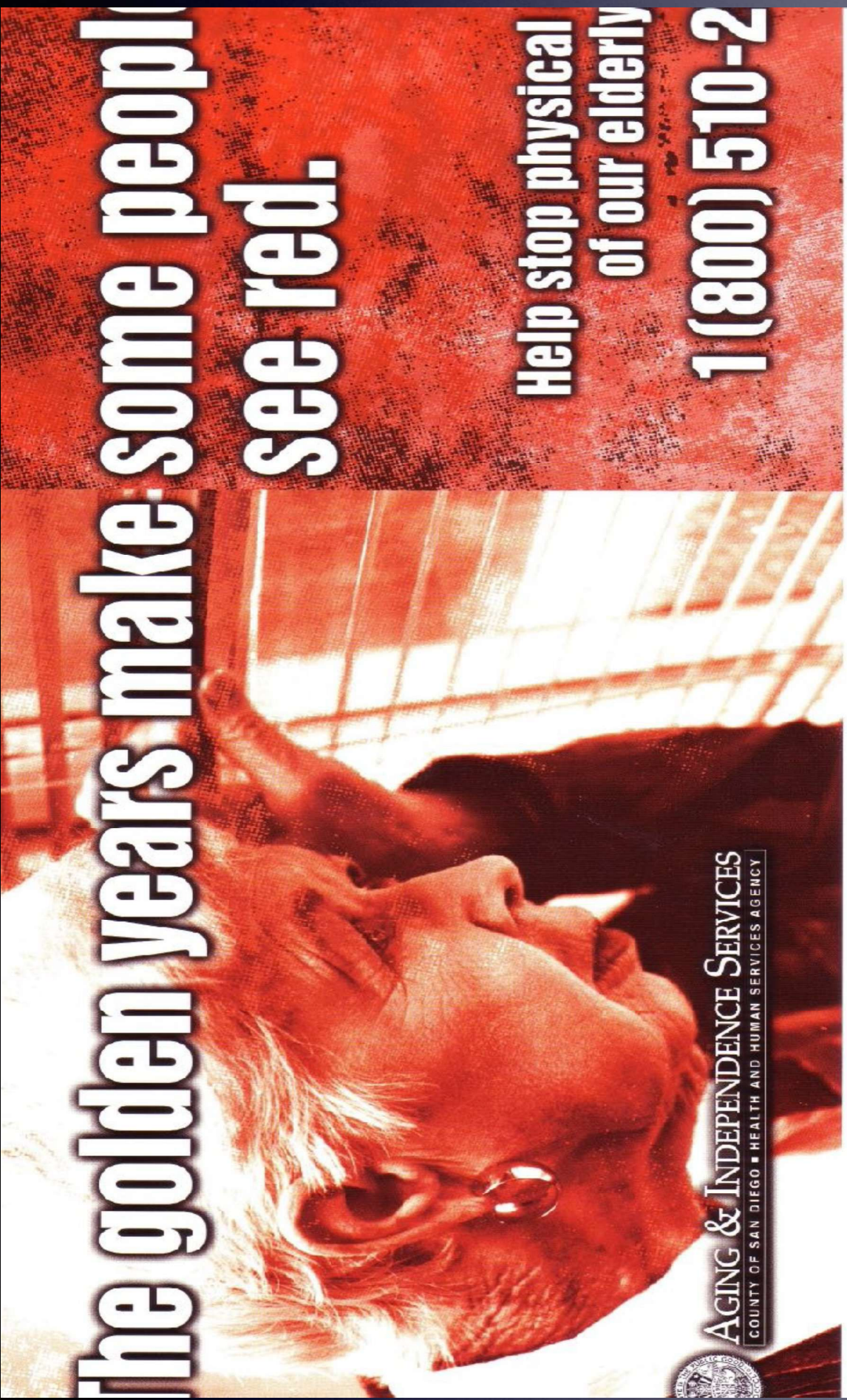


Silence isn't golden.

Help stop elder abuse.

1(800) 510-2020

& INDEPENDENCE SERVICES
SAN DIEGO • HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



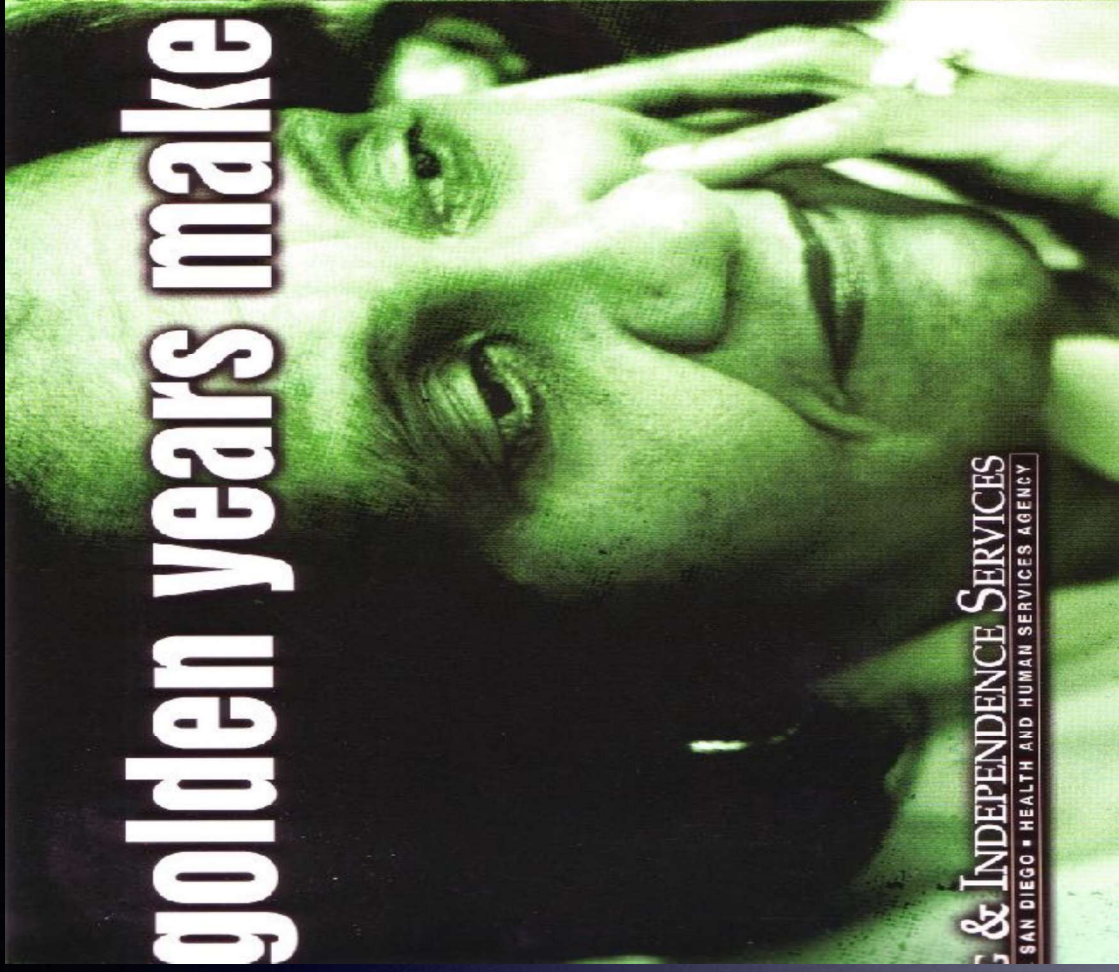
**The golden years make some people
see red.**

**Help stop physical
abuse of our elderly**

1 (800) 510-2

AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO ■ HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY





**golden years make some people
green with envy**

**Help stop financial abuse
of our elderly.**

1(800) 510-2020

AGE & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES
SAN DIEGO • HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



**Golden years make some
people blue.**

**Elder neglect is abuse.
Help stop it.**


1 (800) 510-2020


& INDEPENDENCE SERVICES
SAN DIEGO ■ HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

And now SW Virginia has
taken that same model
some 25 years later...

Silence isn't golden.

Help stop elder abuse.
1(888) 832-3858

 **Virginia Law Foundation**

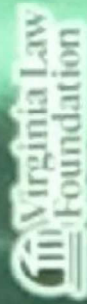
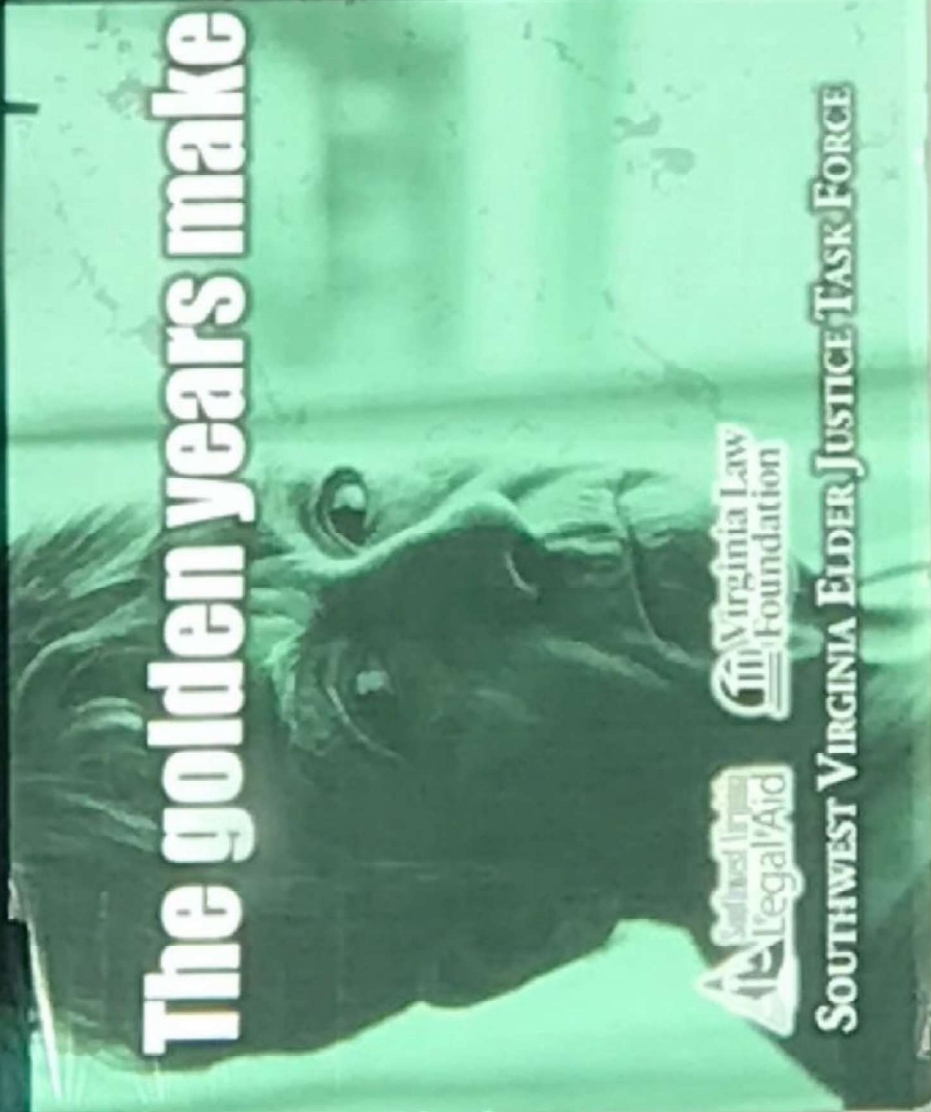
 **SOUTH WEST VIRGINIA ELDER JUSTICE TASK FORCE**

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CAVATIA

The golden years make

**some people
green with envy.**



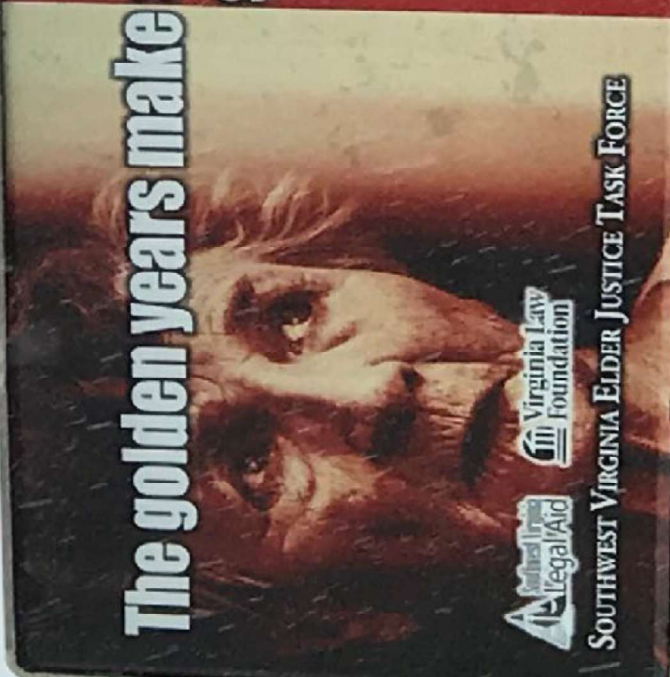
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**Help stop financial abuse
of our elderly.**

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LAMAR

The golden years make some people see red.



SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA ELDER JUSTICE TASK FORCE

**Help stop physical abuse
of our elderly.**

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The golden years make



**some
people blue.**

Elder neglect is abuse.

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SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA ELDER JUSTICE TASK FORCE

CLARK COUNTY 43125

Here in Tennessee...

Adult Protective Services



Need to Report Suspected Adult Abuse?

No login is required to submit a report online at the [One DHS Customer Portal](#). Each report is assigned a reference number that can be used to return and track the report. Confidentiality remains an APS priority. Anyone can help stop abuse in Tennessee and everyone has the option to share contact information or choose to be anonymous when submitting a report.

The APS Hotline at 1-888-APS-TENN (+1-888-277-8366) is also available, 24/7 and Tennesseans should call 911 in cases of emergency.

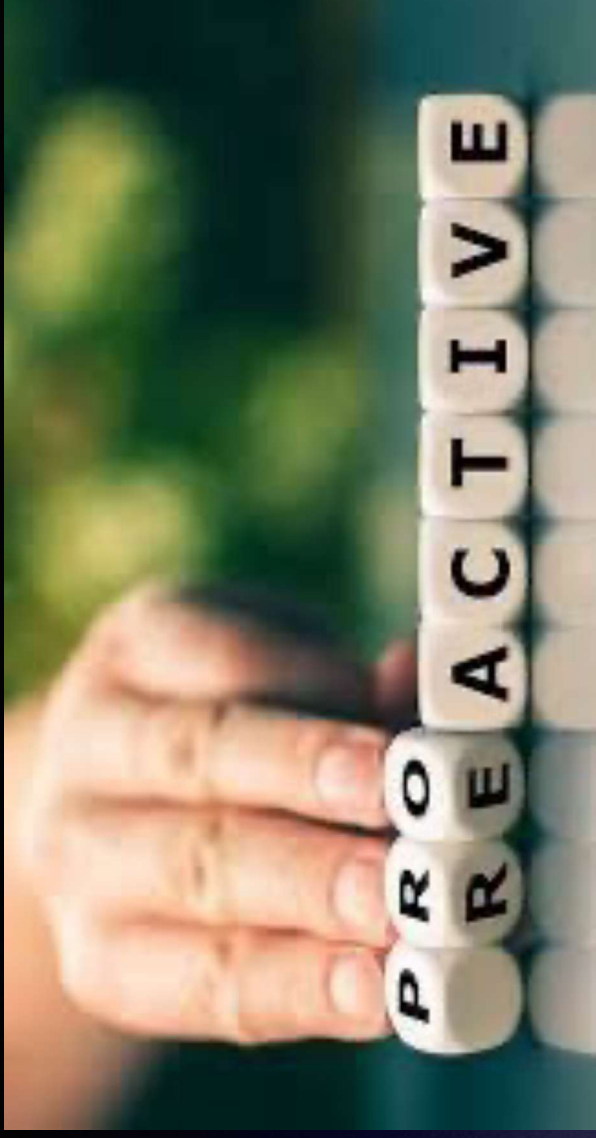
888 - 277 - 8366

APS are still the often
“overlooked” agency -
compared to CPS

We need to give APS
greater public visibility...

For the first 7 months I did
not prosecute any elder
abuse case; instead I went
around our county talking
with fellow professionals....

What did I learn?



The importance of
proactive vs reactive...

Out of the office & into
the community



And meeting with law
enforcement.....

**Discovering
misconceptions that can
often hinder or prevent
successful investigations**

Myth #1

- Elderly people make terrible witnesses

Most common answer...
forgetfulness

AVOID STEREOTYPING OF SENIORS

- Forgetful
- Senile
- Longwinded
- Grumpy
- Disabled
- Fragile



Myth # 2

- If elderly victim refuses to provide information, there is nothing that can be done

- We can still build a case by talking to other key witnesses
- Start on the outside and work your way to the middle
- Let the DA figure out a way to break through victim's wall of silence

LESSONS LEARNED FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Self-determination is not the answer

“Victim declines
prosecution”

And in a Rhode Island
newspaper article..

Elder-abuse victims are often reluctant to press charges

By Jack Brook, Rebecca Ellis and Katrina Northrop / Special to The Journal

Posted Aug 24, 2018 at 8:52 PM

Updated Aug 28, 2018 at 5:53 PM

Victims' fear of reprisals, dependence on their abusers for their daily care, and reluctance to send a loved one to prison make elder-abuse crimes notoriously difficult to prosecute, authorities say.

Why self-determination is a problem

- If not punished, the perp WILL abuse again
- We CAN convict even without the assistance of the victim
- Abuse is a crime against NOT JUST the abused

Profile of the physical abuser:

- Son in his late 30's to late 50's
- Living at home with Mom
- Divorced/ returns or single and unmotivated or just out of jail
- Lazy and unemployed
- Drugs, alcohol or gambling
- Feeds habit off Mom
- Sometimes history of mental illness

Why I am SO determined about the
fact that victims should not get to
“press charges” or choose which cases
get filed.....