

My fieldwork experience with

**THE LAKE COUNTY
STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

LGL251 – Fieldwork Presentation

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State's Attorney's Office

LAKE COUNTY, IL

“We are dedicated to seeking justice with integrity by vigorously and ethically prosecuting criminal acts; acting with empathy and compassion for the victims of crime while observing unwavering respect for the rights of the accused; protecting the people of Lake County by working with our criminal justice partners to make our communities safer and fairer; and providing exceptional and professional legal representation to Lake County and its elected and appointed officials, thereby promoting responsible and trustworthy government.”

Source: <https://www.lcsao.org/27/About-Us>



Eric Rinehart
Lake County State's Attorney

Administrative Services
Division

Executive Division

Specialized Victims Unit

Child Support Division

Civil Trial Division

Financial Crimes Division ▶

Domestic Violence
Division

Probation Trial Division

Probation Review

Juvenile Justice Division

Misdemeanor/Traffic
Division

Rehabilitative Services
Division

Special Investigations
Division

Victim Services Division

Violent Crimes Unit



The Lake County State's Attorney's Office (LCSAO) is comprised of:

- Over 15 Divisions
- More than 140 employees

I completed my fieldwork assignment in Financial Crimes

- This previously fell under the Cyber/White Collar Crimes Division
- Newly designated as its own unit with recently approved additional funding from Lake County FY2024 Budget ([11/20/2023 Press Release](#))
- Chief of the Financial Crimes unit, Assistant State's Attorney Kevin Berrill, was my direct supervisor for my fieldwork assignment



Financial Crime

Some examples:

- Fraud (check, credit card, loan, insurance, financial institution, payment)
- Theft
- Scams
- Embezzlement
- Money laundering

In the News...

LOCAL NEWS



Lake Forest man accused of stealing \$500K from victims in Lake County found guilty in one of several cases

 by Sam Borcia Published February 3, 2023 4:17 PM

Click on these headlines to read about a recent financial crimes case prosecuted by my fieldwork supervisor!

Serial Scam Artist Ricky Dugo Sentenced To 8 Years In Plea Deal

Accused of stealing nearly \$1 million from four victims, Ricky Dugo pleaded guilty Friday to resolve all remaining charges against him.

 Jonah Meadows, Patch Staff 

Posted Fri, Mar 24, 2023 at 4:40 pm CT | Updated Wed, Aug 23, 2023 at 2:35 pm CT

Assignment #1

Reviewed over 150 pages of evidence pertaining to a case where an employee of a company is accused of defrauding customers

- Police reports
- Witness statements
- Bank records
- Emails and text messages

Created a spreadsheet to summarize the following for each of many victims

- Amount of net financial loss
- Evidence we currently have
- My opinion regarding what evidence we still need to obtain

Assignment #2

Reviewed evidence of multi-faceted case involving potential fraud by a business owner

- Police reports
- Witness statements
- Reports/tickets/violations from other governing authorities
- Invoices
- Bank records
- Emails and text messages
- Allegedly forged documents

Summarized the following for each of many victims

- Amount of net financial loss
- Evidence we currently have
- Evaluation of the strength of case



What I learned

- The detectives with the local police departments or the Lake County Sheriffs do the majority of the work gathering evidence, which they then provide to the SAO.
- The prosecutors must decide which cases to pursue based on the severity of the crimes and the strength of the evidence. All crimes cannot be pursued.
- Most cases end in a plea agreement. The SAO seeks fair and just punishment for a crime, not necessarily the most severe penalty.
- A more serious offense called “continuing financial crimes enterprise” is when a person knowingly, within an 18-month period, commits 3 or more separate offenses as defined by [\(720 ILCS 5/17-10.6\)](#)
- The class of felony depends upon the amount of money related to the crime (i.e. the higher the \$ amount, the higher the felony class, the higher the sentence range, the higher the fine, and the more strict the terms of probation).



IN SUMMARY



I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with the Lake County SAO office in the Financial Crimes unit. I learned a great deal and forged some great relationships!

