

Seeing Justice Served – Investigating and Prosecuting Crimes in Orinda

By Laurie Snyder

You call the Orinda Police to report a stranger peering through the back windows of a neighbor's home. The black and whites roll, police spot the dastardly dude and hustle him out from the back yard and into a waiting cruiser. So, what happens next?

"The criminal investigation and subsequent prosecution process requires thorough documentation from investigators, officers and citizens," explains Orinda police chief Mark Nagel. Once compiled, evidence from the crime scene is presented to the Contra Costa County Office of the District Attorney, along with reports from each police officer involved, fingerprints, crime scene measurements, photographs, line-ups of suspects, and crime victim and suspect statements. Second interviews may also be conducted if a crime lab report or other additional evidence comes in.

Meanwhile, the suspect remains in jail – up to 72 hours before the county must release him. Or, if police can pull documentation together quickly, his heels may be cooling until arraignment.

Sometimes, though, the district attorney may rule that a suspect must be released because hold time has run out and more investigation is needed. A suspect may certainly be rearrested once the sleuthing is done, but during that time, the person is free to continue committing crimes if so inclined. That's why it's important for burglary victims, for example, to hop to it and quickly provide investigators with a list of items stolen. "Police often aren't given a list for days, weeks or months, and that delay can hamper the investigation," potentially

leading to the victimization of other Orindans.

That is why it is also vital for anyone who may have witnessed a potential crime to call police or email right away via: orindatip@cityoforinda.org. "We've already had a few people submit," says Nagel. One resident sent a cell phone picture with the license plate of a suspicious car. Another Orindan, who has a camera mounted on the dashboard of his car, turned in video of a white Ford Explorer that just happened to show the same vehicle that was being scrutinized in relation to a Lafayette home burglary.

"When you get the little hairs on

the back of your neck standing up," says Nagel, don't just suppress that inner voice. Call the police and let the dispatcher make the decision whether or not an officer needs to respond.

So, we're going to court, right?

Not necessarily. Even if OPD does its typically thorough job, a plea deal may be reached, charges may be reduced – or the district attorney may elect not to prosecute. "Contra Costa County receives thousands of cases a year," observes Nagel, "and there aren't enough prosecutors, judges and courtrooms to try every case in front of a jury."

And there also aren't enough jail cells to hold everyone – a situation that has only worsened since Governor Jerry Brown signed a law reducing the state's prison population. "AB 109 shifts the responsibility from incarcerating many low risk inmates from the state to county jails," explains Nagel. Law enforcement professionals statewide have observed that this may be causing county systems to release criminals early in order to release their own now-overcrowded facilities, and are also looking at whether AB109's implementation may be related to the recent spike in burglaries and auto thefts.

Despite this frustrating situation, though, Nagel wants residents to remain vigilant and engaged. "The bad guys, they don't want to be seen. Once they realize they've been spotted and can be identified, most will move on," says Nagel. If they don't, the sooner OPD arrives on scene, the better the chance they'll have enough evidence to bring the crooks to justice.

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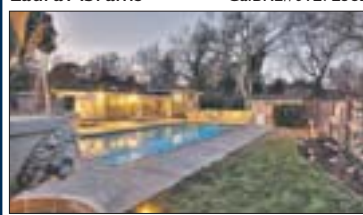
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MORAGA \$1,288,000
3/2. Lovely one story contemporary with great views. Lrg rear patio, great for entertaining.

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ALAMO \$1,695,000
5/4. Bright, spacious estate home in gated community. Stunning backyard with pool and spa.

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ORINDA \$2,175,900
4+/3. New construction. Gorgeous views, close to town. More pics/info at OrindaOaks.com.

Glenn & Kellie Beaubelle CalBRE#00678426

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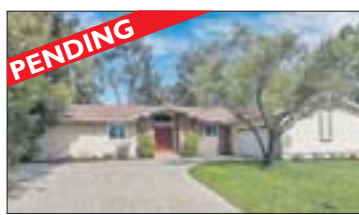
ORINDA \$6,300,000
4/4.2. Rare opportunity to buy newer estate plus two adjacent lots. Gated, wine cellar, gorgeous grounds w/pool & more!

Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247



ORINDA \$1,749,000
4/3.5. Orinda Downs Luxury through and through. Private deck w/hot tub off Mstr.

Vlatka Bathgate CalBRE#01390784



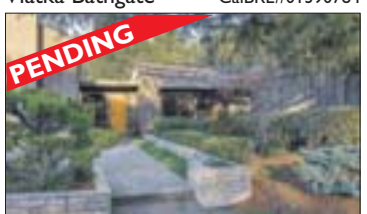
LAFAYETTE \$989,000
4/2.5. Contemporary Single Story. Extraordinary backyard. Open floor plan with upgrades throughout.

Andi Brown CalBRE#01738605



ORINDA \$2,100,000
4/3. New construction. Gorgeous views, close to town. More pics/info at OrindaOaks.com.

Glenn & Kellie Beaubelle CalBRE#00678426



ORINDA \$1,950,000
4/3. Amazing 1+ ac, rarely available. Custom built located on a pvt cul de sac in the heart of Sleepy Hollow.

Shellie Kirby CalBRE#01251227



LAFAYETTE \$1,220,000
4/2. Adorable rancher at the end of a cul-de-sac close to town. Open layout, lawn, patios & pool!

Emily Estrada CalBRE# 01942438



ORINDA \$2,095,000
4/4. New construction! Gorgeous view, nice lg yard, quality materials. Cul-de-sac loc. www.orindaoaks.com

Glenn & Kellie Beaubelle CalBRE#00678426



LAFAYETTE \$998,000
4/2. Gracious home offering a tranquil setting w/lush gardens. Many upgrades throughout.

Kathy McCann CalBRE#00946092



LAFAYETTE \$1,450,000
4/3. Sophisticated contemporary custom home situated on private 1.22 acre lot w/breathtaking views!

Glenn & Kellie Beaubelle CalBRE#00678426



ORINDA \$1,599,000
4/3.5. Gorgeous home in the heart of Glorietta. Spacious with a large yard & pool. Perfect for entertainers.

Rick & Nancy Booth CalBRE#01341390/01388020



ORINDA \$2,595,000
5/3. Gorgeous European inspired villa. Dramatic 2 sty entry. Infinity pool, cabana & wine cellar.

Glenn & Kellie Beaubelle CalBRE#00678426



MORAGA \$2,750,000
4+/4. Executive home, 4837 sqft, 1.54 acre private lot, gourmet kitchen, guest house, wine cellar.

Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247



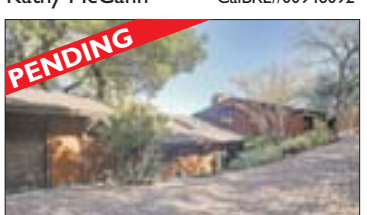
ORINDA \$2,549,000
5/4.5. Fabulous Traditional Orinda Home set on 2.5 Acres and Private Cul De Sac.

Finola Fellner CalBRE#01428834



MORAGA \$899,000
5/3. Great location on cul-de-sac close to K-8 Moraga schools, .44 acre lot w/pool.

Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247



LAFAYETTE \$1,150,000
3/3. Spectacular Mid-Century Modern in Zen-like Setting. Designed for Enjoyment & Relaxation!

Soraya Golesorkhi CalBRE# 01771736



ALAMO \$4,900,000
5/4.3. Gated custom home on Private Knoll with unparalleled outstanding views and features!

McCann/O'Donnell CalBRE#00946092/01916567



MORAGA \$1,295,000
4/2.5. Great Sanders Ranch Home! 2946 sqft in tranquil setting, updated kitchen and baths, spacious deck w/ hot tub.

Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247

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