



COUNTY

MANAGEMENT & RISK

CONFERENCE

APRIL 4-6, 2018 | GALVESTON

RESOURCES AND SOLUTIONS FOR COUNTIES



COURTROOM SAFETY AND SECURITY

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OBJECTIVES

What are we here to learn?

- Why Courthouse Security is so important
- How can we better secure our Courthouses
- Making each of us aware of threats and what to do when the threat becomes a reality



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL

It won't happen here!!

- This only happens in the big cities!!
- This is small town America, everybody knows everybody.
- We don't need to scare everybody with all of this security.
- It just cost too much money.



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WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET



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Incidents of Courthouse Violence in Texas

- *Total Incident Reports for FY 2014*
- Between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014, **132 incident reports** were submitted to OCA.
- This corresponds to an **average of 11 incidents per month**. In comparison, 159 incidents were reported during the previous fiscal year.
- *Incidents Reported by Court Type*
- Of the 132 incident reports submitted, 32 percent were submitted by **district courts** (42 incidents), 10 percent by **county-level courts** (13 incidents), 4 percent by **justice courts** (5 incidents), 33 percent by **municipal courts** (43 incidents), and 22 percent by a **courthouse serving multiple court types** (29 incidents).



Incidents of Courthouse Violence in Texas

- *Total Incident Reports for FY 2013*
- Between September 1, 2012 and August 31, 2013, **159 incident reports** were submitted to OCA.
- This corresponds to an **average of 13 incidents per month**. In comparison, 130 incidents were reported during the previous fiscal year.
- *Incidents Reported by Court Type*
- Of the 159 incident reports submitted, 40 percent were submitted by **district courts** (63 incidents), 15 percent by **county-level courts** (24 incidents), two percent by **justice courts** (three incidents), 26 percent by **municipal courts** (42 incidents), and 17 percent by a **courthouse serving multiple court types** (27 incidents).



Incidents of Courthouse Violence in Texas

- *Total Incident Reports for FY 2012*
- Between September 1, 2011 and August 31, 2012, **130 incident reports** were submitted to OCA.
- This corresponds to an **average of 11 incidents per month**. In comparison, 184 incidents were reported during the previous fiscal year.
- **Incidents Reported by Court Type**
- Of the 130 incident reports submitted, 43 percent were submitted by **district courts** (56 incidents), 15 percent by **county-level courts** (20 incidents), two percent by **justice courts** (2 incidents), 25 percent by **municipal courts** (33 incidents), and 15 percent by **courthouses serving multiple court types** (19 incidents).



High Risk Situations

- Divorce cases
- Domestic Violence cases
- Child custody hearings
- Murder cases
- Probation Revocation cases
- Sentencing Hearings (Family Impact Statements)
- There is no formula for when violence will occur, it can happen at any time and for any reason.

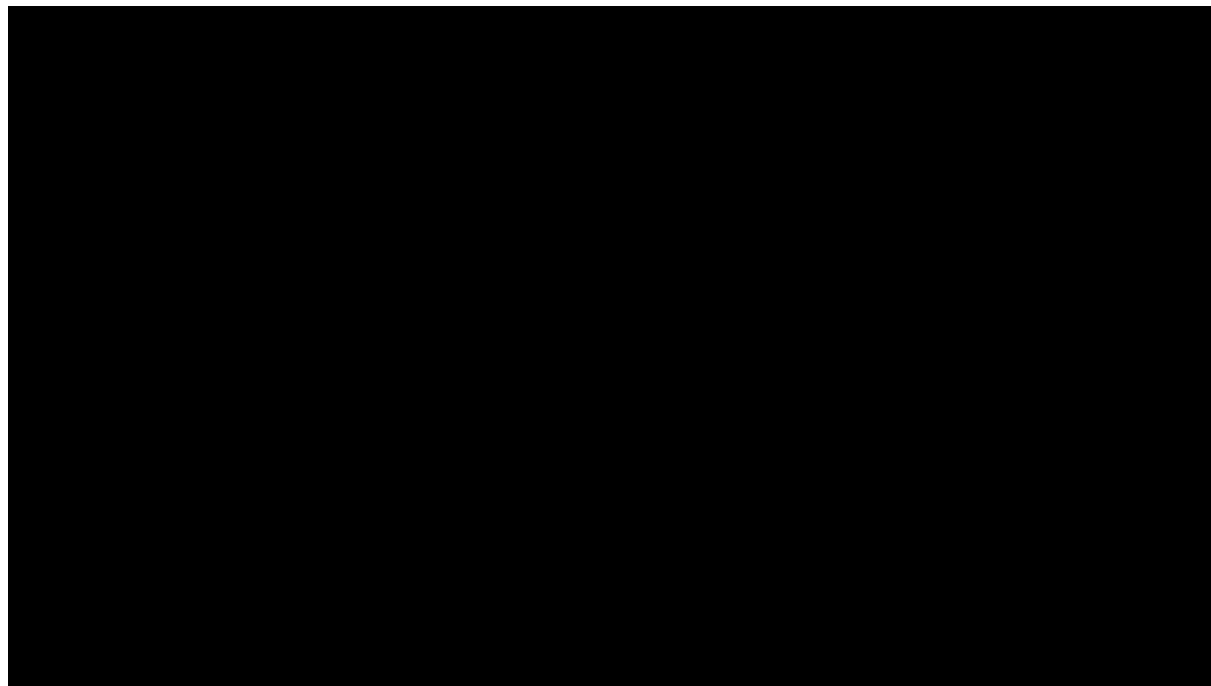


Warning Signs to Look For

- Baggy or loose clothing
- Very nervous
- Sweating when it is cold outside
- Blood Shot Eyes
- Can not sit still
- Will not make eye contact



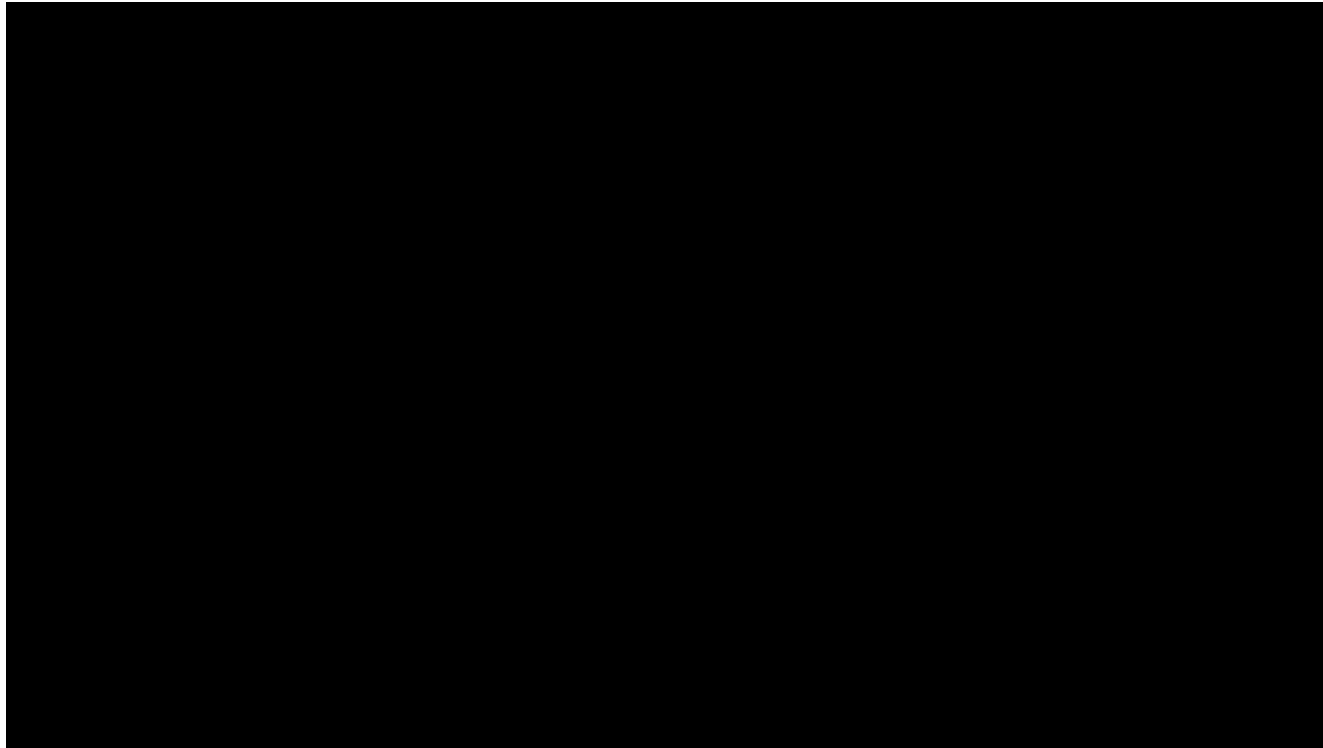
Las Vegas Courthouse Shooting



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Van Buren, Arkansas



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Tyler, Texas - 2005



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Kaufman County, Texas - 2013



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Kaufman County, Texas

- Chief Prosecutor gunned down outside of the courthouse
- District Attorney and his wife murdered at their home three months later
- All three murders related to the prosecution of a former Justice of the Peace for theft



PHYSICAL SECURITY

Physical Security Plan

- Perimeter Lighting (Exterior)
- Perimeter Doors – Control access to courthouse
- Windows
- Interior Doors – Mag locks
- Interior Lighting (Halls) – Good lighting is essential
- Interior Lighting (Rooms) – Good lighting is essential
- Alarms (Duress and Intrusion)
- Communications
- Evacuation Plan
- Fire Detection (Smoke Detectors)
- Fire Protection (Hydrants, Hoses and Extinguishers)
- Parking Lots
- Auxiliary Power



Weapons Detection

- Safety in all court facilities is essential. Weapons need to be detected long before they can be used to do harm. Contraband detection equipment that includes screening with walk-through metal detectors, augmented by hand-held detection, virtually eliminates the possibility of weapons entering a court.



Scanners and Pass Through



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Steps to Take to Avoid Violence

- Armed security in the courtroom at all times
- Panic or duress alarms installed
- Video monitoring in the courtroom (monitored by the sheriff's office)
- Control measures for high risk inmates (Stun-Cuff)



Stun-Cuff (Magnum)

The Stun-Cuff Magnum is 80,000 Volts and will immediately disable the inmate



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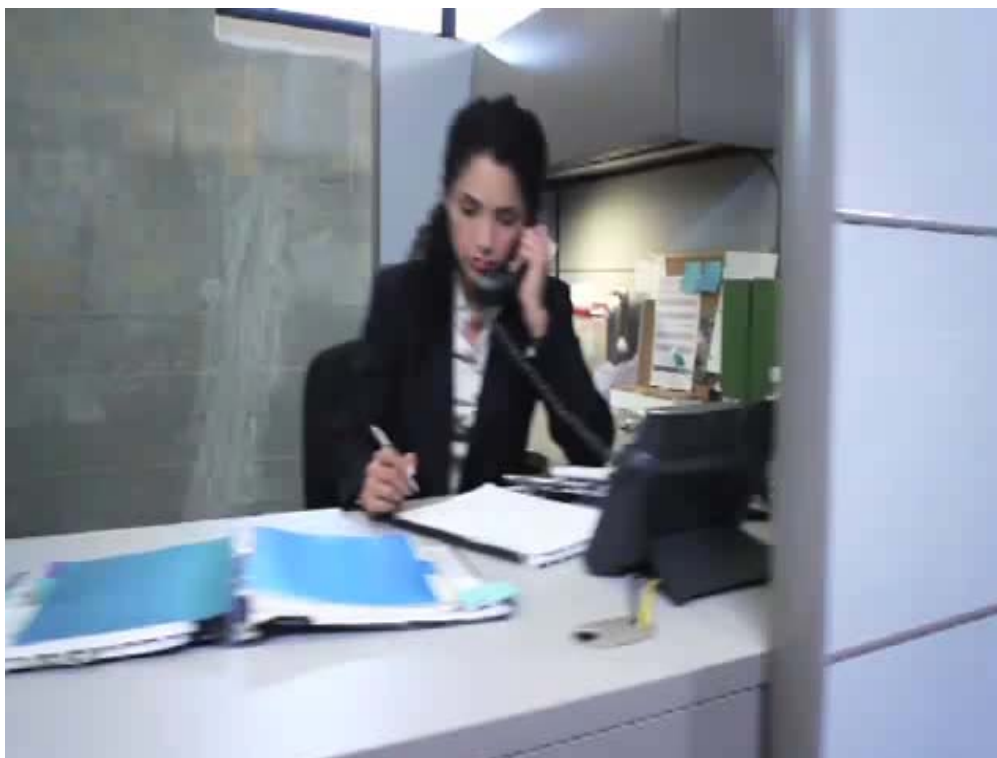
RUN, HIDE, FIGHT

- These may be the three most important actions you can take in the event of an incident of courthouse violence.



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Judge Julie Kocurek Judicial and Courthouse Security Act of 2017 (aka SB42)



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Courts Under Fire



Judge Julie Kocurek

- Travis County District Judge
- Former prosecutor
- Ambushed in her driveway returning home from a football game with her family
- 3 men indicted in conspiracy (one a former defendant in her court)
- Law enforcement aware of death threat – did not notify her



State's Response

OCA Survey to courts

- 2/3 of respondents did not know of a court security plan for their court
- More than 30% knew of a security incident in the previous year
- 2/3 reported no security training provided in their courthouse
- 2/3 unaware of existing statutory security incident reporting requirements



Recommendations from Supreme Court's Court Security Committee

1. Create position of Director of Security and Emergency Preparedness at the Office of Court Administration;
2. Establish local court security committees;
3. Require court security training of judges and court personnel;
4. Add \$5 filing fee for civil cases; and
5. Establish avenues to remove judges' personal information from public documents.



Required Reporting of Security Incidents

- Article 102.017 CCP amended
- Requires agency providing security for a court to report a security incident to OCA
- Must also notify presiding judge of the court (provide a copy of report)
- Report must be made within 3 days
- The report is confidential and exempt from disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code



COURT SECURITY COMMITTEE

- Amends **Section 74.092 of the Gov. Code**
- Local Administrative Judge must establish a court security committee
- Committee adopts security policies and procedures for courts served by the local Administrative District Judge (Presiding Judge)



COURT SECURITY COMMITTEE

Composition of Committee

- a) local administrative district judge or their designee (Chair);
- b) a representative of the Sheriff's Office;
- c) a representative of the county commissioners court;
- d) one judge of each type of court in the county (other than municipal court – they have their own committee);
- e) a representative of any CA, DA or CDA that serves in the applicable courts; and
- f) any other person the committee determines necessary to assist the committee.



COURT SECURITY COMMITTEE

- Committee may recommend to the county commissioners court the uses of resources and expenditures of money for courthouse security
- BUT may not direct the assignment of those resources or the expenditure of those funds



Civil Filing Fee

- Amends Ch. 51 of Gov. Code
- Creates Judicial and Court Personnel Training Fee
- \$5 fee collected on the filing of any civil action requiring a filing fee
- Fee to be deposited into the State's Judicial and Court Personnel Training Fund



Required Court Security Officer Training

- Adds Ch. 158 to Gov. Code
- A person may not serve as court security officer unless that person holds a court security certification approved by TCOLE
- Court security officer includes bailiffs and deputies
- Officer has 1 year to obtain certification from start date
- Currently employed officers have until Sept. 1, 2019



Required Court Security Officer Training

- Curriculum available through TECOLE
- Course 10999 (16 hours)
- Can be taught locally by:
 - Certified Court Security Officer who has completed 40 hour course;
 - academy training provider; or
 - contract training provider.



Office of Court Administration Security Division

- Creates new division within OCA
- Division to provide guidance to state court personnel on improving security for each court
- Must notify county registrars, DPS, Texas Ethics Commission and any other necessary state agency of the judges and judges' spouses whose personal information must be kept from public records



Judicial Privacy & Protection

- Amends Chs. 552 and 572 of Gov. Code
- Chs. 13 and 15 of the Election Code
- Ch. 11 of the Property Code
- Ch. 25 of Tax Code



Judicial Privacy & Protection

Includes:

- Current or former federal judge
- Current or former state judge
- Current or former district attorney
- Current or former county attorney (if jurisdiction includes criminal or CPS cases)



Judicial Privacy & Protection

Allows judges to opt to remove from public records for themselves and their spouses:

- home address
- DL number
- SSN number
- any other personal information



Conclusion

- We all need to be aware of the threats we face everyday on our job
- Do not be a victim
- Be prepared
- Ask Questions
- Know how to react



QUESTIONS?



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