



PRESENTER BIOS

Ufferman Files: A Conversation with Three of the Best Originally Presented on December 13, 2024



MICHAEL UFFERMAN received his Bachelor of Arts from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and received his Juris Doctorate from the Florida State University College of Law (serving on the law review and graduating magna cum laude). After he graduated from law school, Michael clerked for five years for Justice Major B. Harding at the Florida Supreme Court. Michael has been in private practice since 2002 and is a board-certified criminal appellate lawyer (2006-present).

Michael currently serves on The Florida Bar Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration Committee (vice chair) and The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section Executive Council. He previously served on The Florida Bar Criminal Law Certification Committee from 2015-2021 and as chair of the Committee from 2019-2020. Michael also previously served on The Florida Bar Appellate Court Rules Committee from 2007-2013 and as chair of the Committee from 2012-2013. Michael was on the board of directors of the Innocence Project of Florida from 2007-2014. Michael served as President of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (FACDL) from 2015-2016.

Michael is an adjunct professor teaching Criminal Procedure – Police at the Florida State University College of Law, Fall semester of 2024. Michael is the author of the Florida Criminal Practice and Procedure treatise, 2024 ed. (Vol. 22, Florida Practice Series). He received the Richard W. Ervin Equal Justice Award given by the Capital City Bar Presidents Council (2016). Michael has also received the Pro Bono Award from The Florida Bar Appellate Practice Section (2013); Inspirational Service Honor from Tallahassee Women Lawyers (2012); Gene Taylor Memorial Award given by the Tallahassee Chapter of FACDL (2010); the FACDL President’s Appreciation Award (2010); and the FACDL Extra Mile Award (2009 & 2012).

Michael and his family reside in Tallahassee, Florida.



BRIAN T. CAVANAGH retired in 2016 as Chief of the Homicide Trial Unit of the Broward State Attorney’s Office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He devoted 27 of his 38 years as an Assistant State Attorney prosecuting and supervising scores of homicide cases at all stages of their investigative development and court resolution, while himself engaging in the jury trials of over 100 first degree murder cases. As described by *South Florida Sun Sentinel* reporters upon his retirement: “*Veteran homicide prosecutor Brian Cavanagh ... pounded the law, the facts and the table with equal effectiveness in front of countless Broward juries over the last four decades... In court, Cavanagh is known for a soft-spoken demeanor that could melt away instantly, replaced by a passionate expression of moral outrage that would instill fear in defendants accused of the most hideous of murders.*”

Among these cases were the notorious Gus Boulis murder; the infamous “Homeless Beatings” case; and the horrific Donna Decker murder which further entailed attempted execution-style murders of three members of her family, including her husband, father-in-law, and 2½ -year-old son. The latter case

became the subject of a true crime book titled, *“Until Proven Innocent”* by Arthur Jay Harris, recounting Brian’s enlistment of his own father, Thomas J. Cavanagh Jr., a retired NYPD Detective Lieutenant of storied renown, to help exonerate a defendant he had begun strongly to suspect was wrongly accused. Ironically, Brian followed his dad’s legendary example: The elder Cavanagh’s quest for justice 30 years earlier as a Manhattan detective squad commander, in establishing the innocence of a young man named George Whitmore whom he believed had given a false confession to Brooklyn detectives about a double murder in New York City. This celebrated “Career Girls Murder” case spawned the pilot movie for the *“Kojak”* television series. More significantly, the United States Supreme Court cited the case in the landmark decision of *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) as a militating reason for the requirement that *Miranda* rights-warnings be given to suspects prior to custodial interrogation.

Brian was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. After a Jesuit education in high school at Brooklyn Prep, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York (1973), and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Miami School of Law (1976). As a student-athlete in college, Brian excelled as Captain of the Water Polo team, as well as on the Varsity Swimming and Baseball teams, for which he was awarded the Robert L. Bankert Memorial Scholarship. Brian worked summers as an ocean beach lifeguard for the Long Beach Patrol (Long Island, NY), saving innumerable lives – something he would continue to do metaphorically as a crusading prosecutor whose hallmark was the pursuit of justice and not merely convictions.

Before commencing his 38-year career as an Assistant State Attorney for the 17th Judicial Circuit of Florida in 1978, Brian served as a valued law clerk writing appellate briefs and legal memoranda for the estimable insurance defense attorney, William Hoeveler, of the Knight, Peters, Hoeveler law firm in Miami until Mr. Hoeveler’s appointment to the federal bench. Brian thereafter worked in New York City for criminal defense attorney Murray Cutler alongside his father, an attorney in addition to retired police detective. While assisting the defense of a Harlem Hospital surgeon accused of murdering his wife, Brian and his father uncovered crucial evidence that the then-infamous Dr. Carl Coppolino had been wrongly convicted of murdering his wife – by allegedly similar means – upon perjured testimony in Sarasota, Florida, ten years before. The resultant national headlines precipitated Dr. Coppolino’s release from prison by the Florida Parole Commission.

Brian has been featured in various televised documentaries detailing some of his celebrated murder trials, as well as an Earwolf podcast entitled *“Stranglers.”* The subject matter of the latter had involved joint efforts with his father in reviving investigation of another case of international infamy – the Boston Strangler. Their endeavors established that there was more than one “Boston Strangler” (beyond Albert DeSalvo); that the original Boston Strangler was a man name Charles Terry who hailed from Maine; and that he had been apprehended by Manhattan detectives under the command of his father, and later convicted, for a similarly sadistic strangling murder in New York City in 1963 after perpetrating the first half-dozen stranglings in Boston, as well as previously unsolved murders in Maine and New Orleans.

Since retiring from the State Attorney’s Office, Brian has worked “Of Counsel” with Gregg Rossman of Rossman Legal in Davie, Florida, and as a founding partner of 1-CLEAT (Comprehensive Law Enforcement Analytics & Training), conducting seminars and creating legal updates for law enforcement agencies on topics ranging from *Miranda* to Jurisdictional Authority to Search & Seizure, and addressing a myriad of constitutional issues related to criminal law enforcement. He has contributed much time as a guest lecturer over the course of decades for groups as diverse as the Florida Prosecuting Attorney’s Association (FPAA), the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (FACDL), Broward College, Nova Southeastern University College of Law, Boys and Girls Clubs of Broward County, and St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Brian has also been called into court periodically to testify in the interest of justice as an expert witness in criminal procedure and legal protocol.

Honors accorded Brian include: Honorary Membership with the Retired New York City Detectives Association – 1979; Distinguished Faculty Award from Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association (FPAA) – 2001; Prosecutor of the Year from Broward County Crime Commission – 2008; Special Recognition Award by Boys and Girls Clubs of Broward County – 2011; and “Irish Person of the Year” from Emerald Society of Fort Lauderdale – 2015.

Brian resides in Fort Lauderdale, FL and is the father of three adult children. His friends still call him “Coach” – a nickname derived from serving as a volunteer coach of more than two dozen youth league and travel sports teams in Coral Springs, FL during their formative years.



JUDGE JOHN A. FRUSCIANTE was elected to the Florida Circuit Court in 1990 where he served in every division over the next 20 years. He eventually became the Administrative Judge for Broward’s Juvenile and Dependency divisions. He has sat as a Senior Judge subsequent to his retirement.

Judge Fruscianté was a member of the Federal Magistrate Judge Merit Selection Panel, United States District Court Southern District of Florida, on a number of occasions between 2012 and 2021. Judge Fruscianté has been a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator since his retirement. He was also a Nova Southeastern University Law Center Adjunct Law Professor from 2005-2023.

Prior to his election to the bench, Judge Fruscianté served as a prosecutor in the Broward County State Attorney’s Office. He prosecuted cases as diverse as Sex Crimes and Child Abuse and White Collar Crime. He was chief prosecutor of Computer and Telecommunication Crime and chaired the first American Bar Association Committee on Computer Crime.

Judge Fruscianté received many awards over the years including the Judge William E. Gladstone Award which is given to a Florida Judge that has been outstanding in giving Judicial Leadership and Service to Florida’s Children; The Flite Center Albert and Beatriz Miniaci - Lifetime Heroes Award in 2021; And a Lifetime Legacy Award from Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Broward.

Judge Fruscianté’s first career was as a concert pianist. He received his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the Juilliard School of Music after graduating from Fort Lauderdale High School.



JEFF HARRIS has been Florida Board Certified in Criminal Trial Law since 1987, is past president of The Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and also past president of the Broward Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He is a former adjunct professor at Nova Southeastern Shepard Broad Law Center, a former prosecutor, frequent lecturer, long time faculty advisor at the Prosecutor/Public Defender Program at the University of Florida Levin College of Law and faculty advisor for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA).

Jeff Harris has been in private practice in Broward County since 1978 defending many persons in federal criminal matters and high-profile homicides, narcotic charges and white-collar cases. While the majority of his practice emphasizes felonies, Mr. Harris also has an extensive background in criminal appeals. He has been court qualified as an expert witness in criminal law by numerous judges. He is the recipient of the Broward County’s Harry Gulkin Award given annually to a criminal defense attorney recognizing his exceptional character, competency, credibility and honesty.

Mr. Harris has been consistently given the highest rating AV by Martindale-Hubbell the national rating service of attorneys. He also enjoys an AVVO rating 10/10 which is the highest rating provided based upon the attorney's qualifications, and has for many years received recognition by the Florida Super Lawyers as one of the best criminal defense attorneys.

Mr. Harris is presently serving on the Florida Bar Executive Council of the Criminal Law Section, and serves on the Florida Bar Code and Rules of Evidence Committee. He has served on the Florida Bar Criminal Board Certification Committee and was twice Chair of a Florida Bar Grievance Committee.