



# KERN COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Lauren Skidmore

**FROM:** Ken Russell  
Assistant District Attorney  
Kern County District Attorney's Office

**DATE:** September 16, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Public comments on pending criminal cases

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Ms. Skidmore,

I have become aware that you have made public comments about criminal cases that are pending in Kern County Superior Court (see attached). These are serious cases, and while we share your outrage involving the conduct, commenting on these cases while they are still pending in court can cause serious issues with our ability to prosecute the case. Prosecutors and the people associated with prosecuting cases (i.e. investigators and staff), have very high ethical standards regarding pre-trial statements, and I'm concerned that your comments about pending criminal cases could be attributed to the assigned prosecutor or the Kern County District Attorney's Office. Such a finding could result in a change of venue, the recusal of our office, or dismissal of the case.

For the reasons that follow, the Kern County District Attorney's office is asking that you refrain from public comments about pending cases until the case is concluded and sentencing is complete. I am providing you with written notice to comply with our ethical obligations.

The prohibition against extrajudicial statements by lawyers is rooted in the broader ethical framework governing the conduct of lawyers in California. The California Rules of Professional Conduct are intended to ensure the integrity of the legal system and promote confidence in the outcome. In addition to the general rules that apply to all practitioners, prosecutors are obligated to guarantee that the defendant is accorded procedural justice, and to ensure that the case is not litigated in the court of public opinion.

The California Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 3.6(a) states in relevant part that, "[a] lawyer ... shall not make an extrajudicial statement that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know will (i) be disseminated by means of public communication and (ii) have a substantial likelihood of materially prejudicing an adjudicative proceeding in the matter." The American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 3.6 is in agreement and contains very similar language.

In addition to the general rules regarding public statements, there are specific limitations that apply to prosecutors, which are outlined in California Rule 3.8(e), which is again very similar to the ABA Rule 3.8(f). [The prosecutor shall] ... exercise reasonable care to prevent persons under the supervision or direction of the prosecutor, *including... persons assisting or associated with the prosecuting in a criminal case* from making an extrajudicial statement that the prosecutor would be prohibited under rule 3.6.

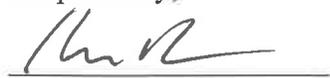
The combination of those rules underscores the heightened duty of fairness and ethical conduct expected of prosecutors, who not only must refrain from making inflammatory extra judicial statements themselves *but are also required to control the conduct of the persons assisting or associated with prosecuting the case.*

In addition to the California and ABA rules, the Kern County District Attorney's Office policy is to not discuss pending cases, except in compliance with our ethical rules. Our attorneys and staff are instructed to avoid discussing the merits the case while it's pending.

While you are not an employee of the Kern County District Attorney's Office, you are often present associating with the prosecutor, our victim-advocates, the victims, and officers. Even if such a motion has no merit, it would be a simple matter for a defense attorney to argue that you are a person *assisting or associated with prosecuting a criminal case*, and thus your statements may be attributed to the prosecution team for purposes of Rule 3.8(e). Those accusations would result in time lost in unnecessary, and entirely preventable, litigation. That lost time could be used more productively somewhere else.

We have always appreciated your commitment to supporting and advocating on behalf of all victims, the Kern County District Attorney's Office asks that you to refrain from commenting on cases that are still pending in our courts.

Respectfully,



Ken Russell  
Assistant District Attorney  
Kern County District Attorney's Office

# CSUB assistant coach arrested for trafficking woman across 3 states after anonymous tip

by BakersfieldNow Staff

Fri, September 5th 2025 at 11:33 AM

Updated Fri, September 5th 2025 at 10:16 PM



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02:40



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The Kern County Sheriff's Office Inmate Information website said Kevin Sanford Mays was arrested. The California State University of Bakersfield, confirmed Mays is employed by the university and is currently on leave. PHOTO: CSUB



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BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (KBAK/KBFX) — A 32-year-old Bakersfield man was arrested after allegedly trafficking a woman across three states. The investigation comes from an anonymous tip. The man was also arrested for weapons and drug charges.

The Bakersfield Police Department said on August 3, 2025, Bakersfield Police Vice Detectives received an anonymous tip claiming a woman was being trafficked across California, Oregon, and Washington.

The person responsible was identified as 32-year-old Kevin Mays, according to police. Mays is a coach for the CSUB men's basketball team.

Police said at first, detectives weren't able to confirm a direct link between Mays and the victim. However, a police report from Washington State revealed the woman had been stopped while driving a rental car registered to Mays.

According to Bakersfield police, as the investigation continued, detectives found multiple online ads showing the victim being trafficked, and they were able to track her down in Sacramento. BPD reached out to the Sacramento Police Department's Human Trafficking Unit, who helped make contact with the victim.

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During that contact, she identified Mays as her trafficker, according to police.

She also had his rental car in her possession, and the hotel room she was found in was booked under his name.

Lauren Skidmore from The Open Door Network said, "The roadways are definitely an element that is used for human trafficking." She added, "We also know that not having to communicate via face-to-face makes access easier for perpetrators. It makes it easier for the trafficker to force somebody; the online platforms are just easier for perpetrators to navigate through and recruit at a faster and quicker pace."

Police said on the evening of September 4, 2025, Mays was taken into custody without incident after leaving a home in Bakersfield. Detectives served a search warrant on him, his vehicle, and his apartment.

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along with signs of drug sales activity, two unregistered handguns, and two short-barreled assault rifles.

Mays was booked into the Kern County Jail on several charges, including human trafficking, pimping and pandering, weapons violations, and drug offenses.

The investigation is still ongoing.

Skidmore emphasized the severe impact on victims, stating, "Human trafficking victims are amongst the most traumatized victims that we see. There are lifelong effects to being a victim of human trafficking; you know, trauma will show up throughout your body in many ways. These individuals have PTSD; they have mental and physical issues that will linger, and they have a lot of trust issues that then cause them to have issues with relationships moving forward."

Anyone with information related to this case is asked to call the Bakersfield Police Department at (661) 327-7111.

The Kern County Sheriff's Office Inmate Information website said Kevin Sanford Mays was arrested on Kroll Way.

The California State University of Bakersfield, confirmed Mays is employed by the university and is currently on leave.

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According to CSUB officials, Mays is an assistant coach for the CSUB men's basketball team. The website said Mays entered his sixth season with the CSU Bakersfield men's basketball coaching staff in Fall of 2024. Mays earned a bachelor's degree from CSUB in 2016.

**WEATHER ALERT**

Flood Watch: Frazier Mountain Communities, Grapevine, Indian Wells Valley, Kern River Valley, Mojave Desert, Mojave Desert Slopes, Piute Walker Basin, ...



## LOCAL NEWS

## Experts urge public to report suspected child abuse after death of 8-year-old Genesis Mata

by: [Jacob Clark](#)

Posted: Aug 6, 2025 / 07:03 PM PDT

Updated: Aug 6, 2025 / 07:25 PM PDT

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BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (KGET) — The death of Genesis Mata over the weekend sent such a shockwave through the community that advocates are renewing efforts to proactively identify — and stop — the [abuse or neglect](#) of children in Kern County.

“I think this is probably one of the worst cases — if not the worst case — that Bakersfield has seen,” CEO of The Open Door Network Lauren Skidmore said.

“This is the worst we’ve seen in recent years. There’s been other significant cases, but I think this type of torture is really unprecedented and I think this type of torture is just really unheard of, especially with parents inflicting the torture on their own child.”

[Genesis Mata investigation: Court documents indicate Ray Mata was already under investigation by CPS](#) >

Skidmore says the abuse of [Genesis Mata](#) goes further than traditional abuse.

“I will say, this is the worst case scenario. What happened to Genesis is the worst case scenario.”

Organizations like the Open Door Network work with mandated reporters — who are required to by law to report abuse — and childcare workers to prevent harm or neglect of children. Likewise with the Kern County Network for Children, or KCNC.

President Tom Corson says the signs of a child being abused can vary.

“Physical abuse is pretty obvious a lot of the time. There’s bruising, marking. A lot of it is behavior. If a kid all of a sudden becomes withdrawn, if a kid all of a sudden becomes depressed, or talk about self harm and those kinds of things, you’ve got to look for these cues.”

Corson says there’s never a circumstance too small. Anyone must and should report neglect or abuse if they believe it’s ongoing.

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“Child abuse is real. And we encourage people, that if you suspect abuse or neglect in any form or fashion — and I say suspect — you don’t have to have any evidence or anything, you make that phone call to child protective services hot line, or 911. It’s critical. We have to be actively involved in our kids’ lives,” he said.

Harm to a child can occur within seconds, and with little effort. Corson says what victims like Genesis deserve most of all is justice.

“I am as appalled as anyone else, and I’ve been in this business for 38 years. I really hope justice prevails in this case, and I can’t say how sad we are to see these kids and families go through this,” said Corson.

[More on the investigation into Genesis Mata’s death >](#)

Both organizations say to stay vigilant. and to never hesitate to report what you think may be harm.

You can call the Kern County Child Abuse Hotline at 661-631-6011 or the National Hotline at 1-800-540-4000 which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Support services for child abuse victims including counseling and emergency services are also available through The Open Door Network. You can contact The Open Door Network at 661-322-9199 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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