



**STEVEN LEWIS/SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE**

Michael Streed, an officer for Orange, gets praise from colleagues who say he's helped cases.

# Drawn to work

*Corona man is a police sketch artist  
and now an author*

BY MELANIE C. JOHNSON  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

**A** chiseled chin and cheekbones, thick mustache and piercing blue eyes shadowed by the bill of a baseball cap.

That is the face of evil to Michael Streed, an image he keeps tucked in the corner of his Day Planner as a constant reminder of a killer yet to be captured.

Streed, a 25-year officer for the city of Orange and a forensic artist, drew the sketch shortly after the April 4, 1997, kidnapping in Beaumont of 10-year-old Anthony Martinez, who was later killed.

The case is one of several he recounts in his recently published book "SketchCops: True Stories from Those Who Draw the Line Against Crime."

Anthony's abductor, soliciting the boy, his brother and a friend to purportedly help search for a missing cat, forced him into a white sedan and drove off. Anthony's body was found bound in duct tape April 19, 1997, about eight miles south of Joshua Tree



Michael Streed, of Corona, displays a page from his book about his experiences making composites of crime suspects.

## NEW BOOK

■ "Sketchcops" will be available in all major bookstores by the end of the month.

■ To order pre-release copies from the publisher, go to [www.publishamerica.com](http://www.publishamerica.com). For more information on Michael Streed, e-mail [sketchcops@aol.com](mailto:sketchcops@aol.com).

# SKETCHES

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## National Park.

Until his killer is found, Streed, 45, of Corona said he will carry the drawing both as a reminder of Anthony and of why he continues to sketch.

"It's summed up in that photo," he said. "That's my fuel. It's 'because of you, others are going to suffer by my pen.'"

Streed said he wrote his book not only to highlight the work of forensic artists, but also to show how everyone from the victims to the witnesses to the investigators play a part in solving crimes.

"Sometimes we add the missing link that helps solve a case," he said of sketch artists. "Sometimes it's bare-knuckles police work. No one person can take the credit."

## Work combines talents

The Orange native practically was destined to become a "sketchcop," a name he created for part police officer and part sketch artist. His late father, Wayne Streed, was Orange's chief of police, retiring in 1990.

Streed had an early interest in police work, but he also was the child who frequently got in trouble for drawing in class, he said.

He was working for the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department in the 1970s when he saw a composite on a television news broadcast and it clicked that he could combine both his loves.

He immediately inquired about classes, taking his first in 1979, and sought out mentors in the field.

Besides sketching, he also does age progressions and skeletal-remains reconstruction.

When Streed is not doing his patrol duties in Orange, he works for various law enforcement agencies, often sacrificing time with his wife, Mary, and now-adult sons Michael Jr. and Christopher. In 1998, he did a stint with the show "America's Most Wanted."

It is all about finding a balance between the desire to serve and the need to have outlets outside of the work such as family or hobbies, he said.

"If you can teeter on the line of passion and obsession and never fall too far on either side, you do really well," he said.

Fellow officers praised Streed for his dedication and willingness to help other agencies.

Chino Police Department Detective Matt Weinstein recalled a recent case where a man attempted to abduct an infant from a church. Streed came in on New Year's Day to meet with the victims and do a composite of the suspect, he said.

"He was acting as much as an investigator as an artist," Weinstein said. "He has the ability to get to the heart of the case and connect with the victims."

Detective Mike Holguin, who works in the Long Beach Police Department's sexual-assault unit, said when the department calls, Streed comes. That's important for sexual-assault cases, he said.

"A lot of times with these kinds of crimes, we need to have a composite like now, because time is of the essence," Holguin said.

## Sketching successes

It was Streed's sketch that helped lead to the arrest of Alejandro Avila, who is accused of killing Samantha Rynnion. Samantha, 5, was kidnapped in 2002 while sitting on a block wall with a friend outside her Stanton home.

Her body was found less than 24 hours later off the Ortega

Highway.

It was working on the Rynnion case that prompted Streed to write the book. Faced with the need to decompress after the emotionally draining case, he began to write.

The book was therapeutic, he said.

"After I did that sketch, there were high expectations," Streed said. "You're not afraid of doing it, but you wonder if lightning will strike twice. Will it be this good again?"

The officers, who often call on Streed to help solve their cases, say he more than meets their expectations.

"He has enabled me to solve cases that probably, without his assistance, wouldn't be solved," said Detective Randi Castillo with the Long Beach Police Department's sexual-assault unit. "His drawings are so lifelike."

Fellow Detective Craig Newland said the way he gets victims and witnesses to open up is Streed's strength.

"I like using Michael because he spends a lot of time with them," he said. "He is an experienced investigator, so he brings a lot more than just his art to the table."

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