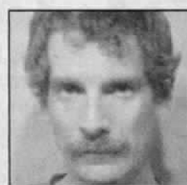
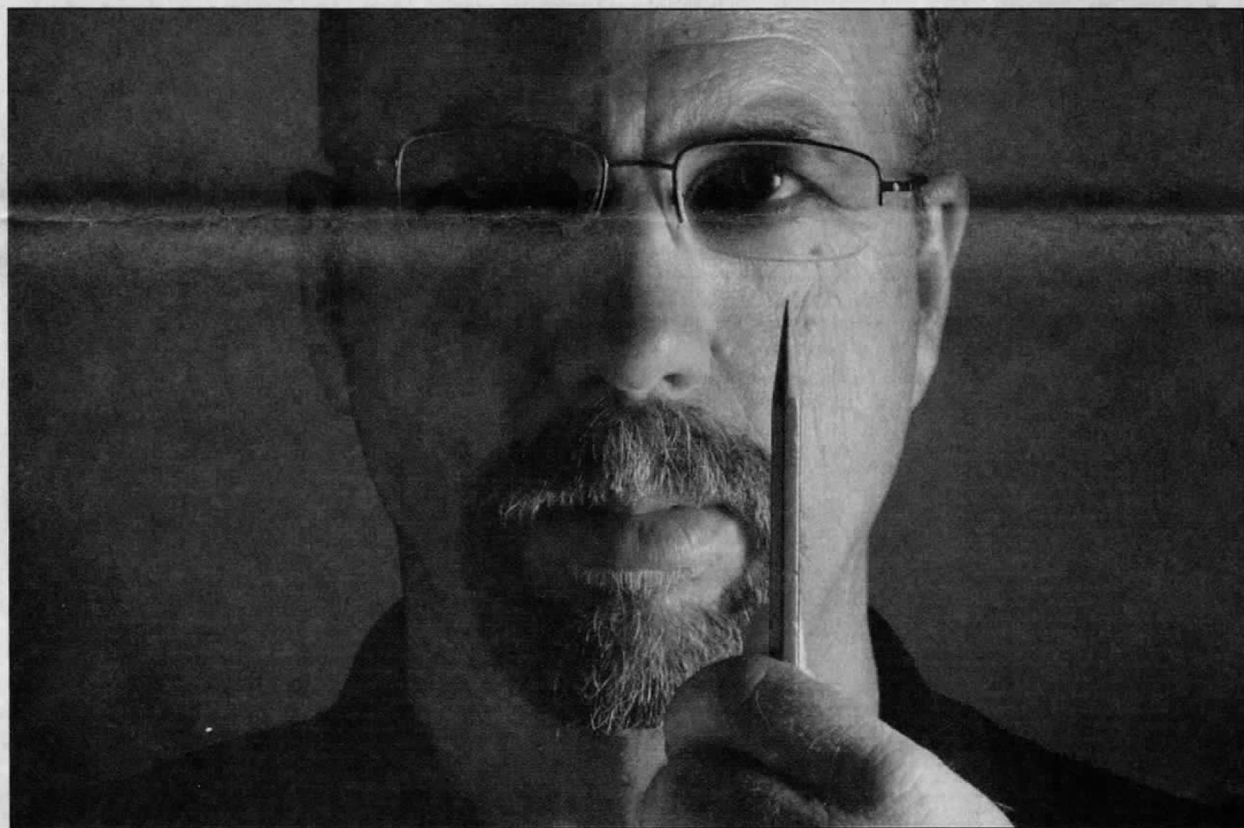


**ALEJANDRO
AVILA**
Convicted in 2005
for killing Samantha
Runnion



**JOSEPH
EDWARD DUNCAN**
Accused of slaying
Beaumont's
Anthony Martinez

Sketching out 'evil'



Jeff Malet/Staff Photographer

Michael Streed is a sketch artist for SketchCop Solutions, a company that provides facial imaging solutions for law enforcement. He recently provided a sketch to Montclair police for a rape case involving a 13-year-old suspect.

By Lori Consalvo
Staff Writer

Michael Streed has looked into the eyes of evil. He has been face to face with killers, rapists and child molesters.

He has witnessed a victim at the most vulnerable state and assisted in the arrest of some of the most heinous criminals.

The 50-year-old Corona resident is a composite sketch artist for police agen-

cies. He recently completed 31 years as a police officer.

In his 29-year drawing career, he has composed more than 1,000 images with the help of people's descriptions.

"Going out with law enforcement and helping to bring these people to justice is probably the most rewarding feeling in the world," Streed said.

Throughout the years, he has worked for law enforcement agencies in San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange counties, San Diego, Salt Lake City and

Baton Rouge, La., as a contract artist with his business, SketchCop Solutions.

He has also worked with the "America's Most Wanted" television program, taught sketching in Canada, and published a book of cases in 2004.

He started as a police cadet for the city of Orange in 1977 and took his first sketch class three years later. In July, he retired from the Orange Police Department as a patrol sergeant and started sketching full time.

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But it took him a while to become good at his sketching job.

"My first cases were just rough," he said. "When I started, I was more of a cartoonist."

After the first few drawings, Streed said he learned how valuable the sketches were to police officers. He trained with experts throughout the country learning about facial reconstruction and composite sketches.

"This is more than just chasing down drunk drivers," he said.

Streed has since been called to work for several high-profile child abduction cases in Southern California.

He drew the sketch for Alejandro Avila, the man sentenced to death for the crime of kidnapping, sexually molesting and killing 5-year-old Samantha Runnion in 2002 in Stanton.

He also composed the face of Joseph Edward Duncan, accused of sexually molesting and killing 10-year-old Beaumont resident Anthony Martinez in 1997 and recently convicted of killing and sexually assaulting members of an Idaho family in 2005.

For years, Streed said he carried around a black and white sketch of Duncan.

"If I really want to remind myself why I do this, I need to have an image of evil," he said.

For more information about the cases Streed worked on, go to www.SketchCop.com and click on "Captured."

In late July, he drew the composite sketch for a 13-year-old Montclair boy suspected of raping a 15-year-old girl. The youth was captured several days later.

"I will never, ever, ever get over what human beings can do to each other," he said. "Whether they're 13 or 30, I'll never get used to it."

Sgt. Bryon Kelly, with Montclair police, said sketch artists make it much easier to look for suspects.

"It's amazing to see how these people work," he said.

In addition to accurate ren-

derings, sketch artists must also know how to interrogate victims and decide if they are lying, Kelly said.

"We see the actual fear in the victim's eyes (when the victim sees), and we know that's the right person," he said.

On average, it takes about two hours to complete a rendering, Streed said. But first, he must establish a connection.

"You have to get that person to trust you ... to spill their guts about the most traumatic experience of their life," he said.

After a rapport is made and he has seen the victim relax, Streed goes to work asking a series of questions: "What was the lighting like?" "Was he in your face?" "Were there any distinguishing characteristics?"

He calls it exploiting their memory.

After a facial image has been established, he goes to a catalog of features where people can point out recognizable attributes.

"It gives (them) a feeling of empowerment, that (they) have a hand in bringing something to this case," he said. "I tell people, 'It's your eyes, my hands.'"

After a grueling couple of hours, Streed is done. When he turns the image around for the first time, there is a mixture of reactions.

Some people start to shake, cry, or even throw up.

But the image is complete, and police can begin a more thorough search for the suspect.

"We have to have a place to start," Kelly said.

For the most part, Streed's images are remarkably accurate. But there have been a few times when his sketches have not matched the face of an arrested suspect.

"I'm not afraid to acknowledge when my sketch had nothing to do with a case," he said. "All I care about is that it looked close enough to the suspect; that the drawing helped maintain focus and helped investigators steer (the) course."