

Why Traffic Safety Matters

How Municipal Courts Make a Difference



Ryan Kellus Turner

**General Counsel & Director of Education
Texas Municipal Courts Education Center**

Regional Program

AY 2009

V. 1.08.09



VEHICULAR HOMICIDE



VEHICULAR ASSAULT



RECKLESS DRIVING



SPEEDING

A cyan pyramid is centered on a dark grey, textured background. The pyramid is divided into three horizontal sections by two white lines. The word "SPEEDING" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters in the middle section.

“Preventing the Greater Harm”



Vehicular
Homicide

Vehicular Assault
Reckless Driving

Speeding

Powers in Numbers

Municipal courts constitute 34 percent of the Texas judicial system.

Municipal judges constitute 38 percent of the Texas judiciary.

Municipal judges constitute 44 percent of judges in Texas who are attorneys.

Powers in Numbers (cont.)

Municipal judges who are non attorneys constitute 41 percent of all non-attorney judges in the state.

In FY 2007, Texas municipal courts adjudicated 6,743,230 cases.

In FY 2007, Texas municipal courts conducted 1,225,561 trials.

Gate keeping Functions

Magistrate Duties

In FY 2007:

Number of Search Warrants issued = 5,368

Number of Arrest Warrants issued = 2,454,665

Magistrate's Warning Given = 274,567

Emergency Mental Commitments = 2,078

Orders of Emergency Protection = 8,847

Gate keeping Functions

Part I of 2: Children in the Courtroom

True or False: For the last decade, juvenile courts have adjudicated the vast majority of children accused of criminal conduct.

FALSE

Texas Juvenile Law Continuum

163,390

51,602

1,413

231

**Class C
Misdemeanor**

**Delinquent
Conduct**

CINS

Cert. Felony

EXCLUDING:

Juvenile Traffic - 154,050 Cases

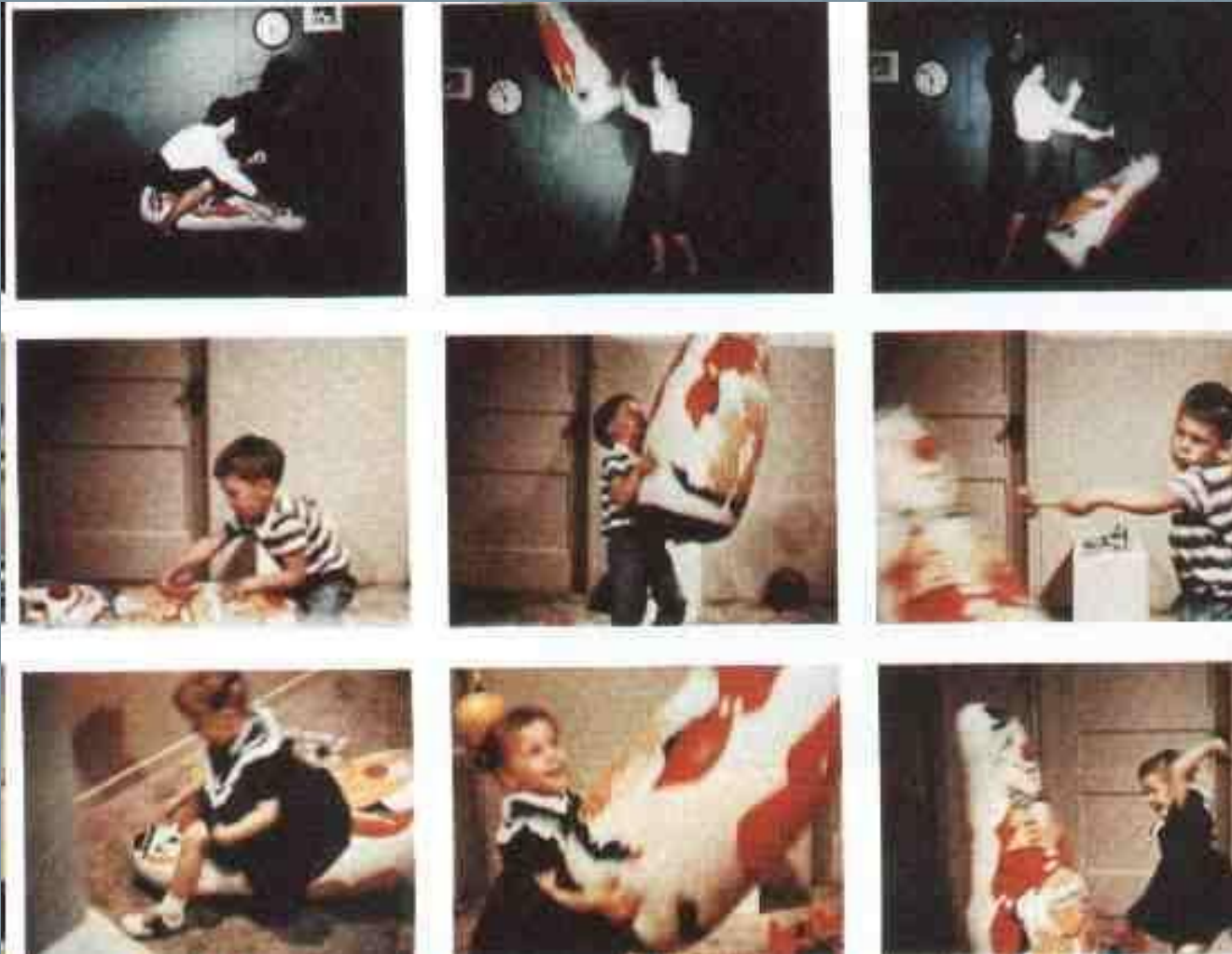
DUI of Alcohol - 3,261 Cases

ALL JP JUVENILES FILINGS!!!!!!!!!!!!

 **Criminal**

 **Civil**

What does “training the offender” mean?



Part 2 of 2

Trial Court Function

Class C Misdemeanors:

Offense defined in the Penal Code =
a fine not to exceed **\$500**

Offense defined outside the Penal Code =
“Fine-Only”

In FY 2007, judgments in municipal court totaled:
\$ 685,793,685

Tools

1. “Probation”

- **Driving Safety Courses**
- **Teen Court**
- **Chemically Dependent Persons**
- **Deferred Disposition**

2. “Deterrence” = Fines

3. “Remedial Orders”

Enforcement

Active Enforcement	Arrest Warrants Capiases Pro Fine
Passive Enforcement	DPS Omni-FTA Program TxDOT Scofflaw Program
Private Enforcement	Collection Firms
Civil Enforcement	Abstract of Judgment Writ of Execution

How Good Things Go Bad



Judicial Independence

1. Is **NOT** “Playing Politics”

- Rubber Stamp Justice

- Cronyism



2. Is **NOT** “Unaccountability”

3. Is **NOT** Separation of Powers

The Rule of Law



Is **NOT**

“Moving the
Docket”

- Quality of Life

AND

≠

- Public Safety



Some Things are More Important than Money



Enjoy the
Conference!