



# JOHN P. O'CONNOR

Partner

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## In Brief

- **Partner of Wagstaff + Cartmell LLP**
- **Lead counsel in more than 175 criminal jury trials over 37-year career**
- **Louis Lombardo Prosecutor of the Year Award, Jackson County Prosecutor's Office**
- **Lon O. Hocker Memorial Trial Lawyer Award, Missouri Bar Foundation**
- **Listed in Ingram's Magazine "Best Lawyers in Kansas City"**
- **Kansas City Business Journal "Best of the Bar" Kansas City's Top Attorneys chosen by their peers**

John O'Connor's practice is focused on criminal law, white collar criminal defense, and complex criminal litigation in both state and federal courts. He began his law career as an assistant prosecuting attorney in Jackson County, Missouri. He was promoted to trial director where he supervised 40 attorneys and handled a major felony criminal trial docket. In that role, he prosecuted major crimes and oversaw attorneys handling hundreds of criminal cases each year.

In 1987, John entered private practice. For more than 30 years, he has been recognized by his peers and news publications as one of Kansas City's top criminal defense attorneys. He has tried cases before juries in federal and state courts in Kansas and Missouri, including numerous high profile and complex matters as well as death penalty cases. His cases have received news coverage locally and nationally. A case he defended that became known as the "FBI Sting Murder Trial" was aired nationally on Court TV. After listening to John's closing argument, Nancy Grace gave him an A+. See below for a list of John's other notable representations.

Outside of the courtroom, John is a frequent speaker at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department Training Academy.

In 1984, John received the Louis Lombardo Prosecutor of the Year award. In 1986, he was awarded the Lon O. Hocker Memorial Trial Lawyer Award, an award presented by the Missouri Bar Foundation to an outstanding trial lawyer in Kansas City for "outstanding expression of the qualities of professional competence, industry, integrity, and courtesy indicative of a trial lawyer." John also holds an AV Preeminent rating with Martindale Hubbell, which represents the "highest possible rating in both legal ability and ethical standards."

### Notable Litigation

#### DISMISSED CASES

Kansas City man charged with five counts of Murder 1st Degree and facing five Life Sentences without parole in Firebombing Arson of a residence. As result of our extensive investigation. All Charges were Dismissed. Case featured in Kansas City Magazine Article "Man in the Streets." Read more here.

College bound Scholar Athlete was charged with Murder 2nd Degree and Armed Criminal Action in Jackson County, Missouri and facing two potential Life Sentences. As a result of our investigation and proving the Police had the wrong person charged, All Charges were Dismissed. The real perpetrator was subsequently charged.

Ray County man was Indicted in 30-year-old cold case with two counts of Murder 1st Degree in the deaths of his wife and daughter was facing two Life Sentences Without the Possibility of Parole. As a result of our investigation and depositions of witnesses, All Charges were Dismissed.

Members of a professional football team in Kansas City for a game were accused of Forcible Rape in Jackson County and facing potential Life Sentences. As a result of our investigation and the deposition of the alleged victim, All Charges were Dismissed.

Milan, Missouri man was charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Arson and Insurance Fraud. As a result of our investigation, All Charges were Dismissed.



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- **Best Lawyers in America Criminal Defense: Non-White Collar Crime and Criminal Defense: White Collar Crime**
- **Best Lawyers in America's Kansas City, MO Criminal Defense: Non-White Collar Crime "Lawyer of the Year"**

Kansas City Police Officer in the line of duty at a traffic stop accused of Murder 2nd degree. As a result of our investigation, All Charges were Dismissed.

Blue Springs woman charged with Murder 2nd Degree of her niece. All Charges were Dismissed after depositions and our investigation.

Four Kansas City Police Officers charged with Felony Theft. All Charges were Dismissed and fully re-instated with back pay as a result of our investigation.

Jefferson City man charged with two counts of Murder 2nd degree. Charges were Dismissed as a result of our investigation.

Commercial airline passenger charged in Federal Court with Interfering with Flight Crew on a flight from San Francisco to Kansas City. All Federal Charges were Dismissed.

Kansas City Police Deputy Chief charged with Sexual Harassment. As a result of our investigation, All Charges were Dismissed and was Reinstated with Back Pay and Full Benefits.

Independence Fire Captain charged with Assault 1st Degree and facing a potential 15 years imprisonment in Jackson County. As a result of our investigation, the Charge was Dismissed.

Kansas City Police Officer accused of wrongdoing. All Charges were Dismissed and was Awarded Back Pay and Re-Instated as a result of our investigation.

Kansas City Police Captain Cleared of DWI Charge.

Kansas City woman charged with Assault 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action in road rage incident. All Charges were Dismissed as a result of our depositions and investigation.

Two teenage residents of Wichita, Kansas charged with Possession of Marijuana and Drug Paraphernalia in Johnson County, Kansas. Both clients had All Charges Dismissed before the preliminary hearing based on our legal research of probable cause for car stop.

A Smithville real estate agent charged in Wyandotte County, Kansas District Court with Murder 1st Degree in 27-year-old cold case, facing a Life Sentence. After a Motion Hearing to Exclude Certain Evidence and a Preliminary Hearing, District Court Judge Dismissed the Murder 1st Degree Charge.

Kansas City Police Detective accused in Clay County of Assaulting a prisoner in his custody, cleared of All Charges as a result of our investigation.

California resident going to college in Kansas City charged in Jackson County with Assault 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action facing a potential 15-year sentence. As a result of our investigation and depositions, All Charges were Dismissed.

Cass County man charged with Assault 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action in shooting of trespasser on his property, facing a potential Life Sentence. After our investigation All Charges were Dismissed.



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### TRIALS

Kansas City teenager charged with Vehicular Involuntary Manslaughter, driving while intoxicated. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Daughter charged with Murder 1st Degree of her mother and facing a Life Sentence without the possibility of parole. Found Not Guilty by a Jasper County Jury. Case featured on Oprah Winfrey Show.

Court TV "FBI STING MURDER TRIAL" Nationally televised trial, Nancy Grace gives John an A+.

Kansas City liquor store owner charged with Murder 2nd Degree and Armed Criminal Action facing two Life Sentences. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury. Case featured in Kansas City Magazine Article "Man in the Streets". Read more here.

Navy Seal charged with Assault 1st Degree, Kidnapping, and Armed Criminal Action facing two potential Life Sentences and 15 years. Found Not Guilty by a Buchanan County Jury.

Police Officer working off duty involved in a shooting incident and charged with Murder 2nd Degree and facing a potential Life Sentence. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Kansas City Attorney and Councilwoman charged with Assault of a Police Officer and facing a potential 15-year sentence. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Decorated Army Veteran charged with Assault 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action against Kansas City Police Officers and facing two Life Sentences. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Kansas City woman charged with Involuntary Vehicular Manslaughter facing a potential 15-year sentence. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Kansas City man charged in Federal Court for the District of Kansas with Sale and Distribution of Cocaine. Found Not Guilty by a Federal Jury.

Kansas City man charged with Robbery 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action of a local pharmacy facing two Life Sentences. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Prominent Kansas City Doctor charged with Possession of Child Pornography. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Kansas City Attorney charged with Aggravated Assault in barroom fight. Found Not Guilty by Judge.

Kansas City man charged with Murder 2nd Degree in a drive-by shooting. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Kansas City man charged with cheating at local casino for \$14,000. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

Kansas City man charged with Solicitation of a Prostitute. Found Not Guilty by Judge. Kansas City man charged with Murder 2nd Degree and Armed Criminal Action. Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.



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Kansas City Police Officer charged with Involuntary Manslaughter in a shooting while on duty. After a jury trial, Found Not Guilty by a Clay County Special Judge Assigned by the Missouri Supreme Court.

Kansas City man charged with Possession of Cocaine with Intent to Distribute, Found Not Guilty by a Jackson County Jury.

## PROBATION CASES

Kansas City man charged with vehicular injury DWI in Jackson County. Received Probation.

Local Mortgage Broker charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Wire Fraud and Money Laundering with a loss amount in excess of \$2.5 million. Received Probation.

Kansas City Police Officer charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Theft of Government Funds by Fraud or Deceit. Received Probation.

Kansas City Attorney charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Federal Tax Evasion. Received Probation.

Kansas City Attorney charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Stealing \$142,000.00 from an estate. Received Probation.

North Carolina resident charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine and Marijuana facing 10 years to Life. After our investigation and negotiation, client pled to reduced charge of conspiracy to distribute marijuana only. Received Probation.

Olathe, Kansas resident indicted for Conspiracy to Defraud the Food and Drug Administration, Mail Fraud and Falsifying Records in Federal Court in the District of Kansas. After a negotiated plea agreement, client faced a guideline sentence between 18-24 months. After our motion for downward variance and arguments at sentencing, Received Probation and had to pay restitution.

Federal Employee charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with using computer at work to promote prostitution. Received Probation.

Independence Police Officer Indicted in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri for Distribution of Anabolic Steroids. Received Probation.

Kansas City Businessman investigated for Income Tax Fraud by the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service. Prior to being charged, we negotiated a waiver of indictment in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri. After a negotiated plea, client pled guilty to tax fraud and Received 6 Months of Home Detention and Probation.

Wichita resident charged with Aiding and Abetting a Felon in Possession of a Firearm in Federal Court in the District of Kansas facing 10-years in the Bureau of Prisons. After negotiation and argument at sentencing, Received Probation.

Kansas City man charged in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri with Aiding and Abetting the Disposal of Hazardous Waste Without a Permit. Received Probation.



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Kansas City Woman Indicted in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri for Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance (900 plus Ecstasy Pills). Received Probation.

In Lafayette County, Military Student charged with Forcible Rape. Pleads to a reduced charge of a non-sex offense. Did not require sex offender registration. Received Probation.

Texas native charged in Lafayette County with Possession with Intent to Distribute 600 plus pounds of Marijuana. Received 120 Day Sentence and Probation.

Platte County man charged with 1st Degree Statutory Sodomy and Deviant Sexual Intercourse in Platte County. After our investigation and negotiation, client pled guilty to the amended charge of Child Endangerment. Received Probation.

Kansas City woman charged with 2nd Degree Murder and Armed Criminal Action in Jackson County. After our investigation and negotiation client pled to Involuntary Manslaughter. Received Probation.

Cass County man charged with Manufacturing a Controlled Substance within 2,000 feet of a school and Distribution within 2,000 feet of a school. Received 120 Day Sentence and Probation.

Ray County woman charged in Ray County with Fraud over \$300,000. Received 120 Day Sentence and Probation.

Kansas City Police Sergeant charged with Sexual Assault while on-duty. Received Probation.

Prominent Kansas City Dentist charged in Jackson County with Rape. Received Probation.

Juvenile charged in Jackson County Juvenile Court with Child Molestation. Received Probation.

Kansas City Police Officer charged in Jackson County with Misconduct in the Administration of Justice and Theft. Received Probation.

Lone Jack, Missouri Police Chief charged in Clay County with Possession of Drugs. Received Probation.

Warrensburg woman charged with Arson 1st Degree and Murder 1st Degree. After two days of trial, State dismissed Murder 1st Degree charge and defendant pled guilty to Arson 2nd Degree. Received Probation.

Harrison County Man charged with Child Molestation and facing a 15 year Sentence, pled guilty to reduced charges of Harassment. Received Probation.  
Platte County man charged with Attempted Sodomy 1st Degree facing a potential Life Sentence. Received Probation.

Daviess County man charged with Vehicular Involuntary Manslaughter DWI. Received Probation.



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Georgia Contractor charged in Clay County with multiple counts of Stealing/Theft over \$25,000.00 facing a potential 15 year sentence. Received Probation.

## MISCELLANEOUS CASES

Johnson County businessman indicted for Conspiracy to Distribute Oxycotin and Oxycodone in Federal Court in the Western District of Missouri. After a negotiated plea agreement, client faced a guideline sentence between 46-57 months. After our objections to the presentence investigative report, sentencing memorandum and arguments at sentencing, client Received One Year and One Day Sentence and had to pay restitution.

Warrensburg resident investigated for Social Security Disability Benefits Fraud. Prior to being charged, we negotiated a waiver of indictment. Upon a plea to theft of government money, client was facing between 21-27 months after the presentence investigative report was complete. After our objections to the presentence investigative report, sentencing memorandum and arguments, client Received a Six-Month Sentence, followed by a term of supervised release and had to pay restitution.

Columbia businessman charged with Bank Fraud (approx. three million dollars) in Federal Court for the Western District of Missouri. Client faced a 78-97 month sentence after the presentence investigative report was completed. Based on our objections to the presentence investigative report, a sentencing memorandum and arguments at the sentencing hearing, our client Received 27 Months and was ordered to pay restitution.

Grandview businessman charged with Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property and Aiding and Abetting Others in the interstate transportation of stolen property in the Federal Court in the District of Kansas. After negotiation and agreement, the defendant pled to a reduced charge of misprision of a felony and received an eight-month split sentence. Received Four Months in Prison and Four Months on House Arrest.

Battered wife in Columbia, Missouri charged with Murder 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action facing Life without Parole. Found Guilty of Lesser Offense of Involuntary Manslaughter by a Boone County Jury.

Independence man charged with Murder 2nd Degree in road rage incident facing a Life Sentencing. Found Guilty of Lesser Offense of Involuntary Manslaughter by Jackson County Jury.

Johnson County, Kansas man charged with Federal Bank Robbery and Use of a Weapon in a Crime of Violence in the Federal District of Kansas and facing a 30-year sentence. After a Trial by Jury, the Jury was unable to agree on defendant's guilt. The Judge declared a Hung Jury. After the Hung Jury, a plea was negotiated with the Government and the Bank Robbery Charge was Dismissed and the defendant pled Guilty to five years on the gun charge. Case featured in Missouri Lawyers Weekly Article "John O'Connor Challenges Fingerprint Identification". Read more here.

Ray County resident investigated in the Western District of Missouri for Embezzling or Stealing from a Government Agency. Prior to being charged, we negotiated a waiver of indictment. Upon a plea to theft concerning programs receiving federal funds, client was facing between 18-24 months after the presentence investigative report was complete.



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After arguments at the sentencing hearing, our client Received a Downward Variance to 4 Months followed by supervised release and had to pay restitution.

Independence woman charged with Murder 1st Degree of her husband in Jackson County, Missouri, facing a Life Sentence without Parole, pleads guilty to Conspiracy to Commit 1st Degree Murder and Received an 8-year Sentence.

An IRS agent charged with Murder 2nd Degree of his wife and facing a Life Sentence is found guilty of the lesser offense of Voluntary Manslaughter by a Johnson County, Kansas jury and received a 49-month sentence.

## Practice Areas

John handled criminal law. John is an expert for criminal law cases. John has 56 years of criminal law experience and have been trusted by many to aggressively represent their interests, with results that speak for themselves. John has an unparalleled reputation in the legal community and results have garnered local and national media attention.

His practice area include:

### FEDERAL CRIMES

White Collar Crimes and Corporate Criminal Investigations  
 Fraud / Embezzlement / Theft  
 Health Care Fraud  
 Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Violations / Antitrust Violations  
 Public Corruption / Bribery / Perjury and False Statements / Grand Jury Investigations  
 Money Laundering  
 Mortgage / Real Estate Fraud  
 Computer / Internet Crimes  
 Drug Conspiracy / Distribution / Possession / Trafficking / Importation / Production  
 Felon in Possession of Firearms or Ammunition / Carjacking  
 Bank Robbery and other Hobbs Act Violations / Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property  
 Capital Murder and Kidnapping  
 RICO / Racketeering  
 Fish and Wildlife Violations

### STATE CRIMES

Sex Crimes  
 Murder  
 Armed Criminal Action  
 Assault All Forms (Domestic)  
 Drugs  
 Robbery / Stealing / Embezzlement / Theft in General  
 Bad Checks / Forgery  
 Tampering  
 Domestic Violence  
 DUI/DWI  
 Weapons / Firearms Offenses  
 Arson  
 Appeals  
 Probation and Parole Hearing  
 Post Conviction Hearings



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## MUNICIPAL CRIMES / ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS

DUI / DWI

Driving While Suspended or Revoked

Domestic Violence

General Ordinance Violations

## Prior Work Experience

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and Trial Director, Jackson County Prosecutor's Office

## Education

- J.D., University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, 1982
- M.S. in Criminal Justice Administration, Central Missouri State University
- B.A., Avila College

## Professional Organizations

[National Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys](#)

[American Trial Lawyers Association](#)

[Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association](#)

[Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys](#)

[Missouri Bar Association](#)

## Admissions

[Missouri](#)

[U.S. District Court, District of Kansas](#)

[U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri](#)

[U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit](#)

[U.S. Supreme Court](#)

## Honors and Awards

Best Lawyers in America Criminal Defense: Non-White Collar Crime and Criminal Defense: White Collar Crime – 2005-2020

Best Lawyers in America's Kansas City, MO Criminal Defense: Non-White Collar Crime "Lawyer of the Year" – 2013

American Trial Lawyers Association Top 100 Lawyers in Missouri – 2007-2019

Kansas City Magazine "Super Lawyers" Top 100 Lawyers – 2005-2019

Kansas City Business Journal "Best of the Bar" Kansas City's Top Attorneys – 2002-2016, 2019

Ingram's Magazine Kansas City "Best Lawyers in Kansas City" – 2009 – 2019

I-435 Magazine "Best Lawyers in Kansas City" – 2013-2018

Lon O. Hocker Memorial Trial Lawyer Award, Missouri Bar Foundation – 1986

Louis Lombardo Prosecutor of the Year Award, Jackson County Prosecutor's Office – 1984



AV Preeminent Rating by Martindale-Hubbell