

breach, however, Epstein would enter his state guilty plea and the federal investigation would end. Thus, the statement that the case was “currently under investigation” was literally true, but the omission of important contextual information about the existence of the NPA deprived the victims of important information about the exact status of the investigation.

A. The USAO Was Not Responsible for Victim Notification Letters Sent by the FBI in October 2007, January 2008, and May 2008 Describing the Status of the Case as “Under Investigation”

The 2005 Guidelines charged the FBI with informing the victims of CVRA rights and available services during the “investigative stage” of a case. During the Epstein investigation, the FBI case agents complied with the agency’s notification obligation by hand delivering pamphlets to victims following their interviews and through computer-generated letters sent to the victims by the FBI’s Victim Specialist. The FBI’s notification process is independent of the USAO’s. The USAO has its own Victim Witness Specialist who assumes the responsibility for victim notification after an indictment or complaint moved the case into the “prosecution stage.”

The FBI’s Victim Specialist used the VNS to prepare the October 2007, January 2008, and May 2008 letters, a system the FBI regularly employs to comply with its obligations under the 2005 Guidelines to inform the victims of their rights and other services during the “investigative stage.” The stock language of that letter, however, was generic and failed to communicate the unique case-specific status of the Epstein investigation at that time. The FBI Victim Specialist who sent the letters acted at the case agent’s direction and was not aware of the existence of the NPA at the time she created the letters.⁴¹⁰ Neither FBI case agent reviewed any of the letters sent by the FBI’s Victim Specialist.⁴¹¹ According to Villafañá, “The decision to issue the letters and the wording of those letters were exclusively FBI decisions.” Although the FBI case agents informed Villafañá after the fact that the FBI’s Victim Specialist sent her “standard form letter,” Villafañá had never reviewed an FBI-generated victim notification letter and was not aware of its contents.⁴¹² Villafañá told OPR she was unaware of the content of the FBI letters until they were collected for the CVRA litigation, sometime after July 2008.

⁴¹⁰ The case agent told OPR that she did not recall specifically directing the Victim Specialist to send a letter, but acknowledged that “she would come to us before she would approach a victim.”

⁴¹¹ The case agent told OPR that she had no role in drafting the letters and believed them to be “standard form letters.” Similarly, the co-case agent told OPR, “I can’t think that I’ve ever reviewed any of them . . . they just go from the victim coordinator.”

⁴¹² Villafañá’s lack of familiarity with the language in the FBI letters led to some inconsistency in the information provided to victims concerning their CVRA rights. Beginning in 2006, the FBI provided to victims standard letters advising victims of their CVRA rights but which also noted that only some of the rights applied pre-charge. During this period, Villafañá also crafted her own introductory letters to the victims to let them know of their CVRA rights and that the federal investigation “would be a different process” from the prior state investigation in which “the victims felt they had not been particularly well-treated by the State Attorney’s Office.” Villafañá told OPR that in a case in which she “need[ed] to be talking to young girls frequently and asking them really intimate questions,” she wanted to “make sure that they . . . feel like they can trust me.” Villafañá’s letter itemized the CVRA rights, but it did not explain that those rights attached only after a formal charge had been made. The letter was hand