

About Schenectady County DA's Office

The Schenectady County District Attorney's Office in New York operates at the forefront of local criminal enforcement, and its Financial Crimes Unit is responsible for investigating complex fraud, theft, and exploitation cases. Justin Colarossi, a Financial Crimes Analyst and Digital Forensics Specialist, leads investigations focusing on money laundering and tracing funds through complex accounts. With 18 years of investigative experience, his mission is to follow the flow of funds to identify not just the middle-men, but the "big bosses" and ultimate perpetrators behind financial crimes.

The Challenge: Uncovering Evidence to Prove Intent

The Schenectady County District Attorney's Office faced an unthinkable case: a mother, a trained nurse, withheld critical medication from her special-needs daughter, leading to the young woman's death. Investigators suspected the mother continued collecting the victim's disability payments after her daughter's passing, but proving the financial motive and intent required reconstructing several years of complex financial records across multiple bank accounts.

To secure a successful prosecution, the Financial Crimes Unit needed to prove the motive: fraud and financial neglect. The team faced extreme data complexity and a severe resource constraint:



- **Massive Data Volume:** Investigators had seized over four years of financial data, totaling 20,000+ pages across six bank accounts. Reconciling this volume to find relevance would be a resource drain.
- **Manual Bottleneck:** Traditional methods would require weeks of manual data entry, prone to errors, delaying the case and risking missed evidence.
- **Auditor Problem:** Hiring an external forensic auditor to manually reconcile the records would have cost the small county over \$300,000 in retainer fees and caused delays of 6 to 12 months due to limited availability.

Solution: Automation for Actionable Evidence

Faced with these constraints, the office leveraged the Valid8 forensic investigation platform. By automating the data ingestion and reconciliation process, Valid8 transformed the investigation from a multi-month manual slog into an actionable intelligence operation.

- **Rapid Data Processing:** The analyst was able to upload all 20,000+ pages of financial evidence into Valid8. Valid8 then verified the bank data against known spending patterns, compressing the time for data preparation and initial analysis from potential months of manual work down to hours.
- **Automated Fraud Tracing:** Valid8's custom visualization categories were used to expose how the mother was siphoning funds for her own benefit. The platform traced the flow of the victim's disability checks and financial benefits, showing the money was spent on personal items like Wayfair and Sephora, and used to pay the mother's personal loans and utility bills.
- **Check Matching & Visualization:** Crucially, the analysis confirmed that the victim's funds were not being spent on their intended purpose. Valid8 exposed a conspicuous lack of spending on necessary personal care and, most notably, no record of the life-saving prescription drug purchases.

The Results: Clarity and Closure

Valid8 provided the Schenectady DA's office with the irrefutable, evidence-backed proof of fraud and motive needed to prosecute the case.

Outcome	Impact
Accelerated Analysis	20,000+ pages of financial records were reconciled and made actionable in hours, not months.
Cost Avoidance	The office avoided the need for a forensic auditor, saving over \$300,000 in external fees and up to 12 months of delays.
Fraud & Neglect Proven	Clear, visible evidence of financial siphoning and neglect was produced, enabling the DA to charge the suspect with the crime.
Increased Capacity	Achieved 100% greater efficiency, allowing the analyst to keep working on other cases while Valid8 processed the data.

"WITHOUT VALID8, WE'D STILL BE WORKING THE CASE—OR WORSE, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CLOSED WITHOUT ANSWERS. OUR SOLVING RATES HAVE GONE UP, AND IT LETS ME KEEP WORKING WHILE IT'S WORKING IN THE BACKGROUND, AND I JUST GET MY ANSWERS."

JUSTIN COLAROSSO,
FINANCIAL CRIMES ANALYST AND DIGITAL FORENSICS SPECIALIST

Strategic Imperative

For government agencies facing complex financial crimes, limited budgets, and staffing challenges, Valid8 is a necessity. It allows investigators to bypass manual bottlenecks and leapfrog forensic delays, providing rapid, defensible answers that accelerate investigations and significantly increase solving rates.