



Year 3 Virtual Regional Training

Enhancing Conviction Integrity through Forensics

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Enhancing Conviction Integrity through Forensics

3-Year Overview



ENHANCING
CONVICTION
INTEGRITY

Achieving Justice: Recreating the Reality of the Crime at Trial

Patricia D. Powers, JD

AEquitas

Patricia D. Powers

Patti Powers joined AEquitas as the lead Attorney Advisor on the SAKI project after serving as a Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Washington State for 27 years. She supervised the Sexual Assault—Domestic Violence Unit and prosecuted and tried a high volume of violent crimes—specializing in adult sexual assault, child sexual assault and abuse, sexual exploitation of minors, domestic violence, and related homicides (including complex litigation of high-profile, as well as cold and current cases). Patti served on the domestic violence and child fatality review committees and was a member of the Washington State Technical Assistance Committee for Child Death Review Guidelines. For five years, she was appointed as a Highly Qualified Expert for the United States Army, Criminal Investigation Division; in this role, she provided training for army criminal investigation agents and prosecutors at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and in Germany.



Objectives

1

- Identify forensic evidence that corroborates elements of crime and/or provides context

2

- Ensure appropriate collection of evidence and documentation of context

3

- Effectively present expert testimony at trial and communicate its significance to the jury

4

- Center the victim's experience of the crime through evidence

Sexual Assault and Homicide Considerations

Suspect known
to victim

Suspect
unknown to
victim

Serial offenders

Cross-over
offenders

Commission of
other violent
crimes

Linkage between
sexual assault
and homicide

Homicide and Sexual Assault

Review reports, identify evidence and chain of custody, submit for testing

Crime scene documentation, video, photographs, measurements analysis

Consult with ballistics, blood spatter, fingerprint experts, DNA analysts

Homicide witness interviews, possible res gestae statements by victim, statements/admissions of suspect

Consider impact of trauma and need for expert

Consult with forensic pathologist / SANE

Determining potential defenses

Denial, alibi, self defense (homicide), consent (sexual assault)

**Forensic Evidence: DNA,
Ballistics, Fingerprint, Bloodstain**

Digital Evidence

**Victim Statement/
Autopsy**

Offender Statement

**Secondary Witnesses
Other Victims**

Expert Testimony

**Medical
Evidence**

**Corroborate
Disclosure/
Medical
Findings**

**Reality
of
Crime**



Infrastructure of the Presentation of Evidence

1

Present chain of custody witnesses without stipulation: establish the diligence of the investigation and importance of detail

2

Offer witness(es) who can identify evidence and location at crime scene

3

Place the item of evidence in context of the crime scene through questioning and use of exhibits

Expert Testimony

Qualifications

Education / Professional Background

Employment Responsibilities / Length of Time

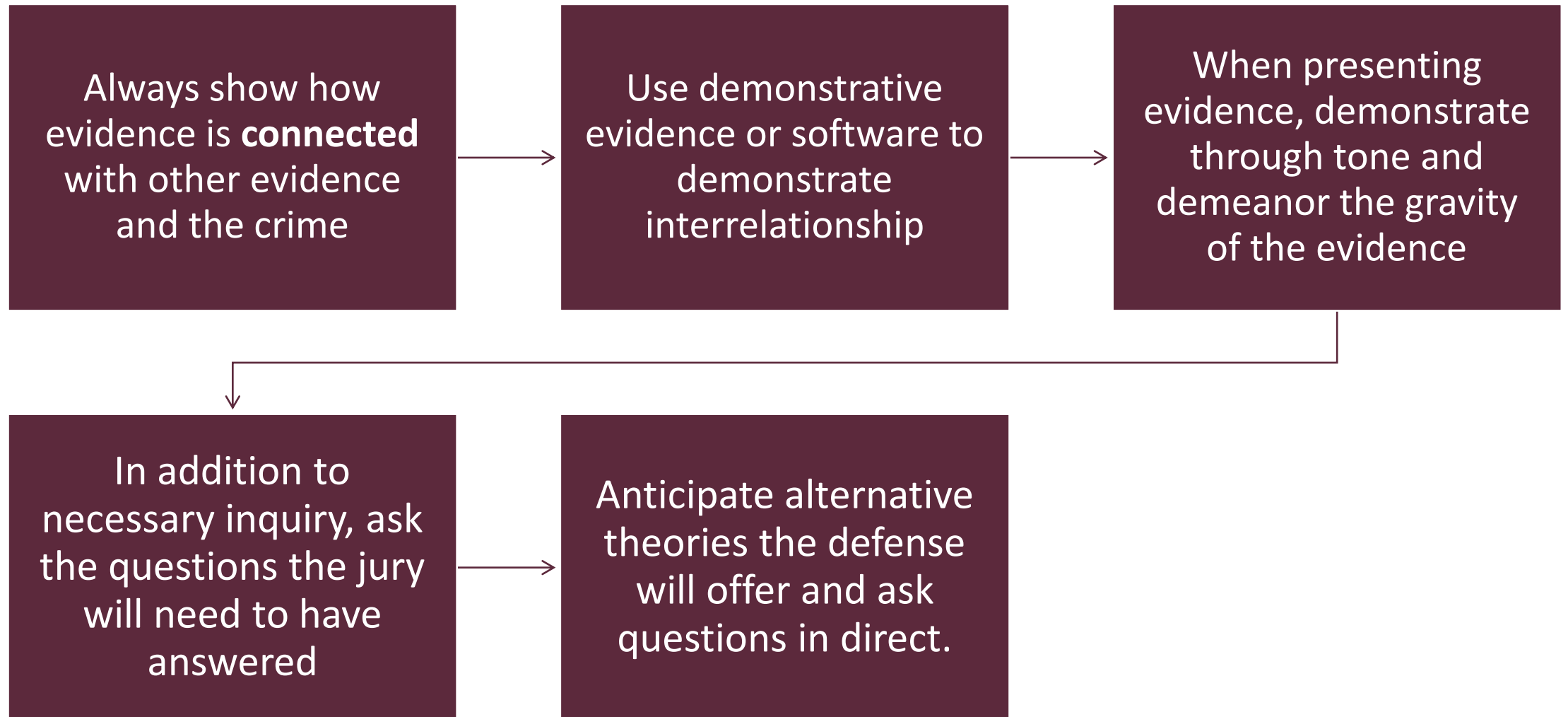
What was the expert asked to do?

Process observed

Evidence-based hypotheticals

Opinion / explanation

Presenting Evidence Effectively



Going Forward

Corroborate the elements of the crime and surrounding context with forensic evidence

Present testimony regarding identification and collection of evidence and relationship to the crime scene

Use expert testimony to inform the jury of the significance of the evidence

Center offender accountability and the victim's experience of the crime with evidentiary support

Role-Play Scenarios

Pre-Trial Consultation and Direct Examination

Presenters

Patricia Powers – *AEquitas* (moderator)

Dr. Rebecca Campbell – *Michigan State University*

Misty Marra – *Marshall University Forensic Science Center*

Michelle Machalka – *Federal Bureau of Investigation*

Jodi Corsi – *Michigan State Police*

Rebecca Campbell, Ph.D.

Dr. Rebecca Campbell is a Professor of Psychology and Presidential Advisor on Relationship Violence & Sexual Misconduct at Michigan State University. Dr. Campbell's research examines how contact with the legal and medical systems affects adult, adolescent, and pediatric victims' psychological and physical health. She was the lead researcher for the National Institute of Justice-funded Detroit Sexual Assault Kit Action Research Project, which was designated as an Exemplary Project by the Association of Public & Land Grant Universities (APLU) and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Dr. Campbell received the 2015 Crime Victim Research Award from the U.S. Department of Justice. Dr. Campbell also conducts training on sexual assault for law enforcement and multidisciplinary practitioners in civilian, military, and campus community settings.



Misty Marra

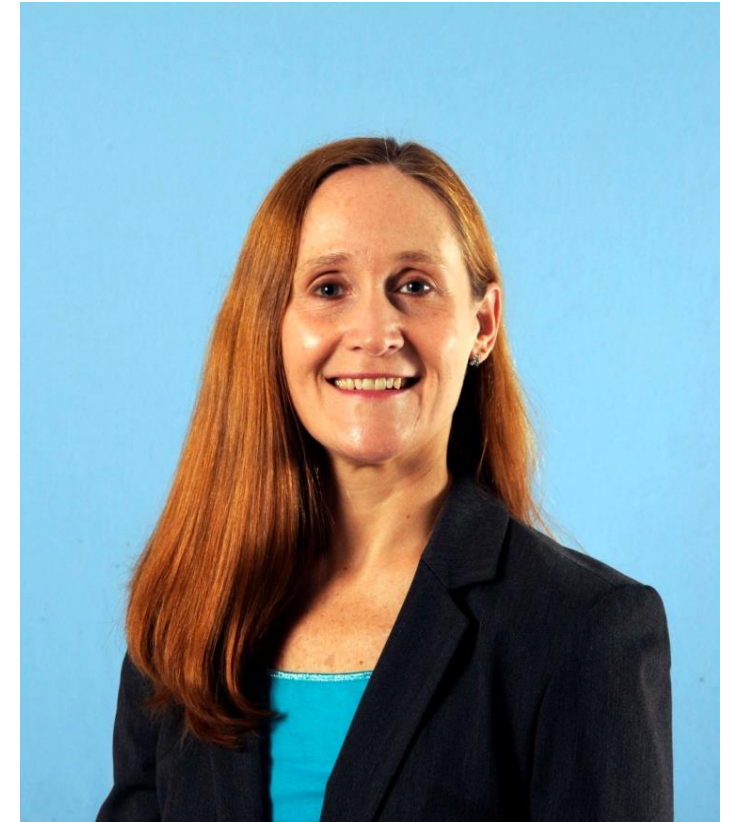
Misty Marra is a Forensic DNA Analyst and the DNA Laboratory Coordinator at the Marshall University Forensic Science Center (MUFSC) in Huntington, WV. She received a BA in Biology from West Virginia University and a MS in Forensic Science from Marshall University. Misty has performed analysis/review of over 5,000 forensic DNA cases, which have included sexual assaults, homicides, and property crimes. She has been instrumental in coordinating the MUFSC's sexual assault kit testing projects and the technical review of outsourced sexual assault kit projects with agencies and crime laboratories across the U.S.

Ms. Marra has served as a Subject Matter Expert and has conducted instructional webinars and on-site trainings regarding DNA and its use in criminal cases with a focus on sexual assault cases both nationally and internationally for entities such as RTI International, SANE-SART Resource Service, and the Office for Victims of Crime.



Michelle Machalka

Michelle is a Supervisory Physical Scientist/Forensic Examiner with the Latent Print Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Laboratory in Quantico, VA. Michelle received her Bachelor of Science degree in Ecology from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign and her Master of Science degree in Environmental Science from the Florida Institute of Technology. Michelle's current duties include the supervision of case-working examiners, administrative and technical case reviews, and training. She is a member of her agency's Hazardous Evidence Analysis Team and the Fingerprint Legal Advisory Group. She assisted in the development of the ACE module for the FBI's Latent Print Unit Training Program and currently teaches lectures regarding the scientific foundation of the friction ridge discipline, document classification, and legal topics and testimony specific to the discipline.



Jodi Corsi

Jodi Corsi is currently the manager of the Biology Unit at the Michigan State Police (MSP) Metropolitan Detroit Forensic Laboratory. She has been with MSP for over 15 years, most of that time as a forensic scientist in the Biology Unit. In addition to processing evidence for body fluid identification (BFI), Ms. Corsi also responds to crime scenes and is a trained bloodstain pattern analyst. She also teaches biology, bloodstain pattern analysis, and photography at evidence technician schools.



Case Scenario #1: Sexual Assault-Homicide

October 15, 2001

Sexual Assault- Homicide: Unknown Offender

The victim was sexually assaulted and killed.

Investigation reveals that the suspect was not known to the victim.

The crime scene was reviewed, and evidence was documented/collected.

Latent print
from doorknob

Bloodstain pattern
on wall adjacent
to victim's body

Crime Scene

Vaginal swabs
obtained during
autopsy

Crime Laboratory Analysis

Latent prints:

- 2001: manually compared to all known individuals and the victim—with all excluded

Vaginal swabs:

- 2001: DNA mixture could not be resolved
- 2017: DNA mixture re-submitted, with profile identified and uploaded into CODIS

Bloodstain pattern:

- 2001: Identified adjacent to victim's body, caused by blunt force trauma

Case Scenario #2: Sexual Assault

March 31, 2021

Sexual Assault: Known Offender

The suspect had a prior relationship with the victim.

Entry was made through a bedroom window.

Victim suffered physical injury and trauma and was unable to report.

Medical examination was conducted four days after sexual assault, and vaginal swabs were obtained.

Surviving Victim Interview: Evidence

Delayed disclosure

Fragmented memory

Shock at discovery of offender's identity

Evidence

Latent Prints

Trauma

Crime Scene

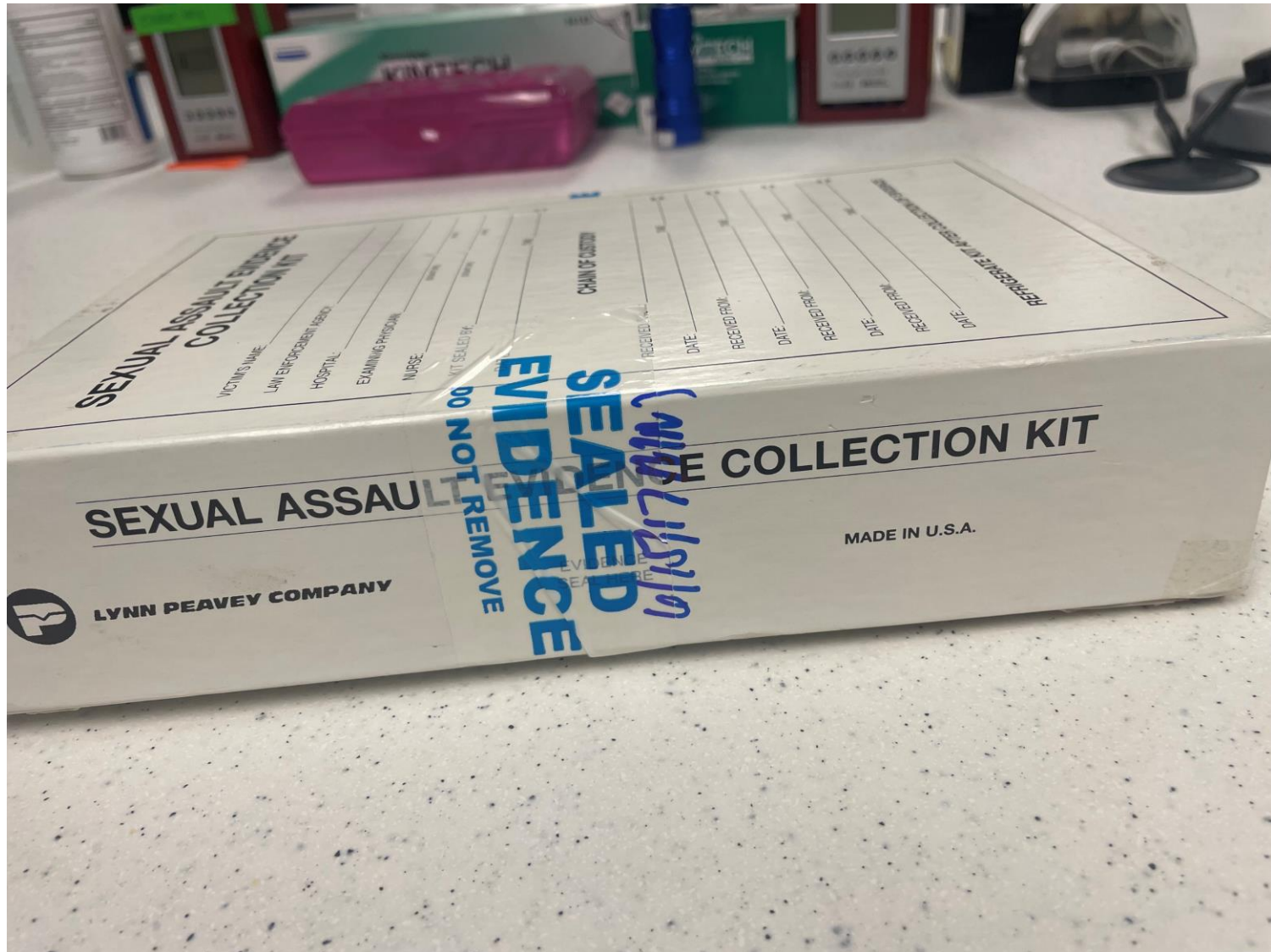
Vaginal Swabs

Pre-Trial Consultation

Dr. Rebecca Campbell – *Michigan State University*

Direct Examination

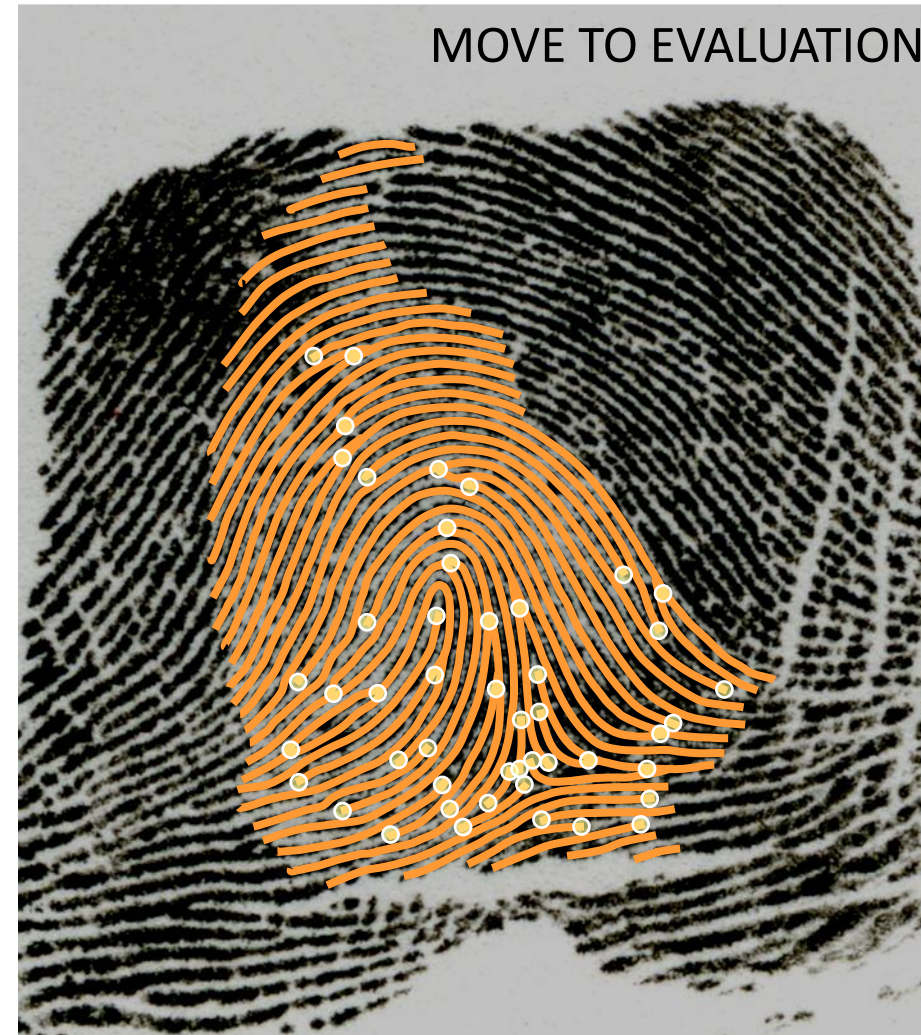
Misty Marra - *Marshall University Forensic Science Center*



Direct Examination

Michelle Machalka – *Federal Bureau of Investigation*

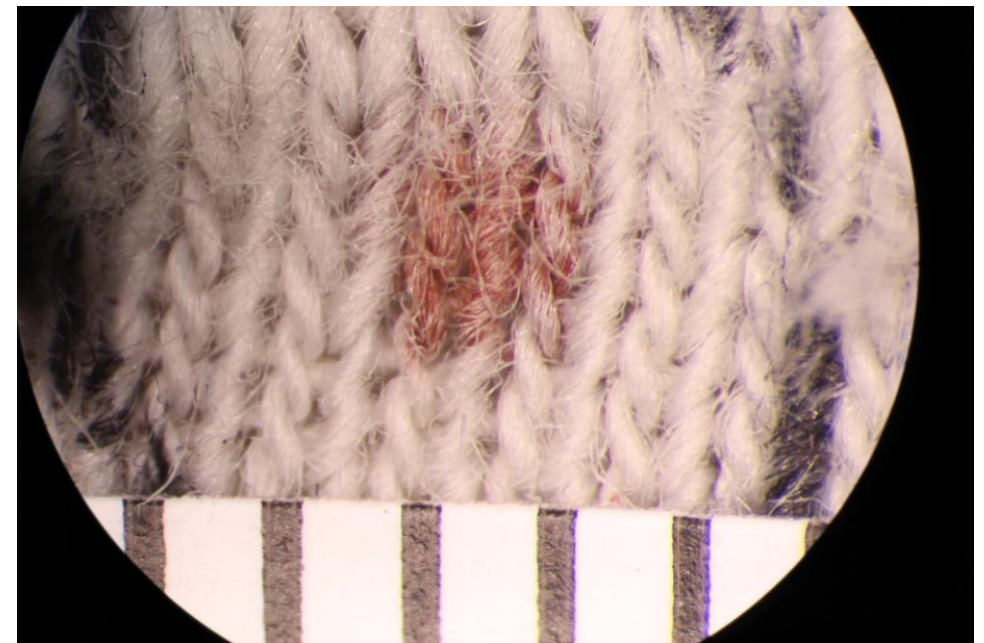
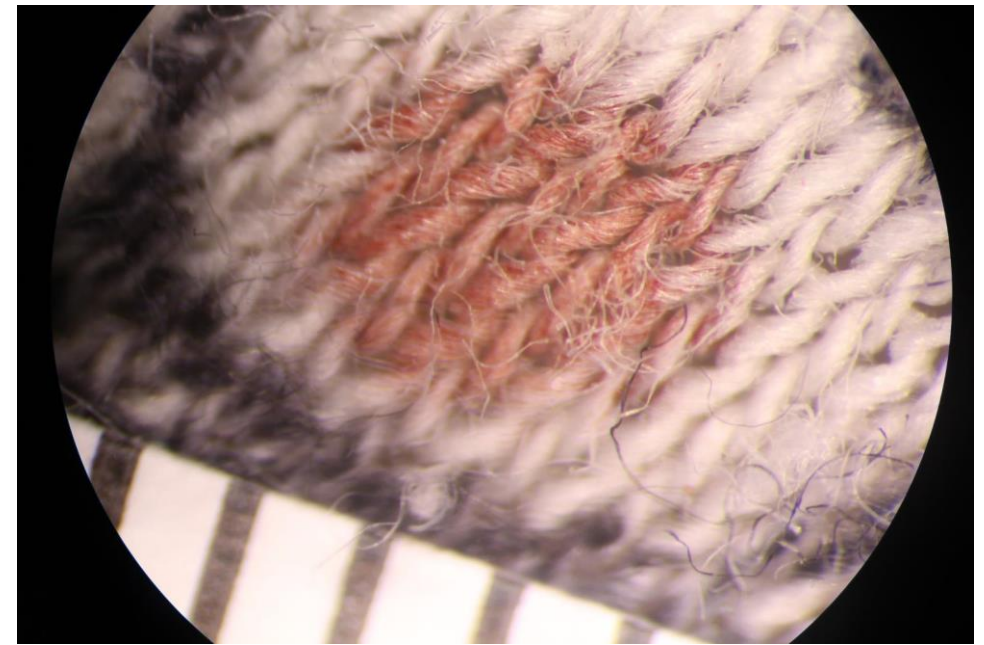
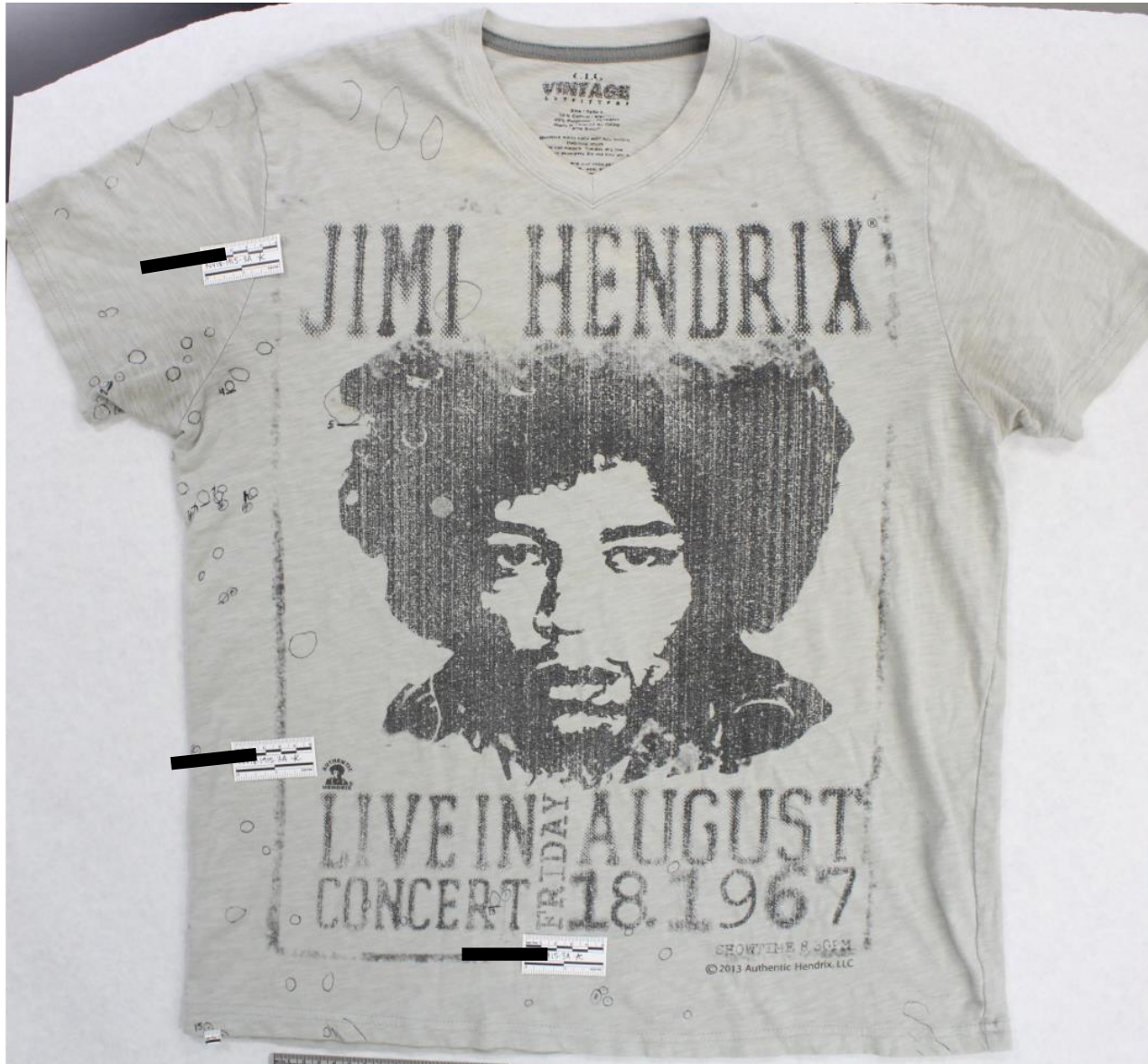
Analysis, Comparison, Evaluation



Direct Examination

Jodi Corsi – *Michigan State Police*

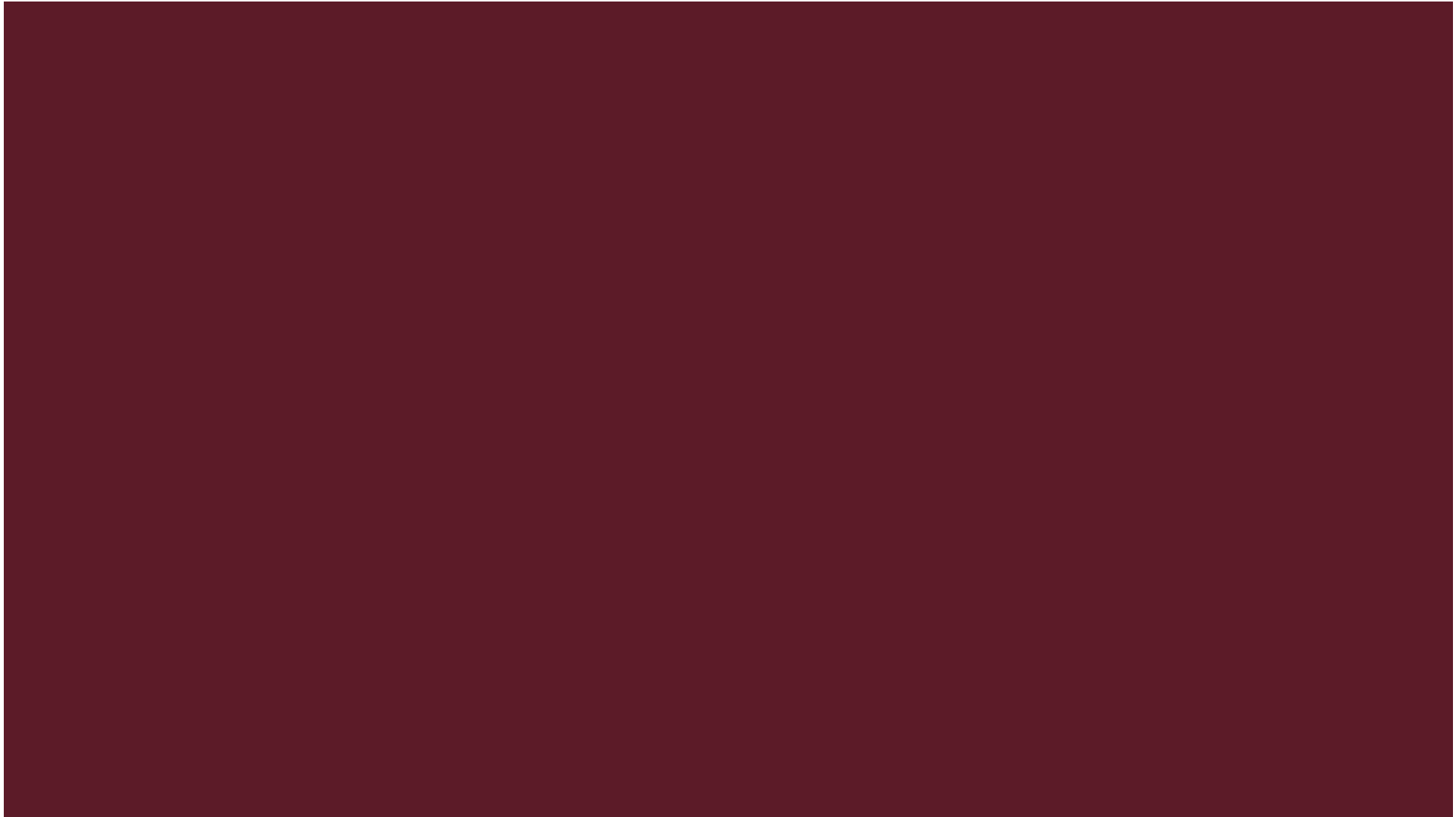




Let's Take a Break!

We will reconvene in approximately 10 minutes.

Virtual Reality – Crime Scene Evidence Collection



Discussion Panel

Please submit your questions using the Q/A feature!

Contact Information



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<https://sakitta.org/conviction-integrity/>

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SAKI TTA Help Desk

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Thank You!

We appreciate all of your time and attention today. We will archive the recording of this event on the Enhancing Conviction Integrity through Forensics webpage in approximately one week.