

**Virginia Department of Forensic Science
Virginia Forensic Science Academy Alumni Association
2018 Annual Retraining Seminar
Presentation Synopses**

Exploring Perspectives: Strategies for Mitigating Bias in Crime Scene Investigation

Interactive workshop geared toward helping law enforcement officials enhance their awareness about cultural diversity issues, specifically as it relates to their employment responsibilities. The two-hour training will consist of both lecture and open discussion styles of presentation. In addition, the facilitator seeks to engage participants in the following ways:

- Discuss the various elements of diversity and how they play a role in establishing social and cultural norms;
- Examine one's own worldview in comparison to the perspectives of others;
- Identify the concepts of prejudice and explore methods for moving beyond biases; and
- Provide strategies to help strengthen relationships and/or build alliances among community members.

The primary focus of this workshop is to encourage participants to increase reliability on cultural observations and other fact-based sources of information rather than allowing stereotypes to influence their performance as crime scene investigators.

Digital & Multimedia Evidence Update

- General overview of DME services
- DME backlog and how cases are prioritized
- Updated evidence handling / submission recommendations
- New data acquisition methods for mobile devices
- Recommendations for obtaining data stored in the cloud
- Future capabilities
- Q & A

Department of Forensic Science Update

- Review of backlogs and case turnaround times for all sections
- Presentation of the "Drug Cases Submitted to DFS in CY 2017" report
- Update on online Request for Laboratory Examination capability
- Update on Firearms & Toolmarks submission policies and expansion of NIBIN search areas
- Update on the Byrne/JAG grant that has allowed for delivery of 3 Forensic Science Academy sessions

- Presentation of the Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) to consider amending
- 6VAC40-30 to permit DFS to consider and approve presumptive mobile instruments as
- field tests
- Update on Breath Alcohol instruments and the development of online Breath Alcohol
- operator recertification training
- Presentation of new informational resources for the DNA Data Bank
- Update on PERK Tracking system development and implementation
- Update on PERK grant testing

Questioned Documents

- Overview of Forensic Document Examination
 - Definition of a document
 - Types of questioned document evidence
 - Famous cases involving questioned documents
- Questioned Document Analysis Types
 - Handwriting
 - Typewriting
 - Inks and Writing Instruments
 - Paper
 - Printing Processes
 - Identity Documents
 - Indented Impressions
 - Paper and Tape Examinations
 - Mechanical Impressions
 - Shredded Document Reconstruction
- Instrumentation and Software
 - Video Spectral Comparator (VSC)
 - Electrostatic Detection Apparatus (ESDA)
 - Ribbon Analysis Workstation (RAW)
 - Matchmaker
 - Write-On
- Evidence Packaging and Handling
 - Processing a scene with questioned document evidence
 - Packaging questioned document evidence

DNA Updates

- Review PERK legislation and requirements for submission or non-submission (I wasn't going to go into the status of the untested PERKs unless you want me to)
- Sample selection at the laboratory (Y screen et. al.)
- Pros and cons of using a private laboratory (speed for a fee, mini STRs, phenotyping, MOU for CODIS, etc.)

- Encouragement to swab easy items for property cases - review this process step-by-step (demo or video...)
- Difference between familial searching and GSK genetic dumpster diving
- Reminders (status of statistics, no DNA after FX or LX exams at your Dept. or our lab, presubmission consults, federal cases, 2 trace items for property crimes, etc.)

Training Updates

Update on the status of the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program and the Virginia Forensic Science Academy “waitlist”.

Radford City Case Study

Gina Hall case – 1980

Most will agree to the following general summary of events:

In December of 1980, Stephen M. Epperly was convicted by a Virginia jury of the first-degree murder of Gina Hall. He received a life sentence. Neither Hall's body nor a weapon was ever found; there were no eyewitnesses to the killing; and Epperly never confessed. Thus, the evidence of Hall's death and of Epperly's complicity in it was entirely circumstantial. It was the first murder conviction in Virginia without a body.

Gina Hall was an eighteen-year old college student when she first met Epperly and his childhood friend Bill King at the Marriott Hotel in Blacksburg, Virginia on a Saturday night in June 1980. Hall had decided to go dancing to celebrate the conclusion of her final exams. She was a petite woman (5 ft. tall, 107 lbs.), in excellent physical and emotional health.

King was responsible for watching over his parents' lake house while they were out of town. The men state that later that night, after dancing with Hall several times at the Marriott, Epperly borrowed the key to the lake house from King. He then left with Hall in the brown Chevrolet she had borrowed from her sister Dlana. According to King, Hall appeared "confused as to what car was going and exactly who was going" to the lake house. . She was last heard from when she telephoned Dlana between 1:00 and 1:30 a.m. sounding "very uneasy or out of character ... very nervous." She told Dlana that she was "at the lake with a man named Steve.

After years of searching numerous places by investigators, friends, family and volunteers, Gina's body has remained undiscovered. Countless theories have been formed.

A fresh set of eyes to an old case

I became interested in the case after a jury trial in March of 2007 that involved the murder of another young Radford girl that had grown cold. That's truly where this story begins....

Legal Update

Presentation and discussion of court decisions from the past year that directly affect the laws of Search & Seizure.

Impression Evidence Update

Discussion of the Department's implementation of the SoleMate Database

MS – 13

Presenters will provide an in depth look into the violent criminal street gang known to many from Central America as “La Mara”, or MS-13. The why, when and how MS-13 came to be so violent will be discussed, starting with the history and the origins of this ruthless gang. Attendees will be shown examples of MS-13, “Then!” and “Now!” on the East Coast. The presenters will discuss the criminal activity MS-13 has been involved in over the years. In addition, the gang's rank structure will be discussed, along with their rules. The presentation will conclude with a case study of Operation Dull Machete which is a VICAR Murder case involving three murders and an attempted murder that was prosecuted in the Eastern District of Virginia.