

THE IDENTIFIER

[HTTP://WWW.SCIAI.ORG/](http://www.sciai.org/) | FALL ISSUE | VOLUME 1. ISSUE 4



FALL FOR THE SCIAI

As the weather cools down in our state, or at least maybe the humidity tapers off a tad, We begin to look back at the SCIAI's accomplishments over the past year and remember to be thankful for our members and your desire to grow our division. Since our redevelopment, the SCIAI has hosted two conferences, several training days, and has encouraged networking among agencies throughout our state to accomplish one of the main goals of the SCIAI this past year - affordable and relatable training for our profession. We hope to keep up the momentum into 2019, with the highlight being the **Spring**

Educational Conference in Greer, SC. Planning for this event has already begun, so be sure to stay tuned with more information being updated to our Facebook page and website regularly.

On a personal note, the Fall newsletter will be the last issue where I serve as Editor for the SCIAI. Due to education aspirations, I will be passing the torch to the next individual, however I will most definitely be spotted at our SCIAI events. It has been a joy being a part of this new phase in the SCIAI, and I'll see you all soon!

- Ashleigh Wojslawowicz, Editor

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LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Fall is here, which means many divisional conferences are taking place around the country. Here at the SCIAI, we are scheduling speakers and contacting vendors for the annual spring conference which is scheduled for April 10-11, 2019. We strive to make ours one of the most affordable divisional conferences in the organization, while still bringing in high quality speakers. I hope you are able to join us as this will be the largest conference we have had since the new formation of the organization. We will have around 12 different presenters covering many topics including arson scene processing, observation skills, bloodstain pattern analysis, latent print analysis, child abuse investigation, trauma/stress management, DNA statistics, and courtroom presentation. Attendee registration will be available soon on the website. Officer elections for the 2019-2020 term will also take place at the conference. If you are interested in carrying on the mission of the SCIAI, please email the secretary, Nova Grilli, and let her know what specific position(s) you are interested in. The Board of Directors will be compiling a slate of recommended officers to be voted on at the conference.

I would like to publicly thank two SCIAI officers for their dedication to the mission of the SCIAI. Lt. Harold Bouknight presented the *Introduction to Bloodstain Examination* class on September 21. Lt. Bouknight is one of 3 IAI Certified bloodstain pattern examiners in the state, and we are grateful that he made himself available for this training. I have heard feedback from the course and those I have spoken with were pleased with the information received and were able to take back some real-life, practical information to use on the job. If you have experience presenting in your area of expertise, the SCIAI wants to know. Contact the secretary or fill out the speaker registration form on the website.

The second officer who has made a great impact is our Editor, Ashleigh Wojslawowicz. Ashleigh has revamped *The Identifier* and has consistently produced a professional publication which represents the SCIAI well. The content is engaging and informative and I always look forward to what is coming next. Unfortunately for us, Ashleigh will be resigning her position as editor after this issue as she focuses her time and energy on pursuing her doctorate. She is committed to making this a smooth transition and we wish her the best in her studies. If you would like to serve in this capacity, please contact Trish Odom or me to learn more about the opportunity.

Finally, I commend those who have served our state in a time of great need during hurricane Florence. Though much of the state was spared from the potential destruction that was initially forecasted, many still saw flooding at levels never before experienced. For those who were directly and personally impacted, we support you and our prayers are with you as you continue to recover from the damage.



Tyler R. Bucholtz
Tyler Bucholtz, President

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2019 SCIAI Spring Educational Conference Greer, SC

SOCIAL MEDIA

Check us out!



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SC Division of the
International Association for
Identification



South Carolina IAI

2018 OFFICERS

Tyler Bucholtz – **President**

Trish Odom – **1st Vice President**

Chris Scott – **2nd Vice President**

Nova Grilli – **Secretary/ State Representative**

Harold Bouknight – **Sergeant at Arms**

Nada Kerstein – **Treasurer**

Jeffery Scott – **Vendor Representative**

Ashleigh Wojslawowicz – **Editor**

Luke Spratt – **Historian**

IN THE NEWS

Spring Educational Conference 2019

SAVE THE DATE! The 2019 SCIAI Spring Conference will take place in Greer, SC April 10-11. We are putting together a great lineup of speakers with multiple lectures on topics such as arson/post-blast scene processing, latent print processing techniques, child abuse investigations, NGI and OSAC updates, latent print examination, courtroom testimony, mental survival of law enforcement trauma, forensic observations skills and more! Multiple vendors will also be on site to present the latest technology in the industry. You don't want to miss this conference! Registration for speakers and vendors is available at SCIAI.org. Another announcement will be made when attendee registration is available.



Fall Training Recap



The SCIAI hosted a one-day fall training event on Introduction to Bloodstain Examination September 21st, 2018. The class was held at the South Carolina Sheriff's Association in Columbia, and provided members with seven **FREE** IAI and CLE hours of training.

Lt. Harold Bouknight, a certified bloodstain pattern analyst through the IAI, led participants through the history of bloodstain pattern examination, followed by proper identification, documentation, and collection of bloodstain pattern evidence. Taxonomy, nomenclature of stains, and the proper photography method were also discussed, as well as the components needed to properly reconstruct a scene including bloodstain evidence.

Participants were then presented with a case study, which highlighted bloodstain pattern reconstruction. Visual aids were also provided, to allow participants a close-up encounter of differing patterns. Thank you to all who attended this training, we look forward to the next!

Call For Speakers for In-State Training

The SCIAI is continuously searching for members and/or parties who are interested in speaking at upcoming educational conferences or trainings. If you are certified in a specialized area or have expertise in a specific field and experience teaching adult learners, please contact an SCIAI Officer with your information, resume, and topic you are interested in sharing. Upcoming speakers will be featured in training announcements as well as on the SCIAI's website.



IN THE NEWS

NCIAI Meeting for Latent Print Examiners

Latent Print Examiners within the SCIAI have been invited to attend the North Carolina IAI LPE meeting **November 9th** in McLeansville, NC. Attendance will count towards LPE certification/recertification. Boxed lunches from Apple Spice Junction will be provided by the NCIAI. If you are interested in attending, please contact Doreen Huntington at DHUNTIN@guilfordcountync.gov with your name and agency.

Interested?

Who: Practicing LPEs or Instructors

When: Friday, November 9th

Where: Guilford County Sheriff's Office, District 2

5440 Millstream Road

McLeansville, NC

Time: 10:00am – 4:00pm

Tentative Agenda

- *State v McPhaul* – The Reliable Application of Fingerprint Evidence
- SAFIS Update - NGI Tutorial
- OSAC Draft - Standard for Friction Ridge Examination Conclusions
- SBI Evidence Handling
- PADTRAX - Evidence Tracking System

Annual IAI International Forensic Educational Conference

The 2019 Conference will be held August 11 - 17, 2019 at the [Peppermill Resort](#) in Reno, Nevada. Mark your calendars and check the IAI's website for updates as the date draws closer.

New IAI Website

The IAI has launched its new website, featuring updated formats for accessing the Member's section as well as past *Journal of Forensic Identification* publications and an easy format for membership fee payment. Be sure to check it out at theiai.org - and don't forget that membership fees are due!

Los Angeles Discovery Request Encourages LPEs to Be Prepared

Insight and opinions provided by John P. Black



Over this past summer, The Office of the Public Defender in Los Angeles County issued a discovery request in a case involving fingerprint evidence. While discovery requests are common, what stood out was the type of information that was being sought – extremely detailed and obviously from a well-informed source familiar with the latent print examination process. The SCIAI reached out to John P. Black (CLPE, CFWE, CSCSA), one of the SCIAI's former presidents and a qualified courtroom expert in latent print examination, to ask his opinion of the discovery request and what this may mean in the future for latent print examiners.

The following is John Black's response to the aforementioned discovery request.

On August 6, 2018 the Office of the Public Defender in Los Angeles County, California issued an extremely thorough discovery request in a case involving fingerprint evidence. To many readers the request may seem excessive (there are 20 items listed), but I believe it is simply indicative of the defense bar's increasing awareness of the challenges to forensic evidence. I will address some of the more salient items and offer some insight from my 23 years of experience as a latent print examiner.

IN THE NEWS

Los Angeles Discovery Request

Many of the requested items are administrative in nature but are extremely relevant. Examples include standard operating procedures (SOPs), training manuals and quality assurance manuals. The defense will review these items (often with the assistance of their own fingerprint expert) to determine if the agency of record is operating in accordance with recognized best practices. Any deficiencies in protocols or procedures will afford the defense an opportunity to make an argument. Therefore, it is imperative that fingerprint examiners understand the 'why' behind the 'what' they do, making sure they follow procedure unless there is a legitimate reason for deviation. And if there is then that reason must be documented in the case notes.

This brings us to another important request: examination documentation (bench notes). It is absolutely mission-critical to document both the conclusions and the bases for those conclusions. Another qualified examiner should be able to look at your case file and be able to clearly determine why you reached a given conclusion. If this documentation is lacking – and it often is based on cases I have reviewed – then the defense can and should make an argument. Along these same lines, crime scene investigators should photograph any latent prints developed on scene prior to lifting. This is part of the fingerprint documentation and provides evidence of a print's location and orientation on a surface. Again, if these photographs are miss-

ing then the defense can make a legitimate argument.

Other items in this discovery request include proficiency test records, accreditation and certification records, corrective action records, as well as the résumé of the examiner. In fact, you should always expect that the defense has these items. I recall a trial when I was a SLED agent where the defense attorney questioned me on *voir dire* directly from my résumé. His questions were both fair and reasonable.

Bear in mind that the defense can and should request the above items and more. The Sixth Amendment affords the accused the right "to be confronted with the witnesses against him... and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense." The defense is simply exercising due diligence for their client, which includes a thorough review of everything related to the fingerprint evidence, particularly if that evidence is inculpatory.

Summary of Discovery Request which pertained to LPEs:

- **The names and addresses of persons the prosecutor intends to call as witnesses at trial**
- **All statements of the defendant**
- **All relevant real evidence seized or**

obtained as part of the investigation of the offense charged. The existence of a felony conviction of any material witness whose credibility is likely to be critical to the outcome of the trial

- **Any exculpatory evidence**
- **Relevant written or recorded statements of witnesses or reports of the statements of witnesses whom the prosecutor intends to call at trial, including any reports of the statements of experts made in conjunction with this case, including the results of physical or mental examinations, scientific tests, experiments, or comparisons which the prosecutor intends to offer as evidence at trial**
- **Documentation of Corrective Actions for Discrepancies and Errors for all individuals who examined the prints, compared the prints, reviewed the comparisons, or will testify in court and documentation of any errors or mistakes of any kind made**



John P. Black is the owner of Black & White Forensics, LLC in South Carolina. His focus is to assist various criminal justice system stakeholders in understanding the value of forensic evidence within his areas of expertise, which include latent prints, crime scene investigation, footwear/tire tracks and blood-stain pattern analysis. John has conducted over 250 training events throughout North America, Africa, Asia, Europe and Central America. He is certified by the IAI as a Latent Print Examiner, Footwear Examiner and Senior Crime Scene Analyst. John offers consulting and training services for attorneys, law enforcement, forensic personnel and others.

- **Copy of Fingerprint Technician Quality Assurance and Training Guidelines and Protocols**
- **Digital version of all latent prints lifted, whether or not they were compared. Includes all lifts cards and exemplar fingerprints utilized—minimum resolution of 600 dpi**
- **Chain of custody and current disposition of evidence including copies of all records that document the collection, handling, and storage of fingerprint evidence — from initial point of collection up to the current disposition**
- **Complete copy of AFIS file and results of any and all AFIS searches run in connection with the case**
- **Documentation or information for all individuals who examined, compared, or reviewed the prints and disagreed with another examiner's opinion.**
- **Certification of individuals who examined, compared, reviewed the comparisons, or plan to testify regarding the prints**
- **A copy of resume for each individual who examined, compared, reviewed the comparisons, or will testify in court**
- **Copies of all licenses or other certificates of accreditation in fingerprint analysis held by the laboratory as well as a copy of the lab or agency's most recent external audit report**
- **A summary of proficiency test results for the past 5 years for each individual who examined, compared, reviewed the prints or will testify in court**
- **A copy of the quality assurance manual for the fingerprint unit.**
- **A copy of the training manual fingerprint examination and comparison**
- **A copy of the Unit Policy Manual**
- **All communication (oral or in writing) between the DA, latent print unit and law enforcement including but not limited to what the latent print examiner knew about the case and the suspect prior to the examination of the latent prints in the case.**

Thank you to Nova Grilli for drawing our attention to this case for the purpose of educating our members!

INTERVIEW WITH AN OFFICER

Getting to know our 2018 serving Officers

For our last issue of *The Identifier* for the 2018 year, we wrap up our Interview with an Officer segment with our Historian, Luke Spratt. Luke can be found at most of the SCIAI events, camera in hand, documenting our training and conferences as well as ensuring that our social media presence is recognized.

Thank you Luke for all you have done this past year in helping our organization grow!



LUKE SPRATT

Historian

Tell us about your work experience. How long have you been a practitioner in the field and what is your current position?

I have been a Crime Scene Investigator for 3.5 years. I completed a 400-hour internship at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office in April 2015 and was hired by Charleston Police Department in June 2015.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I knew I wanted to be involved in Forensic Science ever since I took an introduction class at my high school. I originally had my sights on lab work until I experienced crime scene investigation through my internship. I immediately fell in love with the field and the

unpredictability. I love not knowing what I am walking into every day. Crime Scene work is certainly not predictable!

What improvements would you like to see in the forensic community?

I do not know if I have the exact answer but some uniformity would certainly help the community. As I have networked with other departments through training and conferences, I have learned that not everyone is always doing things the same way. I believe this is the root of the scrutiny forensic science receives from 'outsiders'.

Interview continued on page 11

Attestor Spotlight

Innovation in Forensics: The Latest Developments in Viewing & Documentation of Evidence at the Crime Scene and in the Laboratory.

How do I “visualize” latent evidence? What are the best tools?

This is a fundamental question that needs to be answered if the forensic professional is to do their job effectively. Norbert Jaufmann, the managing director of Attestor Forensics Gmbh and myself (Alex Gieser, President, Attestor Forensics US Inc) ran a workshop on this topic at the San Antonio IAI meeting this summer. Norbert has an engineering degree and has been a leader in the forensic equipment business for a very long time. I, on the other hand have been in the forensics equipment industry since 2001 but still only have a working knowledge of this forensic process and have a lot of learning to do. The workshop attendees were split down the middle as far as their level of understanding. This made me feel better and it should comfort you too. Sometimes we need to stop what we are doing and take the time to learn the basic “how” and “why” we do things the way we do. Some of the smartest people in the world are in the forensic industry. Let’s see how they are doing things and what equipment (tools) they are using.

Let’s get started. The term latent indicates that something is not normally visible with the naked eye. It may though be “seen” using special illumination and/or camera equipment and techniques.

Evidence could be detected or visualized by:

- Its natural appearance and visibility
- Some form of contrast enhancement
- After chemical treatment

How do we get “contrast”?

Contrast exists, when different material “looks” different to our eye. Different material will exhibit different ratios of reflection and absorption of the individual light shining on it.

Contrast can be enhanced by different lighting techniques (incident, oblique, specular ...) and by exposing the evidence to different levels of light of a particular color. Also, by causing the evidence to expose fluorescence by exposing it to a light of a single color.



This document provides general information on which wavelength of LIGHTcubes can be used for which application and for selecting fitting Safety & Viewing Glasses and Camera Filters. This information is not prescriptive since variations in the evidence material and the circumstances of carrying out the examination may require the user to vary wavelengths of light sources and filters.

LIGHTcube	Type	Application	Sample Images	Viewing Glasses & Camera Filter
	LIGHTcube NWW5000 Neutral White 5000K wide beam angle & LIGHTcube DLW6500 Day Light White 6500K wide beam angle	Suitable for general search of various evidence matter. The neutral white light 5000K of NWW5000 is in particular good for enhanced contrast in e.g. finger and foot prints in dust. Day Light White of DLW6500 is the preferred choice for color correct photography.		no filter or safety goggles/glasses required
	LIGHTcube UV365 ultraviolet 365nm	Suitable for general search of stains, e.g. blood spatter, search and examination of UV fluorescent matter, e.g. various textile fibers, banknotes, passports and other documents.		Safety Goggles PWM-FUV recommended for user safety 
	LIGHTcube RBM447 royal blue medium beam angle & LIGHTcube RBF447 royal blue narrow beam angle	Suitable for the excitation of fluorescence in various evidence types, e.g. fluorescent fingerprint powders, various dyes like Basic Yellow (BY40), fibers, tooth and bone fragments as well as body fluids as semen, urea etc..		Safety Goggles PWM-FRB & Camera Filter GCM-FRB 

When do I use which light and which filter is best for my application? It's hard to get a clear answer isn't it? Here is a cheat sheet that you will find useful (see images below).

The LABview Generation II Blood, GSR & General Evidence Viewer has an integrated filter wheel that by selecting the forensic light color on the touch screen the applicable camera filter will be selected and used. The system is based on the innovative modular forensic light source (LIGHTcubes). Each LIGHTcube can be dimmed. On the LABview, the



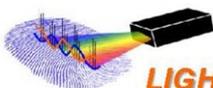
Figure 2 LABview II: Blood, GSR and General Evidence Viewer



LIGHTcubes: modular forensic light source



LIGHTcube on "hot shoe" adaptor



LIGHTcube Application Guide 08/2018

LIGHTcubes can be moved and angled for optimal illumination conditions. They can also be placed on this handle for crime scene use. It can also be easily attached to the "hot shoe" of your camera. Appropriate filter must allow no or minimum excitation light to pass or cut off any of the fluorescence.

The high quality filter (don't go cheap on this) shall view wavelengths as steep as possible. It shall have the same characteristics all over the viewing area. Depending on light intensity it should not emit self-fluorescence.

What are different methods for developing and finding latent fingerprints?

You can dust using fluorescent fingerprint powders. The POWDERado includes white light and UV light to view the fluorescence optimally. It also has robust downdraft and open sides.

Fluorescent fingerprint fuming. Standard cyanoacrylate works perfect, if your background gives a nice contrast to white. Some evidence will need subsequent (fluorescent) staining, e.g. with BY40. Alternatively fuming with one step chemicals is a viable option. MEGAfume is process controlled, all glass construction,

LIGHTcube	Type	Application	Sample Images	Viewing Glasses & Camera Filter
	LIGHTcube BGM470 blue green medium beam angle & LIGHTcube BGF470 blue green narrow beam angle	Suitable for evidence which emits fluorescence when excited with blue-green light, e.g. Rhodamin or Lumicyano™. Also for background reduction if background fluoresces strongly with blue light.		Safety Goggles PWM-FBG & Camera Filter GCM-FBG
	LIGHTcube CYM505 cyan medium beam angle & LIGHTcube CYF505 cyan narrow beam angle	Special wavelength version, particularly trimmed to visualize fingerprints developed with Lumicyano™ in high contrast. Could also serve as an alternative to blue-green.		Safety Goggles PWM-FCY & Camera Filter GCM-FCY
	LIGHTcube PGM530 pure green medium beam angle & LIGHTcube PGF530 pure green narrow beam angle	Suitable for evidence which emits fluorescence when excited with blue-green light, e.g. DFO or Indandione-Zinc but also for contrast enhancement for e.g. Ninhydrin with black & white photography.		Safety Goggles PWM-FPG & Camera Filter GCM-FPG
	LIGHTcube IR850 infrared wide beam angle	High quality illumination for IR visualization of blood stains, GSR or IR fingerprint powders. Note: IR-sensitive camera and a fitting filter is required. Images right recorded with SCENEview BV800.		Safety Goggles PWM-FIR recommended for user safety

easy to clean.

DFO development process includes bathing the evidence (porous or semi porous material) in DFO solution. Then completely dried in a vented area. When dry, insert for development in a forensic climate chamber at approx. 100°C with no relative humidity for 10-20 minutes.

DFO treatment chemical: petroleum ether based DFO solution (BVDA). Development: NINcha M31 (100°C/ RH off) view results under green or blue-green forensic light with and suitable filter

The Indandione development process includes bathing the evidence in IND/ Zinc solution and drying in a vented area. Development in a forensic

climate chamber at approx. 75-100°C and 40 - 50%rh or RH switched off for 10-20 minutes

Treatment Chemical : HFE7100 based. IND-Zinc solution (BVDA) Development: NINcha M31 (80° C/40% RH). View results under green or blue-green forensic light with and appropriate filter

The NINcha Series fingerprint development chambers will develop DFO, IND and Ninhydrin treated evidence.



POWDERado: Downflow fingerprint powder workstation

NINcha: Ninhydrin, DFO and IND fingerprint development chambers

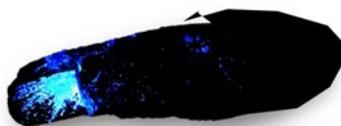
Viewing blood spatter, blood stains, and GSR

Luminescence and IR imaging are great tools for viewing blood.

As you probably know traditionally there are challenges of using Luminol, Bluestar, HemaScein and similar. The luminescence is rather weak and difficult for the human eye to be seen. The human eye needs full darkness and time to adjust to the darkness. A tripod mounted LTE photography is usually required or at least recommended.

Excessive application bears risk of reduced repeatability. It can wash down blood spatter pattern. Risk of being unusable for DNA.

Completely darkened scene presents risk for crime scene officer's health & safety. Destroying other evidence when moving about at the crime scene

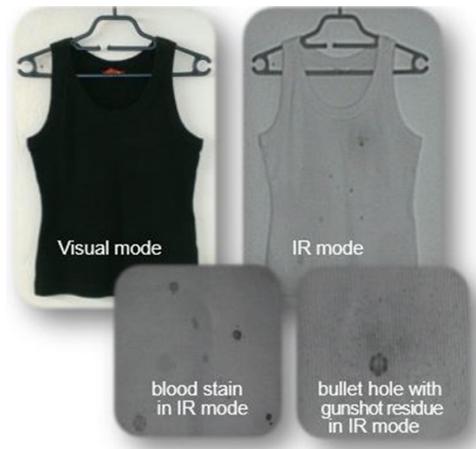


Luminol treated blood stain viewed with SCENEview LTE mode

The SCENEview allows you to document the crime scene using photography and video to see latent evidence with IR and residual light amplification technology.

These are the latest innovations and ideas for best viewing and documenting evidence in the lab or at the crime scene. The technology is on your side! It is nothing to be intimidated by. My hope is that it will help you do your job better and more efficiently.

Alex Gieser is the President of Attestor Forensics US Inc based in Quakertown, PA. alex@attestor-forensics.com.



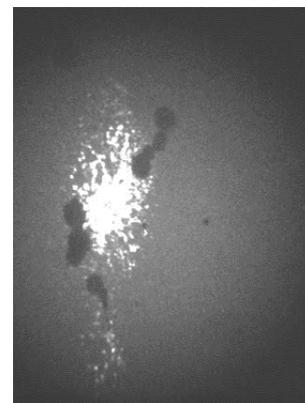
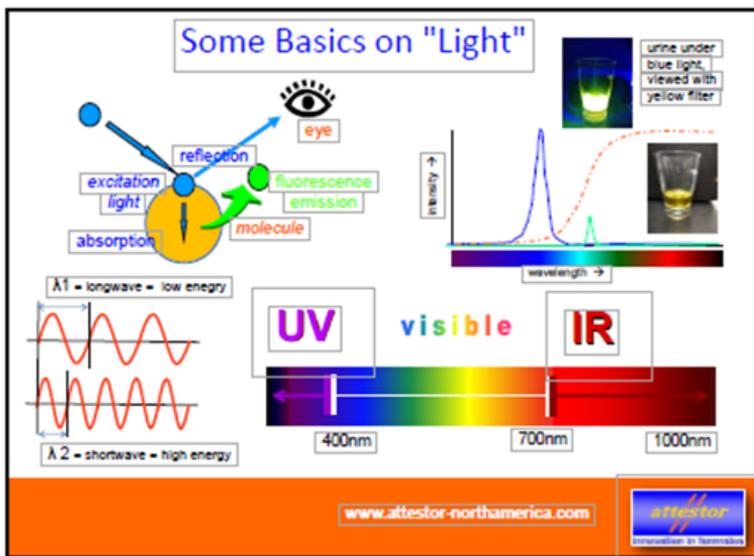
As viewed with SCENEview IR mode



SCENEview BV800 Bloodstain and GSR viewer



MEGAfume: Cyanoacrylate Fuming Chamber



Luminol treated blood viewed with SCENEview LUM mode

INTERVIEW WITH AN OFFICER continued

What are you passionate about (this does not have to be work-related!)?

Outside of work, I focus a lot on running and fitness. I enjoy running as it is a stress reliever, social activity, and keeps me in shape.

What is your vision for the SCIAI?

The SCIAI should serve the forensic science practitioner in our state. I believe we have already started to do this with our free/inexpensive trainings and conferences we have held. Numerous times, I have paid for training out of state just to gain the experience when SCIAI was inactive. Our field is innovative and there are always new things to learn. Training is crucial in keeping up with these advances.

Is there a training course or

certification you have completed that you feel has furthered your career?

In December, I took a 40-hour Bloodstain Pattern Analysis course with Craig Moore of SeeMore

Forensics. This class was hands down the best and most well put together training I have attended. I have always had a slight interest in BPA and this class has pushed me to study the field further and work toward completing analysis/ obtaining my BPA certification.

“Our field is innovative and there are always new things to learn. Training is crucial...”

Elections are coming soon for the 2019 term. **We need YOU!**

Case Study **SPOTLIGHT**

As interesting cases are brought to our attention, we seek to share what they taught us with our members. This case study is brought to us by Master Crime Scene Investigator Randal Unterbrink with the Charleston Police Department. Randy is a 28-year veteran with the department, 15 years of those years have been spent in the Crime Scene unit. Randy is also an adjunct professor at Charleston Southern University, teaching Techniques of Crime Scene Investigations to both undergraduate and graduate students.

That One Piece of Evidence

By Randal Unterbrink

Having worked thousands of crime scenes over the past fifteen years, a handful remain as an engraved memory. Some stand out due to an environment that was not pleasant by sight or by smell. Others are due to the degree of cruelty a person exhibited onto another. And then there are those that had an unexpectedly pleasant ending that helped give this type of work its value. I want to give an example of the latter type.

One of my more proud moments in crime scene work is not a high profile one at all. In fact, the case, early in my career, was barely noticed by anyone beyond the victim, the detective, and me. The incident is an armed robbery to an individual where no injury is inflicted and where nothing of monetary value is taken. The scene occurs on a Charleston street corner where a college student is walking alone late at night. The suspect, while holding a firearm, approaches the victim and demands money. Frightened, the young college student replies that he doesn't have anything to give. Realizing the futility of the situation, the suspect quickly flees into the night, leaving the victim dazed.

I soon receive the dispatch to respond. Upon arrival I observe several officers combing the area, looking for anything of evidentiary value. I exit my vehicle and walk to the officer in charge who gives a sketchy summary of what is known at the time. I scan the scene to notice that the area is covered by a dark night sky as street lights partially lit the immediate sidewalk area. Outside of a few passing vehicles, the street is quiet. My initial overview of the scene is somewhat pessimistic. Is there anything to find here? Based on what I understand, which is little, I wonder whether my presence is useful. After all, there are only two known points to consider: an empty dark street and a startled victim. My thoughts of what I can do must have been expressed on my face because the officer in charge quickly comes up with an action plan for me. "Maybe you can take a picture of the sidewalk!" Knowing that taking a photograph of a sidewalk will not help the case, I simply blink my eyes. The officer then comes up with another idea. Pointing down at the sidewalk he says, "Well, the victim's wallet is over there, next to the building."



Case Study **SPOTLIGHT**

“Maybe you can get a fingerprint off it or something”

Maybe you can get a fingerprint off it, or something.” A wallet? I learn that after the suspect demanded money, the victim handed over his wallet, which was then tossed. Barely visible in the shadows, I walk over and, with gloved hands, pick the wallet up. Disappointedly, the outer surface is well-worn, rough, and has a fabric surface. I have little confidence that a fingerprint is coming off that thing any time soon. However, with a little curiosity, I continue to examine it. Holding the wallet, I gently toy with it, thinking how I might go through it like the suspect may have. Unfolding the wallet, I find that the compartment commonly designed to hold loose paper currency is empty. I ask the victim if anything was in it prior to this event, like money. The student responds, “No, nothing. I told the guy that I was a broke college kid.” Peering back in the wallet, I notice two small pieces of paper down inside the currency compartment. The items appear insignificant and that it has limited visual exposure. As I thumb through that part of the wallet, I notice that my thumb reaches near them, making the suspect’s contact with these items feasible. I remove the papers and recognize them as store receipts. I approach the victim for a second time and state the need for me to collect the papers in order to process them in the crime scene lab for latent fingerprints. I secure the receipts for transport, and the



wallet is returned to the victim.

A short time after dipping the receipts in a tray of chemical ninhydrin at the crime scene office, purplish stains in the form of fingerprint ridge detail begin to appear. I am not particularly excited at seeing the prints appear. After all, I conclude, there probably should be prints on them from either the cashier who rips the paper from the register or from the victim who stuffs the receipts in his own wallet.

Several weeks pass and other cases occupy my time. Through a coincidental encounter, I meet the detective who is assigned the case. “Hey,” the detective begins. “We made an arrest on that armed robbery you went to.” Glad for the victim and for the detective’s success in completing the case, I ask how he solved it. The detective

looks at me and states, “No, no, it isn’t me. It’s the paper receipts you processed.” The fingerprints came back to a guy who the victim did not know. Because the

suspect had a prior record, a photo line-up was made, and the victim picked him out. After hearing the results

“As I thumb through that part of the wallet, I notice that my thumb reaches near them, making the suspect’s contact with these items feasible.”

Case Study Continued



of the case I also realize that I probably will not be going to court on this either. After all, how can an attorney explain to a jury how his client's fingerprint is in a stranger's wallet?

While this case is not complicated or come with many twists and turns, it is important to me personally. It occurred early in my time with the unit and is the one that helped influence how I view cases. I realized that the absence of evidence in a scene can be the result of either not digging hard enough, not keeping an open mind on how events may have occurred, or by not having enough curiosity that makes an investigator seek out more information.

If you have a case study that you would like to see published in our newsletter, submissions may be made to the Editor for consideration.

SCIAI ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ The SCIAI is actively looking to fill the officer position of Editor. If interested contact Tyler Bucholtz or Nova Grilli – contact information is listed on the SCIAI website.
- ◆ Membership renewals are available on the SCIAI website www.sciai.org. Memberships renewed will be valid through July 1, 2019.
- ◆ Speakers and Instructors are needed for future conferences and training days. For more information review the Call for Speakers section on page 4.
- ◆ Planning for the 2019 Spring Educational conference has begun. Watch the website for upcoming information!
- ◆ Our SCIAI store page is now available! Check it out at <http://www.sciai.signaturesonlinestores.com>
- ◆ Submissions for case study features and Member Spotlights are open. We want to highlight interesting or unique cases our members have been involved with. If you would like to see yourself, a coworker, or one of your cases featured, contact the Editor at wojoan@charleston-sc.gov





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Don't forget to renew your membership! Forms are also available online at www.sciai.org. Email completed forms to: grillin@charleston-sc.gov

UPCOMING TRAINING/EVENTS

October 16-18, 2018 -- **Advanced Digital Imaging** presented by Foray Technologies, Columbia, SC (SLED Annex) [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS AND REGISTRATION FORM](#)

October 22-26, 2018 -- **Shooting Incident Reconstruction II**, Lexington, SC
[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#) For additional information please contact, Inv. Thomas A. Smith with the Lexington County Sheriff's Office at 803-223-1689.

February 4-8, 2019 -- **Bloodstain Pattern Analysis I**, Florence, SC
Instructors Ross M. Gardner and Tom "Grif" Griffin - For course information and registration go to bevelgardner.com

April 10-11, 2019 -- **SCIAI Annual Spring Conference**, Greer, SC. Speaker and Vendor registration is now open on the [Spring Conference](#) page.

If you have upcoming training that you would like advertised in the newsletter, contact the Editor with course information and details!



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