IOWA DIVISION OF THE IAI: 4N6

Iowa IAI Newsletter: 2022 Volume 1, Issue 1

A Letter from the Editor:

The Coronavirus Pandemic has been a difficult time for organizations around the world. The Iowa IAI was no exception.

Through it all, the Iowa IAI Board has been working hard to meet the training and networking needs of our members, while at the same time weighing safety concerns in light of the Pandemic.

In addition to the innumerable ways that Covid-19 has upended our lives both personally and professionally, 2020 saw the postponement of the Iowa IAI Advanced Crime Scene School and the cancellation of our 2020 Educational Conference and Business Meeting.

In 2021 we made up for lost time. Members participated in both Basic and Advanced Crime Scene Schools; went to the International Association for Identification conference held in Nashville, TN; and attended the Iowa IAI 2021 Educational Conference and Business Meeting held in Waterloo. 2022 looks to be an even more exciting year.

My sincere thanks go out to all of you who have taken the time to be instructors, students, hosts, and organizers at these events. Your support is what makes this organization strong!

Also, thanks so much to David Billings, Hadley Mikovec, and Mike Wisniewski for contributing articles and resources to this newsletter!

Thank you,

Steve Tvrdik

Iowa IAI Newsletter Editor

In this issue:

Pandemic Timeline of the Iowa IAI:

- March 2020- First reported Covid-19 cases in Iowa.
- May 2020- The Iowa IAI Board decides to postpone its Basic CS School and annual conference.
- June 2021- Basic Crime Scene School taught by Schwarz Forensic Enterprises
- September 2021- Advanced Crime Scene. School taught by the Iowa IAI.
- November 2021- Conference & Business Meeting held in Waterloo.

Iowa in the National News in 2021/2022:

- Des Moines native Doug Jensen and six other Iowans are accused of taking place in the U.S. Capitol riot.
- Cristian Bahena Rivera is convicted of the murder of Mollie Tibbetts and sentenced to life in prison.
- Frances Haugen, a native of Iowa City, is revealed as a whistleblower for the WSJ's "Facebook Files" series.
- Union workers at five John Deere plants in Iowa go on strike.
- Artemis Program Astronaut and Cedar Falls native, Raja Chari, is sent to the International Space Station for a six-month mission.
- Warm temperatures in December cause a winter derecho and multiple tornadoes.

2021 Basic Crime Scene School

(Hosted by the Ankeny Police Department)

2021 Advanced CS School

Thank you to Kathy Madison of the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner for volunteering her time and expertise to train students in Major Case Print collection techniques.

2021 Business Meeting & Educational Conference

Thank you to all of the presenters and attendees of our 2021 fall conference in Waterloo.


INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
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106th EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE
JULY 31 - AUGUST 6, 2022
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Photographing Latent Prints

By David Billings and Steve Tvrdik

One of the more challenging (yet important) aspects of latent print processing is photography. Sometimes the quality of our photos, or lack thereof, boils down to not having the right equipment. Other times, it's the result of the time saving measure of "Photo, lift, and go." It may even be a result of a lack of knowledge, training, or confidence in one's abilities.

Overall and mid-range photos can be routine. The close-up photos, however, are where the danger lies. There can be the urge to take your close-ups and move on, without considering the fact that the close-ups are the most important photos for latent print comparison.

In this article, we're going to go through some important aspects of taking close-ups. The process doesn't change much from scene to scene, but may require adjustment to the camera due to variables such as lighting.

MOUNTING YOUR CAMERA: First and foremost this isn't an article about print processing, so let's assume you've already done that. You've developed a beautiful print. Lots of detail. Now what?

One of the most useful tools in your lab, other than your camera and the proper lens, is a copy stand. The copy stand allows you to mount your camera so that it's easily adjustable vertically with a fixed horizontal plane. It takes the guess work out, making sure your camera lens is 90 degrees to the platform and the camera sensor is parallel with the platform.

Now, this doesn't mean your *target item* will be parallel with the platform, however. You may need to make some adjustments for irregularly shaped items. I've used sticky note pads, *Play-doh*®, lens covers…anything I could get my hands on that would help me level out the item being photographed so it is parallel with the platform and 90 degrees to the axis of the camera lens.

Figure 1: Copy Stand
https://www.ttind.com/cs4060overview.html

Figure 1 depicts a stand with attached lighting, but you can purchase a simple unit without built-in side lighting for under $150. Any unit that offers you a platform with a vertical post and a camera attachment will suffice, but the attached lighting does offer a nice even distribution of light.

Figure 2

If you're in the field, a tripod with a mounting post that rotates horizontally and has a rotating ball head, as seen in figure 2 (or something similar), is recommended. Instead of adjusting the fingerprint so it's parallel to camera, you adjust the camera back so it's parallel to the fingerprint. This is often the most challenging thing to do in the field if your tripod doesn't offer easy adjustments.

THE LENS: It's imperative that you use a macro lens for your close-ups. A macro lens is designed to take close-up, sharp, and highly detailed images. A 60mm macro lens is ideal for a high quality latent print image. You can use your wide angle lens to take a mid-range photo of the item your print is on, but then switch to a macro lens to get a good close-up of the print. If you can't switch lenses on your camera, you will need to use the camera's macro feature (if it has one). It's usually indicated by a flower icon. Better yet, consider a new camera that affords you the ability to change lenses when needed.

THE CAMERA: So, what's the camera function that controls the depth of field? You got it, the aperture. Also commonly referred to as the F-stop. The smaller the aperture (F11, F16, F22) the more depth of field you get in your photo. Conversely, the larger the aperture (F2.8, F4, F5.6) the less depth of field is observed.

When I'm looking down a fence line in an overall photo, the depth of field (area in focus) can change drastically in front of and beyond the focal point, depending on the aperture setting. The larger the aperture, the less of the fence is in focus. The smaller the aperture, the more of the fence is in focus.

When taking a close-up photograph, that depth of field can make a big difference, especially when a latent print is on a three-dimensional item. A great example of this is a print on a curved surface like a soda can. No matter where you focus, part of the print will either be curved toward or curved away from your focal point. A narrow depth of field may render much of the print out of focus, making the resulting photo worthless for identification purposes. A high depth of field will capture more of the print in focus, and it's always best practice to strive for greater depth of field than less. The best place to start is in the middle, F11, and adjust from there.

In addition to the aperture, we should consider the shutter speed. However, it is substantially less important than the aperture in our "soda can" scenario. The reason is because the item we are photographing isn't moving and neither is the camera when mounted on a tripod or copy stand. So once we have the aperture set for the appropriate depth of field all we need to do is set the shutter speed in a position that gives us the proper exposure. It doesn't matter if it's a long exposure because your camera is mounted.

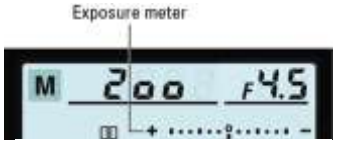

Figure 3

Figure 3 shows us a proper exposure at a shutter speed of 1/200th of a second with an aperature of F4.5.

Next, the ISO (International Organziation for Standardization) refers to the film speed or sensitivty of the camera sensor to light. In forensic photography our objective is to set this value as close to 100 as possible. The lower the ISO the less grainy your image will be. The downside of this is that the camera sensor is not very sensitive to light at this setting. Once again, this isn't really an issue since your camera is mounted on the copy stand and your shutter speed can be as long as you want it to be. It's also not an issue because you can use a high intensity light to accommodate for the lack of sensitivity.

Figure 4

SCALE AND FRAMING: Once your camera settings are ready to roll your focus shifts to setting up the print to be photographed.

First, We've already mentioned that the camera sensor must be parallel to the fingerprint (represented as the red lines in Figure 4) which is important enough to repeat. This may also be described as the lens of the camera being 90 degrees to the target (indicated by the yellow arrow in Figure 4). When the scale is not parallel an effect called parallax occurs which we'll discuss in more detail later in this article.

Second, the scale must to be on the same plane as the print. Not a centimeter above, not a centimeter below...**it must be on the same plane**!

Third, the print MUST fill the frame of the viewfinder with the print and a scale. We're not taking a family photo in the Rocky Mountains, so don't waste space in your image with empty pixels that aren't needed!pixels that aren't needed!

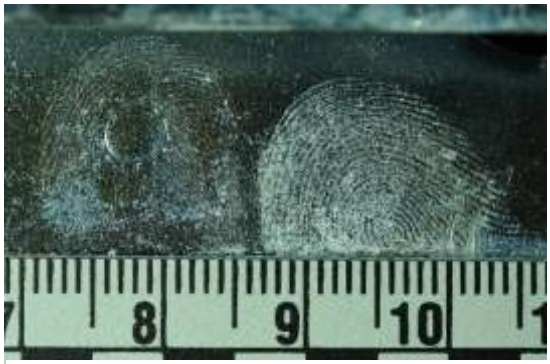

Figure 5

Fourth, the scale must be in the field of view next to the print. It's crucial that you include enough of the scale that the examiner can establish if you are using an Imperial or a Metric scale. Including the numbers on the scale, as seen in Figure 5, is best practice. Finally, you have to pick a side! Inches or centimeters? Either measurment system works, just be consistent from one print image to the next!

Lighting: Lighting can often be a challenge, but it doesn't have to be. In the age of digital cameras it is important to note that excessive light is the death of a digital image. Using a flash light as a light source *can* be acceptable, though, if done correctly.

The flashlight should be positioned at an oblique angle to prevent any reflection. Keep in mind that the hotspot cannot be directly over the fingerprint being photographed, because it causes light metering issues with the camera.

Figure 4: Link

This results in an image that is bright in the center and black around the edges. It's best to use the "spill" of the flashlight beam, as seen in Figure 6. This provides an even level of intensity. Alternatively, you can position your flashlight so that the hotspot fills the entire frame of your image, lighting everything with equal intensity.

Utilizing an external light source that offers an even distribution of lighting throughout avoids this problem entirely. LED lights are often an excellent source.

Parallax: Parallax is the apparent visual change in an object due to the relative position of the viewer. Photographs with a high degree of parallax make it very difficult to scale the image 1:1, and can severely limit their usefulness for fingerprint, footwear, and tire comparisons.

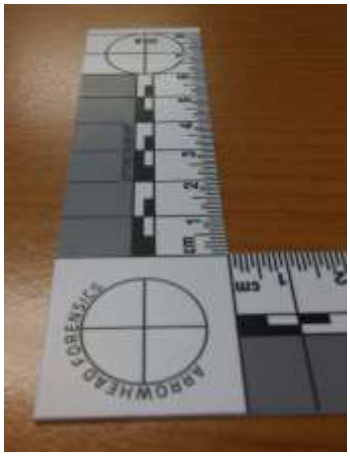

Figure 5: Parallax

Parallax occurs as a result of your camera being on a different plane than the impression you're photographing.

An example of parallax can be seen in Figure 7. Objectively, we know that every centimeter on this scale *should* measure the same length (1 centimeter). However, due to the angle of the camera relative to the position of the scale, the resulting photograph appears to show otherwise: The lines closer to the viewer appear to be larger and spaced more evenly, while the lines furthest away appear much smaller and closer together.

The same optical trick applies to the latent print you're photographing (see Figure 8).

Figure 8 depicts three images of the same fingerprint. The only difference is the angle of the print in relationship to the lens.

The pictures to the right and left were taken at an extreme angle, and the print appears as it would in a funhouse mirror. The tip and the base of the fingerprint are unnaturally condensed, and it

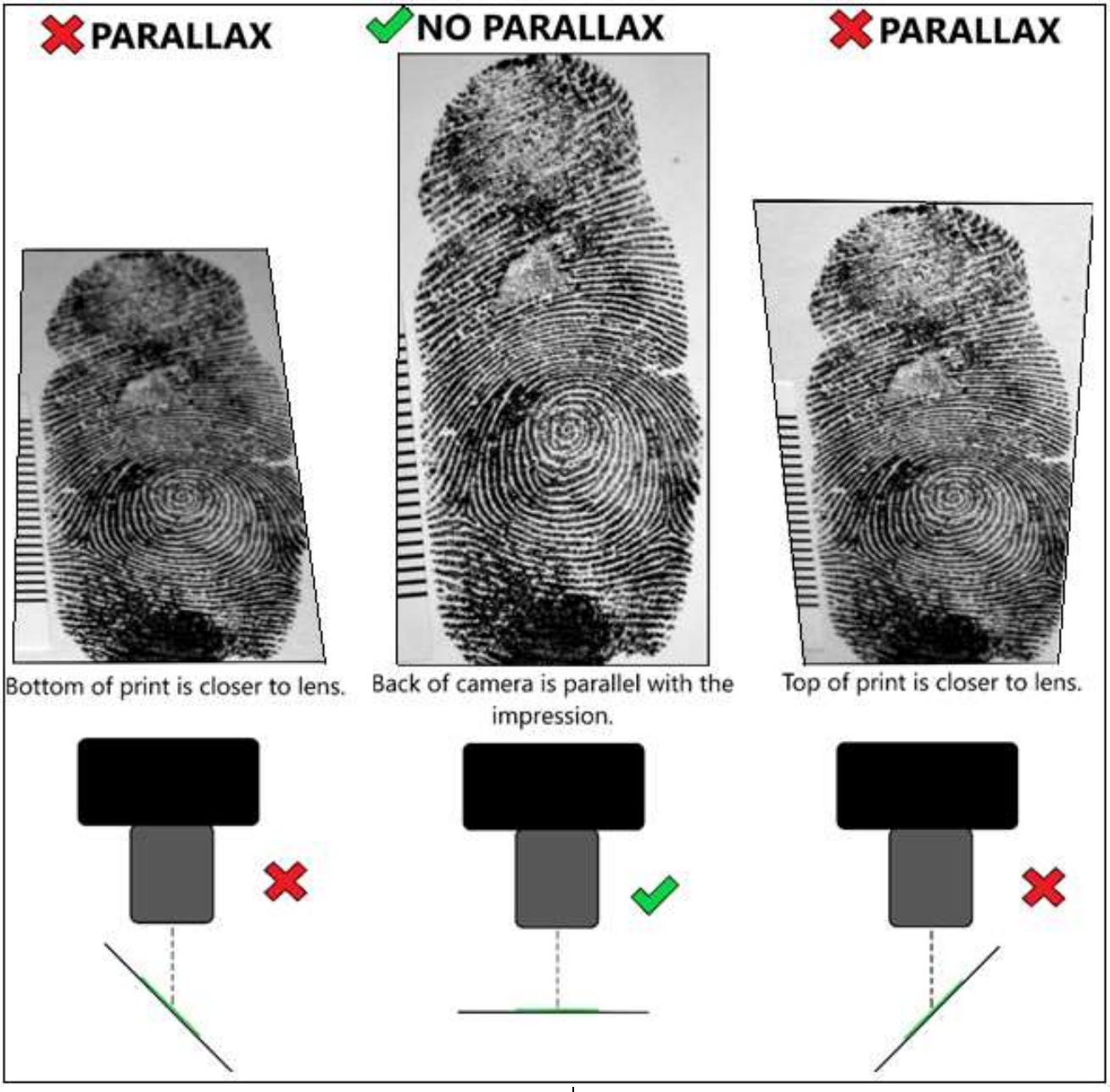

Figure 8: Parallax

appears to be much smaller than actual size. Both of these images have the same distortion as the scale in Figure 7.

The middle picture was taken with the back of the camera parallel to the plane of the impression on both the X and Y axis, and gives a true indication of the size of the print. You can see that the lines on the scale are evenly spread apart and that the edges of the scale are at right angles, rather than acute or obtuse as in the photos to the right and left.

You might be thinking: What does this matter? All three prints look good to me! ☺ Well, the problem is that this difference in scale may throw off search algorithms such as AFIS or NGI, meaning that the print may go unidentified.

It should be noted that this effect is made worse in footwear and tire track photography, due to their comparatively larger size. This is why using

an angle finder, level, and tripod are so important.

File Format: There are so many different file formats these days it's hard to keep track of them all. Many cameras offer their own proprietary file format that requires the reviewer to have proprietary software to review (CR2 for Canon, NEF for Nikon, etc). This presents a problem for prosecutors, defense attorneys, examiners, and even your own agency at times.

Make it easy on yourself, and save images in in a format that can be universally read. Uncompressed files such as RAW and TIFF are universal. A compressed format such as a JPG is universal as well, but comes with a downside. As the name suggests it's compressed. It's considered a "lossy" file format, and each time it is saved it will lose information, becoming less clear.

If you're taking latent print images with your cell phone, my suggestion is this: ***don't***. The best cell phones on the market have significantly smaller sensors than even the most modestly-priced full-frame DSLR (or "Digital Single-Lens Reflex") camera. It's like comparing a tanker truck and a skateboard. The techniques and best practices disucssed in this article do not include using a cell phone. Use a good, quality camera with the capability of taking a high resolution photo!

Insanity: Taking quality photos can sometimes drive us insane. Albert Einstein is often quoted as saying "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". While there is some difference in opinion as to who actually said this, whoever coined the phrase offered us a harsh truth: Getting the right photo isn't easy sometimes. It takes practice and educated adjustment, and you may not get the photo right the first time.

If you try to take the same picture with the same settings and the same lighting you're going to get the same results…that's insane.

Adjust one variable and a different, maybe even better, result will be revealed. When you take a great photo, move on. Digital "film" is cheap, and you can see immediate results. So if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again…just make the adjustments necessary to do it better the next time!

We've become almost desensitized to the challenges of taking photos due to the quality of cameras in our phones. We pull our our phone out, take a photo, and move on. They are good photos, but not the kind of photos we need to do our job well.

Through training, practice, knowledge, and effort we all have the ability to take quality photos. There are always challenges. Use the topics discussed in this article to help you navigate those challenges, especially when taking close-ups. Remember that digital film is cheap! If your image isn't what it should be, change one of the variables discussed and take the shot again. It may take a few shots, but when you make the right adjustment to the right variable you'll get the photo you need.

David Billings *is the Iowa IAI President and has worked as the Evidence Technician for the Ankeny Police Department since 2003.*

Steve Tvrdik *is the Iowa IAI Newsletter Editor and Webmaster. He is an IAI Certified Latent Print Examiner and has worked in forensics since 2005.*

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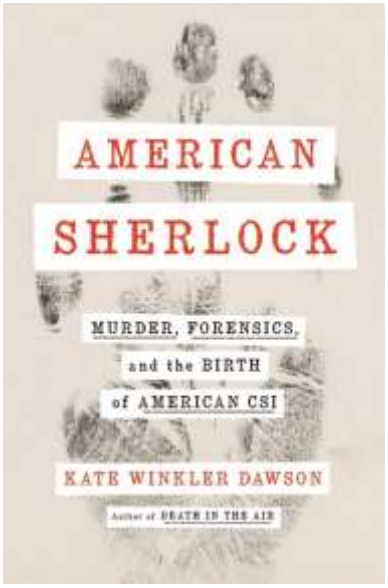


Book Review: "American Sherlock"

By Hadley Mikovec

Prohibition, lasting from 1920 until 1933, was quite the eventful time in the United States. When the Eighteen Amendment made illegal the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcohol, it created something I'm not sure lawmakers predicted: A large onset of both petty (burglaries, vandalism) and major (assault, armed robbery, homicide) crime.

As a result of this increase, many crimes went unsolved due to the sheer volume heaped onto police forces across the country. The cases that were solved were sometimes due to "lazy" police work. Back then, it appears the extent of an investigation was: "*Well, I think he did it and someone told someone who told me that he was there, so we're going to arrest him*."

In the current age of forensics being a consistent subject of podcasts, crime shows, and the media, it is difficult to remember that a century ago science was not a part of most criminal investigation or court procedures.

Enter Edward Oscar Heinrich, an objective and obsessive-compulsive chemist/Jack-of all-trades.

Have you heard of him? His name triggered a faint memory from my college days, when we were learning about blood spatter analysis. Honestly, though? His name was nothing more to me than an answer to a test question.

If only I had known!

An entertaining, enthralling mix of biography and true crime, Kate Winkler Dawson formats her book, *American Sherlock: Murder, Forensics, and the Birth of American CSI,* around Heinrich's most mysterious and sensational cases. Along the way, it explains how he trail blazed the fields of blood pattern analysis, ballistics, forensic photography, polygraphs, the use of fingerprints as courtroom evidence, and criminal profiling.

Dawson also truthfully explains Heinrich's flaws and failings in his work, something that can be a touchy subject in biographies.

After all, if we don't learn from our mistakes and the mistakes of others, how can move forward and do better? How else could we continue to forge onward in forensic science?

Dawson is a meticulous and dedicated researcher, which shows in her work.

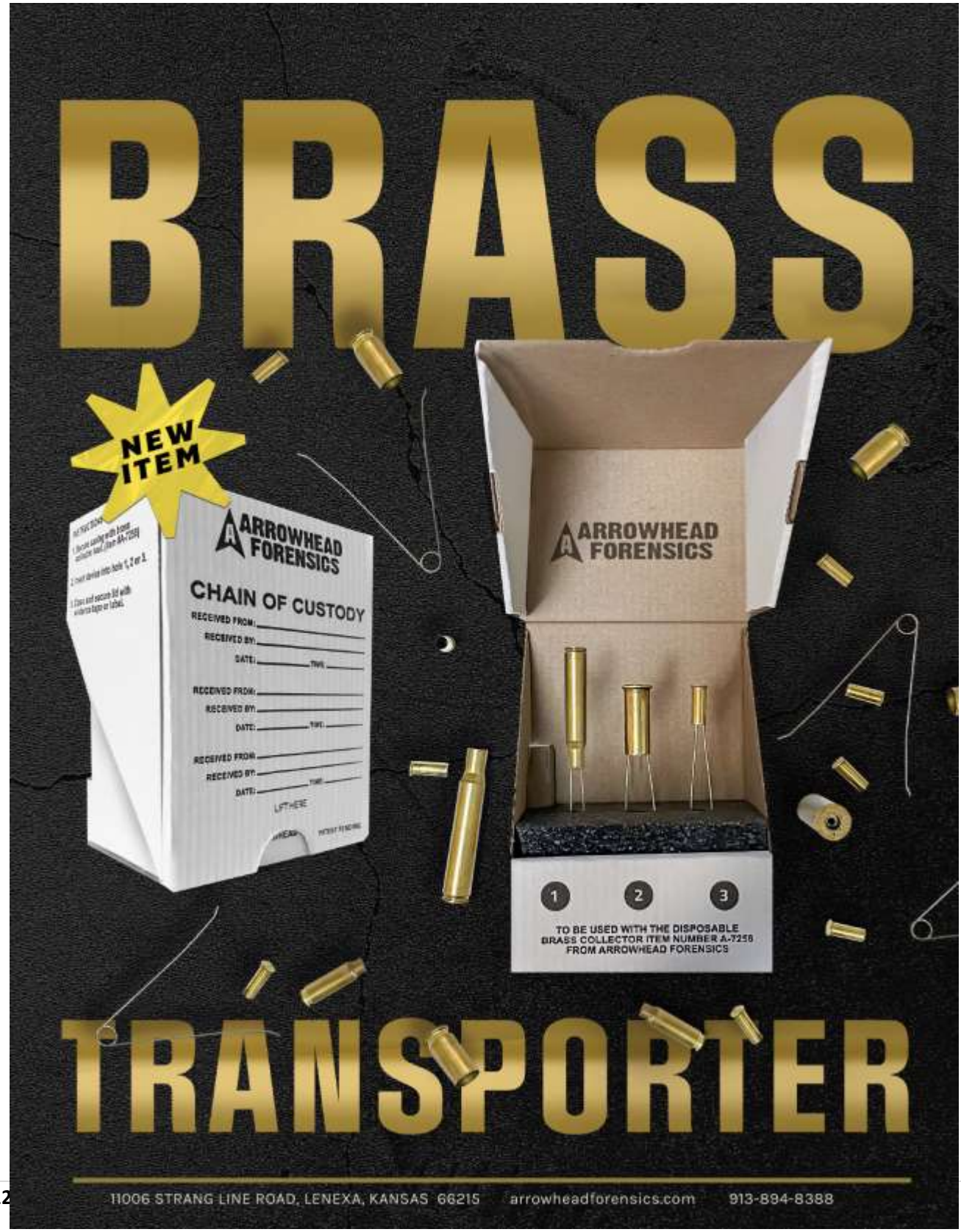
This book is part interesting detective story, part fascinating character study of a little-known man who completely changed the course of American criminal investigation.

Whether in the forensic science field or not, I would highly recommend this book!

My rating: 5/5 stars

Hadley Mikovec is the Iowa IAI Vice President. She has been working in law enforcement since 2013. She currently serves as the Crime Scene & Evidence Technician for the Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Office.

Hadley enjoys reading, travel, hiking, spending time with her friends and family, and loudly critiquing fictional crime-scene related shows.


BRASS
NEW ITEM
ARROWHEAD FORENSICS
CHAIN OF CUSTODY
RECEIVED FROM:
RECEIVED BY:
DATE:
TIME:
LIFT HERE
ARROWHEAD FORENSICS
1
2
3
TO BE USED WITH THE DISPOSABLE BRASS COLLECTOR ITEM NUMBER A-7256 FROM ARROWHEAD FORENSICS
TRANSPORTER
11006 STRANG LINE ROAD, LENEXA, KANSAS 66215
arrowheadforensics.com
913-894-8388

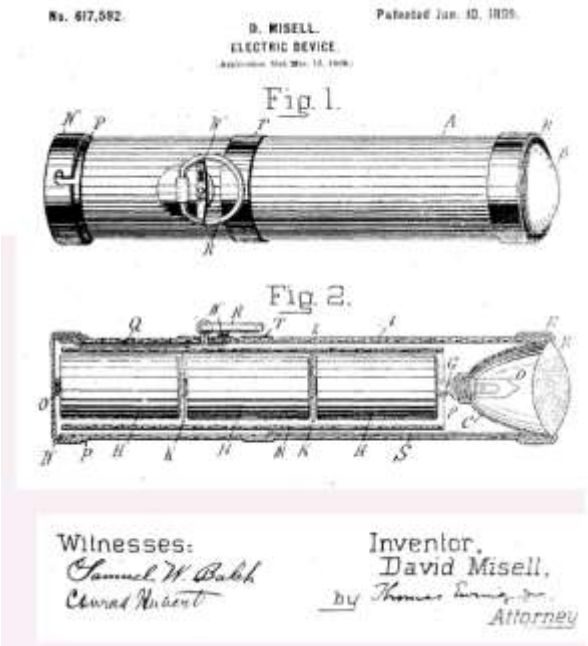
Light it Up: A Brief History (and the benefits of) Forensics' Handiest Tool

By Hadley Mikovec

Humanity has always had need for a hand-held light source. Torches, candles, and oil/kerosene lamps were designed to be portable. However, a burning object at a crime scene isn't exactly the *safest* choice, and definitely not weatherproof.

The inventions of the electric light bulb and the dry cell battery paved the way for one of the most useful things in your toolkit: The flashlight.

In the 1890's, English inventor David Misell invented the first flashlight. He obtained the first patent for his "electric device" in 1899.



(Public domain image of Misell's design as part of the original patent application, obtained from Wikipedia)

Misell's device was described as a paper tube outfitted with a dry cell battery, a bulb, some fiber, and a brass reflector.

At the time of his invention, Misell was working for the American Electrical Novelty and Manufacturing Company (later renamed the American Eveready Company), owned by one Conrad Hubert.

Misell's invention had been referred to as a "flashlight" due to its inability to project consistent light. These early portable lights were required to be "rested," and only offered the briefest flashes of light. Hence the name!

After he finished making improvements to Misell's original design, Hubert and his company were finally ready to patent the updated flashlight in 1902. Even though the new product gave more consistent light, the name "flashlight" had already stuck in the mind of the public.

Better versions of the flashlight would be patented around 1915 by Eveready, after the tungsten filament bulb was created by G.E. in 1910.

However flashlights didn't *really* start "lighting up" the market until1922.

Different varieties and the high degree of usefulness led to roughly ten million flashlight owners and users shortly thereafter.

Just think about what relief a portable, reliable secondary light source must have been to new police officers walking their beats at night, or for U.S. soldiers joining World War I?

In the years since, many companies have added features to improve safety and functionality. In addition to the classic cylindrical style, there is the standing lantern-style flashlight, the small pocket-sized flashlight, and the large reflector type for large areas.

Rechargeable flashlights and hand-powered flashlights give peace of mind in emergency situations. LED flashlights reduce the dimming of light and provide even brighter light than traditional flashlights, which is helpful either on a scene or when processing evidence.

There are flashlights with strobing features, waterproof casings, adjustable widths for beams, and flashlights that can reach the length of a soccer field while still providing hours and

hours of light. A free flashlight application even now comes with the majority of smartphones!

On top of all of this, flashlights continue to be affordable-which can be helpful to an agency on a budget.

When choosing which flashlight to use in either the forensic or law enforcement field, one should consider a few factors:

1- Batteries. Batteries should be first on your list when considering what to buy. They affect the weight of the flashlight, the lifespan, and the brightness. Besides, do you really want to keep a flashlight in your pocket that's so heavy it makes you feel like you're going to lose your pants?

There's no point in purchasing a flashlight that's going to die on you an hour into an outdoor death scene investigation, or one that casts light barely a foot away.

This writer would recommend a rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery, which has more energy density and produces a brighter. A flashlight that can be charged continually in your vehicle (whether by USB port or a dedicated charging port built into the radio) would be ideal.

2- Size. In the case of flashlights, size definitely matters! It's also a matter of personal preference. Do you want to be able to easily carry the flashlight in your pocket or in your vest, for example? Do you want one with more heft because it makes you feel more secure?

I have *five* differently sized flashlights. My view on flashlight sizes tends to be the same as my view on shoes: One should always have multiple types for different situations/occasions!

3- Bulb(s). Another factor to consider is the bulb. An LED (light emitting diode) bulb will produce light up to 90% more efficiently than incandescent light bulbs. This can extend battery life and allow you to use your flashlight longer.

4- Lumens. One should also learn their preference on light output, or 'lumens.' Do you want the light beam to be long and narrow (i.e. to be used for searching or following), or would you prefer a wider beam (i.e. to be used to light your immediate area)?

Of course, there are flashlights that have adjustable light output. This can be incredibly helpful in a field that doesn't exactly fall in the category of "predictable." F

5- What's it made of? Finally, you should choose a material that is durable and able to take everything you're going to put it through, whether that's a type of metal or polycarbonate material. Both have their merits—just make sure they're waterproofed for those rainy days and nights!

I always have a flashlight in my pocket on a scene, and I always use it while taking photographs and during processing. They can be used for "painting in light" during night photography, or aid in searching for impressions with oblique lighting.

It is such a simple tool, and that's part of the brilliance of it. Small, portable, cheap, and easily replaceable if lost/broken.

(Although I will admit that if I lost my favorite flashlight my heart would be broken and no replacement would compare. Okay, perhaps that's a slight exaggeration, but it would for sure cast a cloud over my day!)

As most who work in the field can attest: When you've been a crime scene technician or investigator for long enough, you learn to appreciate the items you couldn't process a scene without. I will always go back to the office to grab it if forgotten while heading to a scene, and I would turn around and go back to a scene if I left it.

Thankfully that last one hasn't happened to me…yet.

Hadley Mikovec enjoys reading, travel, hiking, spending time with her friends and family, and loudly critiquing fictional crime-scene related shows.

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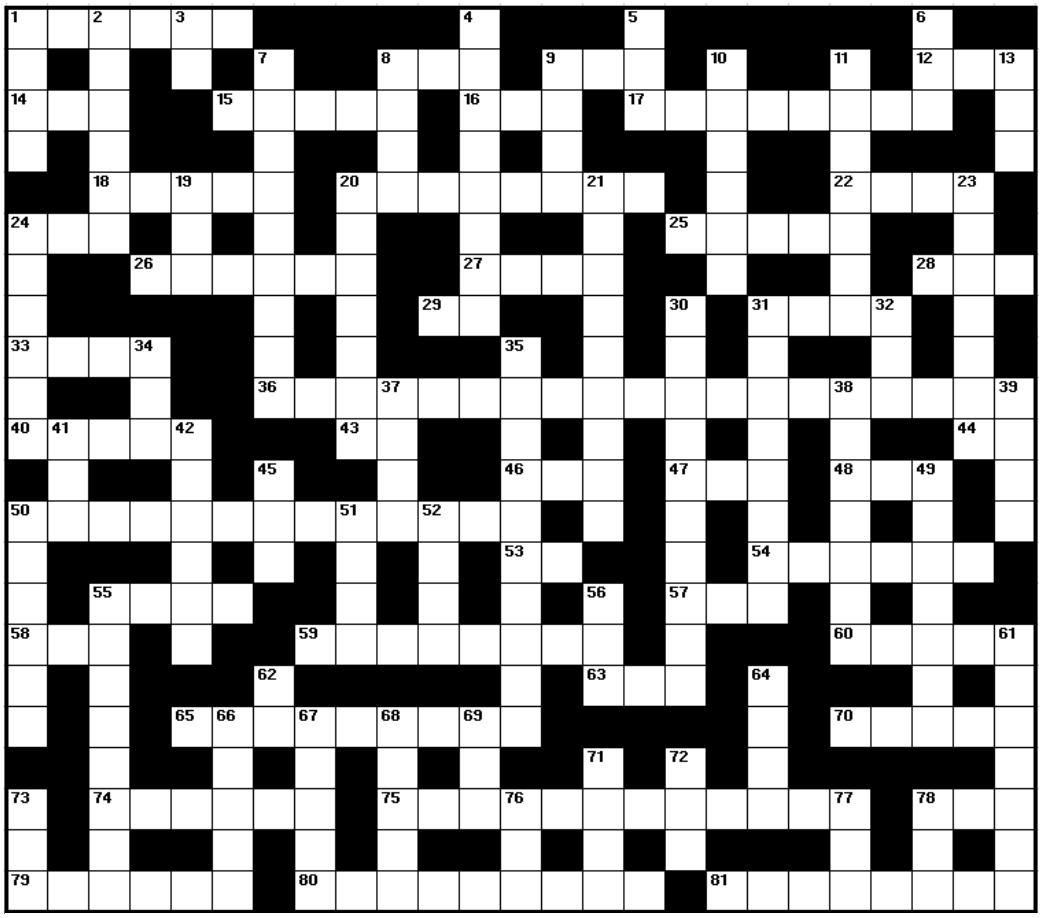

5 A gorilla is one of these.
6 Purchase of audiophiles.
7 Sticky liquid that is used to process for fingerprints.
8 Not "for."
9 A computer system used to search fingerprints.
10 Like a re-used blackboard.
11 A farm essential.
13 A Sen or a Con is an example of one. (abbr.)
19 Kissing on the bus, e.g.
20 He painted "Starry Night"
21 Device to mount a camera so it's adjustable vertically and fixed horizontally. (2 wds)
23 Twain by another name.
24 Many diet foods. (2 wds)
30 Mr. Misell's marvelous invention.
31 Camera function controlling depth of field.
32 Unit of resistance.
34 What a loud person is told in the library.
35 Hometown of NASA Artemis Astronaut Raja Chari.
37 Loaf part that few want.
38 Inland hurricane.

ACROSS

1 What Cops tell robbers in old movies.
8 2020 action film starring Jessica Chastain.
9 Cleopatra's end, as the story goes.
12 Sound made by the weasel.
14 It takes a toll.
15 A measure of light output.
16 He calls the shots.
17 Songs that get stuck in your head.
18 A common pie flavor.
20 Site of notorious axe murders of 1912.
22 Class feared by arithmophobes.
24 Famous movie monster Chaney.
25 Understand? (2 wds)
26 IA City-born whistleblower for the WSJ's "The Facebook Files" series.
27 An advocacy group for the elderly.
28 Common find at a sushi restaurant.
29 Animal representing '97, '09, and '21.
31 Prefix with "nautic."
33 Broadway show of T.S. Eliot's poems.
36 This marked Prohibition's start.(2 wds)
40 ISO refers to the sensitivity of a camera sensor to ____.
43 She's opposite.
44 "Yes," en Espanol.
46 "Viva Las Vegas" star ____-Margret.
47 Word repeated before "hike!"
48 "You'll ___ the day!"
50 Your camera needs this to photo fluorescent prints. (2 wds)
53 The note after Mi.
54 Kids love it.
55 "UAP's," once.
57 "Golly!"
58 Japanese currency.
59 My my! A song says that this is where Napoleon did surrender.
60 There are 32 in a quart.
63 Not in.
65 Proposed location of the IA IAI's 2022 conference. (2 wds)
70 8th letter of the Greek alphabet.
74 A problem for many karaoke singers. (2 wds)
75 To date, the only female prime minister of India.
78 Common in decorative ponds.
79 Farmers, in springtime.
80 The great unwashed. (2 wds)
81 Unblemished.

DOWN

1 Moveable barrier.
2 The Beatles ranted against him in their 1966 hit album, Revolver.
3 "So there!"
4 The apparent visual change to an object due to the relative position of the viewer.
39 Tyre, in American English.
41 Something on tap.
42 A must-have for photographing footwear impressions.
45 To make a mistake.
49 The fundamental part of.
50 His retirement caused quite the ado.
51 Home of the Field of Dreams.
52 "With this ring, I ___ wed."
55 It can pull you down.
56 A British john.
61 Scrutinize.
62 Put simply, the present tense third-person singular of "be."
64 Dry.
66 Not odds.
67 Resin associated with the Nativity.
68 Iowa non-profit chartered in '63(abbr)
69 Terminus.
71 Food truck staple.
72 Sun-kissed.
73 "___ the season to be jolly."
76 Not well.
77 They harbor instinctive impulses needing immediate gratification.
78 Investigative agency in Kansas.

Crossword answers can be found at the back of the newsletter.

News from the IA Department of Justice

Office of the Attorney General

(Source: https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/initiative-improves-how-sexual-assault-kits-are-handled)

Initiative improves how sexual-assault kits are handled

Six-year effort leads to criminal charges, improved processes, and increased training and tracking

DES MOINES – The Iowa Attorney General's Office has wrapped up a six-year effort to address untested sexual assault evidence kits throughout the state. The project has resulted in 1,606 kits tested, four criminal charges to date, and several improvements in the way kits are processed to benefit victims.

The Iowa Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) project was created in April 2015 to address the issue of untested sexual assault kits. The project was supported by two grants awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) in 2015 and 2016, totaling $3 million. The grant period ended in fall 2021.

"We applaud this six-year effort to improve how sexual assault kits are handled," Attorney General Tom Miller said. "Not only has the SAKI program been able to reduce the number of untested sexual assault kits, it has also created meaningful and lasting changes to the processes by which state and local practitioners respond to and investigate sexual assault cases."

Untested Sexual Assault Kits

When the SAKI project began, the AG office's Crime Victim Assistance Division surveyed all 387 active police departments and sheriffs' offices and found 4,275 unsubmitted sexual assault kits.

The grant protocol excluded many kits from testing for several reasons, including the lack of police reports or victim information, or being too recent. Only kits collected before April 28, 2015, could be tested under the grant.

A total of 1,606 kits were submitted for DNA testing, and those tested kits resulted in the development of 852 DNA profiles entered into CODIS, the FBI's Combined DNA Index System.

More than 290 profiles received a CODIS match, with 26 of those profiles belonging to people previously convicted of sex crimes.

The project then referred identified cases to local law enforcement and prosecutors for follow-up investigation and contact with victims. Many of these sexual assault incidents took place 10 or more years ago. In most cases, victims opted not to re-engage with law enforcement.

To date, authorities have filed criminal charges in four cases, with two convictions:

- **Dallas County, 2010 incident:** A 14-year old girl reported that a 20-year old male had sex with her. When questioned, the suspect, Rahim Mohammad Dhoshdel, denied knowing the girl. The kit was never submitted for analysis. After testing under SAKI, the kit resulted in a DNA match with Dhoshdel, who was extradited from California and, in 2019, pleaded guilty to assault with intent to commit sexual abuse.
- **Pottawattamie County, 2003 incident:** Two girls, age 14 and 15, reported that a man they met in Omaha offered them a ride. The girls expected to go to another location in Omaha, but the man drove them to a cornfield in the Pacific Junction, Iowa, area where he pulled a knife on them and sexually assaulted both girls. Sexual assault kits were collected but never submitted for analysis. After testing through SAKI, law enforcement identified Myron Lee Brandon as the offender. On October 6, 2021, Brandon, age 43 of Pacific Junction, was found guilty in federal court of two counts of kidnapping and two counts of transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity. His

sentencing is scheduled for March 2022.

- **Marion County, 2009 incident:** After testing through SAKI, a DNA profile matched Shane Farriester, who is charged with one count of second-degree sexual abuse in August 2020. He is awaiting trial.

- **Winnebago County, 2010 incident:** After testing through SAKI, a DNA profile matched Billy John Tucker, and he was charged with one count of second-degree sexual abuse in November 2021.

Lab Testing Increases and Accelerates

During the time that the SAKI project was ongoing, the number of kits submitted to the Division of Criminal Investigation's laboratory for analysis increased by 87% on average over the previous five years. This increase in DNA submissions is projected to continue into the future, and in part is due to the success of the SAKI project. Additionally, during this same time frame, DCI officials implemented a Lean Six Sigma (LSS) process efficiency effort. The efficiencies and improvements realized through LSS, along with additional positions afforded to the laboratory by the Iowa Legislature and the Iowa Governor's Office, has allowed the lab to reduce processing time of DNA evidence on average from 6 to 9 months to 8 weeks.

"This reduction in testing time is critical," said Sandi Tibbetts Murphy, CVAD director. "If you tell a sexual assault victim that you cannot bring charges for almost a year, you're going to lose that victim. Two months represents a dramatic improvement for victims."

Training and Protocols Improved

CVAD partnered with several state and local agencies, including law enforcement and prosecutors' offices, the Iowa Air National Guard and others, to offer training and assistance in sexual assault response. In total, 2,355 individuals received training in trauma-informed sexual assault response and other SAKI-related trainings.

Additionally, SAKI funds supported the creation of a statewide forensic examiner protocol, which sets best practices of patient care and evidence collection in forensic sexual assault examinations.

In 2021, the Legislature authorized the Attorney General's Office to create and staff a unit to train and provide technical assistance to forensic examiners, maintain updated information on available examiners across the state and promote collaborative responses to sexual assault victims.

"Track Kit" Launched

In October 2020, Miller's Crime Victim Assistance Division completed the rollout of the Track-Kit statewide reporting system. This statewide reporting program allows survivors and practitioners to track the status of evidence kits as they move from medical facilities to law enforcement and eventually to the DCI lab for analysis. Through their own protected access, victims can determine how they want to receive status notifications.

In May 2021, the Iowa Legislature enacted Senate File 451, requiring the use of the Track Kit reporting system for an estimated 1,780 users at medical facilities, law enforcement agencies, crime laboratories, and county attorneys' offices. The legislation also imposes requirements for the storage and disposal of kits, including requiring victim notification before disposal.

"Track Kit, along with these other changes, has increased accountability and transparency throughout the process," Miller said.

Information for Survivors

If you are unsure if your kit was previously submitted, or if you would like to obtain information on the status of your case, please contact the Iowa SAKI Information Line at 1 800 770-1650.

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