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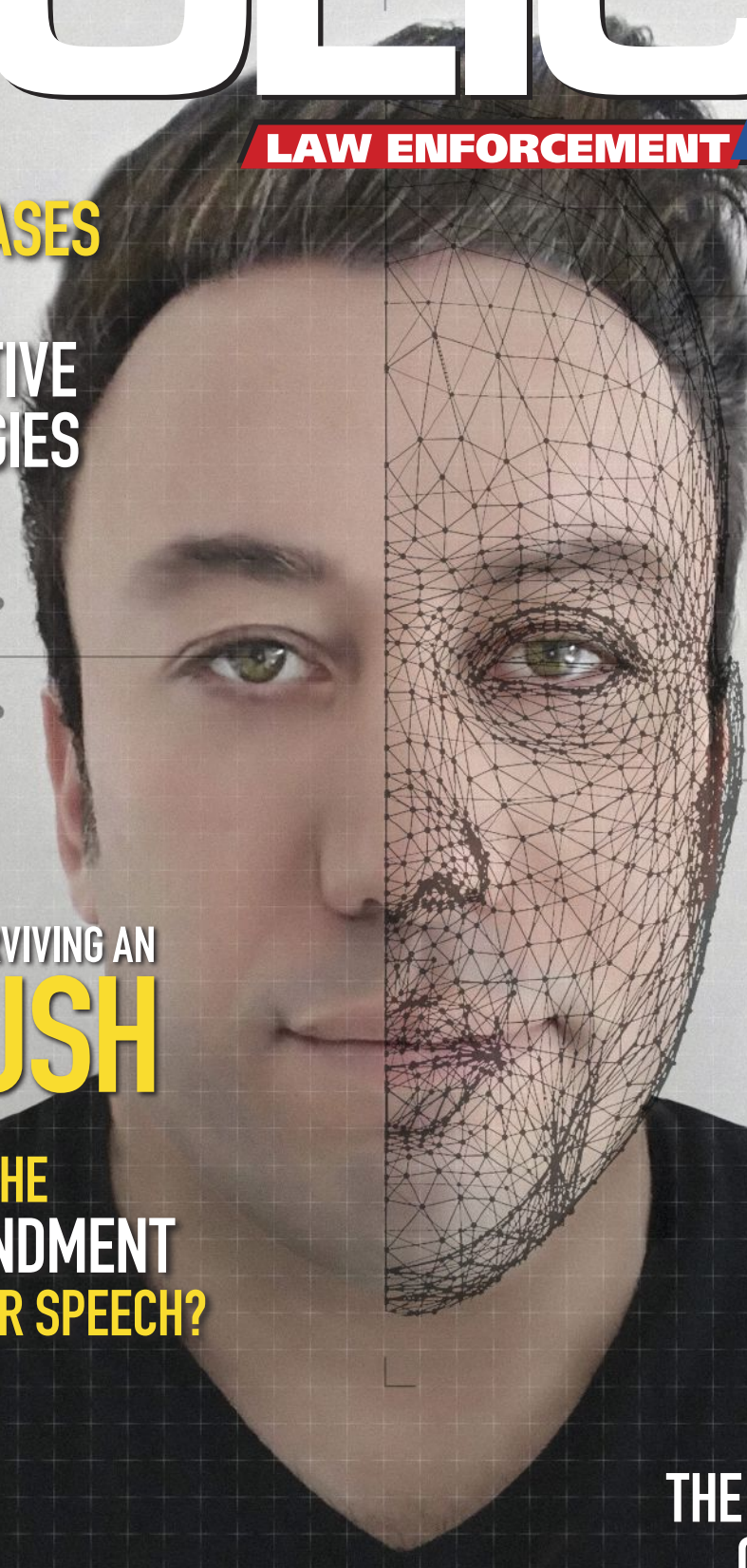
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```

notation
  appInfo
  <schemaInfo
    count_positions_by_byte
    parse_optimization="speed"
    lookAhead_depth="3"
    suppress_empty_nodes="false"
    generate_empty_nodes="true"
    allow_only_terminator="false"
    standard="Flat File"
    root_reference="File" />
  </schemaInfo>
  <schemaInfo:extension
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    extensionClass="
      standardName="Flat File"
      store:ed:source:dict:store:
        appInfo
        notation
        reflectType name="LineType">
          sequence
        :annotation
        cs:appInfo
        <groupInfo
          sequence_number="8" />
        </appInfo
        :annotation
      :element
        name="FlatFileLine"
        type="xsd:string"
        cs:annotation
  
```

ROM FAILURE AT IC14, 17, 20  
 RAM FAILURE AT IC13, 16  
 CMOS RAM FAILURE AT IC15

**LEVEL 7**

NORMAL OPERATION  
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NUMBER 1, 8, 9  
 AND BOTTOM LED

- (1) IC13 ROM, IC20 ROM,
- (2) CPU POWER SUPPLY
- (3) MEMORY PROTECT CIRCUIT, CMOS RAM

NUMBER 2, 8  
 AND TOP LED

- (2) IC16 RAM
- (3) IC14 ROM

NUMBER 4, 8  
 AND LED'S ON

- (4) IC17 ROM
- (5) IC16 RAM, MEMORY PROTECT CIRCUIT OR CPU LOCKUP

NUMBER 6, 7,  
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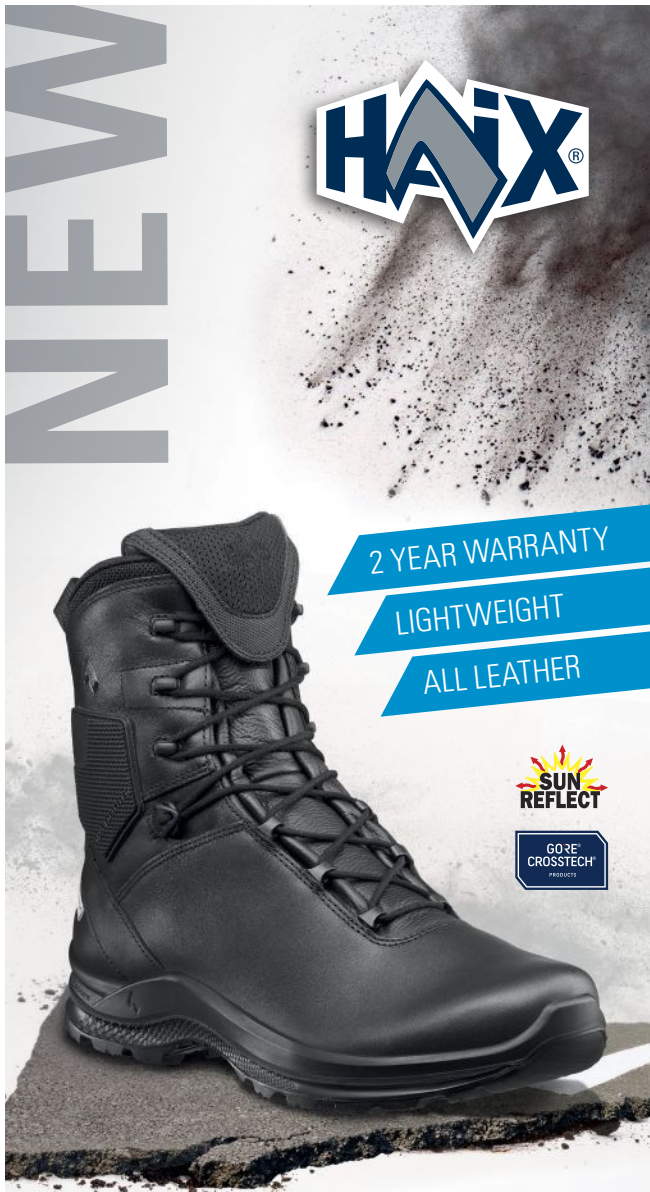
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**DAVID GRIFFITH**  
David.Griffith@PoliceMag.com

# CLOSING CASES WITH TECHNOLOGY

New tools for analyzing images, DNA samples, ballistics, and video are helping agencies speed up the investigative process.

**ON THE TV** police procedurals felony cases are solved in 45 minutes by detectives who have technology the military would envy. When they need to capture detail such as a license plate number in a blurry photo taken at night, all they have to do is say “enhance it.” When they need to go through millions of fingerprints, the right one is found in minutes. When they need DNA results from the lab, there is no backlog.

Of course, real-world criminal investigations do not work like that. Closing some cases can be a long slog of interviews and re-interviews, crime scene reports, and enough paperwork and digital files to kill a redwood forest and choke a cloud server.

Investigations often take many hours of painstaking labor just to develop leads. But that may be changing. We are seeing the development and refinement of high-tech tools that can help investigators clear their caseloads much quicker. These tools have been spotlighted at the last several International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) shows and they are now making their presence felt in the profession.

You can learn more about these new investigative technologies this month in Managing Editor Melanie Basich’s cover feature: “Closing Cases with New Investigative Technologies” on page 38. But let’s discuss them here for a bit.

One of the most effective and most controversial law enforcement technologies is facial recognition. Practical automated facial recognition technology has been around for more than two decades. In the years after 9/11 it was used to try to identify known terrorists in the nation’s airports and transit centers. Those systems were prohibitively expensive for most local law enforcement agencies.

Now facial recognition tools are much less expensive and many local departments are using them to search for common criminals instead of terrorist masterminds. These systems can compare still images and even video with databases of images collected by law enforcement. Getting a hit on such a system is not enough evidence for an arrest, but it can help an investigator develop a lead and identify a person who can be investigated further.

Facial recognition is one of the most useful tools available to overwhelmed law enforcement investigators. And it is one of the most misunderstood. Community activists want it banned because it can yield false “hits” and because they claim the systems discriminate against people with dark skin. Banning

these systems would rob law enforcement of a force-multiplier that makes investigators much more efficient. So it’s important for police agencies to educate people on how this tool is being used, what it can and can’t do, and how the accuracy of facial recognition is improving.

Rapid DNA technology is another new tool that is helping investigators work smarter and faster. DNA labs are overwhelmed and analysis on samples in some jurisdictions is pretty much limited to violent felony crimes.

Even the processing of felony crime DNA samples can take weeks or months before investigators see the results. In contrast, rapid DNA systems can yield results in as little as 90 minutes. They are commonly used to identify suspects in custody who often have multiple street names and aliases. They are also frequently used to identify suspects and victims at crime scenes. This quick ID information can lead to much faster development of leads by the investigators.

**Providing law enforcement with tools to speed up the investigative process is more critical now than ever.**

Rapid ballistics processing is another recently developed tool that investigators are using to close cases. This technology allows users to perform presumptive analysis on casings and bullets. The information can be used to show that a specific firearm was at a crime scene, and it is not unusual for investigators to be able to

track the use of a specific weapon at more than one scene, which can help them close multiple cases.

One of the biggest dilemmas facing law enforcement agencies in general and detective divisions specifically is: What to do with all the video? So many criminal cases now involve video, sometimes from multiple sources, and there is no way that investigators can sit and watch it all. Thankfully, they don’t have to. There are now a number of different tools that can quickly review video and search for faces or other key images.

Providing law enforcement with tools to speed up the investigative process is more critical now than ever. Agencies are facing critical officer shortages and one of the first things they do in these situations is send detectives out on patrol. We saw that last month as the coronavirus crisis intensified.

That leaves the detectives who are still investigating cases with even more work. Which means agencies need to find ways to make their detectives more efficient and more productive. The tools mentioned in this column and others in development may be the answer to how that can be done. ♦



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# THE COLLISION PREVENTION SYSTEM

HAAS ALERT'S SAFETY CLOUD NOTIFIES DRIVERS IN ADVANCE OF NEARBY EMERGENCY VEHICLES TO PREVENT CRASHES.

★ MELANIE BASICH

**I**NSPIRATION STRUCK CORY HOHS when he was almost struck by an ambulance while riding his motorcycle down a busy Chicago street. The vehicle's lights and sirens hadn't been enough to make him aware of the ambulance until it was right on top of him. This near miss led to the development of HAAS Alert's Safety Cloud to notify drivers of nearby emergency vehicles and help prevent collisions.

While conducting research to create this service, Hohns and his team learned that vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death for law enforcement officers. At that point, HAAS Alert's mission became to help prevent such deaths.

"Up until now, the only options were move-over enforcement or educational campaigns, but enforcement and education aren't the same as prevention," says Hohns, CEO and co-founder of HAAS Alert. "People usually have about 3 seconds to react once they see lights and hear sirens before impact. It's closer to 30 seconds with our service, which is usually broadcast to drivers about a half-mile before they're approaching a vehicle."

The earliest versions of the service explored using technology to recognize the sound of emergency sirens and then alert drivers of an approaching vehicle. But in noisy cities that didn't always work, and it didn't inform drivers about stationary vehicles with only lights activated for a traffic stop, for example.

Now, HAAS Alert's Safety Cloud activates and broadcasts an alert via a cellular signal when emergency lights and sirens are active. "That's the trigger most departments use to know that these vehicles actually want to be seen and are trying to alert drivers near the vehicle to their presence," says Hohns. It's important to the company that their service not compromise officer safety by disclosing police vehicles' locations.

He says Safety Cloud alerts, which pop up on a smartphone screen, provide drivers with just enough information to protect them. They don't even specify a law enforcement vehicle, just that some type of emergency vehicle is near. One type of alert is for stationary vehicles ahead, and the other is for vehicles actively responding nearby.

The system is most often set up to trigger once an emergency vehicle's lightbar is activated, but it is very flexible. Safety Cloud could be set up to only broadcast alerts to drivers once one specific lightbar pattern is activated, or it could be connected to a different device's "switch" to trigger activation, allowing the ser-



HAAS Alert's Safety Cloud lets motorists know that emergency vehicles are in operation nearby. The alert system can be activated by lightbars or other devices in the first responders' vehicles.

vice to be used by unmarked cars without activating lights and sirens.

This flexibility extends beyond activation. "We intentionally developed this so that it universally works with all first responder vehicles, no matter how old, no matter the make or model," says Hohns. And it can connect with any make of lightbar and work with any existing technologies being used in the vehicle. "It doesn't have to replace or dislodge anything."

Hardware-free integration is available, but most Safety Cloud customers choose to connect via a cellular transponder that wires directly into their vehicle. It's about the size of an iPhone and is made to be unobtrusive. Installation of the entire system takes only around 30 minutes per vehicle. Once it's set up, the officer doesn't need to do anything differently.

And the service doesn't require a separate cellular data package to maintain reliability. "You're sending such a small amount of data, not like video, so even in a low cell area, this product has been proven to work great, from large to small rural departments," he says.

Around 100 million alerts have been processed through the service via the Waze crowdsourcing navigation app used by many drivers on their phones. But HAAS Alert is seeking out partnerships with many companies to extend its reach, including working directly with car manufacturers to eventually make Safety Cloud digital alerts just as common as a speed alert warning on a car's instrument cluster, Hohns says.

The company is already partnering with manufacturers of police vehicle accessories, such as Code 3, to integrate the service into their lightbars. Safety Cloud can also integrate into vehicles' existing telematics systems.

To further meet law enforcement agencies' needs, HAAS Alerts wants to futureproof Safety Cloud so it will work for years to come. Should a city get 5G or some other future technology, it's very easy to swap out the unit for a newer version, Hohns says. In the meantime, the company is constantly updating its core service with new features, which are added for no additional cost via over-the-air updates, so there's no vehicle downtime to receive them.

Cost for the Safety Cloud suite depends on factors including integration and the length of the service contract, but Hohns says it usually equates to around a dollar per vehicle per day.

Cost for the Safety Cloud suite depends on factors including integration and the length of the service contract, but Hohns says it usually equates to around a dollar per vehicle per day.

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# WHY POLICE DEPARTMENTS NEED SMART REPORTING TOOLS

REPORTING IS A TIME CONSUMING, YET NECESSARY PART OF AN OFFICER'S WORK SHIFT. A VETERAN POLICE CHIEF DISCUSSES HOW REPORTING TECHNOLOGY HAS EVOLVED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC.



PHOTO: NUANCE

**W**hile TV shows and movies glamorize policing—making it appear as if officers spend entire shifts chasing down bad guys and busting up crime rings—real officers know that’s far from reality.

After spending 38 years policing in Massachusetts, retired Chief Richard Stanley has seen and done it all. While he may have spent part of his days arresting perpetrators and interacting with the community, he dedicated just as much time to completing routine paperwork.

“The bane of every officer’s life is paperwork,” he says, citing research that confirms officers can spend about half their shifts on incident reporting and administrative work.

Stanley further explains how reporting demands are growing as mandates, like the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), require greater detail and more specificity. The good news is agencies are applying technology to make the reporting process more efficient and less burdensome,

particularly when compared to methods used before the digital age.

Stanley recalls how police officers once typed or handwrote reports before moving to rudimentary records management systems (RMS)—which, in his experience, were sometimes even less efficient. “Those early systems were frustrating. We would [often] wind up losing everything when we pressed ‘save’ due to user or early equipment errors,” he says.

Today, officers can submit reports directly from their squad car’s MDC,



which eliminates time-consuming trips to the station to file reports. However, these patrol-vehicle-based reporting systems create new health and safety issues, including back problems from non-ergonomic vehicular workstations and limited situational awareness while typing into laptops.

Stanley describes this as a lose-lose situation, given how officers already feel about reporting. “Officers don’t become officers to spend half their shifts typing reports. They want to patrol the community and make a difference.”

As the volume of required paperwork grows, Stanley emphasizes the need for police managers to apply technology to make the process more efficient: “I remember how frustrating it was to miss calls for service or activity on the street because I was doing paperwork. I can only imagine that it’s getting worse.”

“Police officers deserve the best tools available to make them successful and keep them safe,” he says. “Additionally, given the fiduciary responsibility to use appropriated funds responsibly and effectively, police managers should focus on keeping officers on the street doing the work they were hired to do.”

## PROMOTING AWARENESS AND SAFETY

To police effectively, it’s just as important to see as to be seen. Yet spending up to half their shifts writing reports and the other half dealing with crime can limit officers’ perspectives. They become less aware of their broader surroundings and less visible in the community, and, worse, when they are seen it’s often associated with an adverse event.

“When we overburden officers with piles of paperwork, they become frustrated, less effective, and burned out,” says Stanley.

In-car reporting technology may increase officers’ omnipresence—but it comes at a price. The “vehicular office” can lead to citizen complaints as well as back problems and other safety concerns for officers. It is not uncommon for a citizen to [incorrectly] assume when they see an officer “heads down” typing a report that they are surfing the web or, worse, dozing on the job. Additionally, “When officers are typing reports, they are not paying attention to their surroundings—

making them more vulnerable,” Stanley explains.

## ENSURING REPORT QUALITY

The role of police officers in the criminal justice system extends beyond their response to an initial incident. Prosecution teams rely on officer reports to move proceedings forward—and tight deadlines require officers to file timely incident reports.

“But when duty calls, officers have to leave the station—and their half-finished report—to respond.”

**“IT’S IMPORTANT NOT TO IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGY JUST FOR TECHNOLOGY’S SAKE. IT NEEDS TO ADAPT TO AN OFFICER’S WORKFLOW—AND THAT’S EXACTLY WHAT DRAGON LAW ENFORCEMENT DOES.”**

According to Stanley, “Anytime they’re pulled away, report quality suffers.”

Regardless of where reporting is done, interruptions can cause officers to take a more skeletal approach to their writing. This results in reports that are filled with basic information but lack crucial details that are imperative for a successful prosecution. More than just a way to record complaints, these reports provide essential documentation for both civil and criminal litigation.

“We need officers to tell a detailed story that will stand up in court,” Stanley says. “Remember, if it’s not in the report, it didn’t happen.”

## USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE REPORTING

Today, Stanley is the president of RMS Associates, a consulting firm that partners with the law enforcement community to deliver private-sector solutions to solve law enforcement challenges.

One technology he sees as beneficial is Nuançe® Dragon® Law Enforcement. This speech recognition software helps officers prepare detailed reports three times faster than typing while keeping them more focused on patrol. With powerful dictation capabilities, Dragon

Law Enforcement improves report accuracy and timeliness, speeds data entry, and allows officers to access information such as license plates, using voice commands.

“It’s important not to implement technology just for technology’s sake,” Stanley says. “It needs to adapt to an officer’s workflow—and that’s exactly what Dragon Law Enforcement does. It turns officers into storytellers and allows them to fill in the details while an incident is still fresh in their minds.”

According to Stanley, when police supervisors talk to an officer on the scene, the officer shares detailed information about the incident. But when that same supervisor reviews the written report, it often lacks that same nuanced detail. If the officer hurriedly typed the report, perhaps days after the incident, it is likely not to be as comprehensive as the initial verbal account.

“Dragon Law Enforcement lets officers capture a more compelling story of the scene,” he says. “By inputting the data directly into the system, it eliminates the need for transcription and helps avoid lag time in reporting. Plus, it keeps officers and their attention on the street.”

Ultimately, the real appeal of Dragon Law Enforcement is how it helps police better protect the communities they serve. “Higher visibility and more proactive policing build stronger community relations. That, along with more cruisers on the streets, offers a powerful deterrent effect,” Stanley says.

While policing may never be as glamorous as the movies portray, advanced technology is turning law enforcement into a more fulfilling job. “No matter what your line of work, you want to feel good about what you do,” Stanley observes. ☎



STANLEY

*To hear more from Chief Richard Stanley about how technology, including Nuançe Dragon Law Enforcement, can make officers more effective, register for our “3 Ways Tech Can Improve Active Community Policing” webinar, which will be held on Tuesday, April 28, at 2 p.m. EST, at [www.PoliceMag.com/NuançeWebinar](http://www.PoliceMag.com/NuançeWebinar)*

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19 INFECTION

ARM YOURSELF WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND GEAR TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

★ NOEL MCCARTHY



PHOTO: KEVIN HAEGBLE, POLICE ART DIRECTOR

**W**ith the news full of reports about the novel coronavirus circulating around the globe (or COVID-19, as it is now officially known), this seems like the perfect time to think about the threats such viruses pose, especially for law enforcement officers. For some time now the U.S. Department of Justice has been aware of this issue. In fact, its paper “The Role of Law Enforcement in Public Health Emergencies,” published more than a decade ago, warned that:

*“Public health emergencies pose special challenges for law enforcement, whether the threat is manmade (terrorist attacks) or naturally occurring (e.g., flu pandemics).”*

Of course, the threat to an officer’s health in such circumstances depends

on a variety of factors. Will you, for instance, be asked to enforce public health orders, such as quarantine orders or travel restrictions? Perhaps you will be required to seal off contaminated areas, guard health care facilities, or control unruly crowds. You might even be called in to protect vaccine stockpiles or other medical items.

Whatever the situation, you will be in the line of “viral fire,” so to speak. So, how can you protect yourself from infection?

Well, the answer, like the question, is complicated. However, for the moment let’s just focus on COVID-19 and what it means to you.

## WHAT DOES COVID-19 MEAN/IMPLY/THREATEN?

It’s worth reminding people that, on January 31, 2020, Health and Human

Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency for the United States. The aim being to help the country’s healthcare community to respond to COVID-19.

Like MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, COVID-19 is a betacoronavirus, and they all have their origins in bats. As you probably know, the epicenter of the outbreak was in the Chinese city of Wuhan in Hubei Province. However, even though this suggests an animal-to-person spread early on, it now seems to be spreading person-to-person.

## Symptoms

Since you deal with the public every day, you should be alert to the symptoms of COVID-19. The virus can take anywhere from two to 14 days to incubate, and even then, some of the infect-

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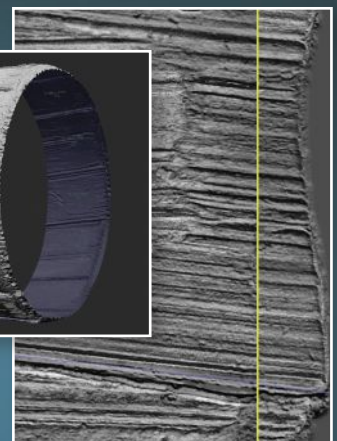
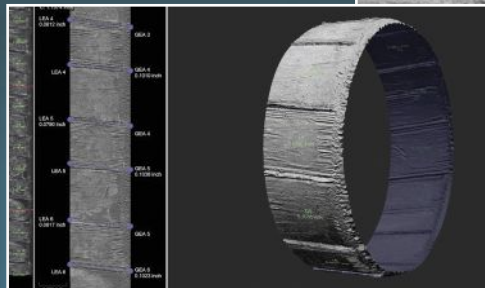
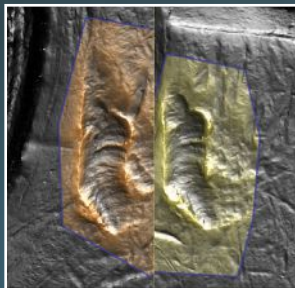
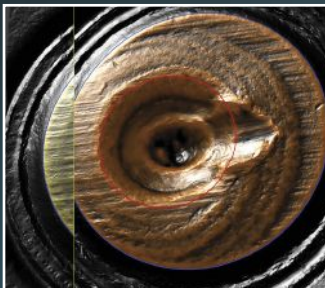
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ed may not exhibit any signs. However, know the main signs:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Some victims have also reported having headaches, being excessively tired, and suffering from diarrhea. The fact is that COVID-19 can range in severity from very mild to acute. Older people or those with underlying medical conditions are especially at risk.

*How to Protect Yourself*

It is not inevitable that you will be infected by COVID-19, but the fact that you deal with many different people in many different circumstances every day means you are perhaps more vulnerable than others.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the virus spreads “Mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets... [which are] produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can...be

inhaled into the lungs of people who are nearby.”

If you and/or your fellow officers should come into contact with a victim of the virus, try to do the following:

- Wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and make sure it is correctly fitted. Use the “buddy system” with your fellow officer(s) to check that each of you has followed protocols.
- If at all possible, try to maintain a distance of at least six feet from the infected person. This will prove difficult, but you should try nevertheless.
- Wash your hands (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water as many times a day as is practical. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- *Very important:* Avoid touching your face—especially your mouth, eyes, and nose—with unwashed hands.
- If you have to transport a COVID-19 victim to a hospital (or any health care facility for that matter) make sure a

trained Emergency Medical Service/ Emergency Medical Technician handles the actual transportation. *Do not* use your squad car.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD CARRY**

It’s almost inevitable that at some point you’ll come into contact with a person who is—or is suspected of being—infected with COVID-19. You should carry some sort of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Of course, there are many different types of PPE, but at a very minimum you should have available:

- A pair of disposable examination gloves.
- A disposable isolation gown or single-use coveralls.
- A NIOSH-approved particulate respirator.
- Eye protection, e.g. goggles or disposable face shields that cover the entire face.

Of course, you may also come into close contact with (potentially infected) individuals if you are effecting an arrest. In which case, you should follow the CDC’s guidelines on the subject:

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- “Clean and disinfect duty belt and gear prior to reuse using a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the product label.
- “Follow standard operating procedures for the containment and disposal of used PPE.
- “Follow standard operating procedures for containing and laundering clothes. Avoid shaking the clothes.”

If you have any questions regarding the foregoing items consult the CDC’s Interim Guidance for EMS.

**HOPE FOR THE BEST AND PLAN FOR THE WORST**

If you are fortunate enough to be in a command position, you obviously have to be aware of the needs of the general public—and the safety and welfare of your officers. You need to define and communicate your goals should you, or one of your officers, contract COVID-19. There are at least four key objectives:

1. Lowering transmission levels among the staff.

2. Safeguarding those at higher risk from the virus.
3. Continuing essential policing procedures.
4. Reducing (as much as possible) the effects of your infection on other critical public services such as fire departments, EMS, power and light companies, sanitation efforts and communications.

It’s also very important that you have contingency plans in place to handle the increased numbers of absences because of employee and family-related illness. Cross-training your staff is one way of being able to carry out essential functions, even if your workforce is seriously depleted. But be prepared to change your plans so that you can maintain critical operations.

It goes without saying that you should make your plans known to those aforementioned critical public services and coordinate your efforts with theirs.

**BY NO MEANS A CLOSING THOUGHT**

At this point it should come as no sur-

prise that with COVID-19 we are dealing with a virus that is both versatile and, in some cases, deadly. However, despite all the media “excitement” and the fear that is now engulfing a large portion of the U.S. population, we have the knowledge and expertise to deal with this crisis.

In fact, there are many, *many* reliable resources you can turn to for help and advice. Here are some of the organizations whose publications will provide information you may find useful:


- World Health Organization
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- UK National Health Service

*Noel McCarthy has worked as a writer and editor throughout his career. A former director for Thomson Reuters, Noel also worked for PwC for 17 years. A staff writer for Sterifab, Noel’s expertise in bed bugs is a newfound hobby of sorts. He has enjoyed learning about these pesky little pests and others such as lice and mites.*

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# HOW TO TURN SMARTPHONES INTO COVERT VIDEO-AUDIO RECORDERS

**UNDERCOVER OFFICERS NEED A RELIABLE AND UNDETECTABLE WAY TO GATHER VIDEO AND AUDIO EVIDENCE DURING AN OPERATION—AND STAY SAFE AT THE SAME TIME. THE LETS SYSTEM PROVIDES OFFICERS THE CONFIDENCE AND RELIABILITY TO GATHER THIS CRUCIAL EVIDENCE SAFELY.**

**I**t was 20 years ago, and Ken Washington was working an undercover operation for the Oconee County (SC) Sheriff's Office to buy a "quantity of cocaine" while inside a residence. He was armed and he was wearing a wire—the old-fashioned kind that could be easily discovered. Fortunately, the bad guys didn't know that Washington was an undercover officer. But they suspected someone in the room was working with law enforcement.

Washington was sitting between two men on a couch. The dealer entered the room with two other men. "He pulled out a gun and stuck it in the face of the guy next to me. 'Lift up your shirt!'" recalls Washington, now a captain with the Oconee County Sheriff's Office. "They pulled him to his feet and jerked his pants down. I thought I was next. I had my weapon in the small of my back, and I was trying to maneuver in a position to get to it."

Fortunately, Washington didn't need his pistol. For some reason, checking just one of the three buyers was enough to satisfy that dealer. But Washington knows that wearing a wire can be an intense experience.

Fast forward 20 years, and this scenario is completely different thanks to a piece of software. Now an officer or an informant can record a narcotics buy and capture it all on their smartphone without the dealer (or the informant) even knowing that he or she is being recorded.

This is the power that today's generation of undercover officers have in the palm of their hands. And reflecting on



his earlier life as an undercover officer, is why Washington thinks the LETS video-audio surveillance system ([www.letscorp.us](http://www.letscorp.us)) is a critical piece of officer safety gear.

"Any manager of a narcotics unit who is using undercover officers and informants to make buys would really do themselves a disservice if they didn't check out the LETS systems," Washington says. "I've never seen a technology that is so important to narcotics operations, it's a must."

## **DESIGNED FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, EASY TO USE**

Developed by Law Enforcement Technologies (LETS) in 2006 at the request of the San Francisco office of the FBI, the LETS system turns an ordinary smartphone into a proverbial "wire," replacing all the covert body-worn

systems that can lead to discovery and tragedy for an undercover officer or informant.

The app was first launched as an audio-only tool. It has evolved to become more robust, including video with very little latency. For example, a standard commercial streaming video system has a delay of 15 to 30 seconds. In contrast, the latest LETS product, the Magnum Streaming Video Recording System, has a latency of four to six seconds. That may not sound like much, but when an officer or an informant is working undercover, it could mean the difference between a successful operation and discovery and failure.

Washington who is now commander of the Oconee County Sheriff's Office's Special Operations Division notes that during multijurisdictional and even multi-state investigations, other agen-

cies are impressed by the capabilities of LETS.

“In one of our investigations the North Carolina and Georgia agencies [working with us] said they wanted to use LETS. They were very impressed by the system because it let everybody listen to what was going on while we were running surveillance,” Washington says.

Oconee County SO uses LETS as a covert surveillance system on the phones of undercover officers and informants, but it also uses the software as a communications tool. “We have had an operation with nine narcotics officers in separate vehicles, and the LETS system allowed everybody to listen in and was much better for communications than radios,” Washington says, adding that it is easy for him to set up officers, even officers from other agencies, with the system during operations.



Washington, who supervises his agency's SWAT team as one of his duties, expands on the benefits of using LETS as a critical tool for tactical awareness and communications. “You can have multiple operators hear and see what is going on at the same time,” he says. Negotiators can also use a LETS-equipped phone as a throw phone to give to barricaded suspects and hostage takers.

As a communications platform, LETS prevents one officer from monopolizing the radio when a commander needs to issue orders. “Some officers just love to talk, and they keep their mics keyed and lock everybody else off of the radio. With LETS a commander can talk over them and order them to be quiet,” Washington says.

### SECURE SYSTEM, HARD EVIDENCE

The LETS system was built from the ground up for law enforcement operations security in mind. Every time a user starts a new recording in the LETS system, the software creates a new se-

crete server to store the data. This makes it nearly impossible for unauthorized people to hack into the streaming feed and view it.

The LETS platform runs entirely in the background of the phone and it can be used on numerous makes and models. This camouflages the process from the targeted bad guys and even the informants who are given the phone during operations. Washington says this is a critical feature because today's informant is tomorrow's targeted dealer or at least the targeted dealer's accomplice.

Throughout the surveillance, the law enforcement officers are the only ones who are aware of how the LETS system really works and it is never shown to the informants, according to Washington. “They think we are just giving them a phone,” he says.

Additional security features in the LETS system ensure that the chain of evidence is preserved all the way to prosecution. Each file has a unique hash number. If a file is changed in any way, that number changes as well. This proves that the file has not been altered since it was recorded. Washington says he has never had a problem demonstrating chain of evidence while using LETS, and was a major question he had from the beginning.

He says the company has been very

responsive to his questions and its customer service has been first rate.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Washington says he hopes future versions of LETS adds more features for tactical applications. And he's in luck because the company's website highlights some of the new features of the soon-to-be-released LETS 2020, and they include a host of improvements, including:

- Three-way call coaching that allows officers to listen in while informants or undercover officers have a conversation with a target.
- Drag-and-drop case and evidence management
- Agencywide user access and management
- FedRAMP-compliant secure cloud storage
- Drone video streaming

That last one could be an important intelligence sharing tool for tactical units, Washington says. The Oconee County SO recently added drone capabilities, and Washington is a certified UAS (unmanned aerial system) pilot. He says the agency is even adding mini drones to its tool kit so that SWAT can gain intelligence inside buildings during callouts.

“To be able to watch live streaming video from a drone inside a building during an operation, that will make our lives so much easier and help keep our SWAT operators safe,” he says. ☉

# MAKING BETTER CROWD CONTROL GEAR AND RESTRAINTS

MANUFACTURERS OF CROWD CONTROL EQUIPMENT AND RESTRAINTS ARE WORKING HARD TO ENHANCE THEIR PRODUCTS WITH NEW FEATURES DESIGNED TO PREVENT SERIOUS INJURY TO OFFICERS AND SUBJECTS.

Melanie Basich

→ WHEN YOU'RE MANAGING LARGE GROUPS of people and trying to maintain some semblance of order, the right equipment can make a big difference. From communicating with concertgoers to arresting protestors, here's a selection of tools to add to your kit.



## ALTERNATIVE BALLISTIC ALTERNATIVE IMPACT DEVICE

The Alternative from Alternative Ballistics is a blunt force impact device that is fired from an officer's duty pistol. The Alternative projectile fits over part of the slide and the muzzle of the pistol. "Once the sidearm is fired the bullet travels down the barrel and welds itself inside the projectile," the company says. "The bullet and projectile instantly becomes one unit and the kinetic energy is simultaneously transferred, which propels the projectile toward the target." The company says the impact of the Alternative projectile is the equivalent of being hit by a "170-mph fastball." According to Alternative Ballistics, the Alternative is intended to be used in situations where deadly force is legally justified. Once the Alternative has cleared the muzzle, the officer can follow up with deadly force, if necessary.

<http://alternativeballistics.com>

## AMPLIVOX PORTABLE WIRELESS PA SYSTEM

AmpliVox Sound Systems has introduced an upgraded version of its Digital Audio Travel Partner Plus wireless portable PA system with a 96-channel wireless receiver. The company says the new capability will help increase sound coverage and reduce wireless channel interference. The system features a 250-watt amplifier, delivering clear sound to crowds of up to 7,500 people indoors or out, in areas up to 25,000 square feet. It offers complete portability, with built-in wheels and retractable handle, plus a rechargeable battery that runs up to 10 hours on a single charge.

[www.ampli.com](http://www.ampli.com)

## ARMOR EXPRESS AMP-1 TP BALLISTIC HELMET

The one-size-fits-most Busch PROtective AMP-1 TP helmet from Armor Express is designed to protect the wearer from close-quarter combat threats. The lightweight helmet is made of an aramid composite for ballistic protection. Increased edge and multi-impact capabilities enhance its protective area by up to 50%, compared to standard ballistic helmets, the company says. The AMP-1 TP also offers high fragmentation protection and is certified to the VPAM-3, NIJ, DEA, and FBI protocols. An optional face shield can protect the wearer from blunt force impact and liquid threats, while providing Level IIIA ballistic and fragmentation protection.

[www.armorexpress.com](http://www.armorexpress.com)

## ASP TRANSPORT SYSTEM

ASP's Transport System is a specialized line of restraints designed for corrections, transport, and courtroom use. The hub of the system is the company's Rigid Ultra Cuff wrist restraints, which provide a central connecting point for other system elements, including a waist chain, extra-long waist-to-leg chain, and ankle cuffs. The modular system is designed with officer safety as a priority—the subject remains secured while components are added, removed or adjusted, and a key is not present when securing the locks. The all-in-one Transport Plus set includes the rigid cuffs and key, a set of ankle cuffs, an extra-long chain to secure around the waist and connect the upper and lower elements, and high-security auto-locking blocks, and keys.

[www.asp-usa.com](http://www.asp-usa.com)







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## AXON TASER 7

The TASER 7 is the latest electronic control weapon (ECW) from Axon. Axon says the TASER 7 is its most effective ECW with features that include rapid arc technology to compensate for narrow probe spreads and spiral darts that fly straighter and faster than previous TASER darts. The new darts have double the kinetic energy on impact so that they can compress loose clothing. TASER 7 cartridges are optimized for short shots, with 93% more probe spread at close range. The company says this is critically important as 85% of TASER deployments occur at close range. TASER 7 is the first Axon CEW to connect wirelessly to the Axon network for firmware updates and inventory management.

[www.axon.com](http://www.axon.com)



## EDI RUB-X RIOT SHIELD

The RUB-X riot shield from Executive Defense International (EDI) is light-weight and provides protection against a number of common riot threats. The shield is molded with a durable suction-mold style, and has a strong protective hardened black border around the edges. The protective black border helps prevent the shield from chipping during use and also protects officers against higher-impact threats. Compatible with FoxFury's tactical shield light.

[www.execdefense.com](http://www.execdefense.com)

## HUMANE RESTRAINT HAND KUZI

Humane Restraint's Hand Kuzi restricts dexterity so that prisoners cannot manipulate contraband or other potential hazards while handcuffed. The Kuzi is 10.5 inches deep and 4 inches in diameter. It's made with 2-inch nylon cordura, and features a 1-inch D-ring and heavy duty plastic sheeting. Handcuffs are sold separately.

[www.humanerestraint.com](http://www.humanerestraint.com)

## LA POLICE GEAR BFE STRETCH PANT

LA Police Gear says the BFE Stretch Tactical Pant is the result of its mission to design a tough, comfortable, practical, and stylish tactical pant. The pant is made of a 67% polyester and 33% cotton fabric blend with mechanical stretch built in. The pant features zippered cargo pockets with interior organization for mags, tourniquets, and other gear; rear hip pockets sized for rifle magazines and cell phones; and many other tactical pant standards.

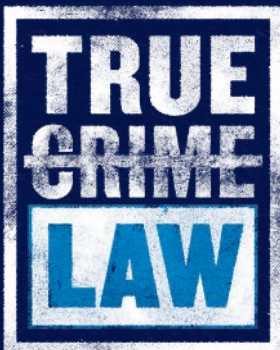
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## LTL VANTAGE SURELOC RESTRAINTS

LTL Vantage is the exclusive producer of SureLock cut-resistant restraints, a patented device for maintaining flexible control while restraining prisoners, detainees, or medical patients. SureLock was designed for controlling violent, drug-intoxicated, or mentally ill subjects. Two embedded stainless steel cords are woven into the waist belt and hand tethers, making the restraint cut-resistant. By simply pulling the tether handles, the escorting personnel can retract a subject's movement to any degree up to the point of immobilization without compromising a subject's health and safety, LTL Vantage says. <http://surelockrestraints.com>

## SABRE SECURITY EQUIPMENT CORPORATION 0.68 CALIBER LAUNCHER AND PROJECTILES

Sabre's SL-SAC less-lethal launcher deploys 0.68 caliber projectiles containing OC formula/Pava. It is designed to be accurate up to 66 feet but can be used at a distance of up to 175 feet. It features auto feed technology with a hopper that holds up to 200 projectiles and is fully pneumatic so there are no batteries required. The 26ci/3000psi compressed air system provides up to 200 shots per fill for continuous fire. An optional folding stock is also available. [www.sabrered.com/law-enforcement-corrections](http://www.sabrered.com/law-enforcement-corrections)

## SAFARILAND PRAETORIAN RIOT SUIT

The Praetorian Riot Suit from Monadnock, a Safariland brand, is a hard polypropylene modular riot suit with a shock absorbing padded layer. Its modular design allows for interchangeable suit parts and pieces, and the quick-release buckle system allows fast donning and doffing. Articulating elbow and knee pads allow for improved movement, and suit ventilation and padding make it more comfortable to wear than some riot suits. Additional padding and support are incorporated in the shoulder, elbow, groin, and knee. [www.safariland.com](http://www.safariland.com)

## SIRCHIE TACCOMMANDER RIOT SUIT

Sirchie's TacCommander modular riot suit system allows a wide range of body sizes to use the same suit. A patented hammock system in knee and elbow pads provides shock absorption and greater comfort. The TacCommander offers full torso coverage and chest protection with front and back removable blunt force trauma plates that can be replaced with ballistic plates. It provides maneuverability with adjustable connectors between pads. It is now available with an optional flame-resistant treatment for added protection during a riot or violent protest. [www.sirchie.com](http://www.sirchie.com)



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# TECHNOLOGY AND GUN CRIME

## TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN SOLVING GUN CRIME AND PREVENTING GUN CRIME



**I**n the fight against violent crime, law enforcement agencies are making greater use of technology. New investigative technologies can provide strategic advantages to administrators as well as tactical advantages to investigators in the field. For example, technologies that improve an agency's ability to analyze crime-scene evidence and data, can also provide:

- investigative leads that help solve criminal cases,
- intelligence that can help disrupt future criminal acts, and
- objective evaluation of crime-scene evidence to support court testimony and improve prosecutorial success rates.

One such technology is IBIS, the Integrated Ballistic Identification System, which is the backbone of the National Integrated Ballistic Information Net-

work (NIBIN) managed by ATF, since the late 20th century. NIBIN is a national network linking over 5,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide providing agencies with technology that allows them to not only solve criminal cases but positions them to prevent future gun crime events.

### THE COST OF GUN CRIME

Before moving on to the technology, it's important to understand the cost of gun crime in society. In 2012, the nationwide societal cost of firearm-related injuries was estimated to be in excess of \$174 billion. This includes work loss, medical care, mental health, emergency transport, police, criminal justice, insurance claim processing, employer cost, and quality of life. And \$7.84 billion of it is governmental costs. In Chi-

cago alone, these costs were estimated at \$1.1 billion for 2010, with Houston and Philadelphia at or near three-quarters of a billion dollars.

A 2012 case study of eight major U.S. cities included calculations of potential government savings and other benefits that would accompany significant reductions in violent crime. One finding is that a small reduction in gun crime in a city can result in big savings and other benefits to that city. In Chicago for instance, it is estimated that a 10% reduction in gun crime would lead to government savings of \$5 million. Also, housing value would rise by \$4.4 billion.

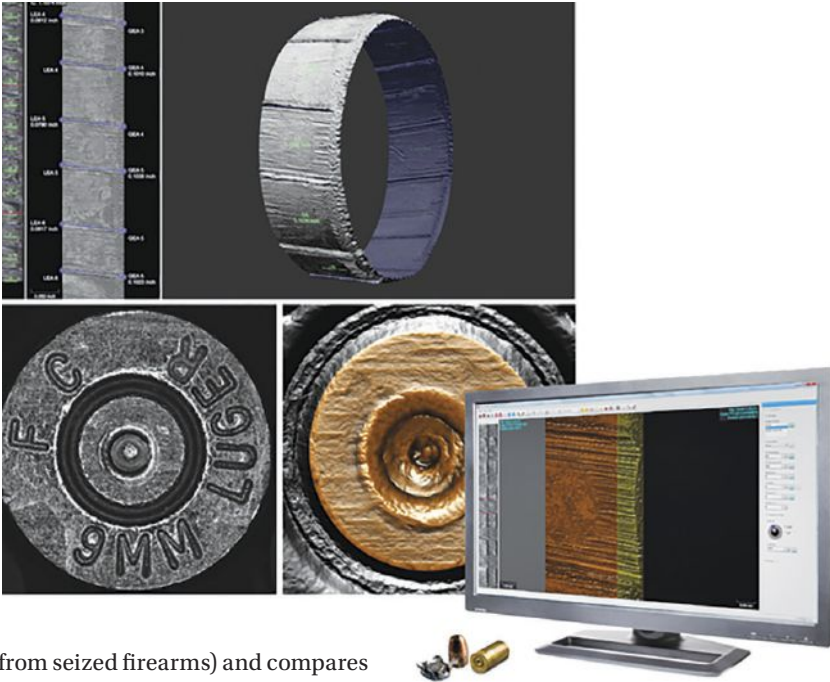
How does technology help?

### IBIS BALLISTIC-IMAGING TECHNOLOGY

The Police Foundation has called ballistic imaging "A critical forensic tool for solving gun crimes and to improve real time case information and intelligence data" in the United States. Worldwide, IBIS is the leader in ballistic imaging technology consisting of BRASSTRAX for fired cartridge cases and BULLETTRAX for fired bullets.

Each firearm has machined parts that have unique tool marks that leave unique markings on the ammunition it fires, like individual fingerprints. So, as a cartridge is fired, each fired bullet and cartridge case bears microscopic markings imparted by that firearm that can distinguish it from other firearms. Trained technicians use IBIS to image these marks (hence, ballistic imaging) for searching against a nationwide database of over 4 million entries in the United States alone.

IBIS then looks at images of the evidence (recovered crime-scene bullets and cartridge cases, as well as test fires



from seized firearms) and compares those images to evidence from other crime scenes. And like Google search results, the powerful IBIS algorithms reveal the most likely matches, which are often sufficiently apparent to provide investigative leads, regardless of

## SUCCESS STORY

One police department incorporated NIBIN into its property division.

- Evidence technicians were trained to routinely process firearm-related evidence for pre-NIBIN work including latent print processing, DNA swabbing, and test firing of firearms.
- Upon submission, NIBIN-eligible evidence was immediately segregated into a separate area for processing.
- Prior to it being placed on the shelf for longer term storage, the evidence was processed and entered into NIBIN.
- Over a period of one year, 75% of submitted evidence was entered and correlation results reviewed within 3 days, with 95% of submitted evidence processed within a week. Evidence which routinely took more than a week included evidence from homicides and assaults with intent to kill.
- The number of NIBIN entries over the course of that first year was close to 3,000. Timeliness was key to helping that agency identify and/or arrest over 100 individuals involved in shootings in that city that year.

distance or time. This helps uncover links between crimes that may otherwise have gone unconnected.

Not only have such searches resulted in a link between a firearm seized from a weapons violation incident in 2017 and an unsolved homicide in California committed more than 20 years earlier, searches in NIBIN have yielded over 200,000 investigative leads.

The capability of BRASSTRAX and BULLETRAX to acquire high-definition 3D images along with high-resolution 2D images has significantly increased the performance of searches. This is critical as more and more agencies are seeing the timely value of ballistic intelligence and the database size continues to increase. Further, the technological advancements have also made visual comparisons easier, allowing trained technicians to make visual comparisons with higher confidence and provide leads to investigators with unparalleled timeliness. This has transformed existing crime gun strategies from a reactive approach to a proactive approach allowing investigators to disrupt violent crime and prevent the next shooting.

## OBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE – THE NEXT FRONTIER

Ultra Electronics Forensic Technology has devoted the last 25 years develop-

ing ballistic imaging and identification solutions that help law enforcement agencies build preventive crime gun strategies, as well as solve gun crime. With that firmly addressed, we will continue on this path and will also tackle new challenges in the justice system.

For example, there's a growing need to support firearm-examiner court-testimony with data that supports the examiner's conclusion that a set of cartridge cases or bullets were fired from the same gun. Giving examiners the tools and means to perform quantitative analysis will arm them with the data needed to support their visual conclusion. For example, one measure is an error rate indicating the probability that two cartridge cases or bullets did not come from the same firearm.

Soon, firearm examiners will have access to a tool to help allay the concerns of the courts, which have been concerned with the subjective nature of opinion in forensic firearm examinations. Not only that but the imaging technology and virtual microscopy will allow for greater collaboration among firearm examiners than currently exists. Imagine one agency acquiring a bullet and getting a potential lead with a bullet from a crime that was entered states away. No longer do firearm examiners have to arrange for evidence to be shipped and wait weeks for any sort of analysis to come back. The images can be electronically shared, and examiners perform virtual comparisons of the imaged bullets.

## INNOVATING TODAY, FOR A SAFER TOMORROW

At Ultra Electronics Forensic Technology, our mission is to provide innovative solutions for a safer tomorrow. In addition to the large IBIS network in the USA, we have provided innovative IBIS solutions to law enforcement agencies in over 80 countries worldwide. This includes the United Kingdom, South Africa, the Philippines, Canada, and Australia, as well as INTERPOL which operates IBIN, the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network. Each of these countries has made IBIS a central part of its crime-fighting efforts.

IBIS helps law enforcement and prosecutors fight crime, but it also helps re-establish value in communities that have been subject to violent gun crime. ☉



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# STOPPING OFFICER SUICIDES

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS AND THE  
RESOURCES AVAILABLE SO YOU CAN HELP  
A COLLEAGUE CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE  
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

Doug Wyllie

**I**n January, POLICE reported the tragic news that in 2019, more American law enforcement officers reportedly died by suicide than those who died in the line of duty.

According to data released by Blue H.E.L.P.—an organization that tracks police officer suicides while simultaneously seeking to prevent such tragedies from occurring—228 American officers died by suicide in 2019.

By comparison, 132 police officers died in the line of duty last year. This is a substantial decrease in duty deaths in comparison to previous years—indeed, a decrease of 20% compared to 166 in 2018, 175 in 2017, and 175 in 2016.

Yet while duty deaths declined in 2019, the number of reported police officer suicides—including active-duty and recently retired—increased significantly. Compared to 228 in 2019, there were 169 reported suicides in 2018. The number of reported suicide deaths was 168 in 2017 and 143 in 2016.

Agencies across the country are beginning to recognize the problem of officer suicide.

For example, the New York Police Department—which suffered a tragically substantial number of officer suicides last year—has declared that it will deploy psychologists to every borough to encourage better officer mental health and wellness.

Other agencies have increased their efforts to make post-traumatic stress—a topic that has for decades been taboo—something that officers can discuss without fear of professional repercussion. This is obvious progress toward the goal of smashing the stigma of officers seeking help when they know they're approaching crisis.

Two areas that law enforcement officers and organizations can continue to improve upon are recognizing the warning signs of a potentially suicidal officer—or dispatcher, or administrative staff, or any other employee—and knowing the wealth of resources available to provide assistance.

### WARNING SIGNS

Families of officers who died by suicide—as well as department colleagues left behind—frequently say the officers displayed visible warning signs of

life-threatening mental or emotional crisis that only really registered after the officer's death.

Some of those warning signs include:

- Displaying feelings of hopelessness
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Increase in alcohol consumption
- Noticeable change in weight—either gain or loss
- Ending typically beloved recreational activities
- Sudden, unexpected outbursts of anger or sadness
- Increased risk-taking both on and off duty
- A change in attitude or personal demeanor
- Saying things like, “You’ll take care of my family if I die, right?”
- Threatening suicide—many suicide victims verbally telegraph their death

Some of these behaviors are far more likely to be observed by an officer's colleagues than his family, particularly the last three listed.

### AVAILABLE RESOURCES

If you observe in your co-worker or spouse any of these behaviors, let them know that you care enough about them

24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress. The Lifeline website also provides prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

Safe Call Now is one of the organizations that offers those services specifically for first responders. It was established in April 2009 by Washington state Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen, Congressman Dave Reichert, and Gil Kerlikowski with the mission of ensuring that no first responder or public safety employee walk through a crisis alone.

There is also Copline, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving law enforcement officers and their families by providing a confidential 24-hour hotline answered by retired law enforcement officers. Copline peer listeners are trained in crisis intervention and can offer referrals to specifically skilled mental health professionals in the caller's area for follow-up and continued assistance.

Badge of Life is a not-for-profit organization with the mission of educating and training law enforcement about mental health and suicide prevention.

## Saying something along the lines of “I care about you enough to act to ask you how you’re doing” can be the difference between saving a life and watching the funeral procession of an officer who died by his or her own hand.

to suggest that they get help. They can seek the assistance of a department resource like a mental health counselor or chaplain. They can talk with an outside psychiatrist or psychologist.

Further, there is plenty of literature available to help officers in crisis. Books like “Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement” by Dr. Kevin Gilmartin, “I Love a Cop” by Dr. Ellen Kirshman, and “Armor Your Self” by John Marx can be great resources for officers who may be approaching crisis. Add to that list books like “The Price they Pay” by Karen Solomon and Jeffry McGill—two of the founders of BlueH.E.L.P.

Then, there is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which provides

The Illinois-based organization hosts events for law enforcement personnel and their families to learn more about mental health wellness.

BlueH.E.L.P. operates a website the organization maintains. A first responder need only enter a few data points—such as their location and what kind of assistance is needed—and the individual will be provided with a list of options for help from a searchable database dedicated to helping first responders find emotional, financial, spiritual, and other forms of assistance.

But what does a person do to come to the aid of a colleague or a spouse who appears to be exhibiting any of the warning signs listed above?

Let's unpack that complicated question.

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## INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Intervening—having that “difficult discussion” with an individual you perceive to be approaching suicidal crisis—is multifaceted, nuanced, and challenging.

Approaching a colleague or a family member who is exhibiting any of the above warning signs is simple, but not

easy. There is an important distinction between simple and easy. Simple is the absence of complexity. Easy is the absence of effort.

Saying something along the lines of “I care about you enough to act to ask you how you’re doing” can be the difference between saving a life and watching the funeral proces-

sion of an officer who died by his or her own hand.

The response to this might be, “I’m not ready to talk right now, but thanks.”

The approach might be, “Let’s get a cup of coffee off-duty” or “I’m going fishing tomorrow. I’d love it if you’d come with me” or “I’m heading to church on Sunday morning—want to go with me?”

**Police organizations at every level must make it clear to their employees that mental and emotional distress is as much of a medical emergency as a gunshot wound or a broken bone, and that treatment is nothing different than life-saving emergency medical attention.**

Regardless of how the conversation starts, the intention is the same—being there.

The response might be, “Thanks, but no thanks.”

Even if someone resists initial outreach, they will know that you’re there at some point in the future.

## INSTITUTIONAL ACTION

Law enforcement agencies across the country provide training to recruits and active-duty officers on myriad topics—from crisis intervention to use of force—but for a few notable exceptions a scant few train agency employees in suicide prevention.

While it is changing, still altogether too many agencies are guilty of professionally penalizing officers who come forward and admit that they’ve been traumatized either by a single incident or in the aggregate over a period of time. Promotions are declined. Requests for special assignments such as SWAT or K-9 or Motors are declined.

Officers in those agencies see what happened to the colleagues before them and choose to suffer in silence instead of seeking necessary assistance.

Police organizations at every level must make it clear to their employees

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that mental and emotional distress is as much of a medical emergency as a gunshot wound or a broken bone, and that treatment is nothing different than life-saving emergency medical attention.

Police agencies should use roll call to emphasize that there is no penalty for asking to get help.

Command staff should be on the lookout for those warning signs mentioned above and take caring action to say simply, "I care about you."

### NO MORE HIDING

For decades, the issue of police officer suicide has been hidden, swept under the rug, because those who have been left behind had some sense of shame that they had either not recognized the warning signs or failed to take action if they did see imminent crisis.

Fortunately, the practice of hiding the issue of police suicide may be coming to an end.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

### BADGE OF LIFE

<https://badgeoflife.org>

### BLUEH.E.L.P.

<https://bluehelp.org/>

### COPLINE

1-800-267-5463/1-800-COPLINE

<https://www.copline.org>

### NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-8255

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### SAFE CALL NOW

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[www.safecallnow.org](http://www.safecallnow.org)

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<https://serveprotect.org>

615-373-8000

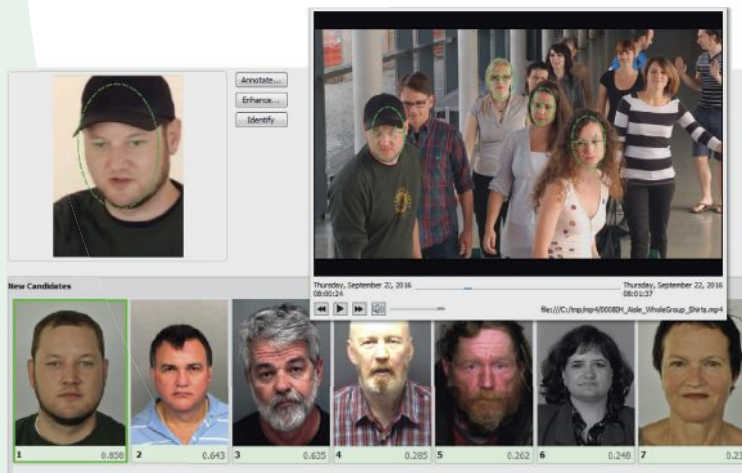
This is possibly due to the number of officers who die by suicide in a very visible way—on duty, in a police station or a squad car—so it becomes public record. The mainstream media covers it as they would a line-of-duty death, as well they should.

The narrative of an off-duty officer "dying of an accidental discharge while cleaning their service weapon" has been revealed for what it is—a cover-up. No officer cleans a gun with a round in the chamber.

The number of reported law enforcement deaths by suicide is almost certainly lower than the actual number of police suicides. But with more attention being paid to the issue—with individuals and institutions paying closer attention to the warning signs and guiding officers toward support services—perhaps the profession can watch that number shrink.

A closing thought to any officer who is contemplating suicide: The world is better with you in it. 🕒

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# SURVIVING THE AMBUSH ATTACK

**WHEN SOMEONE LAUNCHES A SURPRISE ATTACK AGAINST YOU, YOUR TRAINING AND YOUR PREPARATION WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.**

**Pete Ebel**

**T**his article is a compilation of officer safety advice from my own training and experience and from some of the best trainers I know. Parts of it may seem elementary to you. But some of the reports on ambush murders of police officers show that we are repeating our mistakes.

## **WHEN UNDER ATTACK**

The most important thing is to move. A sitting duck is an easy target.

If you are in a patrol car, use it to get out of the kill zone or as a weapon to eliminate the threat. If you are on foot, run fast and get to a spot where you can accurately shoot. Running and gunning looks cool, but it may not be the best choice. You will naturally slow down when shooting, making you an easy target. And firing from a full-tilt run will make your shots inaccurate.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Use communications effectively. Get the best info possible before searching for suspects or advancing on them. Know who your backup is and where your backup is. Radio time is precious. It will be jammed. Clear the air for those who need it. Do not direct backup into the kill zone.

## **APPROACHING A SCENE**

Slow down and take a tactical pause. Stop, look, and listen. This one small act can save your life and make you able to more effectively address the situation.

PHOTO: PEXELS.COM

## **“Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.” - Sun Tzu**

Evaluate what is going on. This is true whether you are in a patrol car or on foot. In police work, time and distance is most always your friend.

Binoculars are a great tool for viewing a scene at distance. Keep them in the seat next to you and not in the trunk. When you study the scene, identify cover and identify people moving around. And remember that the incident is not always limited to the location to which you were dispatched. You could have been given information, or the incident could have gone mobile.

Avoid kill zones and cross fires. When hunting the suspect do not have multiple officers encircle him. That could create a blue-on-blue tragedy.

### **STABILIZE YOURSELF**

Gain control of yourself. Adrenaline can work against you. Combat breathing, otherwise known as autogenic breathing, can help control your heart rate and your fear. To perform combat breathing, inhale for a four-count, hold for a four-count, exhale for a four-count, hold for a four-count.

### **IN YOUR VEHICLE**

The patrol vehicle can give you a false sense of security. It has become our office, but unless it is armored it is not a safe haven or place of refuge during an ambush. Our admins have given us a computer, a stereo, a cell phone, and everything we need to do police work from the comfort of a car seat. But don't type your reports in the car. Type them in your station. If you must stay on the street, meet a partner in a spot with a long approach and wide field of view. And have your partner watch your six. You should both park in a manner that makes for a fast getaway. Unbuckle your seat belt so you can exit your car quickly if you need to.

Think about lighting. Dim the interior lights and your computer screen. Use bright headlights to temporarily blind someone approaching you from the front.

Lock your doors. That will slow an intended attacker and limit access to you. Crack your windows so you can

hear people and vehicles approaching. Look around frequently, using mirrors to scan 360 degrees.

Many patrol units now carry a ballistic shield. Is yours in the trunk? It shouldn't be. Put it behind your driver seat with a bungee cord or strap. That way it can provide ballistic protection for your back and spine while you are driving out of harm's way.

Speaking of ballistic protection, your vehicle is not great cover, unless it has been armored. Tests have shown cars are generally poor cover. The engine block is the only protection in an unarmored vehicle.

When driving, don't get hemmed in at a stoplight or in traffic. Leave yourself room to get out if attacked. Check mirrors often, both when parked and driving.

Finally—and I realize this is not Officer Friendly-like and may be met with some opposition from those who insist we become more kind and gentle—do not let someone approach you while you are sitting in your patrol car. Ask them to stay back and then either exit safely or move the car so that you can do so. Of course, good threat assessment and situational awareness will serve you well here. Use your cop sixth-sense and ability to size people up quickly to your advantage. Remember that there is a way to speak to people without offending them. A well-placed “sir” or “ma'am” can do wonders in this situation.

### **TALKING TO PEOPLE**

Always have a plan. Always be assessing cover.

Maintain a safe gap/positioning. Make sure you are positioned to allow for a quick response to a physical attack. If confronted with a gun while up close, do you try to outdraw the suspect's trigger squeeze? Remember that action is quicker than reaction, and that makes the likelihood of winning unlikely. Do you go hands-on first to redirect the suspect's gun, access yours, and react to deadly force with deadly force? Have you trained in techniques to do so? In addition to physical training in these tactics, men-

tal rehearsal is a must.

### **TRAFFIC STOP TACTICS**

Consider a passenger-side approach or a callout approach. There are numerous advantages to the passenger-side approach. It does something the suspect/driver is not used to, and can provide the element of surprise. It gives the officer a view of the driver's right hand. Ninety percent of the population is right-handed and people tend to handle weapons with their strong hand. If a driver is planning to ambush you once you arrive at the car door, the passenger side can give you the tactical advantage by providing you better options for cover and/or concealment, greater distance, and more reaction time.

When faced with a situation that gives you the tingle (driver making a furtive move, not stopping right away, numerous passengers), consider a “no approach,” or callout tactic.

When a driver or passenger exits the car, be especially wary when the last part of them to exit the car is their right hand. That is not normal behavior and they are concealing it for a reason.

As for remaining seated in the car because your computer and ticket-writing equipment dictates it, always call a backup. Lone officers can be dead officers. It is unacceptable to allow it to become commonplace. Yes, I know this will affect manpower and cut activity somewhat, but officer safety takes priority.

### **SNIPER INCIDENTS**

During a sniper attack, get to cover because he is hunting you. Move from cover if your position becomes tactically inferior. If you must move, stay low and use short sprints from cover to cover. Use the radio. Let your backup(s) know your location, the suspect's location and description, and the type of weapon the suspect is using.

If you are in a vehicle, a quick turn down another street, into a driveway or other space may get you out of the kill zone. If none of those options exist, is a sidewalk drivable? Can you get into a secure building by breaking a

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door or window?

When the suspect has the high ground, and you are in a car, drive rapidly through it. You will be a more difficult target. Some officers might immediately stop, reverse, or U-turn. That might slow you or stop you, which gives the suspect a chance to hit you.

### IN RESTAURANTS

I like my back to a wall, so no one can walk behind me, but that is not always possible. Plus, a lot of people know that's "the cop seat," and they can spot you. If you are off-duty or working plainclothes, consider avoiding it. Whether in uniform or plainclothes, use a table, not a booth, so you can move more quickly out of it. Stay away from window seats. When sitting with multiple officers, communicate your respective area of responsibility such as front door, rear door, etc. Watch people when they enter. Look for squirrely behavior, the thousand-yard stare, the target stare, bulges in clothing, manner of clothing (does it fit the weather?), and unusual gait.

## Tactical medical gear and the knowledge of how to use it is a must for every modern warrior guardian.

Watch how other cops act in these situations to learn what not to do. Many remain oblivious to the world around them. They are entranced by their phone or by their computer. I recently walked into a coffee shop and saw two law enforcement officers sitting right by the front door, buried in their laptops. Neither even gave me—an armed man—a second look when I entered the front door.

### IN THE STATION

Attacks in police stations and the parking lots of stations have been numerous in recent years, so we must consider it an eventuality and prepare for it.

Parking immediately around the building must be restricted. Access control is a must. Fencing, speed humps, and stanchions or other barriers can

help. Exteriors and interiors should be well lit. The use of video cameras provides cheap insurance in the form of an early warning system or deterrent. Agencies should provide a way for officers and other personnel to see what they are walking into when exiting the station. A ballistic window or camera with monitor can provide that.

Attacks have happened at the front desk area. Make sure the front windows and door are not covered by numerous posters and other promotional material. Officers at the front desk need to see what's happening outside.

Front desk personnel should be fully uniformed, wear body armor, and have all equipment required for patrol. They should also be in good enough health to fight back if necessary. The desk officers



are literally the first line of defense for your stronghold.

Officers must be mindful of threats when entering and exiting headquarters. Threats can occur anywhere, and the best spot for an ambush is where someone least expects it and is not mentally prepared for it.

## AT HOME

Make sure you are not being followed home. A few left turns will help you identify a threat. Also, don't drive home via the same route every day.

When you arrive home, stop, look, and listen. Does everything appear normal? Assess the situation. An enemy could be awaiting your return, as eagerly as your family dog, except with a much more sinister intent. Speaking of dogs, they are a great deterrent.

Similarly, when you leave your house don't walk out of the front door or garage door thinking you are still in your safe zone because you are at home. When you walk out that door, get your head in the game. And be sure to check the outside through a window or two before proceeding out into the world.

Checking the yard and surrounding areas before exiting is a good practice for your family also. Preparing your family with some basic safety skills—beyond that of normal parent and husband/wife stuff—is important. Your family is different. They are a law enforcement family, and with that comes risk for which they must prepare. It is your job to prepare them.

Finally, take every legal step available to keep your internet profile as low as possible. I don't have a presence on Facebook; I use my wife's account. If you must have your own social media, use an assumed name and keep your account limited to good friends only. Don't post trophy pictures, uniform photos, or blue line content.

Take full advantage of any state statutes regarding the confidentiality of law enforcement officer information. In Florida, for example, it is illegal to make public the addresses and other personal information of police and corrections officers. A confidentiality form must be filed with a local property appraiser's office, as well as the clerk and comptroller's office for civil and criminal court records to ensure your personal information is redacted—including your



PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES.COM

address—before release under public records law. Similarly, make use of the opt-out option on websites that routinely collect and sell personal information. In some cases, I have had to send certified letters to those companies advising them of the law. You may need to “Google” yourself regularly to stay ahead of the information superhighway, but it is worth it. If someone wants to come after you, don't make it easy for them.

## ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

Tactical medical gear and the knowledge of how to use it is a must for every modern warrior guardian. Tourniquets and pressure bandages should be carried and readily accessible. Know buddy/self-care. If you are wounded, and under fire, EMS is not coming to get you.

Extra ammo is important. Lots of law enforcement officers keep these items in a bailout bag or “go” bag. Consider carrying extra body armor, plates, external vests, and other protective gear. No one should go in service without a superior weapon these days. Binoculars and night vision can be a big help as well.

Vehicle armor is becoming more readily available to agencies. It is also possible to equip patrol cars with perimeter warning systems to alert officer occupants

to the approach of a person, especially in blind spots. These systems also come with options for alarms that are deafening to temporarily incapacitate a potential attacker and give the intended victim officer a momentary tactical advantage.

## MINDSET

A proper mindset is possibly the most important thing you need to prevail in an ambush. Do not underestimate your attacker. They have prepared. Have you?

To prepare, watch videos of ambushes and formulate a response plan in your own head. Visualization is a powerful tool. It programs your body and mind for success.

What training have you taken? Shooting on the move is a skill essential to winning a gunfight. Take courses that involve dynamic scenarios using marking rounds to inoculate yourself against fear and pain.

Prepare, because your day will come. 🗡️

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*Lt. Pete Ebel has served as a law enforcement officer for 31 years, and currently works narcotics for a large south Florida sheriff's office. He is a veteran trainer who helped build the Team One Network's Counter-Ambush Instructor course.*



PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES.COM

# CLOSING CASES WITH NEW INVESTIGATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

NEW TOOLS HELP DETECTIVES COLLECT, ANALYZE, AND SHARE INFORMATION TO CLEAR CASELOADS MORE QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY.

Melanie Basich

**L**aw enforcement officers are always looking for more tools to give them an edge in investigations. Technological innovations continue to improve officers' ability to collect, search, share, and analyze information imperative to solving cases. And they can do it more quickly and efficiently.

## FACIAL RECOGNITION

It used to be that automated facial recognition could only compare images showing a well-lit, forward-facing view of a face. Now, this software can search through videos and find people in a crowd of others in varying light and positions.

At the most basic level, facial recognition software takes an image and compares it to images in an existing database. The software creates a "candidate list" of possible matches. From that list the investigator can compare the original image to those possible matches and determine if it is the right person or not.

Algorithms and additional filter tools help investigators narrow down the list before they run an image, and the databases of images to compare against are ever expanding.

In addition to matching still images such as mug shots and passport photos, this technology helps law enforcement find criminals and missing persons in video, and therefore pinpoint their locations at certain times to further investigations.

To enhance its FaceVACS-DBScan LE offering, Cognitec [www.cognitec.com](http://www.cognitec.com) developed a video investigation feature. You can upload video and the software will find the faces in the videos and extract those video snippets and store them. "It can also detect if the same person appears in multiple videos," says a Cognitec spokesperson. "The software will cluster all those different snippets together, and the investigator can see where the person appeared in the videos. The officer can then click on the faces in a video frame and compare them against facial images in a database."

The same system can also recognize if certain other faces tend to appear together with the person being searched across different videos. This might indicate suspects who are working together to perpetrate a crime. An investigator could then start a new search for this second and even third person.

This advanced automation is much faster than the manual process of a per-

son scouring hours of videotape looking for the same person throughout. It's also much less error prone, emphasizes Cognitec's spokesperson. Software programs don't get tired.

But that isn't to say that people are taken out of the process. "Facial matching is a supporting tool, not evidence," the spokesperson says. "Just a tool to help push an investigation forward. It's always a human inspector who looks at the images and makes the decision in the end."

Identify by Veritone [www.veritone.com](http://www.veritone.com) is a facial recognition solution that is based on the concept of linking video evidence to a known offender in the database of an agency and any other agencies participating in the company's program. It includes an automated process whereby every day the known database gets updated via the cloud, and then gets moved into the Veritone application.

Identify also has tools for managing cases and sharing the output between different agencies or officers—all based in the cloud, says Jon Gacek, head of government, legal and compliance at Veritone. He says the program can even conduct a search using a police sketch.

Identify is designed to be fast, flexible, and simple to use. But most importantly, it can be shared across agencies. "Your ability to search not only your own info, but the info of others is super powerful," says Gacek. "It's also very efficient."

To meet the growing need of agencies preparing police videos footage for release to the public, many companies provide video redaction software as well. Veritone's Redact program searches videos not for faces, but for heads.

Head detection can identify reflections in windows and backs and sides of heads in the cloud. Then the officer can go through and decide which heads they'd like to redact or leave in the video. Different levels of blur and complete blackout are available to obscure people's heads. The same program can also redact audio and create a transcript through an automated process.

BriefCam [www.briefcam.com](http://www.briefcam.com) is a company that uses artificial intelligence and video synopsis technologies to turn video into "actionable intelligence." With BriefCam, you can filter the search criteria based on specific time ranges; class categories such as People, Two-Wheeled Vehicles, Other Vehicles, and



PHOTO: FARO

The validated Blood Spatter Analysis tool in FARO Zone 3D gives investigators the ability to determine a potential area of origin and generate detailed reports for all the blood droplets used in the analysis. This image is an example of how the 3D data captured with the FARO Focus Laser Scanner and high-resolution photos can be brought into FARO Zone to estimate the area of origin.

Animals; colors; and faces. A feature called View all Faces allows you to view all the faces that were detected in the video in a dedicated search gallery.

According to the company, law enforcement agencies can use BriefCam to rapidly pinpoint people and vehicles, across multiple cameras, by their attributes such as gender, type, size, color, direction and speed to quickly identify and catch suspects. They can also receive real-time notifications of critical security, safety, and operational events using smart alerts.

### RAPID HIT DNA

DNA has long been an important means of tying suspects to a crime scene. New techniques go beyond checking against CODIS (Combined DNA Index System).

Rapid DNA profiling technologies are emerging to help address the challenges of increased DNA evidence and testing backlogs. One system, for example, automates DNA profiling from a simple cheek swab, generating results in about 90 minutes. The "swab in, profile out process" takes less than five minutes of hands-on time and performs all necessary steps of DNA analysis without human intervention. Reagents in disposable cartridges are loaded onto the system with up to seven buccal (cheek) swab samples.

After a sample run is started, samples are processed with no further user interaction. The system extracts DNA and performs short tandem repeat (STR) amplifications, electrophoretic separations, and software analysis to generate full human identification profiles. The findings are then used to search the linked DNA database to find matching hits or compared to swabs taken from suspects. This inte-

gration enables law enforcement agencies to reduce the time it takes to generate a DNA profile and make decisions while arrestees are in custody.

### SNAPSHOT DNA PHENOTYPING

But what if you've checked the DNA evidence from a crime against all databases and all known subjects and come up with nothing? What if you have unidentified remains? Or blood from a suspect, but no idea of who to look for?

A technique called Snapshot DNA Phenotyping can analyze an unidentified person's DNA to create a picture of what he or she looks like.

Instead of using standard STR analysis of the available DNA, the lab will run a "SNP" panel. It creates a profile of the single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs or SNiPs) found in the DNA, which can be analyzed to help determine a person's likely eye color, hair color, and ancestry. This is based on the characteristics of people with similar genomes. And it can be used to create an image of what the person belonging to the DNA could have looked like.

It's not definitive, but can point investigators in the right direction, mainly by narrowing the focus of possible matches. For example, analysis could reveal that the DNA comes from a person with most likely blue eyes, maybe green eyes, but definitely not brown eyes. A sketch created using this information could be the break an agency needs to find a suspect or identify a victim and solve a case that went cold years ago.

### FORENSIC GENEALOGY

Forensic genealogy is being used more and more to identify suspects or victims



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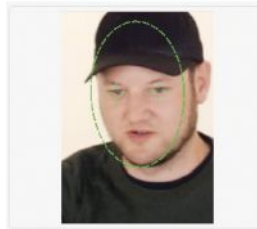


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Using Cognitec's FaceVACS-DBScan LE video investigation feature, an officer can search for a person's face across multiple videos and see where the person appeared. The officer can then click on the faces in a video frame and compare them against facial images in a database.

PHOTO: COGNITEC

in criminal cases. Law enforcement agencies use open-source databases from companies that allow people to upload their genealogy results in the hopes of finding relatives. They compare the unknown DNA they have to the open-source databases to find closely related DNA, indicating a relative of the unknown person. It can identify any person who has a third cousin or closer within an open-source database.

Police recently used forensic genealogy to arrest a suspect in several brutal rapes and one homicide in Washington, DC, in the 1990s. DNA evidence left at the scene led them to five relatives. They were then able to narrow down the list to a man who lived in the area at the time.

### CRIME SCENE IMAGING

Documentation of the crime scene is an essential component of any investigation. Today's high-tech solutions do much more than take important measurements with more precision and efficiency than the old manual tape measure and camera method.

"With 3D Laser Scanning (LIDAR), law enforcement can capture an entire scene in 3D and be able to revisit the scene virtually at any time, days, weeks, months even years later," says a spokesperson for FARO [www.faro.com](http://www.faro.com). "Using the data captured with a laser scanner like the FARO Focus, investigators are able to measure items down to a millimeter of accuracy."

FARO also offers validated software tools to analyze that data and turn it into 2D diagrams, 3D reconstructions, animations, and reports to create presentations for court. These include tools for blood pattern analysis and bullet trajectory. The FARO solution also supports VR (Virtual Reality), which allows investigators to view the crime scene in an enhanced way and can be used to create training scenarios in FARO Zone VR.

"The Trimble Forensics SX10 solution is a newer hybrid tool for investigators that captures high-accuracy total station measurements, photographs, and high-accuracy 3D laser scans," says Chad McFadden, business area director, Trimble <https://forensics.trimble.com>. He says its serving multiple functions saves time and resources.

Another option is the Trimble X7 3D Scanning System, which can create photorealistic 3D models. The data captured allows analysts to collect precise dimensions, evidence, and features recorded for later analysis. By capturing large amounts of data quickly, McFadden says investigators can create a complete 360-degree image of a scene in minutes.

Different tools work for different circumstances. QuickMap 3D Mapping Packages from Laser Technology Inc. [www.lasertech.com](http://www.lasertech.com) were designed for investigators to quickly survey a scene using a lightweight, portable point-and-shoot device. LTI's TruPoint 300 Incident Mapping Package features la-

ser technology with millimeter-grade accuracy and a software user interface that requires minimal training. It includes the LTI Tru-Point 300 compact total station laser measurement tool, a tablet, tripod, case, and QuickMap 3D for Android software so investigators can map only the evidence they need.

**BALLISTIC FORENSICS**

To aid law enforcement in comparing and identifying bullets and cartridge cases to help solve crimes, Ultra Electronics Forensic Technology [www.ultra-forensictechnology.com](http://www.ultra-forensictechnology.com) has developed what it calls an advanced ballistic identification solution. IBIS (Integrated Ballistic Identification System) allows investigators to compare ballistic markings and provides automated identification of likely matching bullets or cartridge cases.

According to the company, the latest generation of IBIS technology includes enhanced 3D imaging, advanced comparison algorithms, and a robust infrastructure, all designed to meet the needs of police and the military.

Firearms examiners or technicians must enter cartridge casing images and related information into IBIS to use the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), which is managed by the ATF. According to the ATF, these images are correlated against the database. Law enforcement can search against evidence from their jurisdiction, neighboring agencies, and others across the country.

**GUNSHOT RESIDUE ANALYSIS**

To determine if a suspect has likely handled a firearm involved in a crime, investigators look to gunshot residue analysis.

RJ Lee Group <https://rjlg.com> is a company that conducts tests for gunshot residue (GSR) analysis and gunshot residue identification, in addition to providing forensic experts to testify in court.

As RJ Lee Group expert Tarah Hesel has testified in court, lead, barium, and antimony are fused together and released in a cloud when a firearm is discharged. Therefore, if these elements are found on a subject's hands or clothes, this indicates the person likely fired a gun or was nearby when one was fired. However, these particles can also be produced by some fireworks and brake pads, which is important for investigators to be aware of when considering context. 🚫

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# KNOW THE LIMITS OF YOUR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

**LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS CAN BE DISCIPLINED FOR SPEAKING THEIR MINDS. HERE'S A PRIMER ON HOW THE FIRST AMENDMENT COVERS AND DOESN'T COVER YOU ON THE JOB.**

★ ERIC DAIGLE

**I**t's a very important question for every man and woman who wears a badge. To what extent does the First Amendment protect a public employee's ability to speak freely?

In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Keyishian v. Bd. of Regents* that an employer may not unreasonably restrict public employees' rights. What was "reasonable" was not specified. Instead, the Court required a balance of the respective interests of the parties in making this determination.

Later in the 1968 case of *Pickering v. Bd. of Education*, the Court ruled that courts should weigh a public employee's right to comment on a matter of public concern against the interest of the public employer to provide efficient, effective services. Where a public employee's speech does pertain to a matter of public concern, the balance will generally tip in the employee's favor.

## **THE TEST**

From many of the cases decided by the Supreme Court, the following four-step analysis has emerged in dealing with claims that an employer has unlawfully retaliated against an employee for the exercise of the employee's First Amend-



PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES.COM

ment right to freedom of speech:

**1. Was the employee speaking pursuant to his/her ordinary job duties?**

- If yes, then there is no First Amendment protection for employment purposes.
- If no, proceed to Step 2.

**2. Was the employee speaking on a matter of public concern?**

- If yes, proceed to Step 3.
- If no, then there is no First Amendment protection for employment purposes.

**3. On balance, does the employer's or employee's interests prevail?**

- If the employer's interests prevail, then there is no First Amendment protection for employment purposes.
- If the employee's interests prevail, proceed to Step 4.

**4. If the employee's interests prevail, was the protected speech a substantial or motivating factor in the adverse employment action?**

- If yes, then the adverse employment action constitutes unlawful retaliation.
- If no, then the adverse employment action does not constitute unlawful retaliation.

**SPEECH AND JOB DUTIES**

The first step of the analysis asks whether the employee was speaking pursuant to the employee's ordinary job duties. If so, then the analysis ends there and an employer may take action against the employee based upon the statement without the employee having any recourse under the First Amendment. If it does not, then the employer should continue to explore the remaining steps of the analysis prior to taking action.

The U.S. Supreme Court in the 2006 case of *Garcetti v. Ceballos* explained that "...when public employees make statements pursuant to their official duties, the employees are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes." In a later case, *Lane v. Franks*, the Court clarified that speech outside the scope of a public employee's ordinary job duties can be speech as a citizen for First Amendment purposes even when it relates to the employee's public employment or concerns information learned during that employment.

In determining what the "ordinary duties" of the employee are, the court will generally take a practical view and look to not only those duties in an employee's job description, but also those duties that the individual is expected to perform.

There are several cases focusing on this particular issue, including *Crouse v. Town of Moncks Corner*, *Debritto v. City of St. Joseph*, *Anderson v. Valdez*, *Rotunno v. Town of Stratford*, *Howell v. Town of Ball*, *Moss v. City of Pembroke Pines*, *Hartman v. City of New Orleans*, *Buehrle v. City of O'Fallon*, *Missouri*, *Ramey v. U.S. Marshals Service*, *Foley v. Town of Randolph*, and *Reilly v. City of Atlantic City*.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN**

The second step of the analysis asks whether the employee was speaking on a "matter of public concern." If they were not, then the analysis ends there, and an employer may take action against the employee based upon the statement without the employee having any recourse under the First Amendment. If they were, however, then the employer should continue to explore the remaining steps of the analysis prior to taking action.

A matter of public concern is one upon which "free and open debate is vital to informed decision-making by the

electorate." This will generally include political, economic and social issues, racial discrimination, and the government's use of its financial resources. Determining whether a public employee has spoken on a matter of public concern depends upon the "content, form, and context of a given statement, as revealed by the whole record."

The content, form, and context portion of the analysis requires that the court examine the following:

- Whether the statements were made at home or at work
- Whether the statements were made in public or private
- How many people heard the statements
- If the speaker's motives were primarily personal in nature.

There are four primary categories into which cases fall where a public concern has been found. These categories include: misconduct by the department, superior officers, the chief, fellow officers or the municipal government; unsafe equipment or working conditions; incompetence; and harassment or discrimination.

There are numerous cases in which courts have determined that an employee's speech *did* touch upon a matter of public concern, including *Bagi v. City of Parma*, *Riccuiti v. Gyzenis*, *Cochran v. City of Atlanta*, *Stinebaugh v. City of Wapakoneta*, *Pucci v. Nineteenth Dist. Court*, *Handy-Clay v. City of Memphis, Tennessee*, *Hutchins v. Clark*, *Wainscott v. Henry*, and *Rankin v. McPherson*.

There are also numerous cases in which courts have determined that an employee's speech *did not* touch upon a matter of public concern, including *Naghtin v. Montague Fire Dist. Board*, *Holbrook v. Dumas*, *May v. Sasser*, *Todora v. Buskirk*, *Garceau v. City of Flint, Borough of Duryea v. Guarnieri*, *Reynolds v. Town of Suffield*, *City of San Diego, California*, *v. Roe*, *Leverington v. City of Colorado Springs*, *Gross v. Town of Cicero, Illinois*, *Desrochers v. City of San Bernardino*, *Miller v. Clinton County*, *Miller v. Administrative Office of the Courts*, *Thaeter v. Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office*, *Durgin v. City of East St. Louis, Illinois*, *Daniels v. City of Arlington*, and *Lawrence v. James*.

**THE BALANCING TEST**

The third prong of the test requires that the Court "weigh the strength of the



employee's interests against the government's interest in the efficient administration of the workplace." This is what is referred to as the *Pickering* balancing test.

In making this determination, courts will generally consider the following factors:

- Does the statement impair discipline by superiors?
- Does the statement impair harmony among coworkers?
- Does the statement have a detrimental impact on close working relationships for which personal loyalty and confidence are necessary?
- Does the statement impede the performance of the speaker's duties?
- Does the statement interfere with the regular operation of the enterprise?
- Does the speaker serve in a confidential, policy making or public contact role in the organization?
- Does the statement undermine the mission of the police department?
- Does the statement conflict with the speaker's responsibilities?
- Has the speaker abused authority and public accountability?

**As a government employee you *can't* say whatever you want on social media and expect to be protected.**

The more these questions are answered in the affirmative, the better the employer's argument for restricting the statement or disciplining the employee for making the statement.

Historically speaking, there are fewer cases where courts have ruled that the balance weighed in favor of the employee. However, there are some, including *Purvines v. City of Crestview* and *Cooper v. Smith*.

There are several cases in which the courts have ruled that the balance weighed in favor of the employer, including: *Lynch v. Ackley*, *LeFande v. District of Columbia*, *O'Connor v. Steeves*, *Shirvell v. Dept. of Attorney General*, *Dible v. City of Chandler*, *Hinshaw v. Smith*, *Locurto v. Guiliani*, and *McMullen v. Carson*.

**CAUSATION**

If the employee satisfies the first three elements, then the employee must also

PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES.COM



prove that he or she was disciplined as a result of the statement. To do this, the disciplined officer must show that “but for” the protected statements he or she would not have received the punishment imposed (*Mt. Healthy Bd. of Education v. Doyle*). If the disciplined officer satisfies this, the burden then shifts to the employer to show that there were sufficient grounds, other than the speech, to discipline the employee.

In determining whether the protected speech was actually the cause for the adverse employment action, courts will generally consider the following factors:

- Have other officers been disciplined for the same conduct?
- Does the discipline imposed exceed the discipline imposed on similarly situated officers in the past?
- Has a substantial period of time elapsed since the conduct justifying the discipline occurred? (Note: the longer the time lapse, the more it appears the discipline was prompted by the officer’s recent

“protected speech” and not his or her prior conduct.)

- How many complaints has the department received regarding the officer?
- Has the officer ever been formally, or informally, reprimanded in the past? If so, how many times, and what was the nature of those offenses?

The more times the officer has been reprimanded, along with the more egregious the offenses, the greater the likelihood that the court will find for the department. Also, the more detailed the documentation, the greater the likelihood the discipline will be upheld.

There are a variety of cases that focus on the issue of causation related to public employee freedom of speeches, including: *Bailey v. Wheeler*, *McGinley v. City of Quincy*, *Swetlik v. Crawford*, *Dew v. City of Scappoose*, *Tharling v. City of Port Lavaca*, and *Skaarup v. City of North Las Vegas*.

So, as a government employee you can’t say whatever you want on social

media and expect to be protected by the First Amendment.

Public agencies and employees must be aware of the contours of the freedom of speech as applied to public employees. The rules of engagement should be clear to put all parties on notice as to what behavior and speech will be tolerated and what is inconsistent with agency policy.

When agencies seek to take action against employees based upon their “speech” or “expression,” agencies are best advised to utilize the four-prong test that we have discussed. While agencies can’t limit their employees from posting on social media you as the employee do so at your own risk. 🚫

*Eric Daigle is founder of Daigle Law Group, LLC, a firm that specializes in law enforcement operations. A former Connecticut State Police officer, Daigle focuses on civil rights actions, including police misconduct litigation. He is a legal advisor for police agencies across the country. [www.daiglelawgroup.com](http://www.daiglelawgroup.com).*

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★ JOHNNY LONG



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Threats to law enforcement officers responding to accidents and terror attacks aren't always immediately discernible; and yet invisible threats are just as real and dangerous as the ones that are visible. That's where Thermo Fisher Scientific's SPRD-ER Personal Radiation Detector can help. It's small enough to fit in your pocket and easy for anyone to use, so you can know what you and other citizens are up against.

## THE PROBLEM

First responders arriving on the scene of a catastrophic accident may encounter ionizing radiation, emitted by radioactive material, from a number of sources, including medical and industrial sites, vehicles transporting cargo, aircraft, ships, and more. At the scene of a damaged cargo container, overturned tractor-trailer, or a crashed plane, for example, there can be sources of radiation in the wreckage that don't advertise their identities and the nature of the cargo might not be

known immediately. Unaware first responders could be exposed to dangerously high doses of radiation in a short time without even being aware of it until later, when it has already done its damage.

Unfortunately, in virtually all such situations, first responders are on the "front lines" and as such are in the greatest danger of accidental exposure to radiation. Protecting them and the public from unknown sources of gamma radiation is challenging because such sources are

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## WHAT DOES MY TECH DO?



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everywhere. Hospitals use radioactive materials in diagnostic procedures and cancer treatments. Blood banks and hospitals irradiate blood for use in immune compromised patients. Food is irradiated, as is water and other beverages. Manufacturers of devices for medical and industrial applications embed small amounts of radioactive materials in their products.

In addition to innocent uses, the potential for terrorists detonating a radiological dispersal device (RDD), also known as a dirty bomb, comprised of stolen nuclear material is great due to the extensive availability of radiological material sources. With numerous fixed targets such as buildings, public parks, and monuments, as well as mobile or temporary targets such as parades, races, or special events, police departments have often utilized a mix of different detectors to locate threats.

### THE SOLUTION

Advances in technology now make it possible for first responders to carry one accurate, compact, powerful detection

device that is handheld and no larger than an electronic pager. The Thermo Scientific RadEye SPRD-ER Personal Radiation Detector is a fast and highly reliable all-in-one extended range unit for search, find, identification, and response missions. It's made to provide high-performance measurement of radiation and radionuclide analysis for any scenario.

While that might sound complicated, it doesn't need to be. The RadEye SPRD-ER offers multiple modes of operation and is highly configurable for novice to advanced users. Operators can use the instrument as a simple 0-9 scale radiation level gauge, or they can choose to turn on dose rate readings, simplified gamma ID classification, or full spectroscopic capabilities.

In practice, the RadEye SPRD-ER is easy to carry in a holster or on a duty belt and seeing detection results is easy thanks to the instrument's large display with improved screen resolution and brightness. You get results automatically, without the need to press buttons, and instructions quickly guide you through the steps to take after an alarm.

Whatever the results may be, you'll see comprehensive data neatly organized and presented on screen so you can decide what to do next. The RadEye SPRD-ER also features Bluetooth integration with iOS and Android devices and complimentary RadResponder iOS and Android phone apps.

And you don't need to worry about the instrument's ruggedness, regardless of the situation. It is built to withstand extreme temperatures and challenging environments. Its small, lightweight design is drop-resistant and IP65-rated.

One of the aspects of the SPRD-ER that makes it so useful to law enforcement is the underlying advanced technology that gives it the ability to reduce false alarms without sacrificing sensitivity, due in part to the implementation of complex algorithms. With traditional PRDs, high numbers of false positives are caused by natural radiation commonly found in building materials and food or as a result of medical procedures. But the SPRD-ER continuously analyzes the environment and immediately differentiates between artificial and natural background radiation so you know if you're really dealing with a threat.

The SPRD-ER's patented Natural Background Rejection (NBR) algorithm significantly reduces nuisance alarms that result from concentrated, Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM), such as granite, natural stone, and subway tiles. It can also quickly identify the class of radioactive agent present, the specific isotope, and its typical application. This gives you additional real-time information quite literally in the palm of your hand.

For example, patients recently treated with radiation for a medical purpose may trigger several alarms daily to a single detector. On the other hand, next-generation PRDs detect the radiation and properly classify it, providing key information about the specific kind of material to support an officer's intuition or prevent him or her from leaping to a false conclusion. Knowing the type of material also helps first responders identify and treat contaminated people in the actual event of an RDD explosion.

The RadEye family of Personal Radiation Detectors (PRD) from Thermo Fisher are high-sensitivity gamma radiation de-

tection and dose rate measurement tools. The RadEye SPRD-ER personal radiation detector is designed to localize radiation sources and monitor exposure even when entering high dose rate scenarios.

Here are some of the numbers behind it.

The RadEye SPRD-ER's extremely high dose rate measurement and accuracy, with measurement capabilities of  $\leq 1000$  R/h ( $< 10$  Sv/h), supports users with one unit for search, find, radiation identification, and response missions. It offers dose rate accuracy across the full spectrum of 20keV-3 MeV and offers a new highly sensitive alarm for artificial gamma (S-Alarm). This supplies extra sensitivity in the range of 90-450 keV for effective detection of Special Nuclear Material (SNM). SNM is a term used by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to classify fissile materials, material capable of sustaining a nuclear fission chain reaction. The SPRD-ER's source-less detector gain stabilization improves radiation identification selectivity and accuracy in varying environ-

mental conditions.

### STAYING ON MISSION

To sum up, the advanced NBR discrimination of the SPRD-ER identifies artificial radiation while minimizing false alarms. This allows first responders to respond and react swiftly for rapid adjudication of potential threats. It gives the operator the ability to quickly distinguish between SNM, industrial, and non-threat radiation sources, e.g., medical or natural materials. It offers neutron indication via proven prompt gamma analysis, simplified ID capability for novice to advanced users, and multiple modes of operation, allowing it to easily be configured to best align with radiation detection operating procedures already in place. 📍

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*Johnny Long is global product manager, radiation detection, for Thermo Fisher Scientific.*

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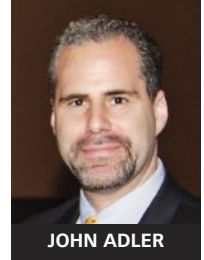


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JOHN ADLER

# PROTECT YOURSELF BY DOCUMENTING YOUR CORONAVIRUS EXPOSURES

How will officers who are symptomatic of the coronavirus now be able to substantiate its impact on their health in the future?

**DOES ANYONE KNOW** what the long-term impact on your health will be if you're exposed to someone manifesting the coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms? On behalf of 9/11 First Responders who were exposed to lethal toxins, I can tell you the resounding answer is no. While the experts are preaching about the need to use soap and water, gloves, hand sanitizers, and social distancing to protect yourself, it is equally important for you to document your exposure to this potentially fatal virus.

How will officers who are symptomatic of the coronavirus now be able to substantiate its impact on their health in the future? Current data indicates that a low percentage of those who get COVID-19 will die. However, as a 9/11 First Responder, I learned the hard way how important it is for a law enforcement officer to document their exposure to something that could impact their health later. Medical experts say many people who recover from COVID-19 will have scarring in their lungs that will be present five, 10, 15 years from now and cause shortness of breath and illness. Document your exposure now so you will have proof later if needed.

This recommendation has been reinforced strongly by Ed Mullins who is the NYPD Sergeants Benevolent Association president. In a March 22 membership email, Ed explained the need to document virus exposure: "As we have learned from our experience during 9/11, department records may become difficult to locate. You should not rely on the Department to maintain your reports."

How else can documentation come into play in an officer's future? As the former director of the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), I oversaw the Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) program. This federal program administers one-time payments to the survivors of a fallen public safety officer killed in the line of duty, and to an officer who is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a catastrophic injury ([www.psob.gov](http://www.psob.gov)). As of October 1, 2019, that amount is \$365,670. The Public Safety Officers Benefits Act of 1976, along with its subsequent amendments, states that the cause of death or disability must be "the direct and proximate result of an injury sustained in the line of duty." In my former position, I agonized over reviewing director appeals where there was no documentation to support the assertion that the death or disability was caused by an undocumented past incident or sequence of prior toxin exposure.

In addition to serving as the BJA Director, I also served on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

(NLEOMF) Names Committee. This is the group that reviews and determines requests to have a fallen officer's name engraved on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. Similar in substance to the PSOB criteria, the NLEOMF requires that an officer's death be the "direct and proximate" result of a line-of-duty injury. In response to the growing number of 9/11 death claims, the NLEOMF has honored over 100 first responders by engraving their names on the sacred wall. Unfortunately, for cases where there is no documentation to substantiate an officer's exposure to 9/11 toxins, the names remain under review.

Whether you are on patrol, working in a correctional facility, or functioning in an investigative capacity, you need to document your exposure to anyone who is symptomatic of COVID-19. When it comes to documenting your exposure, less is not more. Document the date, time, and place of occurrence, as well as your proximity to the alleged contaminated subject, what you observed in terms of their symptoms, and any witnesses. Sadly, this is going to be a daily occurrence for

many officers. If you document this in your memo books, preserve them or make copies. If you complete a daily action report, save a copy for your personal file. This should include the signature of your supervisor. The goal is to keep copies of your documentation in one place.

As a result of the increasing number of state shelter-in-place orders, civilian tensions will likely escalate. This will increase the chances of your possibly intervening in a matter while off duty. While functioning in your off-duty capacity, you will likely not be carrying a memo book or interview notebook. Use whatever means you have to document your exposure to anyone demonstrating symptoms associated with the coronavirus. For the purposes of documentation, treat it the same as an on-duty incident. Make sure you share your documentation with your department or agency so that it is official. Documentation is the best insurance policy you and your family can have to ensure you are protected in the future.

Irrespective of how much longer the coronavirus lasts, its wrath will be felt for years to come. Keep a loaded pen and charged phone in reach so you can document your exposure. Protect your future and document your exposure today. ♦

**As a 9/11 First Responder, I learned the hard way how important it is for an officer to document exposure to something that could impact their health later.**

*Jon Adler is the president of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association Foundation.*



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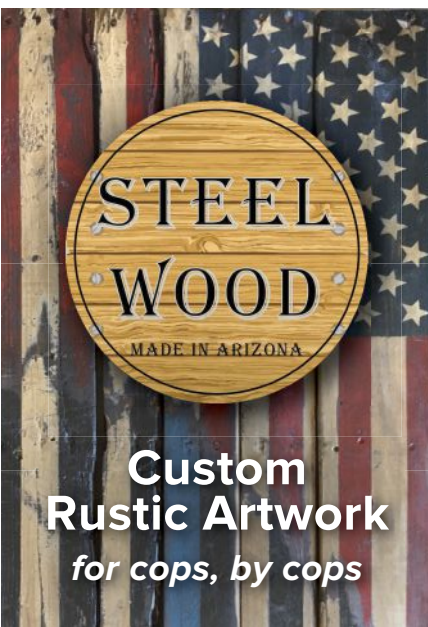
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**THE ROAD TO HELL**

David Griffith's February editorial "The Road to Hell" is spot on. I've often wondered exactly how society would look and function with the abolition of law enforcement. And which law enforcement? Local police? State? FBI? Sheriffs' departments? Game wardens?

Restorative justice is a great and wonderful idea where it maintains the value of the human and can bring a person back from a rough path in life.

But what do you do with the truly evil predators?

The serial killers, the rapists, the child molesters? Do they recommend the infrastructure also be torn down so as not to waste taxpayers' money? Crime labs, DNA testing, rape kits, long investigations would all be gone?

Tearing down LE is a foolish idea.

*Scott G.*

*Via PoliceMag.com*

The DNC/Left is the greatest threat to this country currently. They are the cancer from within that will utterly

destroy everything if they are allowed to continue any of their nutcase agendas. They must be stopped or freedom and sanity will all be lost.

*C. Pyatt*

*Via PoliceMag.com*

The restorative justice model is a non-starter in our urban areas as people are far more interested in looking after themselves and their issues than spending time dealing with the local thugs. Might work in Wahoo, NE, for those who remember Wambaugh's "The Glitter Dome."

Where restorative justice would work is as a police disciplinary model where the entire goal (within limits...) is to have the officer willingly accept responsibility for the act(s) of misconduct and then perform some positive act of contrition where, after a time of good conduct, he or she would be brought back into the fold.

*Jay*

*Via PoliceMag.com*



**OUR GILDED RAGE**

I'd like to respond to Dave Smith's February In My Sights column "Our Gilded Rage" about the pervasive anger in America that's often directed at LEOs.

I think that the anger was always there but it was hard, if not impossible, to express to more than just the people around us.

The digital age has allowed everyone to express their anger (and share the same) to the country.

*Greg Moats*

*Via PoliceMag.com*

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# SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

As coronavirus continues to spread, take every precaution that you can as you take risks to protect and serve.



DAVE SMITH

ILLUSTRATION: SEQUOIA BLANKENSHIP

**THE WITCH IN HAMLET** wasn't talking about a virus when she warned, "Something wicked this way comes," but these words were what came to mind when I heard about the growing coronavirus epidemic emerging from the Far East. Disease has always followed mankind and often affected history, though it is nearly unmentioned in school books.

From approximately 1349 to 1354 around half of everyone on Earth died from the black plague and that, no doubt, had remarkable sociological ramifications for everything from child rearing to religion. One art historian remarked that for the next 200 years, infants were never painted in their mother's arms; even religious paintings showed the baby Jesus held at arm's length, if held at all, by Mary. In fact, until five, a child wasn't expected to live, which tells us a lot about the trauma humanity suffered, and the emotional impact the plague created for the next couple centuries.

Traditionally, smallpox and other microbial horrors have spared no group or nation, and it has always fascinated me how little modern man thinks or even knows about the suffering of generations prior to our modern times. I guess this is because medicine has exterminated or mitigated so much of the suffering in our immediate life spaces, even while malaria alone still kills around 3,000 children every day, or about 1 million a year according to UNICEF. The fact that this happens mostly on the continent of Africa, and nowhere near the United States, allows us to literally ignore this horrible mosquito-carried plague.

Bloodborne viruses like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis make any human fluid presence a real matter of concern. Sports, sex, accidents, biological waste, emergency rooms, and even physical confrontations become possible transmission points, and early on first responders, medical personnel, and hemophiliacs were infected before the true nature of the virus was understood.

Horrors like Ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers are the stuff of nightmares and are often featured in apocalyptic movies like "Outbreak" (1995), which showed the military getting ready to nuke a town suffering from a horrible disease. Not just movies but a plethora of scary novels began to proliferate, and if you think the horror genre of viruses has diminished, I challenge you to look at all of the recent zombie productions.

The media itself only seems to aggravate all these problems, and when politicians jump on the bandwagon things get weird. It seems the public loses perspective and an odd type of panic ensues, loosely based on whatever the threat

is. Costco is suddenly seeing people buy out all the toilet paper and bottled water, which makes you wonder just what happens if you catch this virus.

I grew up knowing that my great grandfather Ulrich brought his family from Germany to Louisiana only to die almost immediately from Yellow Fever, yet my grandmother told the story as part of the family's struggle to escape a rigid class society and find freedom in the United States.

Ulrich's story illustrates that we live in a world where we decide what risks we are willing to take. And we must compensate for those risks. Just like body armor hardens us against armed assailants, our "universal precautions" developed after the rise of the HIV threat should still be a basic counter against disease. First responders are selfless warriors precisely because, regardless of the threat, viral or mechanical, we don't "self-quarantine" to protect ourselves. We still rush to help where we are called. Blood, fluids, breath, and physical contact are part of the life of the law

enforcement officer, a life that we proudly understand and embrace. And that is part of what makes us the spiritual comrades of firefighters, paramedics, nurses, doctors, and all who face risks to help others. Sadly, even as new viruses arise the old ones never completely go away;

so refreshing your knowledge of the various steps you need to take to protect yourself and your family is critical.

While the public merely needs to wash their hands regularly, you may need to change your duty boots before going home or disinfect not only your vehicle but your cuffs, your clothing, and anything else that may be contaminated. Wear your gloves, practice using your CPR mask, and if you don't have one, get one and learn how to use it. One of my friends gave CPR to a suicide years and years ago only to discover the fellow killed himself because he was in the final stages of a fatal virus. Six months of testing and terror followed for this hero, and his suffering is a powerful lesson to protect yourself. Just so you know, it turned out he was OK. But you don't want to go through what he did, so take every precaution that you can as you take risks to protect and serve.

Finally, I celebrate all you first responders for your courageous service and beg you to do your best to stay safe and healthy. 🚔

**First responders are selfless warriors precisely because we don't "self-quarantine" to protect ourselves.**

*Dave Smith is an internationally recognized law enforcement trainer and is the creator of "JD Buck Savage." You can follow Buck on Twitter at @thebucksavage.*



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