

## Tips and Trends from ICJE

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## Monthly News & Updates

November 2024

Happy Thanksgiving to you and  
your family!

### **Distractions**

With the murder rate in Birmingham approaching historic levels, and cities across the state challenged by similar crime trends, it is easy to get distracted by the blessings that abound in our communities.

One such person seeking to change the tenor of conversations between folks of different views and opinions is a Selma Entrepreneur Afriye Wekandodis, who said she is a servant at "By the River Center for Humanity", not the owner. It is a place where people for all walks of life are welcome. Where police officers can join citizens in a casual lunch around a round table and discuss issues.

A great introduction to Thanksgiving!

### **Everyone is welcome to just be human at "By the River on Water Avenue"**

When you walk in to By the River Center for Humanity on Water Avenue, the first thing you notice is the colorful decor and a big sign that says, "Welcome"

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## "It Always Feels Like Yesterday"

### "We Hurt Everyday" - Family Member of Murder Victim

In 1997 a Mary Hutson was sexually assaulted after an unknown assailant broke into her home in a quiet suburb near Kingsport, TN. Her 17-year-old son was stabbed to death when confronted by the perpetrator.

For 27 years the case went unsolved and laid dormant until it was reopened in 2023. Investigators ultimately utilized recently developed family-based DNA tests on DNA evidence preserved from 1997.

The results revealed a DNA family tree which indicated that the killer had been living not far from the crime scene for more than 25 years.

On November 20, 2024, the killer was confronted with an arrest warrant and a SWAT team. He shot himself before officers could arrest him. He survived his self-inflicted wound but remains hospitalized.

At a subsequent press conference, family member Emily Bartley thanked the investigators for solving the case, fighting off tears and emotions as she said that the 27 years was a long time ago, but "it always feels like yesterday" to the family. "We hurt everyday" she continued.

***As I listened to her comments at the press conference, I was reminded how important the role law enforcement and prosecutors are to a functioning society, one that recognizes that these are pursuits that impact people's lives in ways much more than LE personnel often know.***

While it is easy to become cynical in a world filled with evil doers and bureaucratic red tape, there is no greater fulfillment than the gratefulness expressed by those impacted by crime.

The link below provides additional information, and **the victim comments begin at approximately the 5:35 mark of the video.**

### **Man accused of killing teen boy and sexually assaulting woman in 1997 charged**

More: <https://wcyb.com/news/local/man-accused-of-killing-teen-boy-and-sexually-assaulting-woman-in-1997-charged>

[Read More](#)

## **Alabama Cold Cases and DNA Reviews**

### **Cold Case Breakthrough: DNA Technology Solves 1992 Alabama Mystery - Birmingham Free Press - Nov 10, 2024**

WEAVER, Ala. - A mysterious 1992 case involving a body found in a burning boat in a Weaver, Alabama, field has been solved, thanks to advances in DNA technology and forensic genealogy. More than 30 years after a passerby discovered the charred remains, identified as those of Utah resident Kevin Lynn Capps, Alabama and Utah...

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### **How Alabama used DNA to Solve Cold Case of Murdered Teenage Girls**

A man will be sentenced Thursday to life in prison for the 1999 Ozark slayings, but his isn't the only case in Alabama affected by forensic genetic genealogy.

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## **DNA Results Can Complicate or Clear**

### **He's Been on Death Row for Decades. Alabama 'Downplays' DNA that Points to Someone Else, Judge Says**

"Unlike people, DNA doesn't lie," wrote a federal judge. She says Alabama prosecutors are clinging to a 32-year-old confession that makes little sense and

does not match new evidence.

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## **Genetic genealogy: DNA Sleuthing to Uncover Familial Relationships**

Written by: Sarah Sharman, PhD, Science writer Illustrated by: Cathleen Shaw

Although the latter half of my educational journey was spent studying the biological sciences, I took numerous history courses as an undergraduate. I spent hours lost in the pages of history books or poring over old documents, always eager to learn more, piece together the past, and uncover the stories and events that shaped our world.

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## **2024 Impact - ICJE Training and Education**

### **Who Is ICJE and Why Do I Get This Newsletter?**

The Institute for Criminal Justice Education (ICJE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting law enforcement by developing and distributing educational material related to criminal investigation, law enforcement resource management, and the effective use of technology in the criminal justice field.

This information is primarily delivered through lectures and publications to governmental and security agencies with primary law enforcement functions, as well as to select companies, students, and individuals with a demonstrated need for law enforcement information.

In 1997, Alabama mandated that most state law enforcement officers must receive at least twelve hours of continuing education annually to maintain their certification. This requirement imposed a significant financial burden on over five thousand officers in medium and small departments.

To address this need, Faulkner University and Law Enforcement Training Services, LLC (LETS), have periodically offered free training with instructors donating their time. However, this training has been geographically limited and dependent on instructor availability, highlighting the need for a broader, more accessible program.

In response, ICJE was established to provide Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (POST) certified training throughout Alabama at little or no cost to officers or their departments, thus ensuring that law enforcement officers receive the necessary education and training without financial strain.

*We send out the newsletter to those who have attended or been involved with an ICJE or LECC training program over the years. This also includes those who have attended the Worship Protection Series over the last few years, and other "friends of the Editor" around the country.*

## How Can I Be a Better...Prosecutor?

Criminal investigations, regardless of the criminal category and elements brought out in investigations go nowhere without professional prosecutors working in tandem with investigators. Often the tasks of a prosecutor go unnoticed and unappreciated. With all the recent focus on "lawfare" I thought I would begin a series titled "How Can I Be a Better..." fill in the blank each month. I started with Prosecutors this month. More to come on the other professionals throughout 2025.

### **Enhance Your Legal Knowledge**

#### **Continuous Learning:**

Stay updated on the latest laws, regulations, and legal precedents. Participate in continuing legal education (CLE) courses and attend relevant seminars or workshops.

#### **Specialized Training:**

Consider specialized training in areas of law that are frequently encountered in your jurisdiction, such as criminal law, digital forensics, or financial crimes.

#### **Legal Research Skills:**

Hone your legal research skills to build stronger cases and present well-founded arguments.

### **Develop Strong Communication Skills**

#### **Effective Advocacy:**

Practice your oral and written advocacy skills. This includes drafting clear and concise legal documents and presenting compelling arguments in court.

#### **Public Speaking:**

Improve your public speaking abilities through practice and feedback. This helps in delivering opening statements, examining witnesses, and making closing arguments.

#### **Active Listening:**

Develop active listening skills to understand the perspectives of the defense, witnesses, and jurors. This can enhance your ability to respond effectively and build rapport.

### **Develop Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Behavior**

#### **Empathy and Compassion:**

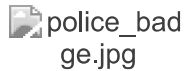
Understand and empathize with victims, witnesses, and even defendants. This helps in making fair and just decisions and presenting your case with integrity.

#### **Ethical Standards:**

Uphold the highest ethical standards in all your professional dealings. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest, ensuring fairness, and maintaining confidentiality.

#### **Stress Management:**

Prosecuting can be stressful. Develop strategies for managing stress, such as mindfulness, regular exercise, and seeking support when needed.



## **Training Provided by ICJE in 2024**

ICJE instructors provided more than 40 days of instruction for approximately 1100 officers, investigators and safety related personnel in 2024. Below are some of the courses provided during the year:

### **Instructor Development Course**

### **Crisis Intervention and De-Escalation Training**

### **Suicide By Cop**

### **Officer Safety/Survival - Surviving in your Workplace**

### **Autism Awareness & Acceptance for First Responders**

### **Are You OK? Recognizing & Coping with First Responder Trauma**

### **First Line Supervision**

### **Undercover Chat Investigations**

### **Street COP: Back to Basics**

### **Policing in Current Times: The New Normal**

### **Interview & Interrogation: Basic & Advanced**

### **Psychological Profiling**

### **Explosives Recognition and Response**

### **Law Enforcement Integrity, Accountability, and Professionalism**

## **Scammers Can Now Clone Your Personality With AI**

Your personality may not be as unique as you might think. In fact, scammers can now replicate your voice, image, and personality to create a replica that acts just like

you. In a landmark study, Stanford researchers created an artificial intelligence system to almost perfectly clone people's per

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## One Last Thing

Last week, my wife and I volunteered with Samaritan's Purse and worked on sites in western North Carolina near Boone, NC. My wife worked on a team that was dispatched daily to locations of those victims impacted by the flooding, while I was assigned to take my chainsaw and work with a crew clearing trees at homes, some in very remote mountain locations.

If you have the opportunity to volunteer, in any of the affected areas you will see God's blessings in those you help and those you work with. The woman, who lived alone in the house shown below, is but one of many who were still dealing with overwhelming damage. She shared with us that she survived by crawling under her bed as the storm raged and prayed, and prayed, and prayed for hours as the world collapsed around her home.

Fortunately, none of the trees were a direct hit, and we were able to clear a path for her to make it out of the mountain. Each and every victim we helped cried tears of overwhelming joy as help arrived, but I can assure you that it was a blessing to be a tiny part of a still massive cleanup.

My daughter lived in Tuscaloosa when the massive tornadoes hit the state in 2011, and I thought that damage was overwhelming, but the damage we witnessed in many parts of North Carolina is so much more widespread, and it will be years and years before they recover. Keep them and all those impacted across our country in your prayers. - Jim Rechel ICJE Newsletter Editor

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