

When Kids Pull the Trigger: Tragedies of Unsecured Firearms in the Home

November 13, 2025
1:00–2:30 pm CST



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Housekeeping

- If you'd like a condensed version of today's slides, you can access them in the chat box.
- Please look out for an email later this afternoon that will explain how you can complete the evaluation form & receive your certificate.
- If you have any questions during the presentation, please submit them in the Q & A Box.

Upcoming Events

Visit Our On Demand Library

Webinar

**What Lives in the Dark:
Drug Endangerment
and the Forensic Interview**

Presented by
Lt. Sarah Blackgill
Madison Police Department

Jacqueline Gruber, MS, CSW
Director of Child Advocacy Center of Madison County, NC

Samantha Nauman, MSW
Assistant Supervisor, Child Advocacy Center

Ty Michael Thibodeau
Madison Police Department

Guardify Kids Hub

Webinar

**Process of Disclosure &
Expert Witness Testimony**

With Kiley Martin, LCSW-S
Director of Programs
Kids Hub Child Advocacy Center

Guardify Kids Hub

Webinar

**Child Exploitation:
Parental Guidance
in the Digital Age**

With Brandon Peor
Law Enforcement Officer
Grand Prairie Police Department

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Webinar

**Understanding the
Fundamentals of
Human Trafficking**

With Jessica Brasel, MA, LPC-S,
RASA Certified & Trainer
Co-Director of The Haven Wellness Center

Guardify THE HAVEN

+ so many more!



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REAL
EVIDENCE
PODCAST

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Child Abuse Detective
Dallas Police Department



Kristen King
Child Abuse Detective
Dallas Police Department



When Kids Pull the Trigger

Tragedies of Unsecured Firearms in the Home

Dallas PD Detective Corey Foreman #6997

Dallas PD Detective Kristen King #10671



About Us

Corey Foreman, B.A.

-32 years with Dallas PD

-20 years with Child Abuse Unit



About Us

Kristen King, M.S.

- 12 years with Dallas PD
- 5.5 years in Child Abuse Unit

Texas Penal Code 46.13 Making a Firearm Accessible to a Child

A person commits an offense if a child gains access to a ***readily dischargeable*** firearm and the person with criminal negligence:

1. Failed to secure the firearm
2. Left the firearm in a place in which the person knew or should have known the child would gain access

An offense under this section is a *Class C misdemeanor* ***except***

it is a *Class A misdemeanor* if the child discharges the firearm and causes death or serious bodily injury to himself or another person.

National Statistics

National Violent Death Reporting System
(NVDRS) information 2001-2021:

- 1,262 Firearms Deaths
- 56% of all child-related firearms deaths occur at the victim's home
- 83% of victim's were boys
- 53% of the deaths inflicted by others
- 38% were self inflicted wounds
- 9% were undetermined
- 50% of all firearm related injuries or deaths occur at home

CDC. (2024). *About The National Violent Death Reporting System*. National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).

*Not all states began reporting the same year

National Statistics 2023

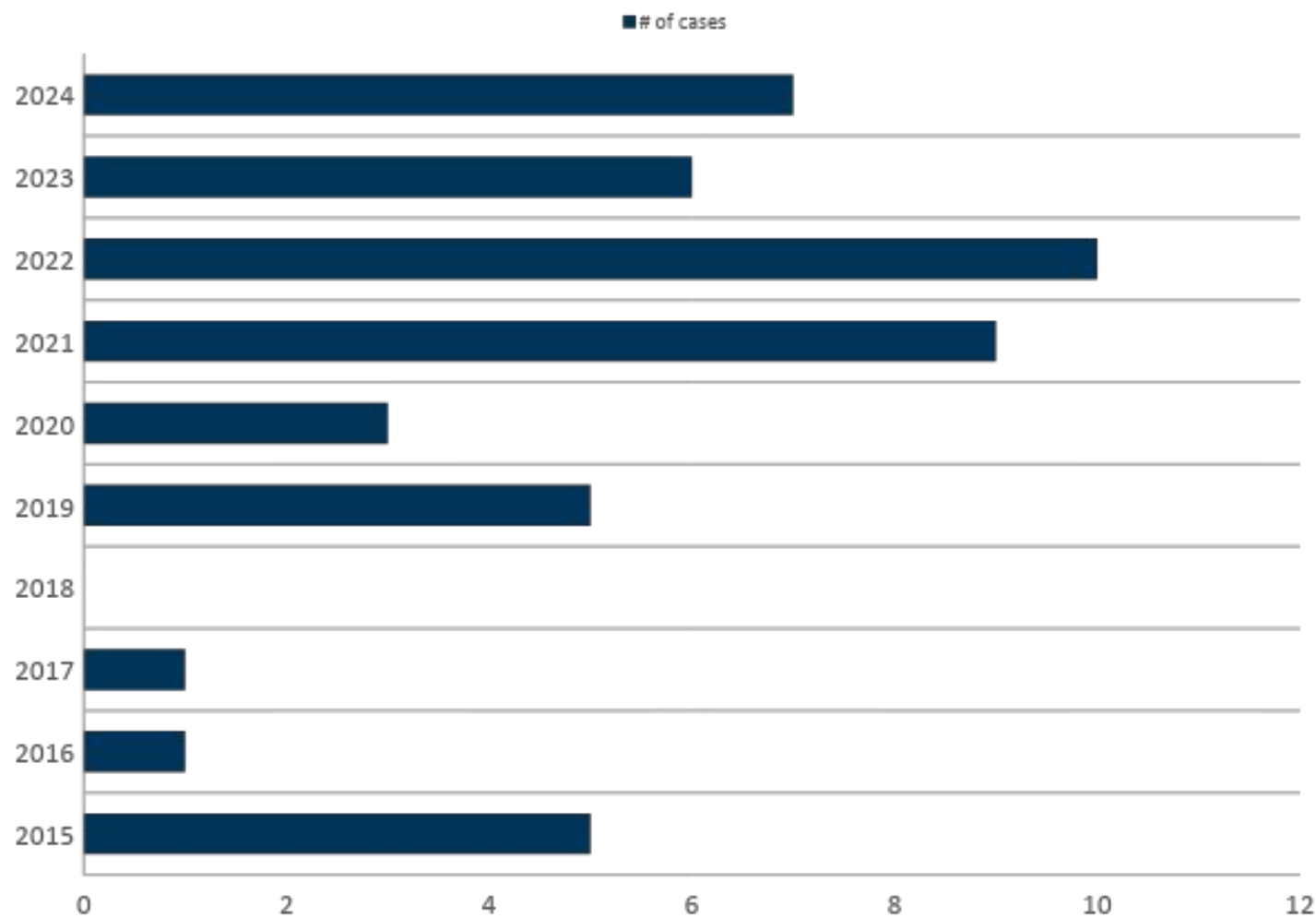
Everytown, a gun safety advocacy group, tracked injuries and deaths that resulted from children accessing firearms (unintentional):

- 157 Killed

- 270 Injured

- Highest number since they started tracking in 2019

Dallas PD Make Firearms Accessible Cases 2015-2024



Case Status

Other case statistics



**Total Number
of Cases Filed**

24



**Total Number
of Cases Not
Filed**

13



**Total Cases
Suspended**

6



**Total Cases
Unfounded**

4

Cases Filed

Outcome of the cases that were filed

Some cases were staffed with the
DA and not filed

Pending Cases: 8

Misdemeanor C: 8

Misdemeanor A: 3

Rejected or No Billed: 5

Reasons for Not Filing

- Gun was properly stored
- Unable to determine owner of gun
- Owner of gun was unaware child would be in the home
- Inconsistencies
- Different charge was filed

Outcomes

These cases can take a long time to progress through the system

Misdemeanor A Cases - Probation

Other States

1. 35 states have laws to charge adults who carelessly or unintentionally allow children to access firearms (there must be injury or death)
2. For those that have laws the definition of child varies
3. Louisiana, which has no law, has the highest rate of unintentional injury and death (in May 2025 they attempted to pass a law but could not)

Other States

4. For the states that do have laws:
 - Florida has the highest charge – F/3
 - Injury or death
 - All other states highest charge – M/A
 - Punishment ranges from probation, deferred adjudication, fine, one-year in prison

Initial Investigation

The initial investigation starts with the 911 call and patrol's response to the scene. Patrol may make decisions based on call comments, the story at the scene, and the heightened emotions of the situation.

Patrol Response

1st Priority is getting medical care for the injured

2nd Priority is the integrity of the scene

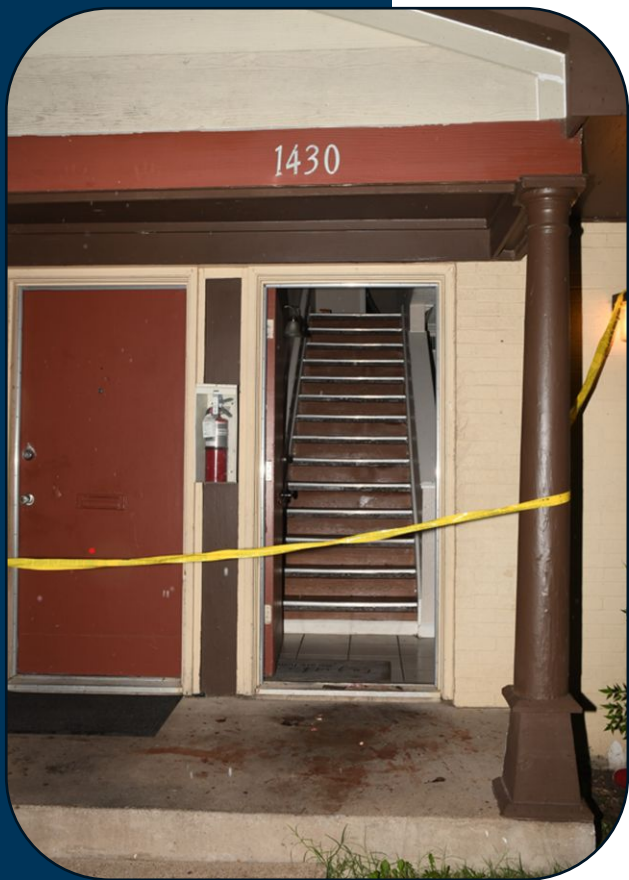
– this includes the injured/deceased

The best policy is to treat each scene the same regardless of what the situation looks like.



Patrol Response

1. Get medical help for the injured.
2. Lock down the scene.
3. Make notifications (e.g. command, detective, crime scene, CPS)



Locking Down the Scene

1. Secure the scene – get *everyone* out and establish a perimeter (make it big)
2. Gather witness information
 1. Who was at the scene?
 2. Who lives at the scene?
 3. Who saw something?
3. Prevent witnesses from leaving if you can
4. Do not let witnesses wash their hands
5. Keep witnesses separated and/or have someone watch them

Notifying the Detective

1. Notification should be made to the detective as soon as is practical
2. Patrol should have: witness names and ages, basic story, location of the witnesses, relationship of the witnesses

Detective Response

Determine how many detectives you need.

01

Scenes

1. Crime scene
2. Hospital(s)
3. Office

02

Witnesses

1. How many?
2. Adult interviews vs. forensic interviews
3. Suspect interviews

03

Evidence

1. Search warrants
2. Crime scene response

04

Managing

Centralizing and disseminating information

Detective Response

Pull the 911 audio prior to response to the scene if possible

- People often call 911 before they have time to discuss the events, they are also more emotional and the detective may hear information that is valuable to the investigation – corroborative or contradictory



Interviews

“Soft” Interviews:

- Conversational
- Exploratory and information gathering
- Detailed and extensive
- Lock the person into their story
- NOT confrontational

Soft interviews are designed to gather information and lock a witness/suspect into a story



Interviews

“Hard” Interviews or Interrogations:

- Can still be non-confrontational
- Usually starts soft
- Determine inconsistencies
- Challenge on inconsistencies that are still present

Hard interviews or interrogations can become more confrontational

Interviews

Witness Interviews:

- Triage which witnesses to interview first and which may be interviewed at a different time
- May be in depth and detailed
- Witnesses may turn out to be suspects

Remember that you may still need witness cooperation later on in the investigation



Interviews

Forensic interviews should be done on all juvenile witnesses that are able to be interviewed. They should be done as soon as practicable and witnesses should be supervised when together prior to their interviews.

Forensic interviews are non-leading and fact-finding for juveniles



Evidence

1. All guns in the residence
2. Defect(s) where rounds entered
3. GSR
4. Blood
5. Audio/Video
6. Phones
7. Social Media





Evidence

1. Guns in the residence
 - There are often many guns and the one that was used may not always be clear if efforts were made to clean the scene prior to police arrival
 - If it is initially unclear which gun is used, you may need to check all of them
 - Who owns the guns?
 - Who is responsible for locking up the guns?
 - How was the gun stored/left?



Evidence

2. Defect(s) where rounds entered
 - Find and keep the rounds
 - Look for additional defects-even if the witnesses say the gun only went off once
 - This may require some destruction of property
 - You may only have the one chance to gather this evidence, once the scene has been released evidence can disappear

Evidence

3. GSR

- GSR tests should be run on everyone that was present at the scene
- Prevent the witnesses from washing their hands
- This may not produce beneficial results but is worth the effort

Results & Conclusions:

One (1) particle characteristic of primer gunshot residue was confirmed on the sampling devices used to collect residues from the hands of [REDACTED]

Item 8-1-1-1: Sampling device from the left hand: 0 particles

Item 8-1-1-2: Sampling device from the right hand: 1 particle

The presence of this particle on an individual's hand could be due to the individual:

1. Firing a firearm
2. Being in the proximity of a firearm when it was fired
3. Handling a firearm, a firearm component, or an object with primer gunshot residue

Stardale Case



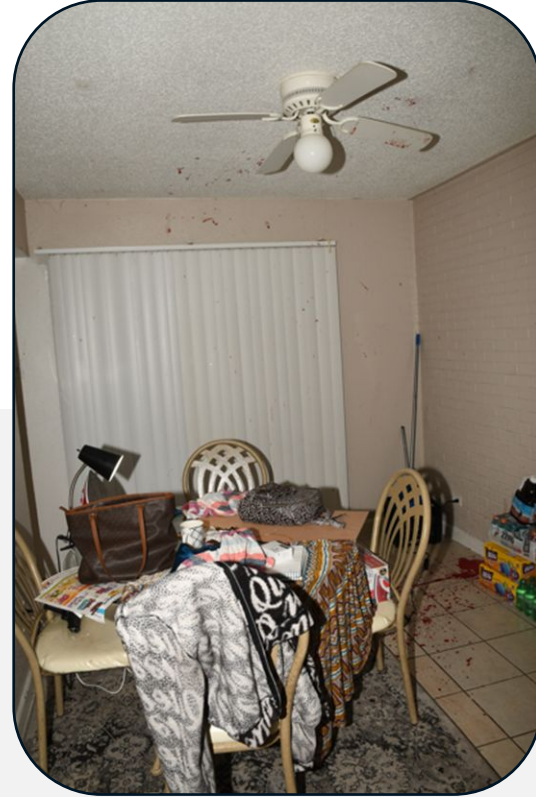
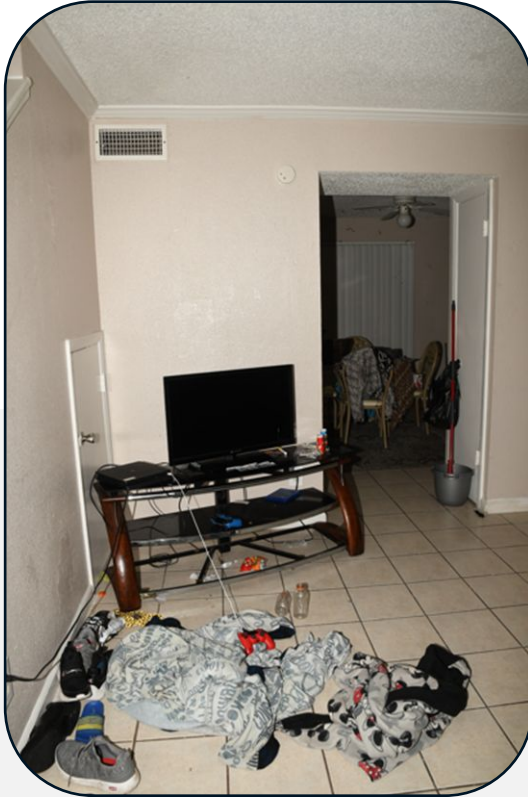
Stardale Case



Stardale Case



Stardale Case





Evidence

4. Blood and other biological evidence
 - Check around scene
 - Check witnesses/suspects



Evidence

5. Audio/Video
 - In home surveillance footage
 - Doorbell footage
 - Canvass the area for neighbor's surveillance video
 - 911 calls
 - Jail calls



Evidence

6. Phones
 - Determine the value of taking phones and when
 - Texts, web searches, phone calls, geolocation, pictures, videos



Evidence

7. Social Media

- Check witnesses' social media
- Was anyone displaying the gun
- How were they displaying the gun

Common Excuses

When kids don't want to get themselves or someone else in trouble, they will fabricate a story to dispel responsibility.

01

Drive-by

02

Found the gun
outside

03

Don't know whose
gun it is

How to Dispel Common Excuses

1. Does it make sense?
2. Crime Scene Evidence
3. Witness Interviews

How to Dispel Common Excuses

1. Does it make sense?
 1. Trajectory
 2. Do the witness accounts match the evidence?
 3. Does the story sound reasonable/likely?
 4. Does the timeline match?
 5. Does the 911 audio match?

How to Dispel Common Excuses

2. Crime Scene Evidence

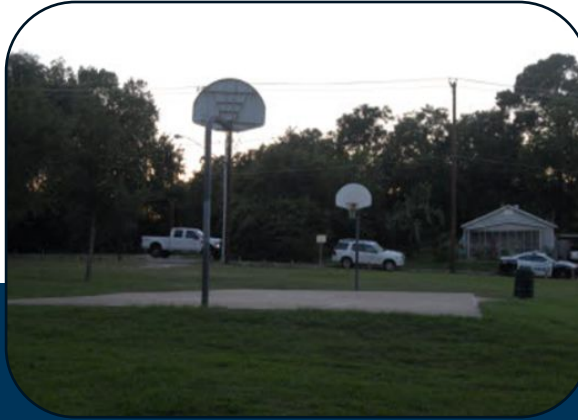
1. Does the evidence match the story?
2. Has anyone tried to hide or alter evidence?
3. Is there GSR where there should be?
4. Do the number of rounds match the witness accounts?

How to Dispel Common Excuses

3. Witness Interviews

1. Are the witness accounts consistent?
2. Does the fire department's account match the witnesses and evidence?
3. If there are inconsistencies, what can you learn from them?

“Drive-by” Case



“Drive-by” Case



Common Ways Kids Get Guns

What are the most common ways children get ahold of firearms?

01

Adults leave the gun completely unsecured

02

Adults store the gun, unlocked, with ammo in a place the kid knows about

03

Adults store the gun, locked, with ammo and the key is accessible

04

Adults allow kids unsupervised in unfamiliar location

Most Common Places Kids Find Guns

1. Nightstand
2. Underneath pillow
3. On top of bed or shelf
4. Handbag, backpack, gym bag
5. Couch
6. Vehicles

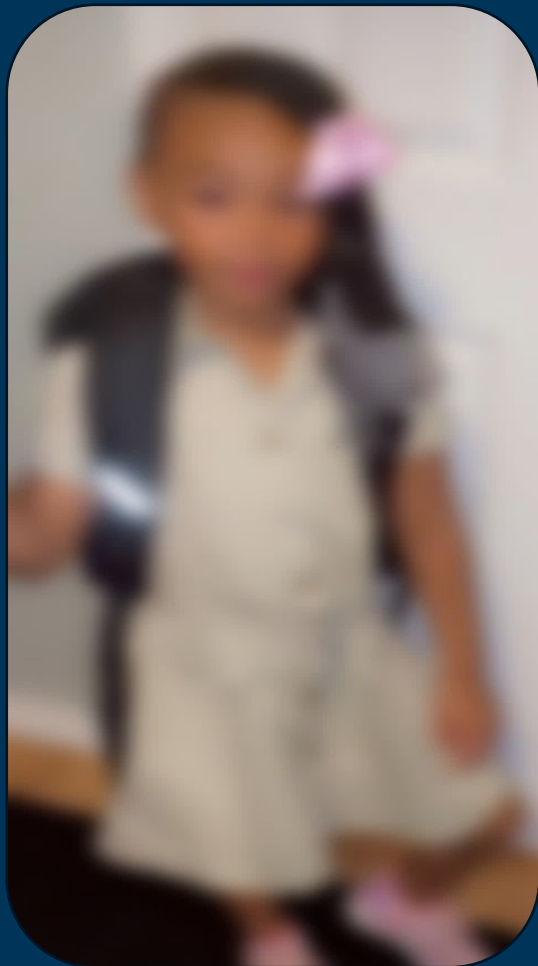
Unintended Firearm Injuries and Deaths are Preventable: Storage is KEY

Department of Justice guidelines state firearms should be stored:

1. Locked up
2. Unloaded
3. Ammo stored separately

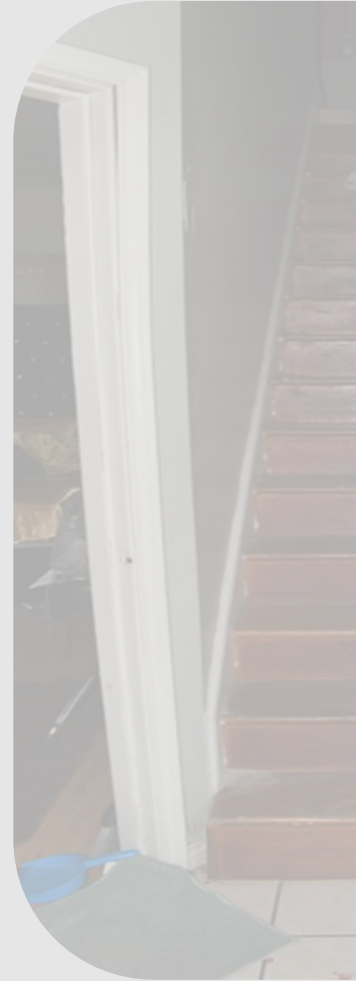
If you must store a loaded firearm in your home, consider special precautions like a trigger or cable lock *in addition* to a gun safe or lockbox

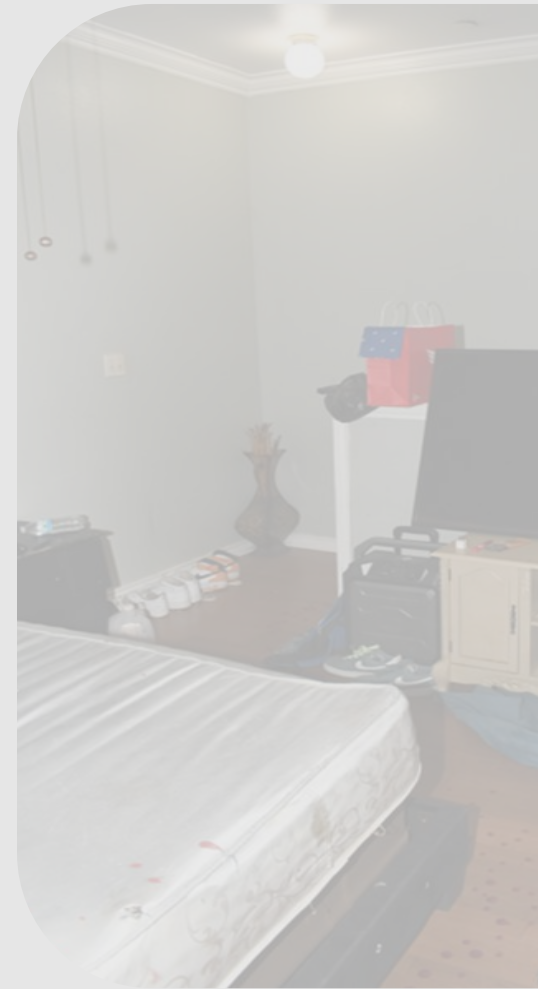
If you are in a vehicle, it should be stored on your

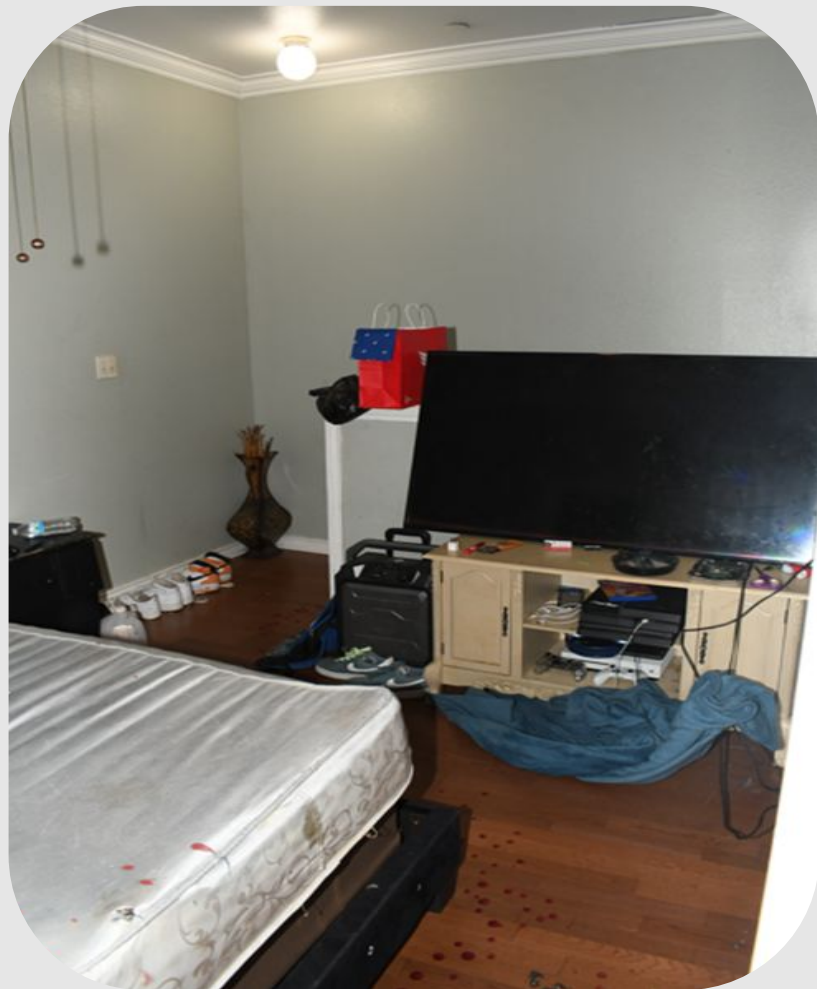


Case Study:

AR 6-years-old

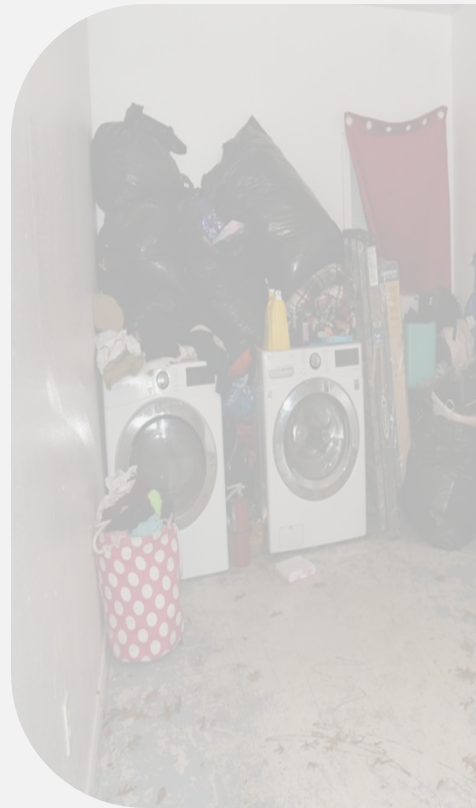
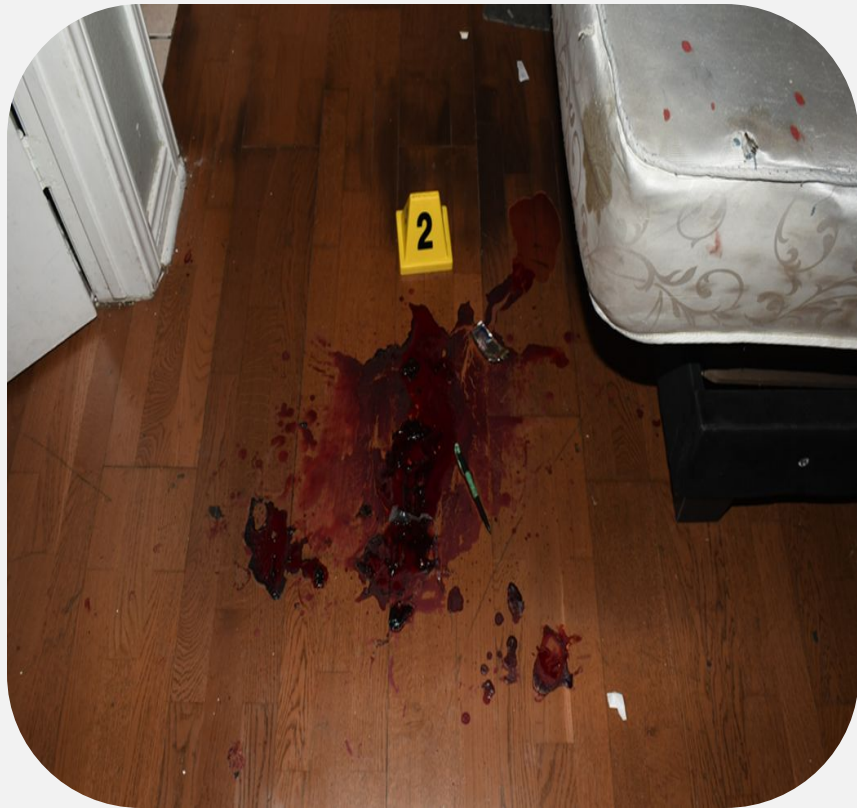






Jail Call













Damariya Sowels



Questions/Comments

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