



**NATIONAL DEFENDER INVESTIGATOR ASSOCIATION
2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
New Orleans, LA**



“Title TBD”

**2024.02.06 – This is a DRAFT AGENDA
The order of sessions and/or topics are subject to change.**

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm			Registration / Check-In	TUESDAY, April 16
8:00 am – 9:00 am			Registration / Check-In & Coffee Bar	WEDNESDAY, April 17
9:00 am – 9:15 am			Welcome and Opening Remarks	
9:15 am – 10:30 am			PLENARY	
<p>The Future of Investigations into Police Witnesses Julie Ciccolini, CEO, Techtivist, Scottsdale, AZ Ayyub Ibrahim, Director of Research, Innocence Project New Orleans, New Orleans, LA Room</p> <p>If you're tasked with investigating police witnesses, then this session is for you. Two experts will share how to investigate police officers' history and where to find out about prior misconduct. The session will also discuss the latest technologies, like Large Language Models and database, making it easier to collect, understand, and store information about police witnesses. The training will share practical examples of how these tools are improving defense practices across the country and even helping identify wrongful convictions in New Orleans.</p>				
10:30 am – 10:45 am			Networking Break, Exhibits	
10:45 am – 12:00 pm				
CONCURRENT SESSIONS				
<p align="center">Cellebrite Session 1 Chris Heeter, Federal Account Director, Cellebrite, Washington, DC Paul Compton, Federal Technical Solution Engineer, Cellebrite, Washington, DC Room Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Conflict Resolution within the Defense Team Ashley Payne, Regional Program Director (Southern Region), Partners for Justice, Atlanta, GA Co-Presenter Pending Room Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Socio-Bio Videos – Part I Steven Robinson, DSW, LCSW, Chief Investigator, Federal Public Defender Northern District of Texas, Dallas, TX Marshall Thomas, JLWOP Attorney, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, New Orleans, LA Hannah Van De Car, Deputy Legal Director, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, New Orleans, LA Room Influenced by the old saying 'a picture says more than a thousand words,' criminal defense teams are using sentencing mitigation videos as powerful visual tools to help their clients receive reduced sentences. Sentencing videos are growing in popularity as a useful form of advocacy and come in many different forms and styles. The most effective sentencing videos are 10 to 20-minute compilations of interview segments from individuals who can illustrate a client's character in a powerful way in addition to supporting documents, records and photos. These videos can convey emotion in a way that leaves a lasting impression on the judge, DA and other system actors. While character letters or sentencing memorandums may be able to explain the client's trauma and its impact on the client's life, a video brings it to life and is a stark contrast to the negative narrative put forth by the prosecution. These striking videos provide an opportunity for system actors to see and feel the emotion from family and friends or hear the gratitude in the voice of a friend or colleague that the client has impacted. This two-part seminar seeks to walk participants through the foundational stages of socio-bio video making including strategy, witness prep/interviews, record and supplemental document collection as well as the technical aspects which include video recording and editing.</p>		
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm			Lunch Break	
1:15 pm – 2:30 pm				
CONCURRENT SESSIONS				
<p align="center">Cellebrite Session 2 / Workshop Chris Heeter, Federal Account Director, Cellebrite, Washington, DC Paul Compton, Federal Technical Solution Engineer, Cellebrite, Washington, DC Room Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Session Confirmation Pending Name, Title/Position, Agency/Office, City, State Room Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Socio-Bio Videos – Part II Steven Robinson, DSW, LCSW, Chief Investigator, Federal Public Defender Northern District of Texas, Dallas, TX Marshall Thomas, JLWOP Attorney, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, New Orleans, LA Hannah Van De Car, Deputy Legal Director, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, New Orleans, LA Room See Part I Session Description.</p>		
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm			Networking Break, Exhibits	
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm				
CONCURRENT SESSIONS				
<p align="center">Investigating Intimate Partner Violence Emily Beasley, Staff Investigator, Women's Prison Project, Tulane Law School, New Orleans, LA Carlotta Lepingwell, Clinical Assistant Professor, Women's Prison Project, Tulane Law School, New Orleans, LA Stanislaw Moroz, Clinical Assistant Professor, Women's Prison Project, Tulane Law School, New Orleans, LA Room This session will highlight common investigative issues and strategies specific to investigating cases involving intimate partner violence on behalf of criminalized survivors. We will discuss how we ourselves, our clients and others understand and perceive IPV and how this understanding affects information gathering. We will identify investigative goals, obstacles, and strategies common in IPV cases, what types of evidence are often relevant and useful and where to look for them. We will focus on specific strategies in investigative practices both in records collection and witness interviews, as well as more broadly on ways investigation can contribute to good outcomes from the perspective of attorneys with extensive experience representing criminalized survivors.</p>	<p align="center">Foundational Elements of Mitigation Practice – Part 1 (Working Title) Jeff Wax, Capital Mitigation Specialist, Atlantic International Associates, Houston, TX Amy Williams, LCSW-S: Mitigation Specialist & Consultant, Williams Mitigation and Consulting, Houston, TX Room Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Ethics & Investigations Rashid Abdul-Salaam, Investigator, Federal Public Defender, Northern District Alabama, Birmingham, AL Co-Presenter Pending Room Session Description Pending</p>		



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4:00 pm – 4:15 pm			Networking Break, Exhibits
4:15 pm – 5:30 pm			CONCURRENT SESSIONS
<p align="center">Tech-Related Session</p> <p>Eric Hirst, Chief Information Officer, Public Defender Service, Washington, DC Matt Hanna, Supervisory Investigator, Public Defender Service, Washington, DC</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Foundational Elements of Mitigation Practice – Part 2 (Working Title)</p> <p>Jeff Wax, Capital Mitigation Specialist, Atlantic International Associates, Houston, TX Amy Williams, LCSW-S: Mitigation Specialist & Consultant, Williams Mitigation and Consulting, Houston, TX</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">A Case Study: Pandemic-Adjusted Investigations</p> <p>Charles A. Brown, Investigator, Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee Inc., Knoxville, TN</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>This session will cover a case that was investigated during the pandemic and some of the adaptations that had to be made throughout day-to-day case work. The presenter will discuss what was learned during the pandemic, what changes remain that were implemented, what worked or didn't work, how it impacted our clients, and also how attendees changed their own approaches.</p>	

8:00 am – 9:25 am **Coffee Bar / Opening Remarks (9:25 am)** **THURSDAY, April 18**

9:30 am – 10:45 am			PLENARY
<p>Social Media (Working Title)</p> <p>Julie Graves, Investigator, Virginia Indigent Defense Commission, Arlington, VA Seana Holland, Director of Investigations, Levy, Firestone & Muse, Washington, DC Amber Smith, Investigative Specialists, Public Defender Service, Washington, DC</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>			

10:45 am – 11:00 am **Networking Break, Exhibits**

11:00 am – 12:15 pm			CONCURRENT SESSIONS
<p align="center">The Challenges and Rewards of Working on a Holistic Juvenile Defense Team</p> <p>Oluremi Abiodun, Attorney/Equal Justice Works Fellow Sam Marrone, Staff Attorney Roberta Lambert, Social Worker Chris Wagner, Staff Investigator</p> <p align="center">Co-Presenter Pending, Youth Advocate</p> <p>Panel Session - Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, New Orleans, LA</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Social Media Workshop</p> <p>Julie Graves, Investigator, Virginia Indigent Defense Commission, Arlington, VA Seana Holland, Director of Investigations, Levy, Firestone & Muse, Washington, DC Amber Smith, Investigative Specialists, Public Defender Service, Washington, DC</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Navigating the Intersection of Fact & Mitigation Witnesses</p> <p>Annie Hamdani, Capital Mitigation Specialist, Capital Habeas Unit, Federal Public Defender, Northern District of Texas, Dallas, TX Mark Dixon, Fact Investigator, Capital Habeas Unit, Federal Public Defender, Northern District of Texas, Dallas, TX</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>How do I navigate investigation on cases with substantial mitigation and factual claims? This session featuring perspectives from both a fact investigator and mitigation specialist will help answer this complex question by exploring best practices when two investigators with different strengths are in the community on the same case.</p> <p>A range of scenarios will be covered such as how to best handle rapport building with witnesses, overlapping responsibilities, and team communication. The session will focus on important considerations such as race, class, gender, and trauma when steering a multi-faceted, client-centered, collaborative investigation.</p>	

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:15 pm – 2:30 pm			CONCURRENT SESSIONS
<p align="center">Tips for Related to the 4 C's – Connecting with Challenging and Complicated Clients: An Investigator's Guide to Cracking the Code with Difficult Clients</p> <p>LaTorya Blackwell, Legal Chief, Federal Public Defender, Western District of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>We've all been in a situation when trying to communicate with a difficult client does not go well and becomes nonproductive. How do we handle it and what's the best course of action? While the suggested methods aren't guaranteed, the goal of this session is to offer some tips for successfully breaking through difficult barriers and effectively communicating with your client. Additionally, some of these same tips and strategies can apply to communicating with difficult witnesses and family members as well.</p>	<p align="center">How to Build Resource Guides</p> <p>Ashley Payne, Regional Program Director (Southern Region), Partners for Justice, Atlanta, GA</p> <p align="center">Co-Presenter Pending</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>	<p align="center">Trauma-Informed Interviewing & Culturally Responsive Practices: A Framework for Criminal Defense Teams</p> <p>Jeff Wax, Capital Mitigation Specialist, Atlantic International Associates, Houston, TX Amy Williams, LCSW-S: Mitigation Specialist & Consultant, Williams Mitigation and Consulting, Houston, TX</p> <p align="center">Room</p> <p>It is essential for interdisciplinary practitioners representing incarcerated clients to implement trauma-informed and culturally-responsive strategies, as trauma often impairs one's ability to build and maintain trust in relationships, which is central to the work of criminal defense teams. Evidenced-based clinical interviewing skills such as reflective listening and motivational interviewing are effective at reducing client reluctance and harmful behavior while forming an alliance with their medical, psychiatric, and legal teams. Further, using these skills can help practitioners recognize how cultural, racial, and gender trauma have shaped our client's experiences and subsequently, their diverse needs within the legal process. The second half of this interactive workshop will cover trauma-informed interviewing techniques that criminal defense practitioners can use when facing trauma-induced client-team dynamics including team splitting, client emotional dysregulation, client reluctance/resistance, and appeals waiving (for capital cases). In addition, ideas on how to handle a client's cultural, racial, and gender needs within these trauma-induced dynamics will be addressed. At the end of this workshop, participants will feel more confident applying this framework during their next client meeting and empowered to have conversations with the broader team about how this framework promotes their client's humanity, sense of solidarity with their defense team, and overall client outcomes.</p>	
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm			Networking Break, Exhibits



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2:45 pm – 4:30 pm KEYNOTE

Keynote Pending Confirmation

Name, Position/Title, Agency/Office, City, State
Room

Stay tuned for updates!

Keynote Session Description Pending.

**President’s Reception
Grand Ballroom Gallery & Balcony
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

8:30 am – 9:15 am Coffee Bar / Opening Remarks (9:10 am) FRIDAY, April 19

9:15 am – 10:30 am PLENARY

Holistic Defense (Working Title)

Katherine Carter, Position, Carter Investigations, City, NY
Co-Presenter (Former Client) Details Pending
Room

Session Description Pending

10:30 am – 10:45 am Networking Break, Exhibits

10:45 am – 12:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS

<p>Defense Investigations for Sexual Offense Cases</p> <p>Bruni Marrero, Director of Investigative Services, The Legal Aid Society, New York, NY Room</p> <p>Being accused of a sexual assault can have a life-altering effect on our client’s life. The world at large has little sympathy for anyone charged in these cases. As defense investigators we must be ready to introduce reasonable doubt long before we enter a courtroom.</p> <p>This session will address interviewing complainants and outcry witnesses, timeline of alleged assault and law enforcement interaction, social media research, false claims and motives, consensual defenses, alibis, mistaken identity, manipulation of minors, and much more.</p>	<p>Competency to Stand Trial and/or the Insanity Defense</p> <p>Katherine Mattes, Director, Criminal Justice Clinic, Tulane Law School, New Orleans, LA Room</p> <p>The intersection of criminal justice and mental illness: treatment of mentally ill criminal defendants who are incompetent to stand trial. This presentation will have an emphasis on mental competency to stand trial and the defense of not guilty by reason of insanity.</p>	<p>Session Confirmation Pending</p> <p>Name, Title/Position, Agency/Office, City, State Room</p> <p>Session Description Pending</p>
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12:00 pm – 12:15 pm Networking Break, Exhibits

12:15 pm – 1:30 pm CONFERENCE CLOSING SESSION

Developing Training Programs and/or Internships

Sara Jones, Investigations Supervisor, Orleans Public Defender, New Orleans, LA
Seana Holland, Director of Investigations, Levy, Firestone & Muse, Washington, DC
Matt Hanna, Supervisory Investigator, Public Defender Service, Washington, DC
Room

Session Description Pending