FINAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

IN RE SENATOR HUEY P. LONG

JUNE 5, 1992

> > THIS REPORT DOES NOT INCLUDE PHOTOGRAPHS OR OTHER EVIDENTIARY ITEMS > >
CASE REPORT
STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS
PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

CASE REPORT

DATE: April 20, 1992
CASE NUMBER: RID013191
INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Lt. Don Moreau
CRIME: Homicide
SOURCE OF COMPLAINT:
LOCATION OF OFFENSE: Baton Rouge, Louisiana
TIME AND DATE OF OFFENSE: Approximately 2122 hours September 8, 1935
ITEMS TAKEN:
ARRESTEE:
CHARGES PENDING:

COURTESY . LOYALTY . SERVICE
OFFICE OF STATE POLICE. P.O. BOX 66614. BATON ROUGE, LA. 70896
SUSPECT(S):

VEHICLES(S):

VICTIM(S):
U.S. Senator Huey P. Long

LAW ENFORCEMENT WITNESSES:
Lt. Don Moreau

CIVILIAN WITNESSES:
Pat Lane, Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory

EVIDENCE:
Documents and Photographs from
Estate of L.F. Guerre
One (1) Browning Model 1910 Pistol
Cal. 32 Auto SN-319446
SYNOPSIS: United States Senator Huey Pierce Long was shot at the Louisiana State Capitol on September 9, 1935. He expired as a result of this wound on September 10, 1935. Files pertaining to the shooting and subsequent investigation were discovered in possession of heirs of the late General L. F. Guerre. In 1935, General Guerre was head of the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. Due to many unanswered questions regarding the shooting, the Louisiana State Police reopened the case.

NARRATIVE: On September 30, 1991, I was assigned by Lt. Col. Kenneth D. Norris to investigate the shooting and subsequent death of U. S. Senator Huey P. Long. This investigation was prompted by the discovery of the alleged murder weapon and investigative reports. These items were located among the memorabilia in the possession of Mabel G. Bennings. Ms. Bennings is the daughter of General L. F. Guerre. General Guerre was the Commander of the Louisiana State Bureau of Criminal Investigation at the time of the assassination.

Colonel Norris informed me that the investigative team would consist of myself and Pat Lane from the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory. Civil Sheriff Paul Valteau of Orleans Parish was charged by the court in New Orleans with maintaining custody of the Guerre papers and the weapon. Dr. Donald Lemieux, an archivist with the Louisiana State Archives, was assigned to assure the proper handling and preservation of all documents and objects.

On October 3, 1991, the files were opened and an initial reading and cataloging of the documents took place. It became apparent almost immediately that we were not in possession of the assassination case file. What we had were notes and correspondence regarding the possibility of a conspiracy to assassinate Senator Long. These documents, while undoubtedly of value from a historical standpoint, shed little light on the shooting of Senator Long.

The handgun was examined and shown to be functional. Also found with the handgun were six (6) .32 auto cartridges and one fired .32 calibre projectile. The fired projectile appeared to be of the same type as the unfired cartridges found with it. All projectiles, both the fired and the six unfired, were tin plated, copper jacketed .32 auto calibre. The fired projectile had visible rifling impressions on its surface and the nose of the projectile was deformed. Scientific analysis of the fired projectile by the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory proved that the fired projectile could not have been fired from the .32 calibre pistol identified as the weapon used to shoot Senator Long.
Due to the complete lack of any chain of custody or information as to the history of the weapon, or its possible use since the assassination, it was not possible to draw any conclusions regarding the origins of the fired projectile.

The most significant pieces of evidence in the documents obtained from Ms. Billings were a series of photographs. The first of these photographs depicted a man's double-breasted suit coat marked with a label "C Napolitana New Orleans" and the handwritten marking "Long-34". The second photograph depicts a white sleeveless garment, possibly an undershirt, marked with a label "Godchaux's New Orleans Custom Made", and handwritten markings "L-34", and "HPL". The third photograph depicted a long sleeve shirt labeled "Made For Godchaux's By The _____ Guild", and a handwritten marking "L-34". The coat, undershirt, and long sleeve shirt had all been cut open and tacked to a display board. All the garments displayed what appeared to be bullet entry and exit holes. There was obvious tearing and sooty residue on the front of the suit coat.

The photographs were examined by the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory and comparison test firings were done with the alleged murder weapon. The Crime Laboratory interpreted the hole in the front of the coat to be a "loose contact bullet entry". There is another hole slightly lower in the back of the coat. This hole is interpreted as a bullet exit. The holes in the white sleeveless garment and in the long sleeve shirt are in conformity with the damage done to the coat. All evidence available indicates that these items of clothing were worn by Senator Huey P. Long when he was shot.

Over the years, there have been several books written on the subject of the assassination of Senator Huey Long. These books have advanced various theories on how Senator Long came to be shot. The historical or official theory is that Huey Long was shot in the abdomen at pointblank range by a "small man in a white suit". This man was shot in turn by bodyguards and later identified as Dr. Carl Weiss, M.D. The other most popular theory has been that a bullet from a bodyguard's gun passed through Weiss and struck Long or that a ricocheting bullet struck him. The damage to the coat speaks for the "official" theory. Huey Long was shot in front of numerous witnesses. Two of these witnesses, Murphy Roden and Judge John Fournet were very close to Senator Long at the time of the shooting. Both of these men testified at a coroner's inquest held on the death of Dr. Carl A. Weiss, the alleged assassin. Both of them identified Dr. Carl Weiss as the man they saw shoot Senator Long. Five other witnesses came forward to say the same thing. Senator Long himself lived for two days following his shooting, and at no time did Senator Long identify anyone other than Weiss as his assailant.

The other documents contained in the collection provided by Ms. Binnings revealed several other facts concerning the assassination and subsequent investigation. A series of what appeared to be coded reports were found. These proved to be the written reports of private detectives employed by the William J. Burns Detective Agency of New York. These detectives were apparently hired by the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation to conduct clandestine surveillances on members of the Weiss family following the assassination. Why private detectives were used for this purpose instead of the Bureau's own investigators remains a mystery.
One enigma in the events immediately following the shooting of Senator Long has been that Harry Costello, then Director of Sports Publications at Louisiana State University, reportedly received a call from Washington, D.C. identifying Carl Weiss as the assassin. This call was received at 9:33 P.M. September 8, 1935, approximately eleven minutes after the shooting. This has been cited by some as evidence of a conspiracy involving President Franklin Roosevelt, a political enemy of Senator Long. The Binnings documents provided a copy of a telegram from Allen Coogan, then employed by United Press International. Coogan revealed that a correspondent had obtained the identification of Weiss from Allen Ellender, the Speaker of the House, at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital minutes after the shooting and had telephoned the identity to the Washington, D.C. Bureau of United Press International.

It is significant that in none of the internal memos and correspondence between General Guerre, then head of the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, and other investigators and members of the Long organizations, is there any mention of the possibility that someone other than Dr. Carl Weiss fired the fatal shot.

Huey Pierce Long was shot once by a small statued man in a white suit. The shot was fired at "loose contact" distance. The projectile entering the upper right abdomen and exiting from the lower right back after traversing the body. The description of the wounds given by the attending surgeons coincides with the bullet hole locations observed in the photographs of Senator Long's garments.

All observations made of the photographic and other evidence was supportive of the official version of the shooting. A careful examination of literary sources and historical information provides no credible contradictions. The lack of any chain of custody on any of the evidence is distressing. But every effort was made by the investigators to be as thorough as possible while remaining professionally skeptical.

This report does not answer every possible question which could be raised concerning the shooting of Senator Long. It does, however, shed some light on what had previously been one of history's many mysteries.
CRIME LAB INFORMATION
REQUEST FOR SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

Submiting Agency File No.

Submiting Agency
LSR RICHMOND DETECTIVES

Address
376 AIRPORT

Suspect(s)
Carl A. Weiss

Victim(s)
Henry P. Long

Type Examination Requested
Ballistic Comparison - Parts Interchange

Type Investigation
HOMICIDE

Itemize and Describe Evidence

1. One (1) BROWNING 1910 32 CM Pistol SN: 319466
2. One (1) Filed Pistol Grip 32 CM
3. Six (6) PLASTIC ROUNDS - CONTAINING BLACK POWDER AND
   CARTRIDGES
4. One (1) 30 CAL MAGAZINE FOR IT TO CONTAINING SIX (6) UNFIRED
   AUTO CARTRIDGES.

Evidence Delivered By:

Print Name: [Signature]

Date: 11-6-91
Time: 10:30 AM

FOR LABORATORY USE ONLY
PRELIMINARY REPORT
To: State Police Reg I Det
P.O. Box 66614
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896

Reference: Carl A Weiss
Huey Long
Parish: East Baton Rouge

Case Officer: D. Moreau
Agency File No: 11-06-91
Date Submitted: 11-06-91
Time Submitted: 10:30 a.m.
Evidence Delivered by: D. Moreau
Evidence Received by: Patrick A. Lane

Examination Requested:
Firearms & Toolmarks
Serology

Date of Examination: 12-02-91

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED:

1. One (1) Browning, Model 1910-32, .32 caliber pistol, bearing Serial No. 319446.
2. One (1) fired .32 caliber projectile.
3. Six (6) plastic envelopes containing photographs and negatives.
4. One (1) pistol magazine for the Browning .32 caliber pistol mentioned in Exhibit 1, containing six (6) .32 auto cartridges.

December 17, 1991

RESULTS:

The tearing and sooty residue around the hole in the right side, near the middle button, on the double breasted coat depicted in the photographs (exhibit 6, Inventory No. 14-48) is consistent with test patterns produced by firing the Browning .32 auto pistol Serial No. 319446 (Exhibit 1) with the muzzle of the weapon in contact with the linen test cloth at the time of discharge. The residues or tearing are observable around a second hole slightly lower and in the back of the coat in the same photo. This hole is interpreted as an exit hole associated with the contact entrance hole in the front right of the coat.

The full metal jacket bullet (Exhibit 2) is a copper jacketed roundnose open base projectile with a thin silver colored plating over the copper jacket portion of the bullet. The physical appearance of this bullet is the same as the bullets seated in the six "Rem-Unc 32-7.03 M/W" cartridges (Exhibit 4).

The general rifling characteristics observed on the questioned bullet (Exhibit 2) are six lands and grooves with right twist. Land impression measurements are .036-.039 inch. Groove impression measurements are .115-.119 inch.

Reference bullets test fired in the Browning pistol Serial No. 319446 (Exhibit 1) bear six lands and grooves with right twist. Land impression measurements on the reference bullets are .026-.030 inch. Groove impression measurements on the reference bullets are .124 inch.

The questioned bullet (Exhibit 2) could not be matched to the Browning pistol bearing Serial No. 319446 (Exhibit 1).

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The maximum capacity for the pistol magazine (Exhibit 4) is seven cartridges. With one cartridge in the chamber, and a fully loaded magazine, the pistol (Exhibit 1) has a total capacity of eight cartridges.

The white sleeveless garment is depicted in a photograph (Exhibit 3) marked with a label "Godchaux's New Orleans custom made", and handwritten markings "L-34" and "HPL".

The long sleeve shirt depicted in another photograph (Exhibit 3) has a label "made for Godchaux's by the -- -- -- Guild" and handwritten markings "L-34".

The double breasted coat depicted in another photograph (Exhibit 3) is marked with a label "C Napolitana New Orleans" and the handwritten markings "Long -34".

Analysis of specimens #1 and 2 failed to reveal the presence of blood.

Certified:

Paul L. Cobb, Jr.
Director
State Police Laboratory Services
FINAL REPORT
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
OFFICE OF STATE POLICE  
CRIME LABORATORY  
P.O. BOX 66614  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70896  
(504) 925-6216  

Laboratory No.  
SP- 07007-91  

Please refer to the above case number when issuing subpoenas for Laboratory personnel.

SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS REPORT  

To: State Police Reg I Det  
P.O. Box 66614  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896  

Reference: Carl A Weiss  
Huey P Long  
Parish: East Baton Rouge  

Case Officer:  
D. Moreau  

Agency File No:  

Date Submitted:  
11-06-91  

Time Submitted:  
10:30 a.m.  

Evidence Delivered by: D. Moreau  

Evidence Received by: Patrick A. Lane  

Examination Requested:  
Firearms & Toolmarks  
SEROLOGY  

Date of Examination:  
02-17-92  

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED:  

1. One (1) Browning, Model 1910-32, .32 caliber pistol, bearing Serial No. 319448.  
2. One (1) fired .32 caliber projectile.  
3. Six (6) plastic envelopes containing photographs and negatives.  
4. One (1) pistol magazine for the Browning .32 caliber pistol mentioned in Exhibit 1, containing six (6) .32 auto cartridges.  

February 18, 1992  
RESULTS:  

The tearing and sooty appearing residue around the hole in the right side, near the middle button, on the double breasted coat depicted in the photographs (Exhibit 6, Inventory No. 14-48), is consistent with test patterns produced by firing the Browning patent .32 Auto pistol, Serial No. 319446 (Exhibit 1), with the muzzle of the weapon in loose contact with the linen test cloth at the time of discharge. No residues or tearing are observed around a second hole, slightly lower and in the back of the coat, in the same photo. This hole is interpreted as an exit hole associated with the contact entrance hole in the front right of the coat.

The double breasted coat depicted in the photographs (Exhibit 3), is marked with a label "C Napolitana New Orleans" and the handwritten markings "Long-34".

The white sleeveless garment is depicted in a photograph (Exhibit 3), marked with a label "Codchaux's New Orleans custom made", and handwritten markings "L-34" and "HPL".

The long sleeve shirt depicted in another photograph (Exhibit 3) has a label "made for Codchaux's by the " and handwritten markings "L-34".

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The full metal jacket bullet (Exhibit 2), is a copper jacketed roundnose open base projectile with a tin plating over the copper jacket portion. The physical appearance of this bullet is the same as the bullets seated in the six "Rem-Unc 32-7.65 M/M" cartridges (Exhibit 4).

The general rifling characteristics observed on the questioned bullet (Exhibit 2), are six lands and grooves with right twist. Land impression measurements are .036-.039 inch. Groove impression measurements are .115-.119 inch.

Reference bullets test fired in the Browning patent .32 Auto Pistol, Serial No. 319446 (Exhibit 1), bear six lands and grooves with right twist. Land impression measurements are .026-.030 inches. Groove impression measurements are .124 inches.

It was determined that the .32 Auto caliber questioned bullet could not have been fired in the Browning patent Fabrique Nationale pistol, Serial No. 319446, (Exhibit 1).

The questioned bullet (Exhibit 2) was made available to Richard H. Young, a research associate at the La. State University Geology Department.

He was requested to examine the damaged area on the nose of the bullet (Exhibit 2) to determine, if possible, the type of surface and the elemental composition of the surface which caused the damage observed on the bullet.

Reference samples were also made available which include: Reference marble samples from corridor wall at the La. State Capitol, a reference bullet of similar composition which had been test fired into a piece of marble (source Lucien Haag - independent Firearm Examiner), and a sample piece of the marble the reference shot was fired into. (source Lucien Haag). A complete report on the findings of these Scanning Electron Microscope - Energy Dispersive X-Ray (SEM-EDX) analysis is attached.

The maximum capacity for the pistol magazine (Exhibit 4) is seven cartridges. With one cartridge in the chamber, and a fully loaded magazine, the pistol (Exhibit 1) has a total capacity of eight cartridges.

Analysis of specimens #1 and #2 failed to reveal the presence of blood.

Patrick A. Lane
Forensic Scientist

George Schiro
Forensic Scientist

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Due to the total absence of any chain of custody on the four items submitted to the laboratory for scientific analysis (Exhibits 1-4), there are many questions that must be addressed as we attempt to establish the origin of each item of evidence. Examination of physical evidence can allow insights into specific elements of a crime; such as, the distance from which a shot was fired. With this known piece of evidence, statements can be evaluated as to their agreement with established facts, and hence an understanding gained as to the overall credibility of a witness.

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When the authenticity of the item of evidence is in question, we must
again attempt to establish some knowns from which to evaluate the
unknowns.

The serial number on the Browning patent Fabrique Nationale .32 Auto
pistol has been previously documented and verified as being 31941.
This serial number can be observed on the frame, slide, and barrel
chamber when the weapon is disassembled. The pistol (Exhibit 1) is
clearly the same weapon seized by authorities after the shooting.

The series of photographs and negatives (Exhibit 3) consist of photo-
graphs of Dr. Carl A. Weiss on the floor at the State Capitol, and a
series of photographs of articles of clothing which had been previ-
ously spread out and tacked onto a board. The position of the double breasted
cost, the shirt, and the vest-like garment; in each instance, shows a
pair of bullet holes and markings in the garment which are of value
for identification.

The inside lining of the coat in the photo is marked "Long - 34" three
or four times. The question may arise as to whether this is a name
"Long" - and a year 54, or a size Long - 34 inches. The number 34
is clearly too small to be a chest size for Huey, but could possibly
be a sleeve length (Huey P. Long is recorded as being 5 feet 11 inches
and approximately 200 pounds).

The long sleeve shirt depicted in the photo is marked "L-34" in the
collar above the "Godchaux" label. This also could be a sleeve length.

The vest-like garment depicted in the photo is similarly marked "L-34"
in the collar above the "Godchaux" label. This garment, in addition
to the handwritten "L34" is marked "HPL". (It is documented that
Huey P. Long's wardrobe was custom made by Godchaux's). The photos
of the scene depict the clothing worn by Carl A. Weiss as a white
suit.

In addition to the markings of the garments, there is also the damage
that is observed. (In the Coroners' inquest into the death of Huey
Long—witnesses including John B. Fournet, C. A. Riddle, and Murphy
Roden testified that a small man in a white suit walked up to Senator
Long and without saying a word, pointed a gun at him and fired. Huey
said, "I'm shot", grabbed his abdomen, turned and fled the scene).
The location of the contact gun shot in the coat is consistent with
these statements. Based on the markings present on the clothing and
the contact gunshot that can be observed, it strongly supports the
fact that these are the clothes worn by Huey P. Long the night he
was shot.

We've established this is the pistol that belonged to and was carried
by Weiss on the evening of September 8, 1935, and the questioned bullet
(Exhibit 2) could not have been fired by that pistol; what connection
if any does the questioned bullet have with the death of Huey P. Long?

Damage observed on the nose of the questioned bullet (Exhibit 2), was
consistent with it having struck some hard surface at an angle. Also,
the type and extent of damage was consistent with its velocity being
greatly reduced, from the normal muzzle velocities encountered in hand
gun ammunition, at the time it impacted.

Was this bullet fired at the body of Huey P. Long where it entered and
exited (thus expending much of its energy), then striking the marble
walls of the corridor at the capitol, ricocheting off the walls, and
ultimately coming to rest in the corridor?

The .32 caliber bullet (Exhibit 2) is a tin plated full metal jacket
bullet that has rifling marks of its surface. This bullet also has
some scuffing damage on its nose and also near the base. The gross
observation (Exhibit 2) suggested it could have been the bullet fired by Weiss; yet, it definitely was not fired by the
Browning patent pistol (Exhibit 1).

Included with the pistol (Exhibit 1), is a magazine containing six .32
Auto "REM-UMC" tin plated full metal jacket cartridges. Are these the
actual cartridges in the pistol that September evening? Research
reveals that they are of a design which was of the 1935 era.
The questioned bullet (Exhibit 2), reference marble from the Capitol corridor (from defects previously believed to have been bullet holes), and a test set of a reference bullet which had been deliberately test fired into a piece of marble, and a small piece of the test marble were provided to a research associate of the LSU - Geology Department. Richard H. Young conducted examinations of the provided samples utilizing a Scanning Electron Microscope - Energy Dispersive X-Ray. In his report he identified particles on the test fired bullet as being consistent in elemental composition with the reference piece of marble which was also analyzed by similar method. With regard to the questioned bullet and the marble samples from the Capitol, however, the findings are less specific. While Calcium and Silica are present in the damaged area of the questioned bullet, it is not certain if their source is marble or some other source.

Comparison of the individual pattern of the marble panel in the black and white photograph of the body of Weiss at the scene (Exhibit 3), to the present day panel of marble on which the plaque of Huey P. Long is affixed at the LA. State Capitol, reveal two very different individual marble patterns. It is by process of elimination in which certainty that the present day marble panel and the orientation of the column have been altered.

It is noted by Mr. Young that the microscopic comparison of the texture of the lines or stria in the damaged area of the questioned bullet (Exhibit 2) is much coarser in appearance than damage observed on reference bullets test fired at an angle into smooth marble. This observation had been noted previously at the Crime Laboratory while photographing the questioned bullet (Exhibit 2).

There still exists some questions as to the origin of the questioned bullet (Exhibit 2). The total lack of chain of custody of the bullet creates questions that may never be answered.

While conflicting accounts of an incident exist, a single piece of physical evidence can often shed insight into which account is most likely, and may render one version as being totally impossible.

The observations made about the holes in the double breasted coat depicted in the photographs (Exhibit 3) in the preliminary Crime Lab report, are very consistent with a contact gunshot in the front right side and a second hole caused by the same bullet exiting the body. The full metal jacket .32 Auto bullet is capable of shooting through soft tissue and be dense enough to cause damage in the bullet path. This type bullet will demonstrate no appreciable change of diameter or expansion; thus, an exit hole may very closely approximate the bullet diameter or appear slightly smaller, depending on the elasticity of the material through which it is passing.

The sooty appearing residues around the four-pointed star shaped tear in the front of the coat indicates the muzzle of a weapon was in loose contact with the garment at the time it was discharged. The sooty residue is caused by the hot vapor cloud, burning gunpowder and lead from the base of the bullet, which forces the bullet through the weapon's barrel. The force of the gases as the bullet clears the muzzle of the weapon rips the material if it is loosely pressed against the weapon's muzzle. Recognizing these two indicators allows a determination of the distance of a weapon's muzzle at the time of discharge. This tearing and sooty pattern was duplicated in test firings made at the laboratory.

This evidence strongly supports the statements made by the witnesses present at the scene who testified at the Coroner's inquest.

SUMMARY:

I have read the statements of the witnesses closest to the shooting, as well as the statements of others who were in the hall at the time of the shooting, but not in plain view of Huey P. Long. The only discrepancies I observed were: where the body of Weiss came to rest after the shooting stopped, and did he fire one or two shots before the return fire started.

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The statements and evidence support the fact that Dr. Weiss walked up to Senator Huey P. Long, pointed and fired his Browning patent .32 Auto pistol. The Weiss pistol, which was initially pointed at point blank range at Huey’s chest, was struck by bodyguard Murphy Roden and simultaneously by Judge John B. Fournet. The pistol was deflected downward where it discharged into Huey’s right side causing the extensive sooting and tearing of his coat. The .32 caliber full metal jacket bullet passed through the soft tissue of the abdomen and exited from the right side of the back. Huey immediately replied, “I’m shot”, grabbed his abdomen, turned and fled from his attacker. The .32 Auto pistol jammed and would not fire. After a brief struggle, bodyguard Murphy Roden pushed away from Dr. Weiss. Simultaneously the surrounding bodyguards fired a barrage of shots killing Weiss.

Theories about the bodyguard’s ricocheting bullet striking Huey as he fled down the hall are disproved by the presence of contact tearing and residue around the hole in his coat.

Theories about someone other than "the man in the white suit, Carl Weiss", being the assassin are unfounded by virtue of the fact that none of the witnesses, including Huey Long, ever mentioned anyone at contact distance firing a shot at him. It is documented that Huey fled down the stairs of the capitol of his own power. From the time of his shooting until his death two days later, there is to my knowledge, no statement ever made by Huey P. Long suggesting or stating that anyone other than Carl Weiss had shot him.

Patrick A. Lane
Forensic Scientist

Certified:
Paul L. Cobb, Jr.
Director
State Police Laboratory Services