



CITY OF GALAX

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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July 1, 2016

Awards Committee
Virginia Academy of Forensic Science Alumni Association
Awards Committee
Training Section
700 North 5th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Sirs,

As an introduction I am currently Chief of the Galax Police Department and a graduate of the Thirteenth (13th) Session of the Virginia Academy of Forensic Science.

I write to nominate the following Academy Alumnus for the Dr. Paul Ferrara Crime Scene Officer of the Year Award 2016.

Detective Aaron Criner, Galax Police Department
Special Agent Burton Russell Edwards, Virginia State Police

On March 10, 2017 a Galax Police Officer was dispatched to investigate an open door complaint at a residence located in the City of Galax. The

responding officer's observations caused him to make entry into the residence where he discovered a young women whose death was obviously the result of a crime of violence. Subsequent to that discovery the body of the infant daughter was discovered.

Detective Criner was immediately placed in charge of the crime scene and all facets of evidence wherever it might be discovered. He immediately determined that the suspect in an attempt to destroy evidence had "washed the crime scene" with bleach.

Detective Criner upon his arrival established perimeters and began establishing priorities. Special Agent Edwards who is assigned to the Virginia State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Fourth Division contacted Criner and offered his assistance, which with my permission we accepted.

Their crime scene investigation was thorough and conducted in the highest tradition of the alumni of the Academy. Their initial examination lasted for fourteen (14) hours, the crime scene was secured and Criner returned the second day and supervised a second search for evidence for an additional ten (10) hours.

While on scene two suspects were developed, Criner had the forethought to seek suspect "PERK" from both of them. He gave complete instructions to the officers who collected that evidence.

On May 17, 2016 Detective Criner received notification that the laboratory system had matched DNA samples from the deceased infant child to one of the suspects from the first day. He was located and arrested as he was preparing to flee and charged with:

Murder in the First Degree (Mother)
Capital Murder (Infant)

Burglary in the night-time with Intent to Commit a Felony

Subsequent to his arrest a quantity of digital media was discovered on and about his person. Pornographic images depicting unthinkable acts with infant children were recovered. The suspect was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury for producing and possessing child pornography. He is currently in the custody of the United States Marshall.

The efforts of both Criner and Edwards are noteworthy because of their meticulous crime scene investigation that overcame the suspects attempts to mask his identify with bleach.

Without their efforts this crime would likely gone unsolved.

As I stated previously I am an alumnus of the Virginia Academy of Forensic Science. In my career I have been involved with the investigation of over fifty (50) homicides and was in charge of evidence recovery and testified as lead investigator in the trails. In my experience personally and professionally their efforts are unmatched.

I without hesitation nominate them both for the Dr. Paul Ferrara Crime Scene Officer of the Year Award 2016. I sincerely appreciate your consideration of this nomination.

Sincerely,



R.C. Clark, Jr., Chief
Galax Police Department