



# CENTER PIECE

The Official Newsletter of the National Child Protection Training Center

## When the Child Has Spoken: Corroborating the Forensic Interview

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### Introduction

The historic purpose of a forensic interview is to take a child's statement in a legally defensible manner.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the word "forensic" means "pertaining to, connected with, or used in courts of law."<sup>3</sup> To fulfill these historic and essential purposes, the forensic interviewer must be well trained in memory and suggestibility issues,<sup>4</sup> child development,<sup>5</sup> cognitive development, the usage of anatomical diagrams and dolls,<sup>6</sup> and must use a forensic interviewing protocol rooted in research.<sup>7</sup> The forensic interviewer must also participate in peer review, attend basic and advanced trainings and otherwise stay abreast of the field.<sup>8</sup>

A forensic interviewer must also understand the rules of evidence that may govern the admissibility of the forensic interview in a civil and criminal court of law. Failure to understand these rules may cause problems in the event the case comes to trial.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the forensic interviewer needs to understand how to defend the forensic interview in a court of law and, if need be, to educate jurors and judges on procedures and protocols relating to forensic interviewing.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, and most importantly, the forensic interviewer must understand the critical importance of obtaining, in a developmentally appropriate manner, as many details as possible from the child. It is the details that will enable law enforcement and social service investigators to corroborate a child's statement. If the forensic interviewer excels in this critical aspect of his or her work, investigators should be able to find multiple pieces of corroborating evidence.

Corroborating evidence doubles the chance a suspect will confess to child sexual abuse,<sup>11</sup> increases the likelihood of a prosecution,<sup>12</sup> and otherwise makes it more difficult for defense "experts" to attack the forensic interview.<sup>13</sup> For example, the defense "expert" may still challenge certain questions that lead to details pertaining to the child maltreatment, such as the usage of a lubricant, as suggestive but if the detectives find the lubricant in the exact location the child described, the defense challenge is weakened.

### Ten Tips for Corroborating the Child's Statement

In the search for corroborating evidence, forensic interviewers and investigators may benefit from the following ten tips.

#### 1. Think at the child's level

Young children lack the vocabulary of an adult. Accordingly, they often don't have words for "ejaculation," "dildo," "fellatio" or "cunnilingus." As a result, they may describe a dildo as a "pink snake" or an ejaculation as grandpa's pee pee "throwing up." Accordingly, examine the statements of a child from the perspective of a child. In one case, a four year old girl said she was sexually abused in the room with a "giant eagle."<sup>14</sup> When the suspect's house was searched, the investigators found the bedspread with a depiction of a giant eagle. If this had not been seized the defense counsel could have had a field day with the child, claiming she was fantasizing. In another case, a child described a "worm" on daddy's pee pee. The "worm," of course, turned out to be a condom (the child was apparently thinking about the receptacle on the top of the condom).

## UP COMING conferences

### Forensic Interviewer at Trial:

This course is designed for teams of two- prosecutors and forensic interviewers. Prosecutors will be required to conduct a direct examination of forensic interviewers, and then conduct a re-direct examination after their forensic interviewers have been cross-examined. The prosecutors, working with forensic interviewers, must also respond to the critiques of their forensic interviews from a defense expert.

**Location:** Winona, Minnesota on Winona State University campus

**Tuition Fee:** Please submit \$50 payment with your registration. Make checks payable to: NCPTC. Or pay online, when you register at [www.ncptc.org](http://www.ncptc.org).

- September training session: We are accepting registration for ATTORNEYS ONLY!
- October training session: Please register in a team of two (one attorney and one forensic interviewer). Attorneys are also welcome to register without a forensic interviewer for the Oct. 11 - 13, 2010 session.

NCPTC has applied for MN POST Board credits for law enforcement professionals, for both training sessions offered.



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## 2. Motive evidence

In searching the child or perpetrator's house, investigators should look for letters, artwork or gifts the child has made or otherwise presented to the perpetrator. In another case, the victim made his father an award from the computer which announced his dad was the "greatest in the world." Investigators seized this as evidence on the child's love for the perpetrator. In closing argument, the prosecutor can use this evidence to show the child has no incentive to lie. We simply don't lie to get into trouble people we love.<sup>15</sup>

## 3. Corroborate "sexual oddities"

In a case in South Carolina, a child was asked about sounds daddy makes when he is sexually abusing her. The girl said he makes a "whinny" sound like that of a horse. The investigator interviewed the suspect's wife and several other sexual partners and found that, indeed, the man made a "whinny" sound as he approached climax. This is powerful, corroborating evidence. How else would the child know the sounds the man makes when he has an orgasm if she herself had not been abused?

## 4. Don't ignore "fantastic statements"

In one case, a child said her dad had a "butterfly on his pee pee."<sup>16</sup> If this issue is not investigated the defense counsel will likely claim the child has an active imagination. The investigators in that case did a search warrant to inspect the suspect's penis and discovered he had tattooed a butterfly on his male organ. In another case, a child said the

perpetrator's penis had a devil on it. Sure enough, the defendant had tattooed the image of Satan on his penis. In a case involving a child who was brutally, anally raped, the child told the forensic interviewer she was with Winnie the Pooh in the 100 Acre Wood when she was being raped. There was powerful, medical evidence the child had been savagely raped. A mental health professional was interviewed and explained the process of dissociation and why, during traumatic events, a child may send her mind to a comfort place. The investigators examined the child's bedroom and found numerous images, videos and toys of Winnie the Pooh—documenting that perhaps, in the child's mind, the 100 Acre Wood is a safe place to go.

## 5. There is always a crime scene to inspect and photograph

Some officers will take dozens of photos of a fender bender and yet fail to visit the crime scene at which a child was raped. There is always a crime scene that needs to be photographed and otherwise inspected.<sup>17</sup> The photographs may help the child testify as he/she explains their experiences on the witness stand. The photographs can also be used in cross examination of a suspect. In one case, a defendant claimed that he had sexual intercourse with his teenage daughter but that it was an accident. The defendant claimed he was intoxicated and intended to have sex with his wife but walked into the wrong bedroom. In such a case, the prosecutor could use the crime scene photos and highlight the absurdity that the defendant could have been mistaken as to which room he was in.

## 6. Videotape the crime scene from the perspective of the victim

In one case, a woman got home after an argument with her boyfriend. As she was showering she heard her boyfriend's pick-up pull into her driveway. She quickly dried off and put on a bathrobe. She went to her front door and saw, through the window in the door, that her boyfriend was in a rage, attempting to break into her house. The woman went to the kitchen to get a knife to protect herself. As she started to open the knife drawer she heard the window in the door break and she knew her boyfriend was now reaching his hand through the broken glass to unlock the door. In her

panic, the woman pulled out the entire knife drawer; the drawer fell to the floor and the knives scattered everywhere. The woman then ran down the hall, flung open a closet door, and grabbed a baseball bat. Her boyfriend chased her down the hall and out into the backyard where he tackled her in the snow. The baseball ball went flying as the man kicked and punched the woman. He then sped away in his pickup. The woman collected herself and ran two blocks to a nearby police station. The officer on duty took her statement and then visited the crime scene. The officer videotaped the crime scene from the perspective of the victim. He started his camera in the bathroom and noted everything that corroborated her statement of having recently showered (water on the tile, a damp towel, etc). The officer then went to the kitchen and documented the knives scattered everywhere. The officer next videotaped the front door with the broken glass and he noticed there was blood on the handle—an indication the suspect cut his hand breaking into the house. The officer then videotaped the open closet door and the absence of a bat. The officer then videotaped as he walked down the hall and into the backyard where he documented a scuffle in the snow, some blood in the snow, and a baseball bat lying some distance away. At trial, this videotape was played for the jurors.

## 7. Photograph bruises on two separate dates

If a child or any other victim has fresh bruises from a recent assault, photograph the bruises on that day but also return a day later and photograph the injuries a second time. The bruises may have changed shape or color and may more accurately reflect the fury of the attack.

## 8. Consider the possibility of other victims

When conducting a search warrant, always be alert to the possibility that other children may have been victimized. In one case, for example, officers were searching for a "love letter" the teenage boy claimed to have sent to his male school teacher. In searching for the letter the officers found a drawer with the photos of about 100 naked adolescent/teenage boys. In such a scenario, it now becomes plausible that there may be other victims.

## 9. Investigate divorce/custody cases as the MDT would any other case

If a child sexual abuse allegation arises in the midst of a divorce custody dispute,<sup>18</sup> and the defense is that mom put the child up to making the allegation, investigate the facts surrounding the first disclosure. If mom took the child to the police station, pushed him into a chair and said “you tell the cop what you told me,” that would be suspicious of a false allegation. If, though, the child’s first disclosure is to a school teacher whom she begs not to tell, that sounds more plausible. Also, examine the mother’s statements closely. If the mother simply says something such as “I was giving Molly a bath and I saw some redness in her genitals so I thought I should take her to the doctor” this doesn’t sound like the exaggerated sort of claim a liar would make. After all, if the mother is really going to perjure herself why not make it really effective perjury by claiming she walked in on the abuse, or her husband confessed to the abuse, or that the child make a clear disclosure of abuse. Also, in interviewing the child, investigators should see if he or she can provide sensory details. In one case, a child said dad’s penis “felt bumpy.” When dad’s penis was inspected, it was found to have genital warts. If a child can provide sensory details such as this, the allegation is likely credible.<sup>19</sup> This is because although a mother may urge a child to make a false accusation it is unlikely she described what it feels like to perform fellatio on her husband. Also, examine the mother’s mental history. The fact she is angry at her husband is not all that important—many divorces end in anger. The question is whether the mother is pathological. To consciously attempt to convince your child that she has been sexually abused when she was not would suggest a complete lack of conscience.

## 10. Don’t delay the forensic interview or the investigation

It is essential that a child receive a forensic interview as soon as possible after a disclosure. It is equally important for the multi-disciplinary team to respond immediately in providing the child with a medical exam, with the interrogation of the suspect, and in searching for corroborating evidence. As Detective Mike Johnson has noted, investigators have a brief “window of opportunity” in which to collect meaningful evidence once the child makes an outcry.<sup>20</sup> When

MDTs or CACs delay the forensic interview or the investigation for days, or even hours, significant evidence is lost and the ability to protect a child from further abuse is limited if not altogether lost.<sup>21</sup>

## Applying These Tips to Three Case Scenarios

For these and other tips to be successful, the core investigative team should be present for the forensic interview. In addition to the forensic interviewer, the law enforcement officer assigned to the case as well as the child protection worker, prosecutor and child protection attorney should be present. Although only the forensic interviewer will be in the same room with the child, the other team members can watch and listen to the interview behind a two way mirror, via closed circuit television, or any other means that allows the interview to be observed.

Once the interview is complete, the first priority of the team is to ensure the child’s safety. The second priority of the team, assuming the child disclosed abuse, is to corroborate the child’s allegation. The team has seen the interview live and, assuming the interview was recorded, may now want to watch the interview a second time. Every team member should have pen and paper and should tear the interview apart, paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, word by word if necessary. After every statement of the child, the team should determine how that statement can be corroborated. If, for example, the child says she lives in a blue house on Fairfax Street, the investigators should photograph the blue house and the street sign. If the child says she has a bedroom decorated with images of Winnie the Pooh and that her dog Pancake sleeps on a blanket in the corner, investigators should photograph the room and document there is a dog with the name the child ascribes to the animal.

Investigators should continue corroborating each peripheral detail as they work to the heart of the allegation—child sexual abuse or other forms of maltreatment. The best way to understand this approach is to look at actual case scenarios. All of the cases below are real, though I have changed some of the facts and paraphrased the interviews to serve one or more teaching points.

## 1. The case of the adolescent struggling to remember the “first time”

In one forensic interview, a 12 year old girl said her father sexually abused her for “a long time.” However, she struggled to remember the “first time” her father began to abuse her. She did, though, state “the first time Dad did it I was so upset I couldn’t go to school for a whole week.”

In this scenario, possible corroborating evidence may include:

- **School attendance records.** If investigators are able to locate records documenting a week of absence from school, they may be able to pinpoint the exact date the sexual abuse began—as well as corroborate the child’s statement she was absent from school for a week.
- **School photographs.** Once the investigator determines the age of the child when the abuse began, look for school photographs or other records to show how little she was when the abuse began. School records for that year may also document her height and weight. This documentation will help the jury to understand how physically helpless the child was when the abuse began.
- **Investigative interviews.** Interview the teacher or any other school official who may remember the child during that year. Was there any point in the year in which behaviors or school performance changed?







## 2. The case of the teenage boy “sold” to a perpetrator

In another forensic interview, a 17 year old boy told the interviewer:

*For the past year my father has been selling me as a prostitute to a man who lives down the road, a couple of blocks away. Every couple of days my dad tells me the arrangements have been made. I then walk down the road a couple of blocks to this other man’s house. The man lets me in and escorts me upstairs into the bathroom. From the medicine cabinet he produces a jar of what he calls ‘white cross pills.’ I guess he calls them that because they are colored white with a black cross painted on them. I don’t know what they are. He gives me a couple of the pills and tells me to wash them down. There is always a blue cup on the sink. I fill the cup with water, wash down a couple of the pills, and then we go downstairs into the basement. It is a finished basement. There is carpeting on the floor including a bear skin rug. There is a bar down there and a big refrigerator. If you open the refrigerator it is filled from bottom to top with nothing but cans of Budweiser beer. We drink some beer, get a little drunk, toss the empty beer cans around on the carpet and otherwise act crazy. Then we engage in a variety of sexual acts on the floor, usually on the bear skin rug. We engage in acts of mutual masturbation and mutual fellatio until we both ejaculate. After the sexual activity is complete he gives me a \$100 bill. I put the bill in my pocket, walk back down the street and give it to my dad. I don’t know what he has been doing with the money. That’s my life, every couple of weeks for the past year. The last time it happened was 10 days ago.*

In this scenario, corroborating evidence may include:

- **The pills.** The “white cross” pills should be seized from the medicine cabinet. The boy gave a clear description of them. An investigator may also choose to do a “pill line up” and determine if the boy can select the pills that have been seized. Once an investigator is confident the correct pills have been seized, call a pharmacist, toxicologist or other medical professional who can tell the investigator what the pills are, what impact they would have on the child’s body and mind, and how that impact would be enhanced if combined with alcohol. Also, determine if, based on the child’s description of having consumed the pills 10 days ago, there is any possibility the substance would still be in the child’s body and, if so, what should be seized (blood, urine, hair) to document the presence of the substance in the child.
- **The blue cup.** The blue cup should be seized from the sink and sent to the lab to determine fingerprints or the possibility of DNA (saliva, etc.) on the cup.
- **Running water.** An investigator should turn on the tap water in the sink to make sure it is running. Although this may seem pointless, it is essential to document every aspect of the child’s statement that can be corroborated. The little details that are not corroborated often become the heart of the defendant’s case. If, for example, the investigator fails to document the water in the sink is working, the defendant can take the witness stand and say “that boy is not credible. In the year he claims to have been in my house the upstairs bathroom sink was not working. I always used the downstairs bathroom. I’m a handyman and I finally got it fixed but it wasn’t working when the child claims to have been using it.” Remember, if a suspect actually sexually abused a child, lying about it is the easy part. Accordingly, investigators should document every aspect of the child’s statement that can be corroborated.
- **Bathroom photographs.** The bathroom should be photographed and dusted for fingerprints. If the boy’s prints can be found in the bathroom, this corroborates this portion of his statement and refutes any argument from the defendant that the boy was never in the house or never in the bathroom.
- **Empty beer cans.** Check the basement for empty beer cans strewn about. Seize them carefully because they could have the boy’s prints on them or perhaps his DNA (saliva, etc).

At the very least, it corroborates the child’s allegation that Budweiser beer is consumed in the basement. If there are no empty cans in the basement but there is a garbage container in the driveway waiting for pickup, investigators should seize the garbage, empty it and collect any empty beer cans. Then speak with the garbage collection company and find out the last time garbage was seized from that house. If the last pickup was two weeks ago then arguably the beer cans in the current garbage represent how much was consumed in the past 14 days—the time period in which the boy claims to have been in the house.

- **Refrigerator contents.** Open the refrigerator and see if the boy is accurate in describing a refrigerator filled from bottom to top with nothing but cans of Budweiser beer. If so, photograph the refrigerator and seize all the beer cans. Although this may seem overkill, it could become critical at trial. If this aspect of the child’s statement is not corroborated a defense attorney can say “It doesn’t make sense jurors. The boy says they never had water or soda or even any alcohol other than Budweiser. This kid is on some sort of script and that, in and of itself, is reasonable doubt.” If, though, the investigator seizes dozens of Budweiser beer cans and says that was the only beverage in the basement, the child’s credibility is enhanced.
- **Semen stains.** The investigator must check for semen stains on the carpet with an emphasis on the bear rug. In particular, the investigator is looking for semen stains that can be traced back to both the defendant and the victim. There could, of course, be legitimate reasons for the defendant’s semen stains to be on the carpet. Accordingly, it is essential to lock him into a story by asking him if there is any reason for his semen to be on the carpet? If he says no and semen stains are discovered, the investigator has established the defendant is a liar. If the defendant gives a plausible reason for his semen to be in the basement, an investigator should follow up on his explanation. For example, if the defendant says he had sex with a girlfriend on the floor, find out the name of the girlfriend and speak to her immediately (before the defendant does) to see if she vouches for the defendant.

- **Witnesses.** Investigators should canvas the neighborhood and see if anyone can corroborate that the boy has been going to and from the suspect's house for the past year. Also, ask if the neighbors have seen any other children going into or out of the house. If the man has purchased one child for sexual purposes it is possible he has purchased or victimized others.
- **Documentation of the arrangements.** Investigators should check phone, cell phone, and e-mail records to determine how the transaction was arranged between the father who was selling his son and the man who was purchasing the child for sexual favors.
- **Bank records.** Investigators should check the bank records of both the men to see if there is any pattern of \$100 withdrawals or deposits. If the man who has been receiving the money has no pattern of \$100 deposits this means he has likely been spending the money. Find out where he typically goes to get gas, groceries or alcohol and find a clerk who knows the man and can recall him paying with a \$100 bill. If the man is arrested and there is a \$100 bill in his wallet, seize the bill—it is likely the bill he received 10 days ago.
- **Crime scene photographs.** The basement in which the criminal activity took place must also be photographed. The photographs may help the child testify, may assist the investigator in interrogating the suspect, may assist the prosecutor in cross-examining the suspect, and independently serve as corroborating evidence.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. The case of the camping and fishing trip

During a forensic interview, a nine year old boy makes the following disclosure:

*I'm a nine year old boy. Two weekends ago my Grandpa took me to Camp Whitewater. We camped and went fishing and I caught lots of fish. I had lots of fun except that, in the middle of the night, Grandpa started to touch my privates. He then told me to lick his pee pee. I licked his pee pee until it threw up.*

In beginning the investigation, the multi-disciplinary team learns the boy's father died some years ago. In interviewing the boy's mother, investigators learn that she

is a chronic alcoholic who passes out drunk most weekends. She tells the investigators candidly and truthfully that she has no memory of two weekends ago. She says her son may have gone on a camping/fishing trip with his grandfather but she doesn't remember. Investigators then interview the grandfather but he immediately invokes his Fifth Amendment rights.

Under this scenario, corroborating evidence may include:

- **Registration records.** Investigators should check the registration records from the campground and document the grandfather was registered that weekend. It is also important to find out when the registration was made. Let's assume the registration was made 8 months in advance and the grandfather specifically asked for campsite 78. Examine the campsite, photograph it and consider obtaining an aerial photograph. Chances are this site is the most barren, desolate part of the campground. If so, the prosecutor now has an argument that the defendant put a great deal of thought into how he would minimize the chance of witnesses. If this is not done, the defense can say to the jurors "come on, people. Memorial Day weekend, a crowded campground. Somebody would have seen or heard a child cry out. Certainly no one would have risked sexually abusing a child with so many people around."
- **Witnesses.** Investigators should find out who else was registered that weekend and speak with those closest in proximity to the boy's campsite. An investigator can likely find someone who saw the boy and the grandfather together and might even find a witness who saw or heard something that, in the context of the child's statement to the authorities is corroborative—such as a witness who heard the child cry as he was strolling through the woods at night and walked near the tent where the boy was sleeping.
- **Incriminating statements.** Just because Grandpa didn't talk to the investigators doesn't mean he didn't speak to others. He may have told his colleagues at work or perhaps his neighbors about a camping or fishing trip with his grandson.

- **Physical evidence.** Investigators need to search the grandfather's house for evidence documenting the camping/fishing trip. This may include photos of the weekend, frozen fish in the freezer (make sure the fish are of a type that could have come from the lake where the boy went fishing with his grandfather), receipts for purchases relating to the trip, a fishing license, fishing equipment, etc.
- **Semen stains.** Investigators must also look for semen stains. The boy said grandpa's pee pee "threw up." Seize the sleeping bag and tent. Ask the boy what he was wearing that night and what grandpa was wearing and see if the clothes can be located. Given the condition of the boy's mother, it is unlikely she has done laundry recently. If investigators can find trace evidence of semen on the boy's clothes, the grandfather's clothes, or inside the tent, this is powerful evidence.

### Conclusion

The field of forensic interviewing is quickly emerging as an independent profession with a unique set of skills. As encouraging as this development is, it is critical to keep in mind the primary purpose of the forensic interview—to obtain enough details that investigators can establish whether or not a child has been maltreated. When the forensic interviewer obtains these details, it is necessary for the investigators to respond immediately in corroborating every detail the child provided.





## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Director, National Child Protection Training Center. The author thanks Mike Johnson and Amy Russell for their helpful comments and suggestions on this article.

<sup>2</sup> See generally, BATTLE AND THE BACKLASH: THE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE WAR (1989) (detailing the controversies resulting when investigative interviews were conducted inappropriately and repeatedly).

<sup>3</sup> RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY (2010); www.dictionary.com (last visited June 16, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> See generally, Thomas D. Lyon, *The New Wave in Children's Suggestibility Research: A Critique*, 84 CORNELL LAW REVIEW 1004 (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Massengale, *Child Development: A Primer for Child Abuse Professionals*, 14(5) UPDATE (2001) (Update is a publication of the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse and can be accessed online at www.ndaa.org).

<sup>6</sup> See generally Amy Russell, *Out of the Woods: A Case for Using Anatomical Diagrams in Forensic Interviews*, 21(1) UPDATE (2008) (Update is a publication of the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse and can be accessed online at www.ndaa.org); Kathleen Colburn Faller, *Anatomical Dolls: Their Use in Assessment of Children Who May Have Been Sexually Abused* 14(3) JOURNAL OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE 2 (2005).

<sup>7</sup> Most, if not all of the major forensic interview training programs provide this instruction and teach a protocol based on research. For example, the CornerHouse forensic interview protocol RATAAC, which is the most widely used model in the United States, is based on hundreds of research articles. See generally, Jennifer Anderson, Sara Illinger, Julie Ellefson, Jodi Lashley, Anne Lukas Miller, Julie

Stauffer, Judy Weigman & Amy Russell, *The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol: RATAAC*, 22 THOMAS M. COOLEY JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL AND CLINICAL LAW (forthcoming Fall 2010).

<sup>8</sup> For example, one of the emerging issues in the field is the possibility of credentialing forensic interviewers. See generally, Mike Haney, Victor I. Vieth, and Hector M. Campos, *Setting Course: The Case for the Credentialing of Forensic Interviewers*, 2(2) CENTERPIECE (2010) available online at www.ncptc.org under "publications".

<sup>9</sup> For example, there is troubling case law suggesting that a "truth-lie" inquiry as part of a forensic interview may entitle a defendant to compel the child to undergo an adverse psychological examination. See *Abbott v. State*, 138 P.3d 462 (Nev. 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Victor I. Vieth, *The Forensic Interviewer at Trial: Guidelines for the Admission and Scope of Expert Witness Testimony Concerning an Investigative Interview*, 36(1) WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW 186 (2009).

<sup>11</sup> Tonya Lippert, Theodore P. Cross, Lisa Jones, and Wendy Walsh, *Suspect Confession of Child Sexual Abuse to Investigators*, 15 CHILD MALTREATMENT 161 (2010).

<sup>12</sup> Theodore P. Cross, Edward De Vos, and Debra Whitcomb, *Prosecution of Child Sexual Abuse: Which Cases are Accepted?* 18(8) CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 663, 669 (1994) (noting that "reliance on victim interviews was significantly associated with a decreased rate of prosecution").

<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of responding to a defense expert's critique of a forensic interview, see Victor Vieth, *When the Smoke Clears: Cross-Examining the Defense Expert's Attack on a Forensic Interview*, 2(4) CENTERPIECE (2010) (available online at www.ncptc.org).

<sup>14</sup> This case and others was more fully addressed in a

previous article: Victor Vieth, *When the Victim Stands Alone: The Search for Corroborating Evidence*, 12(6) UPDATE (1999) (Update is published by the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse and is available online at www.ndaa.org).

<sup>15</sup> For a more complete analysis of the possible arguments available to the prosecutor, see Victor Vieth, *The Moment of Truth: Making the Case in Closing Argument*, 1(12) CENTERPIECE (2009) (available online at www.ncptc.org under "publications").

<sup>16</sup> This is a case related to me by a colleague.

<sup>17</sup> Victor Vieth, *Picture This: Photographing a Child Sexual Abuse Crime Scene*, 1(5) CENTERPIECE (2009) (available online at www.ncptc.org under "publications").

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent analysis of this issue, see Mary-Ann Burkhart, *Child Abuse Allegations in the Midst of Divorce and Custody Battles: Convenience, Coincidence or Conspiracy?* 13(10) UPDATE (2000) (Update is published by the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse and can be accessed online at www.ndaa.org).

<sup>19</sup> For a more complete analysis of assessing a child's statement, see Amy Russell, *Assessing Children's Statements for Investigative and Court Purposes*, 1(6) CENTERPIECE (2009) (available online at www.ncptc.org under "publications").

<sup>20</sup> Mike Johnson, *The Investigative Window of Opportunity: The Vital Link to Corroboration in Child Sexual Abuse Cases*, 1(9) CENTERPIECE (2009) (available online at www.ncptc.org under "publications").

<sup>21</sup> Id.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Vieth, *Picture This: Photographing a Child Sexual Abuse Crime Scene*, 1(5) CENTERPIECE (2009) (available online at www.ncptc.org under "publications").

## For More Information

The National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) at Winona State University provides training, technical assistance and publications to child protection professionals throughout the United States. In addition, NCPTC assists undergraduate and graduate programs seeking to improve the education provided to future child protection professionals. In partnership with CornerHouse, NCPTC also assists in the development and maintenance of forensic interview training programs utilizing the RATAAC® forensic interviewing protocol. For further information, contact NCPTC at 507-457-2890 or 651-714-4673. Please visit our website at [www.ncptc.org](http://www.ncptc.org).

