

# **Strengthening Sexual Assault Investigations and Prosecutions**

## **May 13-15, 2026, Fort Harrison, Helena**

### **About our Speakers**

**Kerri New** is an Attorney Advisor for AEquitas with extensive experience in the areas of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking. Before working for AEquitas, Keri worked for 17 years as a Texas prosecutor. At the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, Kerri learned to manage the massive caseloads of a large urban jurisdiction. Her reputation as a tenacious trial attorney with a passion for protecting victims earned her the unique opportunity to develop a specialized family violence division for the Rockwall County Criminal District Attorney's Office. As the division's Chief, Kerri maintained a full caseload and continued to fight for victims outside of the courtroom. As a member of the Public Policy Committee for the Texas Council on Family Violence, Kerri helped revise Texas' stalking statute to make it more usable for investigators and prosecutors. Additionally, Kerri helped train law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and medical and court personnel across Texas and nationally. Kerri served her community on multiple multidisciplinary investigative teams and as Board President for Women In Need, a local shelter and domestic violence resource organization. Outside work, Kerri loves her small-town Texas life with her husband, their three children, and the best darn dog ever to walk the earth.

**John F. Wilkinson** is as an Attorney Advisor with AEquitas, presenting extensively on the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking and human trafficking both in the United States and abroad. John's international work includes developing and implementing trainings for police, prosecutors, judges, and allied professionals. Additionally, John led AEquitas' Innovative Prosecution Solutions Project, working with prosecutor's offices around the country on innovative and evaluated approaches to combating violent crime. Prior to working with AEquitas, John was the Program Manager for the Gun Violence Prosecution, Homeland Security, and Southwest Border Crime Programs of the National District Attorneys Association. He also worked with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Department of Homeland Security, and International Association of Chiefs of Police to bring data-driven best practices to criminal justice professionals. Under his direction, the Homeland Security Program created a unique counter-terrorism training program for prosecutors and probation/parole officers. Additionally, his Southwest Border Crime Program created a curriculum for prosecutors and allied professionals covering all aspects of the Drug Cartel Business Model and focusing on human trafficking, human smuggling, drug and gun trafficking, home invasions and kidnappings, and undocumented alien victim/witness issues. From 1998 through 2005, John served as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in Fredericksburg, VA, prosecuting cases involving intimate partner violence and sexual assault, including cases of campus sexual assaults and domestic violence homicide. He also served on the Fredericksburg Area Sexual Assault Response Team and prosecuted child sexual and physical abuse and neglect cases and infant homicides. He assisted in the development of the Mary Washington Hospital Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program. Additionally, John completed Virginia's Top Gun Investigation and Prosecution of Drug Cases course and prosecuted numerous drug and firearms related offenses. He was a regular lecturer at the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Academy and spoke at the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys. From 1994 to 1998, John served as an Assistant Public Defender in Fredericksburg, representing indigent clients in matters ranging from first-degree murder to summary offenses. In 1997, he

received the Phillip M. Sadler Award for excellence in public defense. From 1991 to 1994, John worked at the Offices of William E. Gardner in Fairfax, VA, primarily engaged in criminal defense and civil litigation.

**Jamie Bray-Tanner** is the Biology Section Supervisor at the Montana State Crime Lab. She oversees each of the Biology section's subdivisions: Y-screening, Serology, DNA, and CODIS. She was raised in Billings and moved to Missoula to attend the University of Montana where she completed a bachelor's degree in human biology. She has been with the State Crime Lab since 2005, and has experience in serology, DNA analysis, and CODIS. She has worked on hundreds of cases and testified numerous times across the state.

**Lacey Van Grinsven** is a Forensic Scientist at the Montana State Crime Lab with 20 years of experience in Forensic Serology. Lacey has analyzed thousands of cases and testified as an expert throughout the state. In addition, Lacey trains new Serology analysts and has provided training for Montana forensic sexual assault forensic examiners, county attorneys, and law enforcement. She is certified by the American Board of Criminalistics in biological screening, has been a member of the American Academy of Forensic Science since 2012, serves as a member of the Certification Examination Management Group of the American Board of Criminalistics, and is Qualified as a Forensic Assessor with the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation.

**Whitney Brothers, RN**, is excited to help bring education regarding medical exams for victims who have experienced sexual abuse. A Helena native, Whitney graduated in 2015 with her BSN from St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. She began her nursing career in Bismarck, ND and obtained the necessary training to perform forensic medical exams on adolescent/adults in 2016 and pediatric patients in 2018. Whitney returned to Helena in December of 2021 to establish and coordinate the Forensic Nurse Program at St. Peter's. This program responds to victims of all ages who have experienced sexual abuse.

**Hope Stockwell** is the Sexual Assault Response Network Program Coordinator at the Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation Office of Victim Services. Hope grew up in northwest Nebraska and has lived in Helena for 20+ years. She has a broadcast journalism degree from Rutgers University and spent 8 years as a radio reporter before joining Montana Legislative Services. There she worked 13.5 years as a research analyst, serving the Environmental Quality Council and State-Tribal Relations Committee. Before joining DOJ in January 2024, Hope worked in Parks and Outdoor Recreation at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for 2 years. She has been a licensed Emergency Medical Responder since 2010. Hope, her husband, 7-year-old daughter, and dog LOVE to camp and spend time exploring.

**Selene Koepke** is an Assistant Attorney General in the Appellate Services Bureau within the Montana Attorney General's Office. Prior to joining Appellate Services, she prosecuted complex cases across the state, ranging from theft to homicide as a part of the Prosecution Services Bureau. Selene also worked as a Deputy County Attorney in Missoula for 6 years where her caseload focused on domestic violence, sexual assault, and other persons crimes. Selene graduated from the University of Montana School of Law in 2014.

**Meghann Paddock** is an Assistant Attorney General in the Prosecution Services Bureau of the Montana Department of Justice. She is also the Montana Attorney General's Training Coordinator for County Attorneys. Meghann holds a B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology. She earned her JD from the Northwestern School of Law, Lewis & Clark College, in Portland, Oregon, with a certificate in Criminal Law and Procedure. During law school, Meghann was a

member of the trial team and completed internships at the Missoula County Attorney's Office and the Clackamas County District Attorney's Office in Oregon City, Oregon. After law school she returned to Montana and worked as a family law attorney for several years before returning to prosecution at the Ravalli County Attorney's Office from 2013-2019. In 2019, Meghann moved to the Missoula County Attorney's Office, where she remained until joining DOJ's Prosecution Services Bureau in November 2021.

**Diane Cochran** is a Deputy Fergus County Attorney and the Petroleum County Attorney. Diane is a member of the Central Montana Multi-Disciplinary Team, which serves four rural counties in the heart of Central Montana. She is a trained forensic interviewer and has conducted child forensic interviews; however, she primarily uses her forensic interview skills as a tool in the prosecution of child sexual offenders. Diane lives in Lewistown and enjoys running, camping, ATV riding, and elk hunting.

**Mary Barry** is the Chief Criminal Deputy County Attorney with the Lewis and Clark County Attorney's Office in Helena, Montana. Mary also serves as a member of the MTDOJ Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Task Force and is a Children's Alliance of Montana Board Member.

**Alesha Woodland** is the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Cold Case Investigator for the Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI). She began her law enforcement career in Montana in 2011 and has worked as a police officer and sheriff's deputy, receiving numerous accolades including a Chief's Commendation. Agent Woodland has served in many roles including child forensic interviewer, computer forensic examiner, background investigator, and EMT. In 2019, she was hired by DCI as the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Investigator. Agent Woodland joined the FBI in 2022 when she was assigned to the FBI's Montana Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force. In her current role as SAKI Cold Case Investigator, Agent Woodland works closely with the DCI Major Case Section and investigates cold case sexual assault and sexual intercourse without consent cases that may have a nexus to other violent crimes such as homicide, assault, abuse, or abduction. She reengages with survivors, witnesses, and suspects, participates in survivor notifications about the status of their sexual assault kit, and connects them with advocates. Agent Woodland investigates cold cases through evidence from DNA and using Genetic Genealogy. She also conducts case reviews with local Sexual Assault Response Teams from cold cases that receive a CODIS hit.