

Responding to the NAS Report: *Forensic Standards and Standardization*

2009 Trace Evidence Symposium

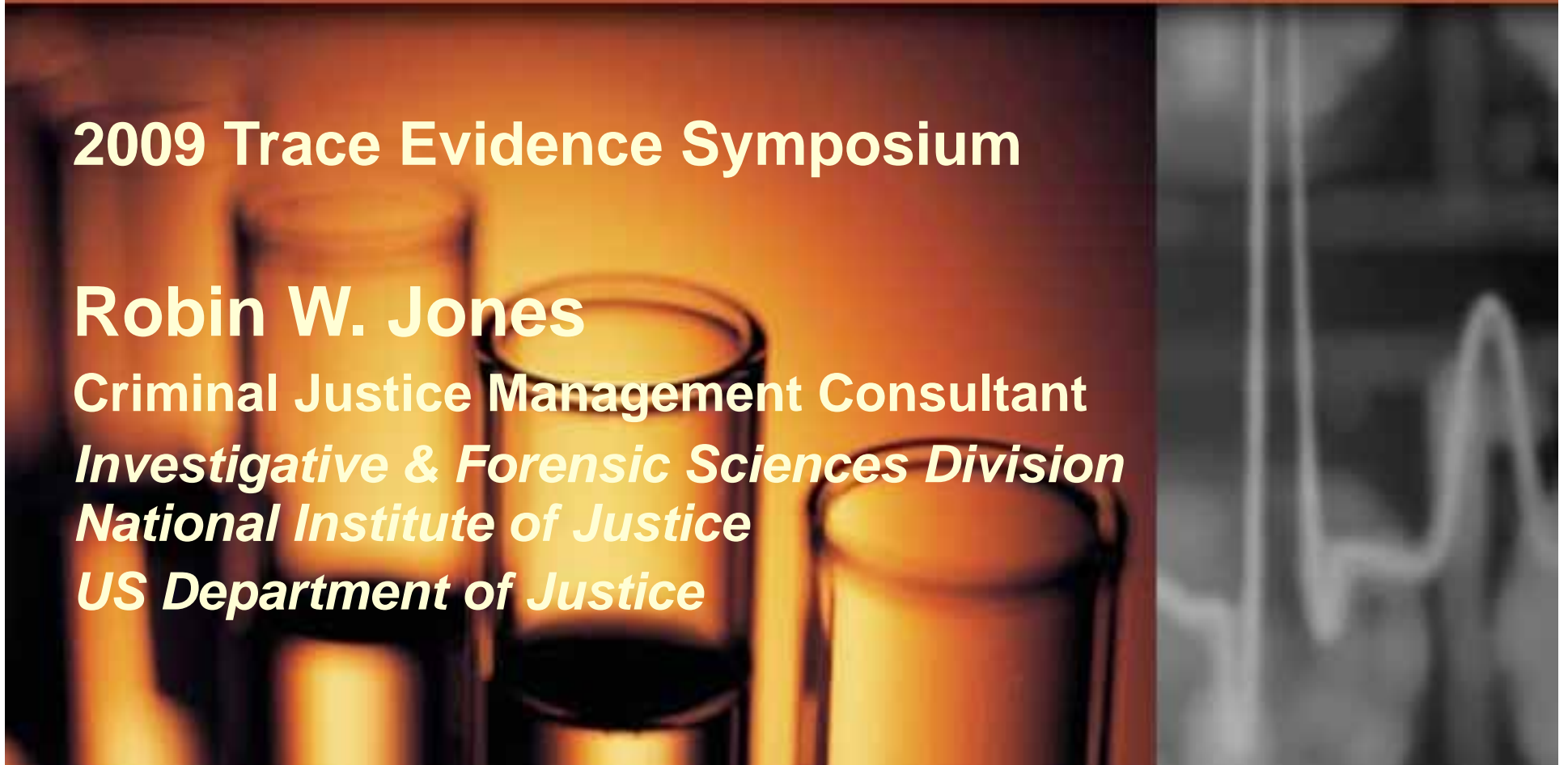
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NAS Report References

- “Establishing and enforcing best practices for forensic science professionals and laboratories”
 - How do we define “Best Practices”
 - What is the process by which “Best Practices” are developed, adopted and enforced?
 - “Best Practices” in what areas?
Technical? Procedural?

NAS Report References

- “Establishing standards for the mandatory accreditation of forensic science laboratories...”
 - Who develops the standards?
 - ISO17025
 - What will be the enforcement mechanism?

NAS Report References

- “Standardized Terminology and Reporting”
 - Specific references made to “match,” “consistent with,” “identical”
 - Proposed reporting language is currently supported through some of the SWGs
 - What is the enforcement mechanism?
 - NAS Recommendation #2 cites “requiring the use of model laboratory reports” as “part of the accreditation and certification processes.”



NAS Report References

“...most disciplines still lack best practices or any coherent structure for the enforcement of operating standards, certification, and accreditation.”

- The issue is whether the process in place is MANDATORY

NAS Report References

- “...establish protocols for forensic examinations, methods, and practices. Standards should reflect best practices and serve as accreditation tools for laboratories and guides for the education, training, and certification of professionals.”
 - What is the development process?
 - What is the implementation impact?
 - Will accrediting bodies now need to judge the ‘standards’ adopted by a lab?



*WHERE DOES THE
FORENSICS
COMMUNITY GO
FROM HERE?*

Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Define what constitutes a robust standard**
 - What is the development process?
 - What are the minimum criteria within a standard?
 - What is the amendment/review process?

Where Do We Go From Here?

- **What should be standardized?**
 - Specific techniques?
 - Reporting criteria?
 - Language used in reports?
 - Discovery information?
 - Evidence management?



Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Identify Standards Development Organizations**
 - There are many forensic science organizations and associations in existence
 - Which actually DEVELOP standards versus promote or reference their existence?

Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Inventory Existing Standards**
 - Is it truly a standard or a ‘best practice?’
 - What does this differentiation mean?
- **Analyze Standards’ Abilities to Meet Needs**
 - Do we need to define what ‘needs’ are to be met?



Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Conduct GAP Analysis**
- **Is there a process that can be designed to determine which standards to use and how they should be implemented?**

Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Cost Estimates For:**
 - **Standards Development**
 - SWGs?
 - ASTM?
 - Are the existing mechanisms ‘working?’
 - **Adaptation**
 - What is the fiscal impact of adopting amended or new standards?

Additional Issues

- **Access**

- Uniform and Equal

- **Enforcement**

- Accreditation? Assumes accreditation will become mandatory?
- What about forensic service providers outside of the crime laboratory?

Standards, Practices, & Protocols Interagency Working Group (SPPIWG)

- Co-Chairs:

- Susan Ballou, NIST

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Thank You!

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