Introduction to Internet True Crime Sleuthing

Dr. Valarie Bell
Websleuthing/Internet Detectives: WHY?

- Interest in true crime
- Bored; want excitement; hobby
- Want to help law enforcement & victims
- Use special skills: compsci, artist, analytical
- Meet similar others online; social interaction
Law Enforcement Response

- Mixed: helpful; interference; harm?
- Can enter case files: BIG HELP
- Can help I.D. missing or murdered: GOOD
- Some innocent people wrongfully accused online: BAD
- NamUs & Doe Network: formal relationship w/national law enforcement agencies & bureaus (Justice; NCIC/FBI)
Types of Cases & Involvement

- Cold cases:
  - Missing persons
  - Homicides
  - Unidentified remains/corpses
- Wrongful Convictions:
  - P.I. C-C. False Confessions
  - Finding evidence
  - Locating new/un-interviewed witnesses
- Current cases: high-profile; stalled
Main Forums & Platforms for Websleuthing/Internet Detectives

- The UNT Connection [http://www.untchi.org/](http://www.untchi.org/)
- NamUs [https://www.namus.gov/](https://www.namus.gov/)
- Defrosting Cold Cases [https://defrostingcoldcases.com/](https://defrostingcoldcases.com/)
- Reddit [https://www.reddit.com/r/UnresolvedMysteries/](https://www.reddit.com/r/UnresolvedMysteries/)