

Summer 2003 Internship with FDLE

During the summer of 2003, I interned with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in investigations. I worked under Steve Desposito, who was wonderful in including me in everything that was happening. I also worked with 7 other Special Agents (Dennis Nordstrom, Michelle Rigoni, Dennis Norred, Ed Hudson, Velma Springs, Jane Schachle, Carl Causey, and Jeanine Williams), 2 Crime Intelligence Analysts (Mia Max and Joe Ulery), and 2 OPS employees (Debbie Sammons and Sheila Weekely). The agents are all very relaxed, and the atmosphere is very calm. Occasionally, I went down to Crime Scene to help them process evidence. I also went to Evidence one day to help them with the Highway 90 Evidence Run. During this run, we went to all county sheriff's offices between Pensacola and Marianna to pick up and drop off evidence for analyzing. On my first day with FDLE, Carl was having his birthday party. When the agents left for lunch, they immediately came to ask me if I would like to go with them. I was also given a project to work on, which included going through the FDLE DNA database. I was given a list, and if a person on the list was in the DNA database, I had to mark him off. I had finished this project so quickly, Beth Green, the Chief of Forensics, was amazed with me. The agents did not want to have me make copies for them, but at times when there was nothing to do, I gladly made copies. Most of the agents work fraud cases. Sometimes a shooting or a drug case will come along, but not as often as fraud. Jane is one of the agents I worked a lot with. She needed help getting copies made for the State Attorney's Office, and making spreadsheets of deposited checks. I also helped organize her documents, and did some

research for her. I impressed Jane so much with my quickness and well-organized spreadsheets that she told Steve he should hire me. I got to go to federal court a few times with Ed. We went to see an arraignment on a drug case, and a plea day on another drug case. Both cases dealt with interstate cocaine trafficking. I went down to the Sheriff's Office in Central Receiving to help Special Agent Chris Rigoni work on another drug case. He had me transcribe a telephone call, and help prepare him for court. I went with Steve and Ed to take DNA samples one night at the Sheriff's Office. A new law had passed requiring all people convicted of a burglary, robbery, or sexual offense to submit their DNA. Because of this law, several cold rape cases have been solved. When I had nothing to do in the office, I would go down to Crime Scene and help them. One time, I helped the girls in Crime Scene spread out evidence, photograph it, organize it, and then test stains for blood. Right before my internship was up, I was recruited to play on the FDLE softball team. The team is made up of people from investigations, chemistry, serology, administration, and many other departments of FDLE. Tom Ring, the Regional Director of FDLE (and also a good person to know for future job opportunities) also plays on the team.

My favorite part of this internship was going to three autopsies. It is so fascinating how a person can tell the entire story of the commission of a crime just by looking at a dead body. I got to go right up to the body and watch the medical examiner cut him open. Thankfully, all three bodies were fresh and did not smell too bad. My other favorite part was going on a search warrant one Sunday morning. Steve had called me on Saturday to tell me the warrant was going to be executed on Sunday morning, possibly around 3 am. He came and picked me up, and we drove out to Shalimar for a briefing at 2 am. We split up into seven teams, and then left to meet up with the SWAT team. All seven teams hit the targeted homes at the same time. Steve made sure we went to the house where we knew there would be drugs. After about four hours of

searching for the drugs, and after two drug dogs had gone through the house and property, we finally found the drugs...one kilo of cocaine (approximately 2.2 pounds). On my second to last day, the agents took me to a shooting range in Walton County. I had never shot a gun before, but Jeanine showed me how to handle the gun and how to aim. They were all very supportive of me, and made me feel safe when at the range. I finally got to shoot a Glock 9 mm, and surprisingly, I did pretty well; I hit the target in the same area each time.

Overall, this entire internship was amazing. The agents are wonderful people, and there was never a dull moment. They all tried to include me in everything they did, from going out to crime scenes, to interviewing people, to making spreadsheets, to eating lunch. I would encourage anyone to do this internship with FDLE in investigations. The key to a successful internship, in my opinion, is to be a very hard and dedicated worker, and make good impressions with everyone you meet.