



**GDRR Program Opening Workshop
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SPEAKER TITLES/ABSTRACT

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“Risk and Decisions in the Criminal Justice System”

"Every criminal leaves a trace". This is known as the Lockhart Principle, and is the *raison d'etre* for crime scene investigators and forensic scientists, tasked with linking -- or not -- a suspect to a crime scene. Decision makers in Court are jurors, who are asked to choose between two alternative propositions: the defendant is, or is not, the perpetrator of the crime. To arrive to this decision, jurors must combine their own prior beliefs about the suspect's culpability with the information provided typically piece-meal by expert witnesses and others offering testimony. Experts, including forensic scientists, in turn face a sequence of decision nodes with uneven degrees of information and uncertainty to inform those decisions. Yet, decisions by experts and juries have tremendous impact on the fair administration of justice. We discuss the sequence of decision nodes and the gaps in knowledge that magnify the risks associated with those decisions, in the context of pattern evidence such as shoeprints and ballistics.