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- 1 Working in policing since 2012, sergeant since 2026
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Explaining Your Expertise on the Stand

Nate Grimm, MS-LEPSL

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Disclosures

The speaker has no disclosures.

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Learning Objectives

- 1 Explain why witness expertise is important to judges and juries
- 2 List factors that contribute to expertise
- 3 Demonstrate how to effectively relate your expertise and credentials on the stand

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Why do the judge and jury care?

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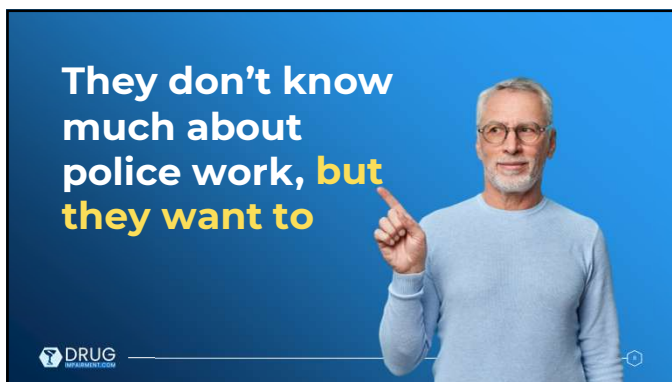
Most of them want to do their job well

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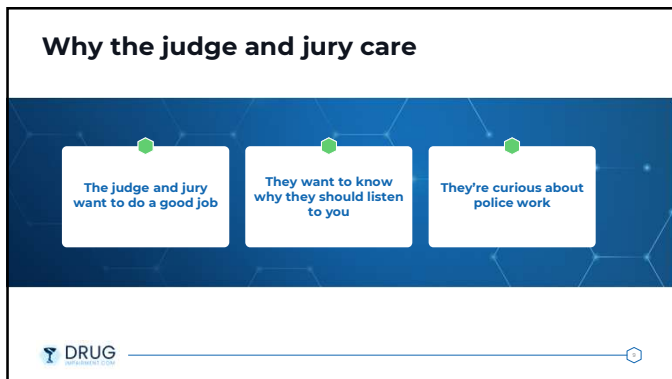
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Knowledge + Skill + Experience +
Training + Education
=
Expert




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Expertise

“
Everyone you'll ever meet knows something you don't.
”


Bill Nye



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Expertise

“
You know something everyone you'll ever meet doesn't.
”





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“ A witness who is qualified as an expert by **knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education** may testify in the form of an opinion or otherwise if the proponent demonstrates to the court that it is more likely than not that:

(a) the expert's scientific, technical, or other specialized knowledge will help the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue



Rule 702, Federal Rules of Evidence





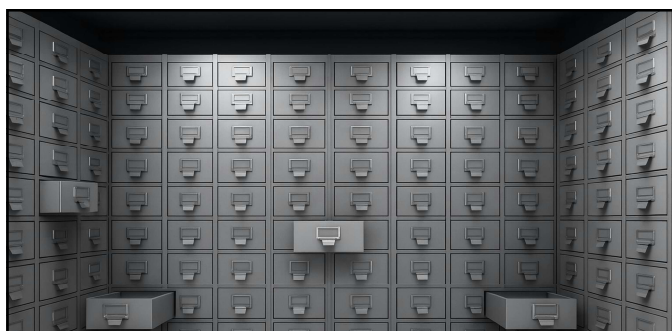
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Training/Education

- Police Training
- Formal Education
- Self Study
- Other job training
- Volunteer training



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Experience

Police	Other Professional	Lived
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many years? Investigations? Interactions?• Seen similar indicators/behaviors before?• Interacted with this person before?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ever worked at a bar or restaurant?• Substance abuse or behavioral health?• EMT or other medical?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ever been drunk or high?• Taken medications that impaired you?• Seen family or friends drunk or high?

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You know something no one else in the room does

ALL of your training and experience matters

Don't sell yourself short

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How do we help the judge and jury understand?


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Talk like you're human

Fancier ≠ Smarter

Tell the jury the way you'd tell a friend

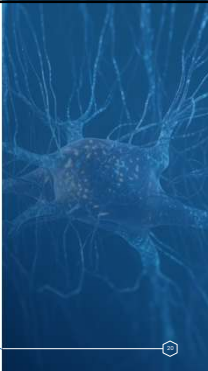


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Break it into chunks

- Chronological
- Type (technical vs academic)
- Relevance
- Policing vs Non-policing
- Broad to specific




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Convert to understandable units

- 40 hours = work week
- Academic Benchmarks
 - 1 credit = 10-12 hours
 - 1 class = 30-36 hours
 - 1 semester = 160 hours
 - Associate's = 600-700 hours
 - Bachelor's = 1300-1400 hours
- DWI Detection/SFST + ARIDE = 40 hours
 - 1 work week OR
 - More than a semester-long class

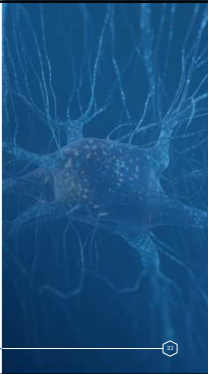



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Specific, not too specific



- What's relevant, surprising, interesting?
- Not every academy class matters (today)
- Hit major class components



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The little things matter

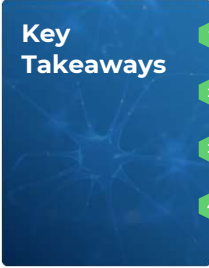

- Open training or selected to attend?
- Was there a test? What was the standard?
- All classroom or practical training?
- How do you stay certified?
- What do you do to get better?



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Key Takeaways

- 1 You ARE an expert – you know something the judge and jury don't
- 2 Explain your qualifications so non-cops can understand
- 3 Bottom Line: The judge and jury care about your expertise
- 4 **TALK LIKE YOU'RE HUMAN!**



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