

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

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Students go behind the yellow tape in mock crime scenes with the DA's Office

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – With rubber gloves and evidence bags in hand, students at Olympic High School collected shell casings and photographed bloody footprints today as they investigated a mock crime scene in their classrooms.

The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office, working alongside the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, gave students in Olympic High's forensics classes a look behind the yellow tape this week.

Throughout the school year, students have been learning about the basics of investigating a crime scene, including identifying different characteristics of a fingerprint and examining fibers through microscopes.

Earlier this week, CMPD Crime Scene Investigator Kris Woodhouse spoke with students about the techniques used when collecting evidence. Assistant District Attorney Clayton Jones, who is a prosecutor on the DA's Homicide Team, also visited the classes to talk about the types of evidence that are critical to the prosecution of crimes in Mecklenburg County. Today, Mr. Jones and Assistant District Attorney Leslie Stephens returned to the school to set up mock crime scenes.

First, Mr. Jones described the scenario: The male victim (a training mannequin provided by the Charlotte Fire Department) arrived at the emergency room with two gunshot wounds. Doctors worked to save him, but he died soon after arriving. Police went to his apartment and discovered that the shooting had occurred there.

Then, students acting as crime scene investigators went to work. They examined two mock scenes: the hospital room and the victim's apartment. Mr. Jones and Ms. Stephens guided students as they inspected the victim's wounds, marked evidence with placards and then photographed each item. They found shell casings, two sets of footprints and a phone number written on a piece of paper in the victim's pocket. Students also took swabs of "blood" found at the apartment scene and identified items that would need to be sent to a laboratory for DNA testing.



Assistant District Attorney Clayton Jones (right) talks with students about documenting bloody footprints and shell casings as part of the mock crime scene at Olympic High School.

“Investigating a crime scene and using the evidence collected to prosecute a case is much more complex than what we see on television,” says Mecklenburg County District Attorney Andrew Murray. “We’re grateful for opportunities to teach students about the skills and level of precision necessary to prosecute criminals in our community, and we hope to generate interest in the criminal sciences field as a profession.”

To see more photos of today’s mock crime scene investigations, visit www.facebook.com/CharMeckDA

Note: For more information about the District Attorney’s Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, “like” the DA’s Office on Facebook at www.facebook.com/charmeckda and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA

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