

CODIN latest news, views, and announcements

---

#### Announcements

Building Relationships with  
Washington Prosecutors

---

#### Articles

Trust the Skillset You Don't Have  
Combating Gangs Through Law  
Enforcement and Corrections  
Intelligence  
Interviews 101  
From Pen and Paper to AI  
CODIN Founder Instructing at NIA

---

#### National Spotlight

Kelly Wedley, NIA

---

#### Training Opportunities

National Alliance of Gang  
Investigators Association  
National Public Safety Innovation  
Academy



## A Message from the Founder & President

In public safety, your network can be just as important as your equipment, training, or title. Challenges today move fast, cross jurisdictions, and rarely stay confined to one agency. The relationships you build now often become the resources you rely on later.

Networking is not about collecting names. It is about building trust with professionals who share the same mission and understand the same challenges. One phone call, one introduction, or one connection can prevent delays, solve problems faster, and create opportunities that would not happen alone.

That is why CODIN continues to focus on bringing professionals together. When we know each other, we work better together. When we share information, we become stronger together. Keep building your network. Stay connected. The next relationship you build may become the most valuable one of your career.



– **Greggory Phillips**  
Founder & President, CODIN, GDOC FBI Task Force Agent



**Alishia McColl, WA DOC Chief Investigator, CODIN West Coast Representative**

## Building Partnerships with Washington Prosecutors

This month, I had the opportunity to present to the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys alongside our Chief and Deputy Chief of Investigative Operations. The purpose of the presentation was to help pull back the curtain on the realities correctional facilities are facing and the growing need for strong partnerships between corrections professionals and prosecutors across our state.

During the presentations, we reviewed data on illicit drug introductions, discovery of dangerous contraband, risk of staff exposures, violence and criminal networks. Specifically, the West Coast was reviewed through the HIDTA OD Map that demonstrated the impacts being felt by the opioid crisis. Also, discussions on the difference between street value and prison value of illegal drugs, highlighting the powerful underground economy that can exist inside correctional institutions. When narcotics enter prisons, the impact often extends far beyond possession alone. It can fuel violence, debt, intimidation and organized criminal activity operating both inside facilities and in our communities.

It's called the "Mirror Effect," when we see criminal activities and overdoses affecting counties across Washington, that are also mirrored behind prison walls, including dangerous drugs like fentanyl. The drug smuggling operations are connected by the same criminal networks, and correctional institutions are not separate from public safety. They are a direct part of it. The message was clear: public safety does not stop at the prison gate. When crimes committed inside prisons are treated seriously and criminal referrals are pursued, it strengthens accountability, protects staff and incarcerated individuals. The purpose is to disrupt criminal networks and reinforce the rule of law.

We appreciated the opportunity to engage with prosecutors from across Washington and continue building relationships that support safer institutions and safer communities.



Pete Bludworth, Founder of Corrections Unfiltered has 34 years in corrections and is committed to bringing important conversations to the table on safer corrections

## Trust the Skillset You Don't Have: Why

Investigators Matter More Than You Think.

There's a reality in corrections leadership that doesn't get talked about enough: You don't have every skill set and you're not supposed to. To be honest, early in my career I didn't fully understand the depth of what investigators bring to the table. I knew they were important, but I didn't grasp just how specialized and multi-faceted their work really was. That changed once I realized the facility relied on them. Investigators operate in a world most of us aren't trained for. They have natural instincts, intuition, and are able to take fragments, even the tiniest pieces of information, behavior patterns, conversations, etc., and build a clear picture out of it. Where most of us, especially me, might see disconnected details, they see connections, intent, and risk. That's not something you pick up overnight. It's a disciplined skillset. And here's where leaders get it wrong sometimes, we either under-utilize them, or we over-regulate them. Both are mistakes. As a supervisor or warden, it's your responsibility to ensure everything stays within policy, within the law, and within ethical boundaries. That doesn't change. Accountability still sits with you.

But if you try to control every move an investigator makes, you'll limit the very thing that makes them valuable. If you over-restrict them, you might as well not use them at all. What I learned is this: your job isn't to do their job, it's to understand how to use their work. That means open collaboration and clear communication. Solid briefings. Asking the right questions. Making sure you understand not just what they're seeing, but what it means and how it applies to your facility. At the same time, there has to be trust on both sides. They need the space to operate within their expertise. You need the confidence that it's being done the right way. That balance matters.

When that relationship works, investigators become a critical part of your strategy, not just information providers, but contributors to how you manage inmates, prevent incidents, and protect staff. Organizations like CODIN play a key role in strengthening that process by helping ensure Intelligence is gathered, validated, and shared in a way that supports safety across facilities. Most people will never understand the level of work that goes into that. But as leaders, we don't have to master it, we just have to respect it, use it, and not get in its way.

Because at the end of the day, the safest facilities aren't run by people who try to do everything themselves. They're run by leaders who know exactly when to rely on the people who see what they can't.

## Combatting Gangs Through Law Enforcement and Corrections Intelligence

By Michelle Jordan, Senior Crime Intelligence Analyst II,  
Florida Department of Law Enforcement  
CODIN Secretary



On April 13, I had the privilege of presenting at the Florida Sheriff's Association Jail Summit in Orlando alongside Eric "Gabe" Simpson, Operations Manager with the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC). Together, we focused on improving how agencies identify gang members, document critical information, and share intelligence across jurisdictions.

Our presentation emphasized the importance of consistent communication and coordinated intelligence efforts. Correctional facilities often serve as key environments where gang affiliations are revealed, strengthened, or reorganized. When this information is accurately captured and shared with law enforcement, it becomes a powerful tool for investigations, community safety, and gang disruption. I began the presentation asking, "What is a Fusion Center?" The number of attendees who were unsure highlighted a significant opportunity for awareness and training.

Fusion Centers were established after 9/11 to close information-sharing gaps across all levels of government. The Department of Homeland Security defines them as state-owned and operated hubs that receive, analyze, and share threat-related information among State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) partners, as well as federal agencies and private-sector stakeholders. Florida's Fusion Center (FFC) operates out of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement headquarters in Tallahassee. The FFC plays a critical role in connecting agencies, identifying emerging threats, and ensuring that intelligence flows quickly and securely to those who need it most. FDC is one of several state agencies partnered with the FFC. Through that partnership and ongoing information sharing, many gangs and their members have been successfully identified and removed from Florida communities.

Every U.S. state has at least one fusion center, each serving as a vital link in the national information-sharing network. Agencies seeking to connect with their state's center can find contact information through the DHS Fusion Center directory: <https://www.dhs.gov/fusion-center-locations-and-contact-information> During our presentation, Gabe and I stressed the importance of identifying and documenting gang activity as individuals are processed through the county jail system. This can include photographing gang-related tattoos, self-admissions, tracking who is visiting the individual, and documenting drawings, symbols, or coded communications. When this information is shared with local law enforcement, and later with state corrections if the individual is sentenced, it becomes a critical component to monitor gang activity within the state.

Gang activity continues to evolve. Collaboration between corrections and law enforcement, with the assistance of intelligence capabilities of Fusion Centers, remains one of the most effective ways to disrupt criminal networks and protect our communities.



Training is an essential component to the work we do. That is why it is so important that when able, investigators attend conferences that supports advanced training and networking. Below you will find the direction link for all gang conferences in the country occurring through the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Association.

<https://www.nagia.org/>

Each state typically holds its own yearly conference, but networking requires expanding beyond jurisdiction. Research states nearby that you can attend, because criminals don't stay within boundaries, so neither should investigators. Build your network.

**Mark Paynter, CODIN Oregon State Representative  
Security Threat Management Lieutenant  
Oregon Department of Corrections  
Operations Division**

*Mark brings over 19 years of corrections experience, and sheds light on the foundation of what makes a good interview.*



## **Interview 101**

During my first week as a newly promoted Lieutenant, our facility experienced an assault involving an identified victim but no known aggressor. I remember contacting my Captain to provide an update. After I briefed him, he asked a simple but direct question: "Are you starting your investigation now?" I responded, "Yes," but the reality was that I had no clear framework in place. I recall sitting at my desk, searching my computer for any folder or resource labeled "investigations"—anything that might guide my approach. There was none. At that moment, it became clear that I would need to develop my own process, quickly and effectively. Formal training on this aspect of the role was limited, and the responsibility to move forward rested squarely on me. It did not take long to recognize that every interview or interrogation presents unique challenges. No two are exactly alike. However, I also learned early on that regardless of the circumstances, success depends on establishing a strong foundation prior to engaging with a subject.

For me, that foundation begins with preparation. Key areas of focus include: the subject's background and place of origin; criminal history; known associates; available reports and intelligence; misconduct history; recent communication patterns; Security Threat Group (STG) affiliations; known aliases or monikers; institutional programming; and housing assignments. Additionally, when appropriate, I will contact the arresting jurisdiction to gather any supplemental information that may not be immediately available within our system. These steps are not exhaustive, but they illustrate a deliberate approach. It is important to consider the perspective of the subject: being brought into a room by an unfamiliar officer who begins asking questions to which the answers are already known. When an interviewer can confidently reference verifiable details early in the interaction, it establishes credibility and control before the formal questioning even begins. I have often been asked by subjects, "Who are you, and how do you know that?" My response is typically straightforward: "It's my job to know." Whether based on confirmed information or strategic presentation, the goal is to create an environment where deception becomes a risk the subject is less willing to take. Equally important is pacing. I avoid immediately pursuing the primary objective of the interview. Instead, I focus on building rapport and creating a level of comfort that allows the subject to lower their guard. When individuals become less focused on the setting and more engaged in the conversation, they are more likely to provide meaningful information. Effective interviewing is as much about psychology as it is about questioning. Patience, preparation, and a measured approach are critical. In my experience, taking the long view consistently yields better results than attempting to force immediate disclosures.



## —5:9 SHIELD GROUP—



Travis Sparks, CODIN's Georgia State Representative, brings more than 25 years of law enforcement experience spanning street crimes, narcotics, fugitive apprehension, and tactical operations. A seasoned special agent, instructor, and peer support advocate, Travis is also the founder of 5:9 Shield Group, dedicated to equipping investigators and strengthening the warrior within.

## From Pen and Paper to AI: Why Modern Report Writing Tools Are No Longer Optional in Policing

I came into this job when everything was analog. Reports were handwritten. Narratives were built line by line, often at the end of a 12-hour shift, sitting in a dim report room with a cup of cold coffee and a stack of calls still fresh in your head. If you missed something, that was on you. We didn't have shortcuts. We had notebooks, memory, and whatever clarity we could hold onto after a shift full of chaos. If your handwriting was bad, somebody down the line was going to feel it....supervisors, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victims. Fast forward to today, and the job hasn't slowed down. If anything, it's gotten heavier. We are running lean across the country. Agencies are understaffed. Calls are stacking. The complexity of cases has increased. Expectations haven't gone down, if anything, they've gone up. Every report has to be accurate, detailed, defensible, and timely, and we're still expected to do it while moving from call to call with little to no reset.

That's where tools like PoliceReports.ai come into play, and why I believe they're not just helpful, but necessary. I'll be clear about this, I've personally only used PoliceReports.ai. I'm sure there are other options out there, and the technology as a whole is moving fast. The reason I speak confidently about this one is because I've seen it work in real conditions, under real pressure. My favorite part worth bragging on: PoliceReports.ai was built and is maintained by cops. Not developers guessing what the job looks like. Not outsiders trying to reverse-engineer police work. This is a tool shaped by people who understand the pace, the pressure, and the demand for a clean, uniform report that holds up in court and review. That matters.

This isn't about replacing officers. It's about supporting them. For those of us who came from the pen and paper days, the idea of using AI to assist with report writing might feel foreign at first. I promise you that when you actually see how it works in the field, you realize it's solving real problems we've been dealing with for decades.

One of the biggest advantages is transcription. We've all conducted interviews on scene, in a patrol car, or in a cramped room at 3 a.m., while trying to balance listening, asking the right questions, and capturing details at the same time. Important statements can get lost, paraphrased, or shortened just because you're human and the pace is fast.

With AI-driven transcription, those interviews can be recorded and accurately converted into text. You're no longer relying solely on memory or rushed notes. You have a reliable record that can be referenced, reviewed, and built into a report with confidence. That alone is a game changer.

Then there's the ability to take a narrated account of an incident and convert it into a structured, written report. An officer can verbally walk through a call and what happened, what they saw, what actions were taken, and the system organizes it into a clear, professional narrative.

For me personally, this is one of the biggest advantages on the street. I spend a lot of time driving and covering considerable distance to scenes, bouncing from call to call, often with no downtime in between. That narration feature allows me to start building my report while I'm in route, simply by talking through the incident as it's fresh in my mind. Instead of trying to hold everything until the end of shift, or worse, losing details to fatigue. I can capture it in real time and when I finally sit down at my computer, the foundation of the report is already there. That's not just convenient. That's operationally smart.

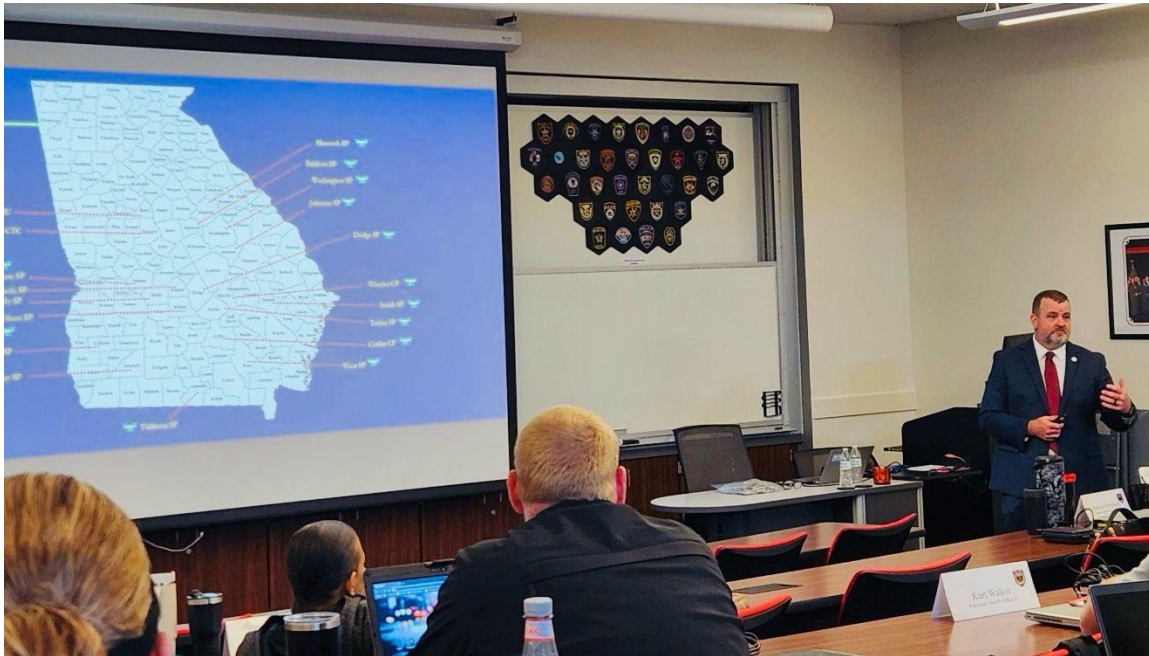
It doesn't replace judgment or decision-making. It takes the raw information and helps format it into something consistent and usable. That consistency matters more than people realize. Across agencies, one of the ongoing challenges is uniformity in reporting. Different writing styles, different levels of detail, different ways of structuring a narrative creates friction for supervisors, investigators, and prosecutors who rely on those reports. AI-assisted tools help create a more standardized product without stripping away the officer's voice or the facts of the case. It brings everything into alignment while still allowing the officer to review, edit, and own the final report.

Another critical function is document summarization. In complex cases, especially ones involving multiple reports, witness statements, or supplemental narratives, being able to quickly generate a synopsis saves time and improves clarity. It helps officers, supervisors, and prosecutors get to the core of the incident faster without digging through pages of text. Again, this isn't about cutting corners. It's about cutting inefficiency.

Because the reality is this: time matters. Every minute spent struggling to complete a report after a long shift is a minute taken away from recovery, from family, or from preparing for the next call. And in a profession already dealing with fatigue, burnout, and overload, those minutes add up.

Tools like PoliceReports.ai don't remove the weight of the job...but they help carry part of it. They reduce administrative drag, improve accuracy, create consistency, and give officers back something we've been losing for a long time: time.

From an "analog" cop who has lived both sides of this job, I don't see this as a luxury. I see it as a necessary evolution. We owe it to the profession and the people still out there answering calls, to use every legitimate tool available to make the job more efficient, more accurate, and more sustainable. The work isn't getting easier. So, the way we support the people doing it has to get better.



Founder Gregory Phillips instructing at the National Public Safety Innovation Academy (NIA)

## CODIN Leader: Gregory Phillips Advances National Collaboration at the National Public Safety Innovation Academy.

CODIN Founder and President Gregory Phillips recently represented and mission of Corrections & Detentions Intelligence Network during a professional engagement with law enforcement leaders from Alabama, Arizona, Florida, and Maryland at the National Public Safety Innovation Academy (NIA). During the session Greg participated in direct discussions centered on some of today's most pressing public safety issues, including narcotics trafficking, drones, gang activity, corrections intelligence, and the increasing need for stronger collaborations across agencies.

As criminal enterprises become more adaptive and more connected, timely intelligence sharing, trusted relationships, and practical communication channels are critical. CODIN was built on that exact principle, helping practitioners exchange information, resources, and expertise in real time.

CODIN is proud to see its leadership contributing to important national conversations and continuing to strengthen bridges between agencies across the country.

**One network. Shared intelligence. Stronger public safety.**

## National Spotlight: Kelly Wedley National Public Safety Innovation Academy



The National Public Safety Innovation Academy (NIA), based in Florida through a partnership between Polk State College and the Polk County Sheriff's Office. It has become a nationally recognized leadership development program for law enforcement and correctional professionals seeking to lead at the next level. NIA is described as the first STEM-based command school designed for public safety leaders, offering intensive residential programs focused on servant leadership, predictive analytics, artificial intelligence cyber threats, strategic communications, trauma awareness, and emerging trends in public safety.

A driving force behind the academy's success is Kelly Wedley, who serves in a leadership and coordination role for NIA. She has been publicly recognized as the program's coordinator and assistance program director, helping guide cohorts of professionals from agencies across the country through one of the most forward-thinking command development programs available today.

Since the launch, NIA has graduated leaders from multiple states and time zones, building a national network of forward-looking professionals committed to innovation, accountability, and service. The academy has earned praise for blending leadership principles with modern operational realities facing corrections and law enforcement today.

If interested in this advanced 8-week training, contact:

**Kelly Wedley**

National Public Safety Innovation Academy

Email: [kwedley@polk.edu](mailto:kwedley@polk.edu)

Website: [www.polk.edu](http://www.polk.edu)

