

Tips and Trends

From ICJE, Inc. <jimrechel@icje.ccsend.com>

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To Phillip Calvert <PCalvert@faulkner.edu>



May 2026

No True North?

Over the last six months, I have been fortunate to speak at fraud conferences across the country, from West Virginia to Hawaii. Many of my presentations have focused on the current and future use of artificial intelligence by fraudsters, and the challenge organizations face in adapting as quickly as the criminal element does.

As I continued speaking and researching, another thought slowly began to take shape in my mind. Some ideas arrive like a flash of lightning. Others emerge more slowly. I suppose I am like an old mercury vapor light in an elementary school gymnasium—taking some time to warm up before reaching full illumination.

While AI may eventually elevate fraud to levels we have never seen before, I have become increasingly convinced that an even greater threat exists beneath the surface—one that undermines many of the efforts made every day to maintain law and order in our communities.

Technology may change the tools criminals use, but the deeper question is whether the internal restraints that once discouraged harmful behavior are changing as well.

That threat is the gradual weakening of the common principles and values that bind a society together.

Whether we call it a worldview, a moral framework, or a foundational set of beliefs, societies require shared principles that guide individual choices and collective behavior. When those guiding principles become blurred or fragmented, human temptation has more room to operate, and the consequences eventually become visible in our institutions, our communities, and our relationships.

I recently heard a pastor make an observation about young people choosing future spouses. He noted that many often focus primarily on shared interests rather than shared values. Interests may create initial connections, but values often determine whether a relationship can endure over time.

The same principle may apply to society itself.

As a culture, we seem to have become increasingly focused on individual preferences while giving less attention to the deeper principles that once served as common points of reference.

Our nation's founders wrote: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The compass that guides us—both individually and collectively—must have a fixed "True North." If every person places north wherever they choose, direction becomes impossible and confusion becomes inevitable.

Perhaps this is part of what many people sense today. While statistics may indicate that certain categories of crime are declining, many citizens still feel a growing uneasiness within their communities. They may be sensing something deeper than numbers alone can measure.

As people of faith, we believe our Creator placed the compass in our hands through His Son and provided a fixed direction to guide us.

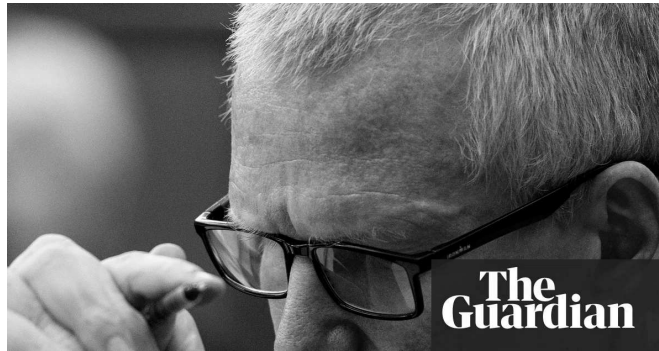
The challenge for each of us is not to redefine True North, but to follow it.

May God bless you each and every day as we strive to live according to His will.

Thanks,

Jim Rechel
ICJE Newsletter Editor

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Alex Murdaugh and the Cost of Losing True North

Can a new trial bring justice in the case of the disgraced South Carolina lawyer whose conviction for killing his wife and son has been vacated after court clerk's misconduct?

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Training Desk: Educational Opportunities

The ICJE training list has been updated, and we are working on new programs and initiatives, so visit the ICJE website for more details.

ICJE Program Highlight

Recognizing & Dealing with First Responder Trauma

If you're a first responder, you've likely faced moments that stay with you long after the call ends. Over time, stress can show up in ways you may not even realize-frustration, anger, or an "us vs. them" mindset.

This powerful and practical course is designed specifically for law enforcement and first responders who want to better understand and manage the impact of job-related stress. Whether you're early in your career or a seasoned professional, this course offers valuable tools to help you stay sharp, resilient, and in control.

Have you recently noticed any of the following thoughts or behaviors?

- Speaking loudly to others just to get their attention
- Yelling at someone you perceive as "just plain dumb"
- Feeling shaky or unsettled after an irritating encounter
- Believing your anger is justified in most situations
- Assuming certain groups of people are dishonest
- Viewing the world as "us vs. them"
- Feeling an urge to punish others

Although this class on June 4th is currently "FULL", you can add your name to the waiting list as the attendees list fluctuates. Use the "Visit Our Website" button below to find the registration link.

Visit our Website



Registration:

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CrimeDesk: Crime and Society



Improving Fraud Alert Engagement - The Decision Lab

Fraud is on the rise, but consumers are tuning out the very fraud alerts meant to protect them. This article explores why traditional fraud warnings fail—thanks to alert fatigue, impersonal messaging, and disruptive design—and how behavioral science and technology can turn the tide

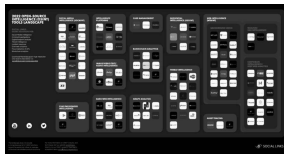
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WATCH: Flamethrower used during street takeover in Virginia

Video of the incident shows dozens of people in the road, including a masked person holding what appears to be a flamethrower, while another person pours gasoline on the ground.

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From Street Takeovers to Digital Swarms: How Police and Communities Are Rewriting the Response Playbook

For years, public disorder events generally followed a predictable model: people gathered physically, tensions escalated, and law enforcement responded.

That sequence is increasingly outdated.

Today's street takeovers, parking lot occupations, flash-mob retail incidents, and youth "pop-up" gatherings often begin digitally, develop rapidly, and materialize in physical locations with little warning. A smartphone, social media post, or group message can now mobilize hundreds of people within minutes..

[From Street Takeovers to Digital Swarms: How Police and Communities Are Rewriting the Response Playbook](#)

A TN Grandmother lost everything because a North Dakota Police Officer Trusted AI Without Further Investigation

Technology is a tool, and facial recognition does not solve a crime by itself. This case is a cautionary tale about using AI as evidence rather than a tool.

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[More Detailed Article on the AI Investigation Error](#)



Two men charged with creating AI-generated porn under new law targeting 'deepfakes'

Federal prosecutors have charged two men with using AI to create nude videos and photos under a new law targeting deepfake pornography.

[Read More](#)

A Great Resource for All Things Tech - Kim Komando

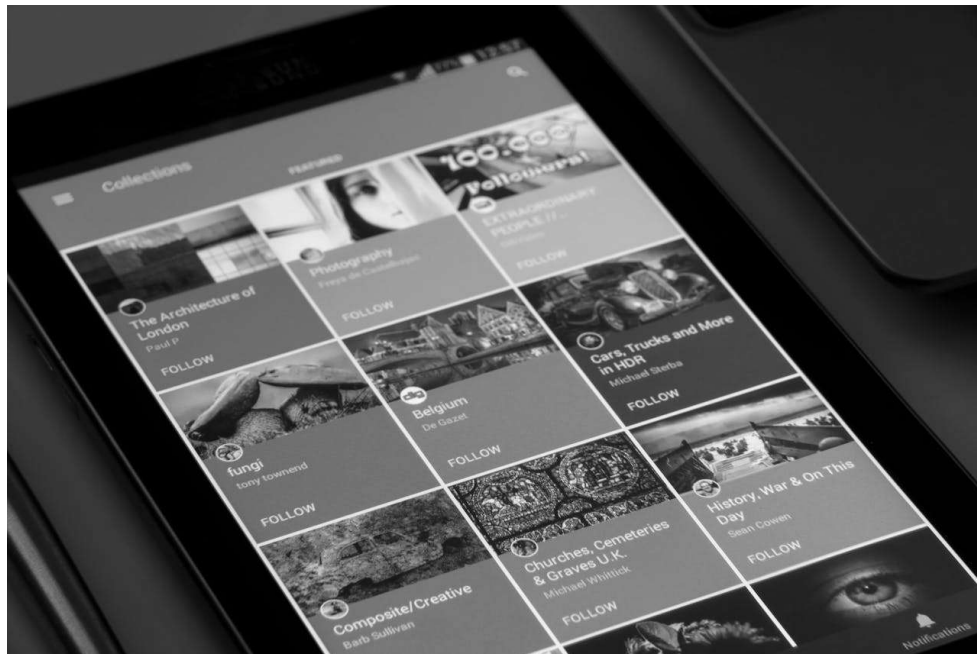
From scam alerts to smart device tips, Komando.com provides trusted tech news and daily digital advice. Listen to Kim's podcasts, win cool gear, and stay

tech ahead.

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Leadership Desk



Critical Thinking and Modern Media: Methods for Finding the Truth

Discover methods for critical thinking in modern media. Learn how to find the truth by analyzing sources, evaluating information, and avoiding misinformation.

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"Crossroads" Desk

In Memorium



Chase's Last Ride | Tribute to Officer Dylan "Chase" Owen (EOW May 14, 2026)

Chase's Last Ride is an original tribute song honoring Police Officer Dylan "Chase" Owen of the Citronelle Police Department in Alabama, who was killed in the line of duty on May 14, 2026, at just 26 years old. Officer Owen was known for his kindness, humor, dedication, and love for his family, friends, and community.

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In Honor of the Fallen

As we reflect on the past year, the Institute for Criminal Justice Education honors the law enforcement officers from Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida whose watches have ended in service to their communities.

Behind every uniform was a person who accepted responsibilities that often required courage, sacrifice, and an unwavering

commitment to others.

Their names are carried by families who continue without them, by colleagues who stood beside them, and by communities made safer because of their service. While individual stories differ, they are united by a common thread: a willingness to answer the call, regardless of risk or uncertainty.

Though their service has ended, their legacy remains in every officer who continues the mission, every citizen protected, and every life touched by their dedication.

"We remember not how they died, but how they lived and served."

The ICJE Board extends its deepest respect and gratitude to the fallen and to the families, friends, and agencies who continue to honor their memory.

One Last Thing

I recently met with a 26-year-old victim of the Jury Arrest Warrant Scam. Prior to meeting him, and when I had been alerted to his situation, everyone familiar said "How could he fall for that. There are so many red flags!

Upon meeting him, and interviewing him, the total circumstances reminded me that it's easier to pass judgement when you are not in the moment. His story reflects the psychological manipulation that blurred the critical thinking skills he believed he had. His story as related to me is below:

I Was You

Like many people, I have a wide range of interests, responsibilities, joys, and concerns. One of those concerns was protecting myself from scams. Having graduated from college a few years ago, I was still living with my parents and saving money for a down payment on my own home. I am currently employed full time in a career related to my business degree, and the company is thriving and growing.

I was a few years out of college, living with my parents, working full time in a growing company, and saving for a down payment on my first home. Because my job in logistics required me to answer dozens of calls a day—many from unfamiliar numbers—I had trained myself to be cautious.

I paid close attention to fraud warnings and learned the common signs of scam calls. That gave me some confidence, even though I knew scammers were constantly finding new ways around safeguards. Still, because of my workload, I did not spend much time regularly researching fraud schemes and related risks, but I was aware of many of the scam types.

I was especially careful never to share personal information. I also listened for background noise that might suggest a boiler-room operation, and watched for grammar or language mistakes that could signal a scam. All that worked to protect me until last week.

I received a voice mail on Sunday from my local Sheriff's Department advising me that a warrant had been issued for my arrest due to the fact that I had not responded to two separate jury summons that had previously been mailed to me. I had never seen the mailed summons the voicemail referred to, and I assumed they had been delivered to the wrong address, as that has been an intermittent with our mail delivery the last few years. I figured I would just call Monday and straighten everything out.

However, as I arrived at work Monday morning, a call came in on my phone with a local area code, but from a number I did not recognize. As that is not unusual, I took the call. It was a deputy sheriff following up on the voice mail. He told me that my name had been included in a jury pool for a highly sensitive child molestation and child exploitation case.

He provided my full name, address, social security number and told me that I was on the jury pool for the case, and that I had not shown up for my service, and the Judge in the case could not seat a jury because too many people were "no-shows" for jury duty, and the Judge was so aggravated that he issued immediate bench warrants for the missing jurors.

The case had to be delayed, and the deputy told me that everything we discussed was totally confidential, as is normal for jurors, and that I could not discuss this matter with anyone. He told me the following:

I had a choice, between being arrested on the bench warrant, which would likely result in a 72 hour period in jail until a preliminary hearing was held, at which time I would probably be released on bond, or I could pay a fine of \$9,000.00 which would be reimbursable after a hearing the Judge would set to hear any mitigating circumstances for not responding to the original jury summons.

MY mind was vacillating between the anxiety of being arrested or paying a fine that could be reimbursed. I knew that I had never been in trouble, which the deputy mentioned when he said that is why I qualified for the option of paying the reimbursable fine.

I was skeptical, and asked to speak to his supervisor, and I was transferred to another individual who said he was the Captain, and provided his name. He repeated the information, and reminded me of the Gag Order in place in the matter.

While in the call with the second Deputy, an inbound phone call appeared on my cell phone with a number associated with my local call. I paused the call and took the inbound call.

The caller indicated that he was the Court Administrator responsible for managing the jury process and stated that he was reviewing the list of jurors who arrest warrants had been issued because they failed to respond to the summons. I told him that I was on the other line with the Deputy Sheriff discussing the matter. He said to work it out with them to get it straightened out.

I returned to the original call and was again advised of my choices. I asked about the fine, and he said it had to be paid immediately, or they would arrest me. I expressed my reluctance, and he said they could meet me at the Sheriff's office to make the arrest if I did not want to choose the "fine" option.

While my original skepticism was still present, I was becoming more convinced I was in trouble. But I was somewhat comforted by the fact that I could pay the fine and I would succeed in the hearing and would get my funds back. I said I wanted to pay the fine rather than being arrested.

He instructed me to keep the call open, go to my bank, withdraw the funds, and make the payment at one of three "county authorized" Bitcoin ATM's, as the county had been accepting bit coin payments and preferred that type of payment due to the ease with which the payments could be processed.

He told me that if the teller asked why I was withdrawing \$9,000.00 in cash to tell them it was for "home improvements". Instantly, the skepticism returned. I could not believe that a law enforcement officer would ask me to tell a blatant lie. He told me that it was a requirement, as the laws regarding confidentiality of juror activities included a "Gag Clause" that covered any and all discussions, including the fact that I was paying a fine related to my case. At that point my mind was going places I cannot explain. I didn't feel comfortable, but I didn't want to be arrested.

He detected my vacillation and reassured me that it was fine if I just wanted to turn myself in and they would just arrest me at the nearest Sheriff's office and take me downtown for processing. He called my bluff, a bluff I did not verbalize but he anticipated.

He told me to keep him on the line as I went to the nearest bank branch. The Deputy was listening in on my phone, which was in my pants pocket as I spoke with the teller.

Sure enough the teller asked me why I was withdrawing the funds, and I told her "home improvements". Any suspicions she may have had about my transaction melted away due to coincidence the fraudsters could never have planned for. It turned out that the teller lives near me, and she and her husband had remodeled their house. The conversation was all about home improvements as she counted out the cash I had been saving to buy a house on my own.

Getting back in my car, and on the phone with the deputy I proceeded to the ATM and processed the payment to a Bitcoin account the Deputy provided me via a text message which included a QR code he sent via text to my phone. As I drove to the ATM my skepticism came to the forefront again. I told him that I need confirmation he was actually a deputy. I wanted to ask him a question I felt a foreign fraudster would not know. I thought for a moment, then asked him to name the quarterback of our NFL team. Without any noticeable hesitation, he answered correctly. Just as quickly he reassured me that if I was concerned that I could just go to the Sheriff's office.

A decision I will regret forever, I decided he was really a Deputy and I was in trouble. I fed the money into the machine, completed the transaction and returned to my car. Upon entering my car the deputy told me that the tracking device they had placed on my GPS and phone revealed I had called someone, and that there was now a new \$7,000.00 fine.

I knew instantly I had been scammed. I told him I was contacting my attorney and the deputy immediately hung up. My heart raced. I did all the things I should have done before, but for reasons still unknown, I had been convinced to ignore.

I called the Sheriff's office. They had no one by any of the names used in my case. My heart and mind sunk to a place I can't describe. I did not sleep the first night and could not concentrate the next day at work. I couldn't fathom that I had fallen for this scam. All my savings were gone. How did I fall for this scam? kept resonating over and over in my mind.

It's been two weeks and now I want to help other young people who think this will never happen to them.

I was you.



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