

John Kennedy

Senior Forensic Scientist

specialising in CCTV, imagery analysis and facial mapping

Forensic Scientist since: 1980

Summary

With over 35 years' experience in forensic science, John Kennedy is an internationally acclaimed expert in digital forensics and is arguably the UK's leading authority in forensic imagery.

John's expertise includes: facial mapping/comparison, clothing identification and comparison, vehicle identification and comparison, reverse projection/reconstruction, photogrammetry, image and video authenticity, evidence recovery, jury bundle production, image and video annotation and the presentation of evidence in court.

During his career, John has been instructed in some of the world's most complex and high-profile cases and is renowned for his expertise in the analysis and presentation of CCTV related evidence in Court proceedings. Examples include the Jamie Bulger case, Birmingham bombings, numerous cases of terrorism in Northern Ireland, the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri in the Lebanon, the Saddam Hussein tapes, multiple Iraqi kidnappings and assassinations, the Boko Haram atrocities and the killing fields of Sri Lanka.

John helped pioneer a number of forensic processes involving complex comparison and Reverse Projection; these are now used by Law Enforcement Agencies all over the world. He has also been trained in forensic video analysis at the FBI Academy at Quantico and at the University of Indianapolis.

Experience

- Leading forensic scientist, specialising in all aspects of forensic imagery and imagery analysis, with over 35 years experience in digital forensics.
- Senior court reporting scientist, having presented evidence in thousands of major criminal cases. These cases have included charges of burglary, possession of an offensive weapon, abduction, ABH, GBH, manslaughter, murder and terrorism.
- Highly adept in the use of the very latest equipment and forensic processes.
- Highly skilled and vastly experienced in the processes of facial mapping and facial comparison.
- Leading expert in clothing identification and comparison.
- One of the pioneers of Reverse Projection/Reconstruction.
- Internationally renowned expert in the assessment of the authenticity of video and images.
- Leading authority in Photogrammetry - Photogrammetry being the science of making measurements from photographs, in order to recover the exact positions of surface points. In the simplest example, the distance between two points that lie on a plane parallel to the photographic image plane, can be determined by measuring their distance on the image.
- Qualified and highly experienced in the safe recovery of digital evidence.
- Leading expert in the limitations and levels of error of digital and CCTV evidence, including opining on issues such as resolution, compression, optical defects, lighting conditions, atmospheric conditions, aspect ratio issues, motion blur and camera to subject geometry.
- Leading authority in the production of credible and reproducible forensic imagery, which results in significant and robust evidential outputs.

Areas of expertise

Digital forensics

CCTV and imagery analysis
Facial mapping and reconstruction



John Kennedy

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specialising in CCTV, imagery analysis and facial mapping (continued)

Committee memberships

- Member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences.
- Member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).
- Sits on the IACP Advisory Panel for Digital Evidence for Public Safety.

Notable work

- Designed and delivered intensive training courses on Forensic Video, attended by a vast majority of UK Police Imaging Officers, members of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Forensic Science Regulator and European Law Enforcement Agencies.
- Retained as the leading imagery expert by those representing all 92 families at the Hillsborough inquest.
- Training Program Manager for LEVA (Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Video Association) with responsibility for organising training for UK and European Law Enforcement Imaging Specialists.

Notable cases

- *R v VENABLES and THOMPSON – Murder of James Bulger*

John analysed low-resolution video images (CCTV) of James Bulger's abduction from the New Strand Shopping Centre by two, at the time, unidentified individuals. John also had responsibility for equipping the Courtroom with all of the CCTV and Audio evidence used during the trial.

- *R v Nico BENTO – Miscarriage of Justice*

Bento had been charged with the murder of his girlfriend. The Prosecution case relied entirely on CCTV evidence. John, then a Consultant Forensic Scientist with the Government owned Forensic Science Service (FSS), was instructed by the Crown and raised concerns about the CCTV and if in fact, this was ever a murder. John had recommended a particular forensic process involving Reverse Projection but the Crown failed to act on his advice and instead instructed an American expert. The defendant was convicted on the evidence provided by the American expert and was sentenced to life imprisonment. John feared that there had been a terrible miscarriage of justice and tried to persuade the Forensic Science Service to alert the court. They refused and prevented him from pursuing the matter. John resigned and despite having a 'gagging order' placed on him by the FSS, he went on to help launch an appeal against the conviction. The Lord Chief Justice ordered the prosecution to undertake the forensic process which John had recommended during the early part of the investigation. That process, undertaken jointly by the Crown and the Defence, entirely undermined the CCTV evidence and the evidence given by the American expert. The conviction was quashed and a new trial ordered. The Crown subsequently offered no evidence. Nico Bento was subsequently awarded substantial damages. This case resulted in numerous TV documentaries including a full feature on BBC Newsnight.

- *Assassination of Rafic HARIRI, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon*

John was consulted by the United Nations Security Council in connection with the CCTV evidence which captured events leading up to and including the assassination.

- *Cases of terrorism in Northern Ireland*

John has provided evidence in numerous terrorism related investigations in Northern Ireland, including the Birmingham bombings.

- *Boko Haram*

John has been involved in the examination of the recordings showing the 200 captured School girls with a view to gathering intelligence on participants, the type of uniforms being worn and the potential locations of where the girls might be being held. Additionally, John has been involved in the examination of "trophy recordings" allegedly made by Boko Haram soldiers concerning various atrocities including the mass execution of villagers in the region.

Recommendations

"In light of all of your scene examination and other CCTV evidence - we made further representations to the prosecution counsel. He reviewed this and offered no evidence! Such a great result for the client. Thank you for your hard work."

Solicitor, Lewis Nedas Law