



Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

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Connecticut Forensic Lab Plays Key Role in Brown University Shootings Investigation

When the call came from the Rhode Island Attorney General, Dr. Guy Vallaro didn't think twice about putting the full resources of the Connecticut State Forensic Science Laboratory in support of the investigation into the mass shooting at Brown University.

As the tense investigation stretched through last week, and the trail extended to a fatal shooting in Massachusetts and to a New Hampshire storage facility, lab scientists in Meriden worked around the clock.

"We were contacted by the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General Office of the Rhode Island Attorney General and we responded immediately. Our job is to independently and thoroughly analyze evidence when requested," said Vallaro, director of the Division of Scientific Services for DESPP. "The forensic lab is committed to regional cooperation and assistance – we know neighboring states would help us with any investigation. In this case, when asked, we offered whatever help we could provide to our New England neighbor."

Working with state and federal law enforcement agencies, a team from the forensic lab in Meriden examined evidence from the Brown University shootings for DNA and latent prints associated with a suspect. They also used the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to analyze shell casings from the crime scene.

Lab analysis provided the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and state investigators in Rhode Island with critical answers. In one case, lab scientists confirmed that one of the two firearms recovered in New Hampshire on Dec. 18 was positively correlated with the firearm used in the mass shooting at Brown University. Another firearm was positively correlated with the murder of Dr. Nuno Loureiro in Brookline, Massachusetts.

"THE FBI and ATF would like to offer their sincere gratitude and appreciation of the around-the-clock collaborative effort of the [Connecticut] Forensic Science Laboratory personnel," the two federal law enforcement agencies said in a statement. "Their behind-the-scenes effort has allowed for the rapid scientific confirmation of the facts of this investigation."

DESPP Commissioner Ronnell A. Higgins and Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz met with the forensic team from the state lab this week to thank them for their work.

"The work at our state's Forensic Laboratory reflects the very best of public service," said Lt. Governor Bysiewicz. "The dedicated staff and scientists worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support law enforcement efforts last week. We are so thankful for the critical work they do every day for the people of Connecticut and our neighbors across the region."

"We are so grateful to see how the hard work at the lab assisted federal and state investigators," Higgins said. "We know that this is the kind of independent and thorough analysis that they perform every day for the citizens of Connecticut."

Connecticut, through DESPP and its forensic lab, has made rapid analysis of crime scene evidence a top priority. A system of regional evidence kiosks across Connecticut, combined with more resources, has allowed for rapid testing of DNA, and ballistic crime scene evidence using NIBIN. The lab has been recognized as a national model for state forensic labs.

"I'm proud of what we do here and the fact that others rely on us and respect what we do here. It's a good feeling," said Vallaro.

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