

Tactical Deployments: The Seattle Experience

Officer Steve Ward

Seattle Police Department SWAT

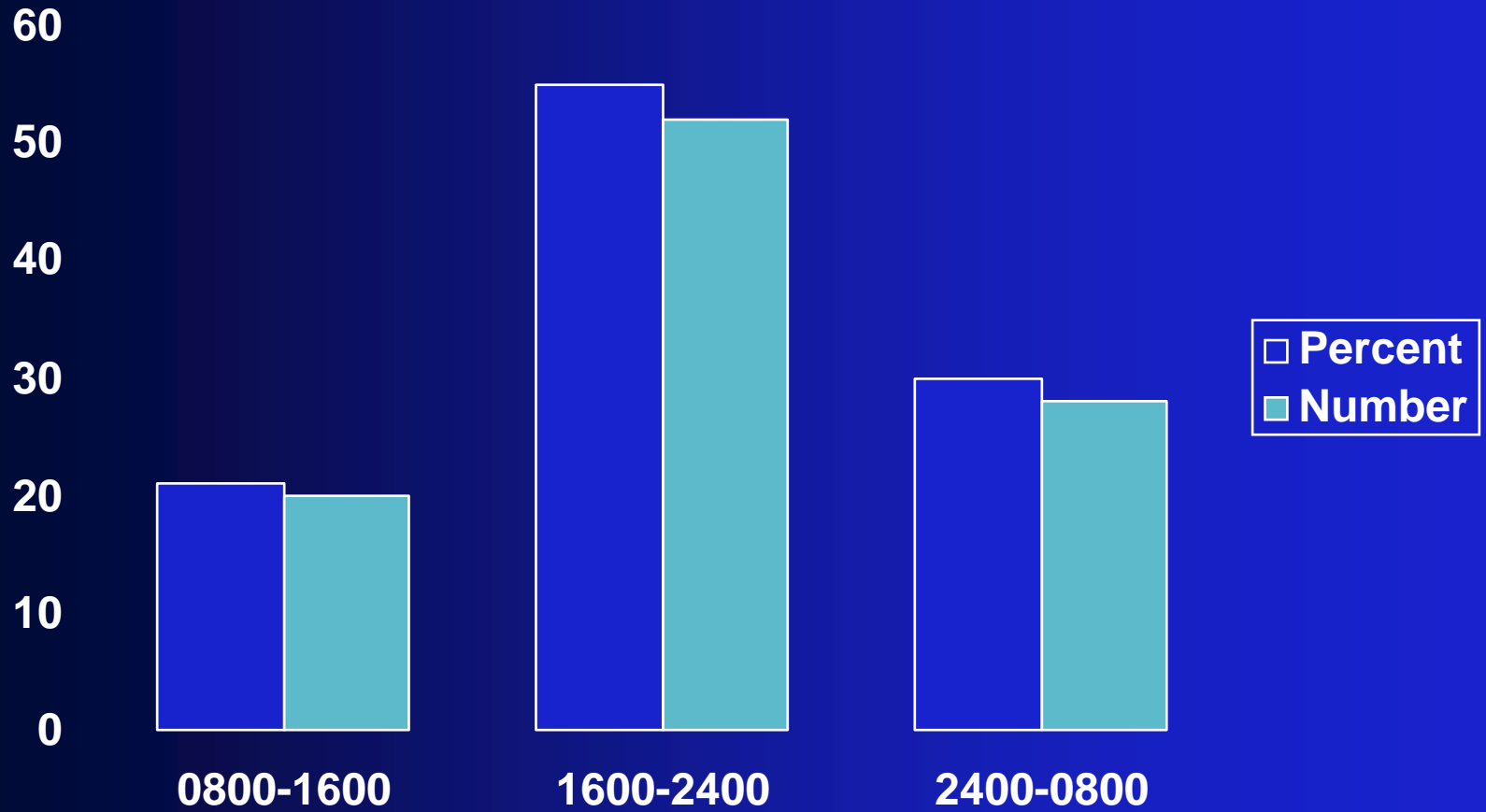
Outline

- Review of Seattle's one year report
- Seattle's high profile cases
- Analyzing M26 deployment evidence
- M26 testing

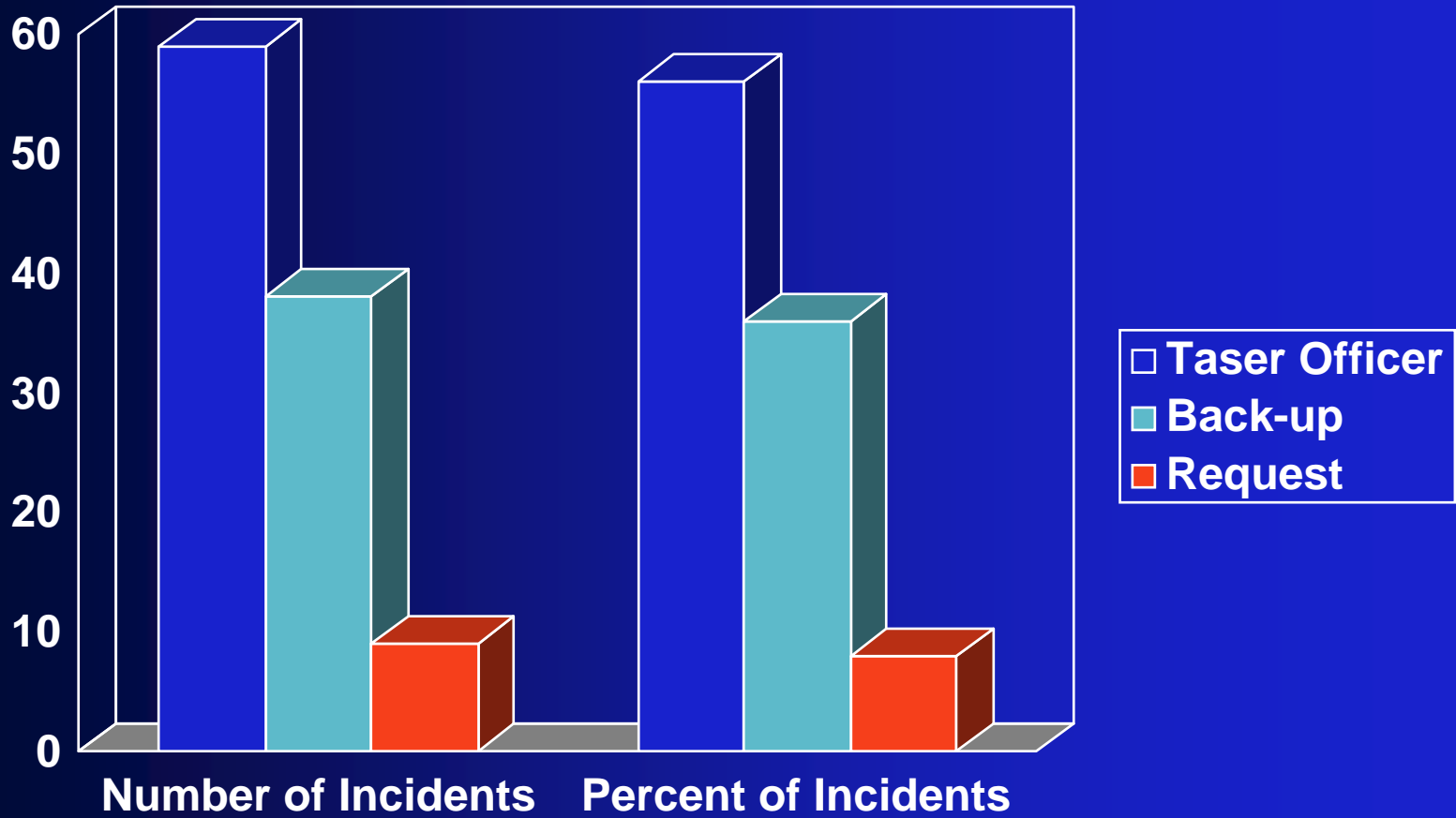
Seattle P.D. One Year Report

- One year study from 1-1-01 through 1-1-02
- 106 M26 incidents studied
- Some incidents involved more than one deployment
- All 106 taser incident reports were reviewed and the information was recorded

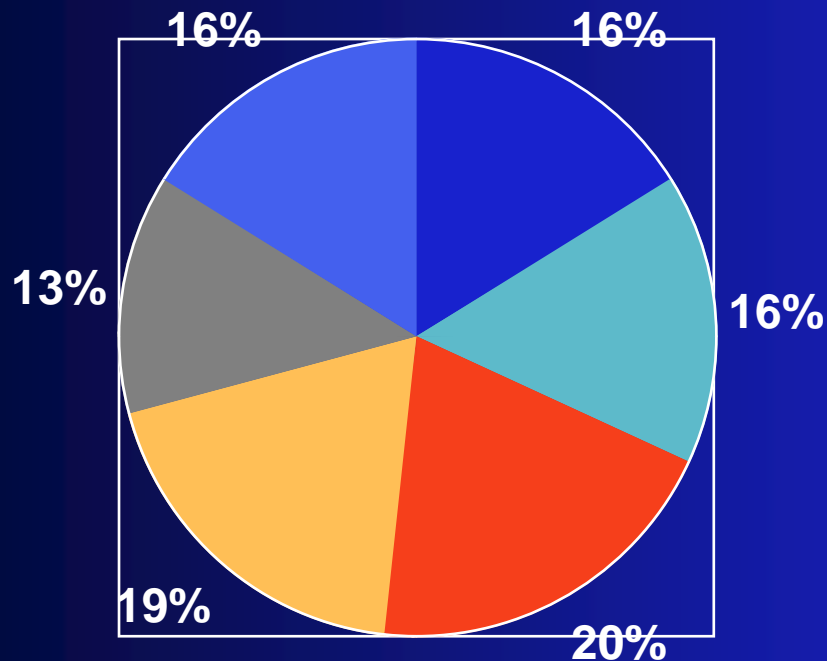
Taser Use By Time Of Day



Incidents By Taser Officer, Back-up, Or Requested

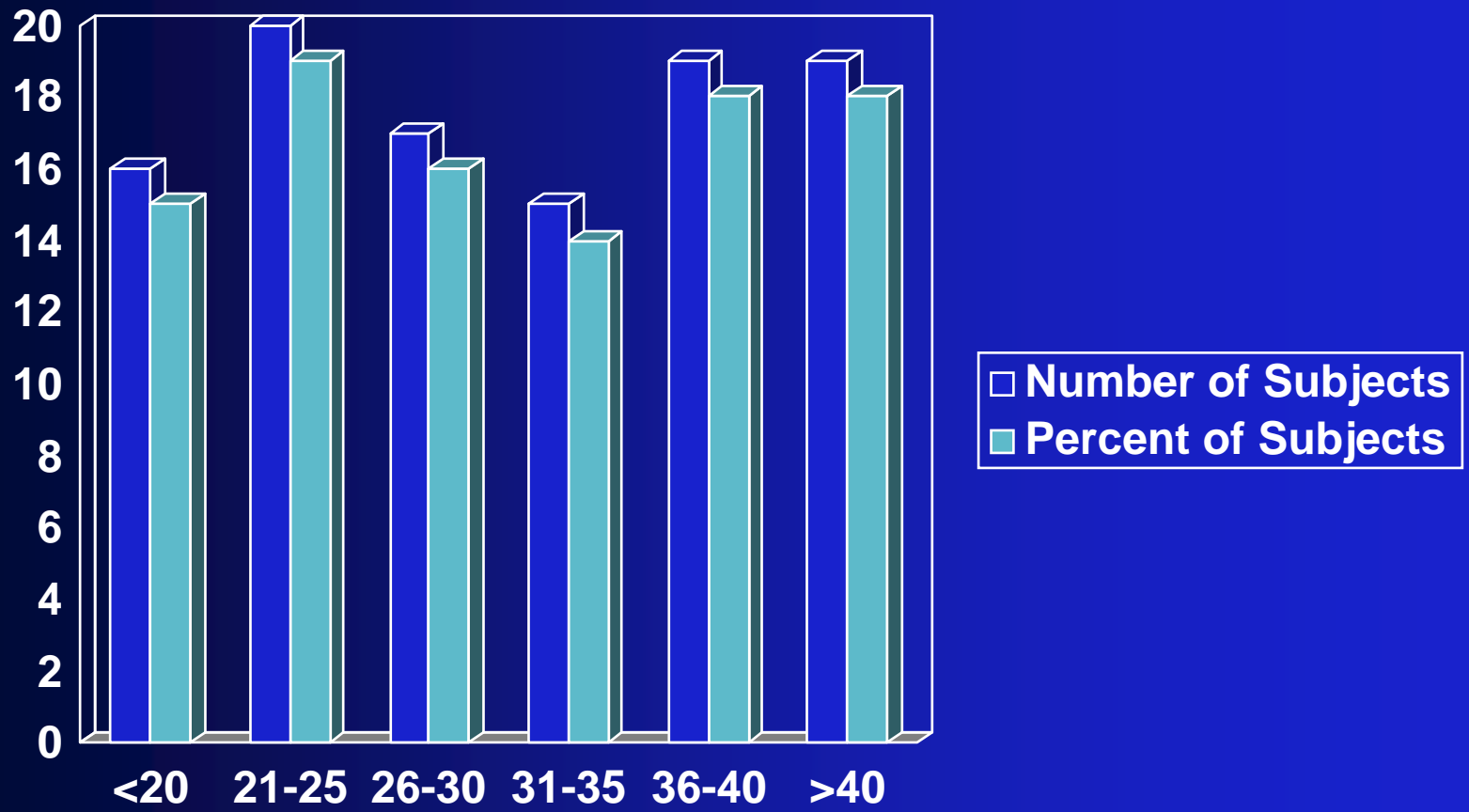


Initial Classification Of Incidents

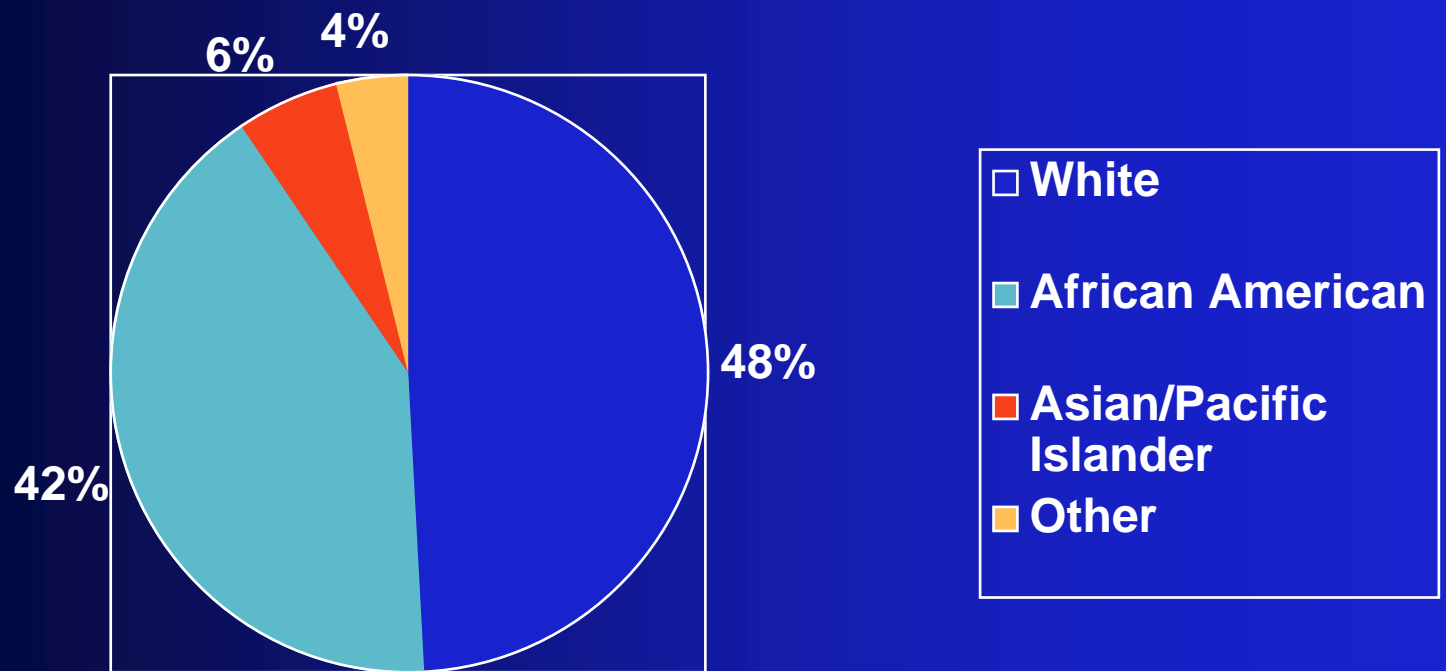


- Drug/Alcohol Related
- Fight/Disturbance
- Mental Illness/Suicide
- Traffic Related
- Violent Crime
- Other

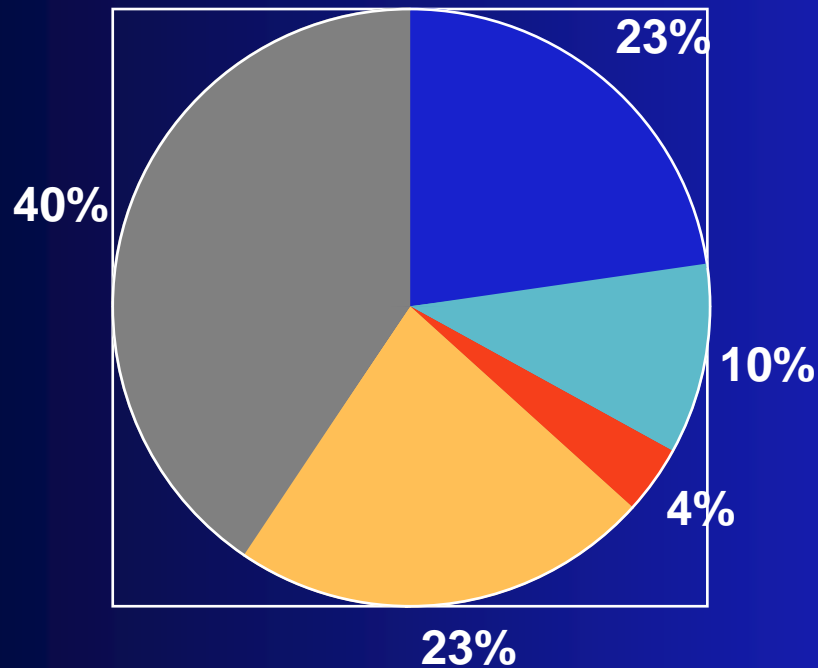
Age Of Suspects



Race Of Subjects



Taser Subject Impairment



- Alcohol impaired
- Chemical/Drug impaired
- Drug & Alcohol impaired
- Mental illness/delusional
- No apparent impairment

Suspect Injury

- 13 percent of suspects were injured subsequent to taser deployment - generally occurred as suspects fell to the ground
- No suspect injuries were major
- No injuries were attributed to the M26 itself

Officer Injury

- In 5 percent of the deployments an officer was injured
- All injuries were minor

Taser Use Against Armed Suspects

- 25 percent (26 cases) of all M26 applications were against armed suspects
- 11 of the 26 suspects were armed with knives
- 62 percent of armed suspects were impaired
- These statistics show the need to deploy with lethal cover

Taser Performance

- Out of all the deployments there have been 14 cases of misses or clothing related failure
- In 95 percent of deployments there was a reported disabling or partially disabling effect on the suspect
- In 92 percent of deployments the taser was solely credited with bringing the situation to resolution

Seattle High Profile Cases

Local News: Wednesday, November 28, 2001

Taser fails to halt man with knife

By Ian Ith

Seattle Times staff reporter

Seattle police say that more than 90 percent of the time, the 200 high-voltage electric guns they have at the ready do exactly what they are supposed to do: jolt violent suspects into submission so police don't have to shoot them.

But not early yesterday morning.

When shots from two M26 Taser guns failed to stop a knife-wielding suspect, a SWAT officer shot the man dead.

Seattle High Profile Incidents

Case 1

- Knife wielding suspect
- Small room
- 2 M26 deployments
- 1st deployment made contact but was broken
- 2nd deployment - no verifiable contact
- Suspect lunged and cut officer's shirt
- Lethal cover shot suspect

Seattle High Profile Incidents

Case 2

- Sword wielding suspect
- 2 M26 deployments
- 1st deployment was a miss
- 2nd deployment was effective
- Lethal cover acted at same time to protect themselves and other officers

Analyzing The Evidence

- Taser instructors might get called to assist in analyzing evidence from a taser deployment
- The need to analyze evidence supports the idea of saving the cartridge, wires, and probes after a deployment

Analyzing The Evidence

- If possible, talk to the officers involved to get their thoughts about the incident
- Read all statements and reports from the incident
- View the physical evidence - clothing, pictures, M26 cartridge, and the M26



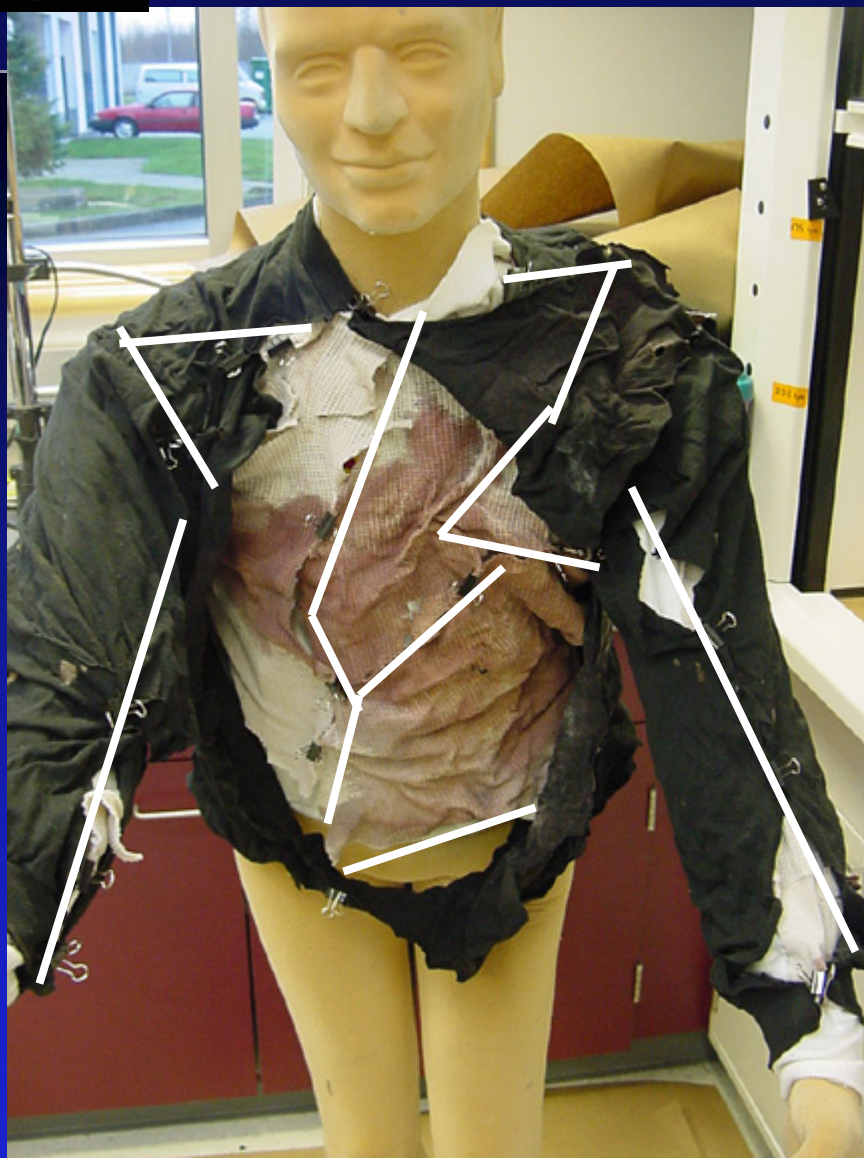
Clothing Evidence



TASER PROBES



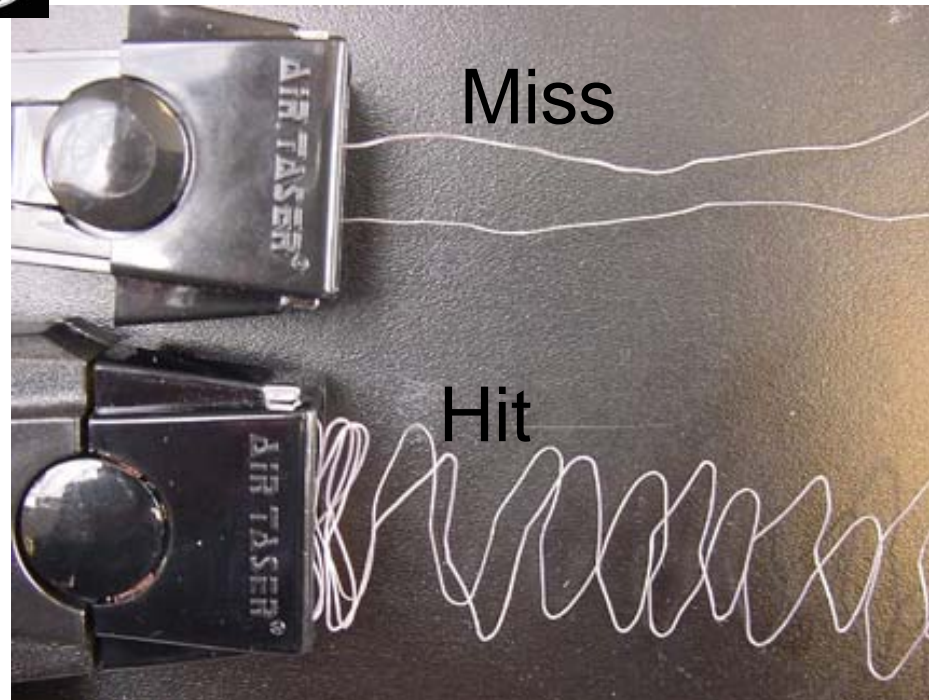
Forensic Mannequin



Analyzing The Evidence: Misses



Conclusion?



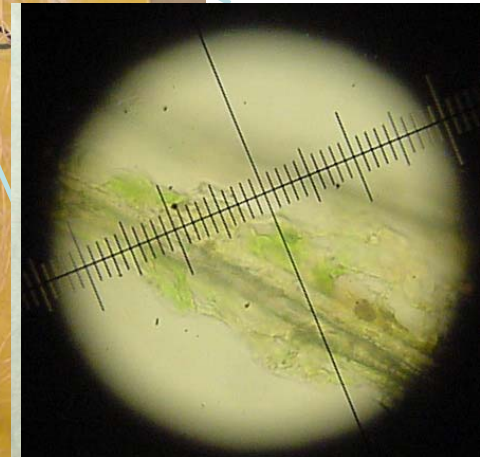
Analyzing The Evidence: Misses



Cartridge Analysis



Both probes attached



(Grass)

Analyzing The Evidence: No Contact With Body

- Examine the body or pictures of the suspect for M26 puncture wounds
- Ask officers if they heard the M26 deploy - a loud deployment usually means no contact was made





Probe impact



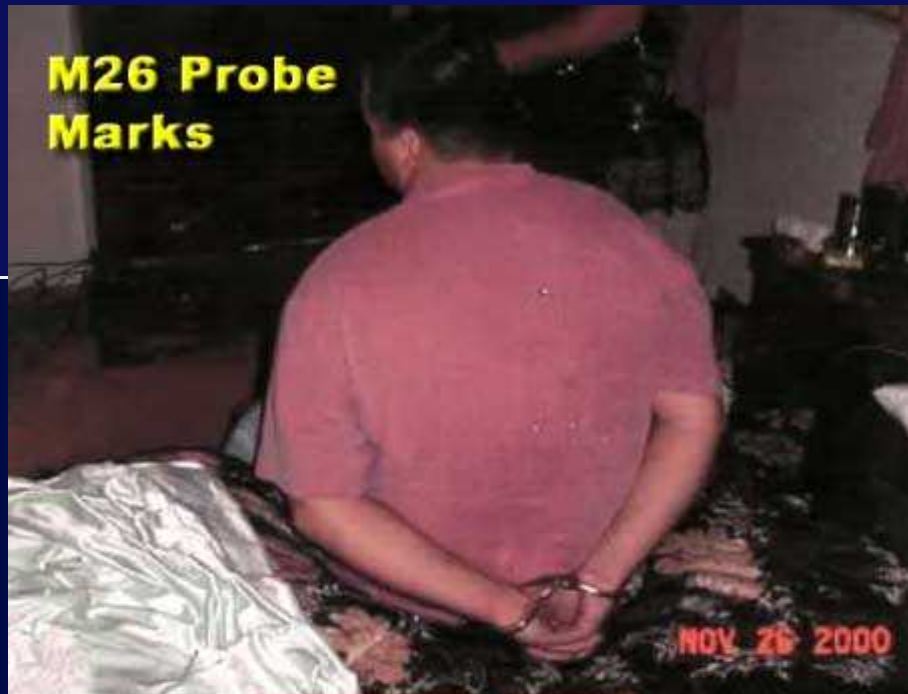
Analyzing The Evidence: No Contact With Body

- Examine the body or pictures of the suspect for red or sunburned areas around the area where the dart came close to the skin





M26 Probe Marks



Taser Testing

- Department administration might want to have independent testing done
- RCMP published an independent report in May of 2001
- Washington State Patrol Crime Lab has commissioned a study and is writing a report for the Seattle Police Department

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