Andrew Postlethwaite – Written evidence (FRS0072)

1. No matter how good the forensic evidence is, unless the Jury understand it, the case can be jeopardised.

2. Ultimately the Jury must understand the scientific data presented to them. If they fail to fully understand the science, I suggest that they will either fail to come to a verdict or go safe and acquit.

3. However good the scientific findings are, if the jury are lost then the case is lost.

4. These days the people who make up the juries are surrounded by visual presentations, either on the television, computer or phone. They may well have experience in the use of computer games, where they are immersed in a virtual environment. They are no longer unsure of the technology.

5. It is true to say that a picture saves a thousand words.

6. For over 24 years I have been preparing visual presentations for use in over 650 major crimes.

7. My expertise is in the presentation of information and as such I work with the Forensic Scientists to ensure their findings are correctly represented.

8. The use of visual presentations has assisted in the depicting pathology findings, scene reconstructions, blood stains, footprints, fingerprints and complex fraud transactions.

9. By its very nature Forensic Science can be complex, full of jargon and logical processes.

10. All this information can be presented graphically using charts, diagrams, computer models and animations.

11. However, care must be taken when preparing graphical information for court. For example, it is not a good idea to represent the defendant’s evidence using red. This could mislead the jury, and lead to accusations of unfairly leading them, so neutral colours must be used.

12. The jury could be mislead by thinking 'because it is presented graphically, in colour, it must be right'.

13. So, safeguards need to be in place to ensure impartiality on the part of the graphic artist. A role not suited to that of the Police.

14. Regulation of this area will also need to be considered.

15. Having pioneered the use of computer generated graphics for use in major cases, I have a unique insight into how and when to apply these methods.
16. As such, I am happy to discuss this further, and explore how the correct presentation of Forensic Science findings can enhance the working of the justice system.

14 September 2018