Abstract: Forensic experts are heavily relied upon as their judgment and decision making is regarded as objective and impartial. Drawing from the field of criminal justice, I will present research and evidence from real casework that many different types of biases affect even experts, including fingerprinting, toxicology and DNA forensic decision making. Forensic evaluations can be highly impacted and distorted by irrelevant contextual information or even by the context in which information is presented or obtained. Confirmation bias and other cognitive biases that I will discuss are implicit and impact hardworking, dedicated and competent experts, and thus are widespread but hard to detect. I will articulate the psychological mechanisms by which forensic experts can make biased and erroneous decisions. Then I will show how this research can assist in identifying such weaknesses and in providing practical ways to mitigate them.

Itiel Dror (PhD Harvard) is a cognitive neuroscientist who is interested in the cognitive architecture that underpins expert decision making. Dror's research, published in over 130 research articles, demonstrated how contextual information can influence judgments and decision making of experts. He has worked in a variety of domains, from policing and aviation, to medical experts and bankers, showing that even hardworking and competent experts can make unintentional errors in evaluating data. Dr. Dror has worked with many agencies in various countries to minimize error and enhance decision making.

More information is available at Cognitive Consultants International: www.cci-hq.com

Please read important background information before the presentation:
* An overview from the journal Science: https://science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6386/243/tab-pdf
* The sources of bias and how to fight them: https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.analchem.0c00704
* All about forensic decision making: http://www.cci-hq.com/forensic-identification.html

Zoom Link: https://duq.zoom.us/j/94716727512?pwd=WkFPNFh5OFExd2VsNm0xZzdZWVM5dz09
Bruce Goldfarb, Executive Assistant and Public Information Officer, Maryland Chief Medical Examiner, and Curator, Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death

Thursday, September 24, 2020
6:00 – 7:30pm EST

Title: Investigating Frances Glessner Lee

A former EMT/paramedic, Goldfarb is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared on All Things Considered, the Washington Post, USA Today, American Health, Baltimore magazine, and many other print and online publications. Since 2012, Goldfarb has been executive assistant to the Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Maryland. He is public information officer for the OCME, regarded as one of the best in the world, and is curator of the Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death.

Through his work with the Nutshell Studies, Bruce earned the trust of Frances Glessner Lee's family and caretakers of her estate, and was designated Lee's official biographer. His first book of popular nonfiction, 18 Tiny Deaths: The Untold Story of Frances Glessner Lee and the Invention of Modern Forensics, was released by Sourcebooks in February, 2020.

https://brucegoldfarb.com/

Zoom Link: https://duq.zoom.us/j/95640019432?pwd=WHEzMIYyUFJ6ekVbYmR6cWN3MUFvZz09