

Faulk, Camilla

From: Anna Samuel (ACA) [Anna.Samuel@acapd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2011 8:15 AM
To: Faulk, Camilla
Cc: Anna Samuel (ACA)
Subject: recording interviews

I am an attorney practicing in the field of criminal law in Seattle. If there were a rule allowing recording all witness statements, it would certainly make our system a lot more accountable and accurate. Routinely, civilian witnesses allow recording. Unfortunately, prosecutors sometimes act as attorneys during the interviews and forcefully instruct witnesses that they needn't answer questions. Short of depositions, relevant questions remain unanswered. By trial, the answers are not always spontaneous. Further, police officers routinely refuse to be recorded. If a system is to encourage honesty and integrity in the courtroom, allowing public officials and officers to decline to allow their statements to be recorded allows them to hide the truth behind that rule. If there is only one version of the events, especially with witnesses who are trained to record and document their observations, our system's integrity is compromised when the same witnesses are allowed to refuse a recording and then change their testimony on the witness stand. I had a seargeant and the main officer in a case recently fabricate a lot of testimony. It was simply fortunate that there were other witnesses contradicting their testimony. Such practices will be minimized and interviews will be much shorter and more efficient. Anna Samuel