

Firm helps deal with the aftermath of tragedy

Behind every major crime is usually a mess, not only of broken lives and ruined hopes but physical debris—broken windows, smashed furniture and worse, much worse.

Requiring family members and friends to do this compounds the tragedy. Often, it's emotionally impossible.

That's why Judd Sweitzer and Carly Lincoln are certain they're in the right business. It's not the work per se, which is often difficult and demanding, but the knowledge they're doing something of enormous benefit.

The Fitchburg residents are owners of Winchester Crime and Trauma Recovery. Their company slogan says it all—"Erasing the Aftermath."

They often tackle some of the most gruesome tasks imaginable. It's a business, and they're prepared.

The couple (they're engaged) met several years ago when she contacted him to help a firm clean up following a death in one of its facilities.

"After 20 years in the Army and two tours of combat in Iraq, there's nothing I haven't seen," Sweitzer said.

Lincoln said the work fulfills her long-time desire to work in a field related to law enforcement.

They clean up the aftermath of crimes, suicides, homicides and unattended deaths, and a variety of other events. One of the toughest is cleaning up illegal methamphetamine labs because the chemicals seep into every porous surface, including tile, cabinets, furniture, stone carpeting and drywall. Some cleanups involve considerable physical labor.

An environmental engineer monitors air quality when they're done. Otherwise, they do all work themselves.

They have several licenses and certificates to dispose of wastes properly, and provide free consultations for law enforcement agencies.

Sweitzer said they often compete with national franchises, but are usually far less expensive. Since they're local, they usually

don't have to charge per diem expenses for lodging, transportation and housing.

They say they're not bothered by the aftermath of suicides, homicides and unattended deaths. Carbon filters and other devices deal with the odor, and they wear protective suits. Bodily remains are handled as medical waste.

Sweitzer said there's often a substantial amount of tissue left behind. Although coroners are required to remove all bodily tissue, many don't, particularly when there's "dispersion material" associated with gunshots.

"In the hard moments, I remember that there's a family waiting," Sweitzer said.

Most of their business comes from word of mouth. Calls come at all hours of the day and night.

Their business vehicle is unobtrusive. "We don't want to call attention to ourselves and what we do," Sweitzer said.

Both support efforts to curb domestic violence, due in part to the carnage left behind. Portrayals of violence seldom in-



Winchester Crime and Trauma Recovery, aka Carly Lincoln and Judd Sweitzer.

clude the real aftermath. It's likely violence would be less alluring if they did. ❀

Winchester Crime and Trauma Recovery, www.winchestermadison.com, (608) 630-1854, (608) 630-1732.