

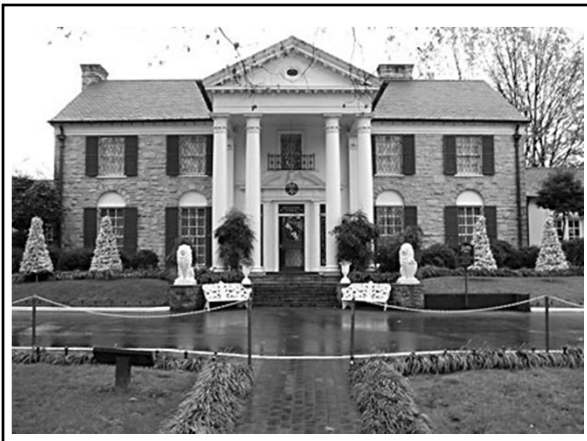
DISSECTING THE CSI EFFECT



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WHAT IS “FORENSIC SCIENCE”?

- The application of scientific knowledge to questions of civil and criminal law.
- Affects a case in several ways, from beginning to end:
- Crime Scene Investigation
- Forensic Pathology
- Criminalistics
- “Specialty” disciplines – toxicology, entomology, odontology, engineering, anthropology, psychiatry/psychology

REAL LIFE VS. TV

On TV, the “CSI’s”:

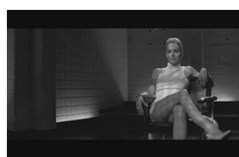
DO IT ALL



REAL LIFE VS. TV

On TV, the “CSI’s”:

INTERROGATE WITNESSES



REAL LIFE VS. TV

On TV, the “CSI’s”:

DRIVE HUMMERS, WEAR FANCY CLOTHES



REAL LIFE VS. TV

On TV, the “CSI’s”:

USE LITTLE FLASHLIGHTS; WORK IN THE DARK



REAL LIFE VS. TV

On TV, the “CSI’s”:

USE ULTRA HIGH-TECH EQUIPMENT



THAT LOOKS THE SAME AS WE USE, BUT DOES FABULOUS THINGS

REAL LIFE VS. TV

On TV, they:

- SOLVE THE CRIME IN LESS THAN AN HOUR
- ALWAYS FIND THE ANSWER, USUALLY AFTER SOME "REVELATION"
- NEVER HAVE BACKLOG PROBLEMS
- ALWAYS HAVE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT
- HAVE MULTIPLE SKILLS

REAL LIFE VS. TV

Purpose of TV:

- To sell advertising
- To entertain

Purpose of A Crime Scene Investigator ("CSI"):

- Identifies, collects and preserves evidence
- Documents scene
- May also do some basic blood stain pattern evaluation and crime scene reconstruction
- Is usually a police officer or former police officer with little or no science

REAL LIFE VS. TV

A Criminalist:

- Evaluates physical evidence using the laws of natural science
- Works in the crime laboratory
- Is an educated and trained scientist
- Is a specialist – works in one area of expertise – areas include biology (DNA), trace analyses, firearms & toolmarks, fingerprints, chemistry, toxicology, document examination, etc.
- May or may not be "sworn"
- Rarely conducts crime scene investigations – may be at a scene to lend technical assistance
- Never questions witnesses

REAL LIFE VS. TV

SPECIAL AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

Include areas such as Odontology, Entomology, Anthropology,
Engineering, Psychiatry, Psychology
Generally have terminal degrees in area of expertise
Are often on academic faculties; serve as consultants to several
departments

A FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST:

Is an M.D. or D.O.
Is often Board Certified in Forensic Pathology
Conducts autopsies to determine manner and cause of death
May go to some death scenes

“CSI EFFECT”

So – do I really know my expert? (Prosecutor)

How do I choose an expert? (Defense)

Who is this “expert”? (Both)

Needs to be considered from two perspectives:
Organizational and Individual

**ORGANIZATIONAL: MAJOR
ISSUES (1):**

1. Is the unit run/staffed properly?
 - a. Where is the unit placed within the organization?
 - b. Is it accredited? By who?
 - c. Is there a program of continuing education?
 - d. Is the facility adequate?
 - e. Are protocols / procedures available?
 - f. Is there enough staff to do the job?

**ORGANIZATIONAL: MAJOR
ISSUES (2):**

2. Have you been provided proper documentation?
 - a. Reports
 - b. Photos / Videos (do the videos have sound?)
 - c. Sketches
 - d. Notes

**ORGANIZATIONAL: MAJOR
ISSUES (3):**

3. Did the agency process the scene properly?
 - a. Proper equipment?
 - b. Protect against cross contamination?
 - c. Good photographs?
 - d. Overlook potential evidence ?
4. Can you reasonably reconstruct the events leading to the incident based on what's available?

INDIVIDUAL: MAJOR ISSUES (1)

(1) C.V. / RESUME

Did you verify education?
All those training courses – how long were they?
How current is the resume?
How current is the training?
Are they certified? By Who? Verified?
Professional activities – are they active?
 Standards committees
 Journal editorial board
 Leadership positions

INDIVIDUAL: MAJOR ISSUES (2)

(2) KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES

Experience – how long?
Testimony – where, about what, how many
 times (too good to be true?)
Area(s) of expertise – does it fit?

THANK YOU



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