



Jurisprudence Section – 2006

E7 Crime Scene Forensics: Reality vs. Entertainment

Thomas L. Martin, Jr., 5 Willard Road, Red Hook, NY 12571*

The goal of this presentation is to review actual cases and discuss the glaring differences between "real world" forensics, and the portrayal of police and forensic investigations in the entertainment industry. Emphasis will be placed on what to expect from a forensic investigation...and when not to expect too much.

The current fascination with forensic sciences has caused many misunderstandings regarding how forensic technology and interpretations should impact criminal investigations. It is important to separate fact from fiction, and the investigator must understand and recognize, when expectations become unrealistic. This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by bringing us back to the basics of conducting a thorough investigation, and uncovering the truth.

The term "forensics" has come to mean much more than a tool to help in criminal investigations; it has become a world wide fad. Colleges, universities, and even high schools are introducing more forensic related courses every year to meet increasing demand. The entertainment industry has recognized this fascination with the scientific aspect of criminal investigations, and has responded by inundating the nightly television schedule with forensic related programming. This forensic programming has not only affected jury pools, but has also had an adverse impact on the way many investigators conduct criminal investigations. This presentation will explore the realistic expectations of forensic crime scene investigations, the time and patience needed to conduct an investigation, and will emphasize the concept of corroborating or refuting facts, circumstances, and statements.

Forensic Crime Scene, Investigation, Reality Entertainment