



### A69 Evolution of “The Method” — The Past, Present, and Future of Forensic Intelligence

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand that as forensic science becomes more sophisticated, it also seems to become harder for investigators to access. This presentation will illustrate the importance of investigative forensic science otherwise known as forensic intelligence.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by explaining how forensic science is primarily being used as an adjudicative tool in the criminal justice system. This presentation will allow attendees to see the value of investigative forensic science and better understand its history.

Upon their first meeting, the slender man with the intense stare and the eagle like face pronounced “you came from Liberton. You drive two horses, one gray, and one bay, and you are probably employed by a brewery.” After all the assumptions were confirmed and the man from Liberton left, the slender man explained himself. “I saw the clay from Liberton on the fellow’s boots. He had gray hairs on one sleeve and bay hairs on the other. As for my final bit of deduction, you probably observed the face, especially the nose.”

While this exchange has all the hallmarks of the most famous fictional detective, it was neither Sherlock Holmes nor fictional. It was only one of many accounts of the keen observational and interpretative skill of a Scottish physician named Dr. Joseph Bell. This account was originally recorded by Hesketh Pearson and then obtained by Ely Liebow for his work on Dr. Bell’s biography. Dr. Bell used what he termed as “the method” every day as he treated patients and taught medical students like the young Arthur Conan Doyle.

Dr. Bell’s keen insights did more than just help his patients and provide the inspiration for Conan Doyle to create Sherlock Holmes. Since the 1870’s, Dr. Bell used his talents to aid the crown with criminal investigations. He continued on this path for nearly 20 years. For a time he was even involved with the Jack the Ripper investigation. The discretion Dr. Bell exercised regarding his involvement in these cases has resulted in a lack of appreciation for the central role he played in fostering the scientific investigation of crime.

As more of the historic literature in Forensic Science is explored, it becomes apparent that forensic science was not only used at trial, but as an active part of the investigation to develop suspects. Similar feats of observational prowess and interpretive intellect are present in works from Hans Gross and Edmund Locard, to Paul Kirk. Yet somehow over time the laboratory became removed from the investigation assuming a more reactive role. The scientist was detached from the inception of the investigation at the crime scene. Slowly, the concept of a general knowledge of forensic science or a “generalist” started to give way to the concept of a laboratory specialist.

Somewhat ironically, the juggernaut specialization of DNA has once again illustrated the investigative power that comes from the proper interpretation of physical evidence. Now more than ever, physical evidence is being used to develop suspects where the traditional investigation had failed. While on the surface, the genetic information contained within biological evidence seems to offer the most potential, there are times when it is useless without other basic information. A basic knowledge of bloodstain patterns allows investigators to select bloodstains at a crime scene that might be foreign to the victim. Other aspects of physical evidence are critical to fully understand the significance of the biological evidence that has been recovered.

In the traditional criminal justice system, change can be cripplingly slow; however, there are times when outside events can provide unforeseen opportunities for the advancement of the science. As the United States is actively involved in the war against terrorism on several fronts, the need for real-time information about our adversaries has led us back to physical evidence. Fingerprints, DNA and other physical evidence found at the scenes of roadside bombs now can tell us just how many people are involved in setting the devices and help troops identify those responsible. Battlefield Forensics is allowing the traditional criminal justice system to see just how useful forensic science can be as an investigative tool.

#### **Forensic Intelligence, “The Method”, Investigative Forensic Science**