



BOOK REVIEW

nalistics utilizes known laboratory techniques and procedures to solve crime. Saferstein makes forensic science and criminalistics both comprehensible and meaningful for nonscientists without sacrificing the integrity and detail of science.

Even though crime laboratories have benefited from enormous advances in scientific technology and a proliferation of public interest, forensic science is still developing, especially in areas involving technology. The most basic concern is an effective foundational education. Saferstein meets this concern with an unrivaled fundamental introductory survey textbook on criminalistics.

Criminalistics is not a pure forensic science handbook. It is designed for learning. This quality college-level textbook, used by students preparing for the American Board of Criminalistics Examination, is readable, well organized and in-depth. It addresses current topics and has numerous illustrations and photographs. Each chapter has stated learning objectives, key terminology indexed and highlighted, a reference list of additional and easily obtainable resources, and wide margins for personal handwritten notes. At the end of each chapter is a succinct summary and relevant review questions.

Saferstein utilizes actual cases to illustrate applied theory and practice, including Monica Lewinsky's famous navy blue dress and the corresponding FBI laboratory report on presidential DNA; the anonymous Anthrax letter sent to Senator Thom Daschele; the Scott and Laci Peterson case; the BTK killer; the Charles Lindbergh kidnapping and the O.J. Simpson case. The book contains two interactive CD-ROMs ("What Every Law Enforcement Officer Should Know About DNA Evidence") from the National Institute of Justice concerning the identification, collection and preservation of crime scene DNA evidence. The revised instructor's manual and laboratory manual are available for use with the book.

The author is a respected forensic scientist, expert witness, college instructor and media consultant. Saferstein is a notable recipient of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences' prestigious Paul L. Kirk Award for distinguished services and contributions to the field of forensic science. He spent 21 years as chief of the New Jersey State Police Crime Laboratory. Saferstein's knowledge, insight and experience are

evident in this book. *Criminalistics* is useful to a variety of people aligned with forensic science, including judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers and mystery enthusiasts.

The ninth edition has been substantively revised and expanded to reflect the changing demands of the 21st century. The book presents case studies with the latest technologies for trace evidence relied upon by law enforcement including DNA typing, crime scene investigation, digital imaging enhancement of fingerprints, bioinformatic tools, computerized ballistic examination, microscopy, drug and alcohol analysis, arson and explosion detection technologies. This edition has a full color layout, a new computer forensics chapter, an enhanced chapter on forensic science and the Internet, a section on forensic databases of physical evidence, and many "Web extras" throughout the book. The Web extras provide handy links to related topical Internet sites.

Criminalistics has some deficiencies. The legibility of this worthy textbook is noticeably compromised through utilization of indistinguishable and confusing color combinations, weak color contrasts, thin or small size fonts and other visual impediments. Poor color selections also severely hinder photocopying of the book's graphics, side bars and offset boxes. The editor should have employed the same common sense approach to integrating color design and visual presentation as Saferstein did to the book's educational content. The concise chapter on computer forensics needs further development and comprehensive summaries. The index does not adequately cover the book's content. Moreover, the alcohol intoxication material is weak, even though it was revised and merged into the toxicology chapter. Also, the crucial effects of *Daubert* and *Kumho Tire* on handwriting, fingerprint and voiceprint analysis (and their related determinations of error rates) are not addressed in the book.

Although somewhat basic for people familiar with cyberspace, the chapter on forensic science and the Internet is good, particularly due to its resourcefulness. The book is neutral and factual except for the excerpt from *Outrage*, Vincent Bugliosi's book concerning the O.J. Simpson trial. The passage is a form of tabloid journalism and it does not belong in this textbook.

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Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science, 9th Ed.

By Richard Saferstein
Pearson Prentice-Hall (2007)
654 pages; \$104, CD-ROMs
over 200 illustrations, index
Reviewed by Gil Sapir

Do not judge a book by its cover. This maxim is apropos for the ninth edition of *Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Sciences*. A plain white cover (replacing the graphically enticing and compelling artistic cover designs of previous editions) and uninspiring photographs belie the book's opulence of educational material.

Forensic science is the application of science to law. It is used to convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent. Scientific principles and technology are extensively relied upon by law enforcement in criminal prosecutions. All cases involving criminal charges generally entail some aspect of scientific evidence and forensic science. The discipline of crimi-

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Unfortunately, the author does not discuss ethics in forensic science. The power and effect of scientific evidence cannot be underestimated. It is the most powerful of all evidence. Nor can the forensic scientist's temptation to compromise his or her honesty and integrity through shaping and shading of evidence be neglected. It is noteworthy that no mention is made of the people or agencies that have distorted and fabricated scientific evidence to obtain civil judgments or convict innocent people. A section on applied ethics in forensic science would have been most beneficial, especially for neophyte criminalists and attorneys.

The substantive quality and practicality of the book, however, transcends these criticisms.

Richard Saferstein's book is a very good instructional teaching text, which cannot be said for other volumes in forensic science. *Criminalistics* will undoubtedly be used as a vector to promote and facilitate equal justice. ■

About the Reviewer

Gil Sapir is a forensic science consultant and attorney. He lectures, testifies and writes extensively on scientific evidence.

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