

**WARDISIANI'S  
FORENSIC SCIENCE**

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# MYTHS AND FACTS OF TV



# BELL-RINGER

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- Who is Calvin Goddard?
- What is "Locards Exchange Principle"?
- ✓ Bell-Ringer and Journal are due at the end of the period!



# INTRODUCTION

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- It was awkward finding a suitable spot to fit in this section, but it was decided that the myths about TV crime shows would be the common topic of many frequently asked questions about forensic science. So here are some answers to these queries:

- On television, the select few characters on the show are able to complete all types of specialist analyses.

# MYTH #1

- Television crime shows take the job descriptions of approximately 5 different forensic specialists and combine them into one to create a 'super scientist', a person who is able to solve any type of crime almost entirely on their own.
- In reality, a forensics laboratory is divided into half a dozen different sections which all have different specialists working within them.
- One piece of evidence is usually passed through a number of sections before deciding if the evidence reveals anything.



- Every piece of evidence is always perfect and easily definable, for example, smudges of dirt and dust, fingerprints and broken fingernails. In the end, the crime scene reveals all.
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## MYTH #2

- More often than not, evidence in the crime scene is well hidden and requires a thorough initial search and usually many returns to the crime scene.
- Evidence, such as latent fingerprints are difficult to find and other evidence found is often contaminated or unusable.



# MYTH #3

TV makes the analysis of evidence appear to be fast and simple.



- In real life, crime labs can take weeks or months to analyze and process evidence and the evidence usually goes through several sections before the analysis is complete.
- Certain chemical processes can also take days and cannot be sped up.
- If a piece of evidence has to go through several types of chemical analyses, the process takes even longer.



On television crime shows, every forensic laboratory is fully equipped with everything needed to solve every crime.

# MYTH #4

- In real life, crime labs are usually under funded and it is a constant battle with larger departments, such as fire and police, for funding and resources.
- Many labs often find it difficult to obtain enough staff members, are often tight for space and using worn out equipment.





# MYTH #5

- On TV, all of the crimes are solved and the criminals are brought to justice and punished.
- Fact- The majority of crimes are never solved and the chances of a person being sent to prison for committing a crime are 1 out of 100.
- Approximately eighty percent of murders are solved, but less than twenty percent of burglaries are solved.





- On TV, violent crimes are very common and hundreds of people are murdered every day

# MYTH #6

- Fact- Since the year 1955, television crime shows have included scripts with murdered characters.
- These continue to be shown today but the rate of murder according to these crime shows would be one thousand times higher than the murder of actual people in the real world.



# MYTH #7

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- TV policemen always get to use their guns at nearly every case they are called on to investigate.
- Fact- The average police officer in the city of New York, America would have to work for approximately sixty years just to be able to shoot once.

# MYTH #8

- On TV, crimes always seem to happen in the most convenient of places, for example, in places where people are packed in to increase the number of hostages.
- Fact- In reality, crimes often occur where there are no witnesses present and the majority of times, crimes will occur outside a busy venue rather than inside.
- Crimes where there are huge numbers of hostages involved are not very common.



# MYTH #9

- On television, forensic investigators and police often allow citizens not involved in the investigation to enter and exit the crime scene whenever they please.



- Fact- In real life, crime scenes are sealed off effectively to preserve the evidence within.
- Citizens not involved with the crime are very rarely allowed into a crime scene area unless they have special permission.
- This is because the more people that are allowed to enter and exit a crime scene, the more chance there is of precious evidence being contaminated or destroyed.

# MYTH #10

- On television, TV police and forensic scientists always seem to be able to bend the law in their favor in order to solve crimes.

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- Fact- In reality, there are stringent procedures in place to ensure that the law is always obeyed and never tampered with during the solving of a crime.
- Certain procedures are compulsory, for example the storage and analyzing of evidence in a laboratory i.e. no evidence should be taken out of its storage area for the personal interest of a forensic scientist.



# THANK YOU!

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❖ Questions  
and Comments

