

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Criminalistics—An Introduction to Forensic Science*, Fourth Edition

REFERENCE: Saferstein, R., *Criminalistics—An Introduction to Forensic Science*, 4th ed., Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, 524 pp.

Dr. Saferstein's *Criminalistics* has remained perhaps the best introductory textbook on this field since it was first published 13 years ago. It successfully outlines techniques utilized by the modern crime laboratory in terms those with no background can follow. It has been especially useful in allowing members of the criminal justice system to understand the language, capabilities, and limitations of the field. Its clear and simple style of presentation provides good review material for the new criminalist preparing for court testimony.

An outgrowth of a one-semester college course in a criminal justice program, *Criminalistics* appears to be the preferred text for such courses today. The International Association for Identification Crime Scene Certification Board uses the current edition as one of two recommended texts for mid-level crime scene technician certification. After introductory chapters concerning the development of forensic science and crime laboratories in this country, as well as overview comments concerning the crime scene and physical evidence, the various disciplines of criminalistics are covered. Each chapter provides technical background material, procedures and interpretation of results, collection techniques, review questions, and a listing of additional references. Many chapters include selected case readings that provide dramatic examples of the various evidence categories and their use in criminal cases.

New material in this fourth edition includes an entire chapter (20 pages) devoted to the forensic science applications of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) techniques in addition to expansion of the chapter on fingerprints to include automated fingerprint identification systems. In keeping with the previous format, the DNA material is presented in such a manner that it will prove extremely valuable to nonscientists trying to understand this rapidly growing technology. The case readings on DNA concern the early use of analysis results that resulted in convictions in prominent Florida and Virginia trials. Also included as Appendix III is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's policy for submitting DNA evidence.

The four editions of *Criminalistics* have done an excellent job of keeping pace with new developments within the field. The only area not current is a reference to increasing crime laboratory accessibility by several states that "have developed a comprehensive statewide system of regional or satellite laboratories." Several accredited state systems, including those of Arizona, Oregon, Texas, and Washington, are not mentioned.

As with previous editions, this text should be included in the library of anyone who deals with physical evidence.

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