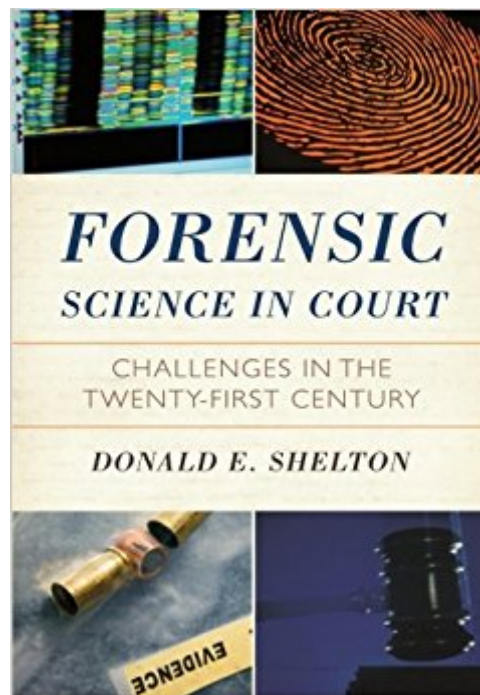




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Forensic Science In Court: Challenges In The Twenty First Century (Issues In Crime And Justice)



Synopsis

Forensic Science in Court explores the legal implications of forensic scienceâ "an increasingly important and complex part of the justice system. Judge Donald Shelton provides an accessible overview of the legal aissues, from the history of evidence in court, to "gatekeeper" judges determining what evidence can be allowed, to the "CSI effect" in juries. The book describes and evaluates various kinds of evidence, including DNA, fingerprints, handwriting, hair, bite marks, tool marks, firearms and bullets, fire and arson investigation, and bloodstain evidence. Assessing the strengths and limitations of each kind of evidence, the author also discusses how they can contribute to identifying the "who," "how," and "whether" questions that arise in criminal prosecutions. Author Donald Shelton draws on the depth of his experiences as courtroom prosecutor, professor, and judge, to provide a well-rounded look at these increasingly critical issues. Case studies throughout help bring the issues to life and show how forensic science has been used, both successfully and not, in real-world situations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You couldn't find a better source for grasping the issues confronting the field of forensic science today than Forensic Science in Court. As a trial judge, Donald Shelton has observed the legal process from its most critical perspective, so who better than a 'gatekeeper' to guide us? Judge Shelton provides a detailed framework for best practices in all areas of forensic science, for today and in the future. Everyone with a hand in the justice system, from judges to attorneys to expert

witnesses, should read this book. (Katherine Ramsland) Judge Shelton's book hits the right balance: it clearly communicates the basic procedures used in each technique but does not dwell too much in any one area. For a very difficult subject matter, it is fairly easy to read, and the case studies really make the issues come alive. Judge Shelton is not afraid to point out the weaknesses both legally and scientifically of some of the procedures. (Ron Bretz) The book offers a searching examination of some of the most sacred of the sacred cows in the scientific evidence field, including: fingerprints, firearms comparisons, psychiatric evaluation, and so on. Former trial lawyer and current judge Donald Shelton has successfully put together an overview of the scientific issues that demand attention in light of modern legal principles. Forensic Science in Court will be a uniquely useful working tool for judges, lawyers, investigators and anyone who aspires to join those professions. It is thoroughly researched, thoughtfully presented and completely readable. (Nick Rine) This important book stands at the intersection of law, science, and technology, and it is essential reading for lawyers, judges, jurors, investigators, policy-makers, and citizens who care about their court system. In this highly readable book, Judge Shelton vividly illustrates that all too often forensic evidence does not meet the test of scientific validity. (Nancy S. Marder) Judge Shelton's book is a very readable, entertaining, concise, and enlightening account of the history of the use of forensic science evidence in criminal trials. This book is a valuable resource for lawyers, judges, and students. I highly recommend it. (Thomas K. Clancy)

Donald Shelton is Chief Judge of the Michigan 22nd Judicial Circuit and an adjunct professor in the criminal justice and political science departments at Eastern Michigan University. He also serves as a supervising judge for the Washtenaw Juvenile Court. He has previously worked as an attorney and taught at Washtenaw Community College and the University of Maryland.

As a forensic engineer, I rarely become involved with criminal cases unless they have to do with arson or sabotage to machinery or structures. Nevertheless, this book is extremely fun and factual with its treatment of criminal forensics. Not to say it lacks material I will not use, because it definitely does have valid, specific, and valuable takeaway information for any forensic professional regardless of his or her field of expertise; the book's dissertation on the Dauber Trilogy is a fine example. Chapter 8, "Jurors and Forensic Science Evidence" is yet another excellent example, and why I chose the title of this review as the "CSI Effect". Briefly, expert testimony at a jury trial tends to follow George Gerbner's hypothesis of over 30 years ago; the "cultivation theory" to be more specific. Mr. Gerbner theorized television programs tended to cultivated the public's perception of

societal reality, especially as it relates to the "CSI effect". This book is not only enjoyable (for anyone) to read, it is an important reference and not just for a forensic professional. I highly endorse it.

Great addition to my other Criminal Justice books on crime scene and forensic information. Also used for class on criminal analysis.

Best read to make sure Guilty Client's don't claim "incompetent Counsel" on Appeal. This is the best text I have seen for under \$200.

Good overview on some landmark cases in forensic science.

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