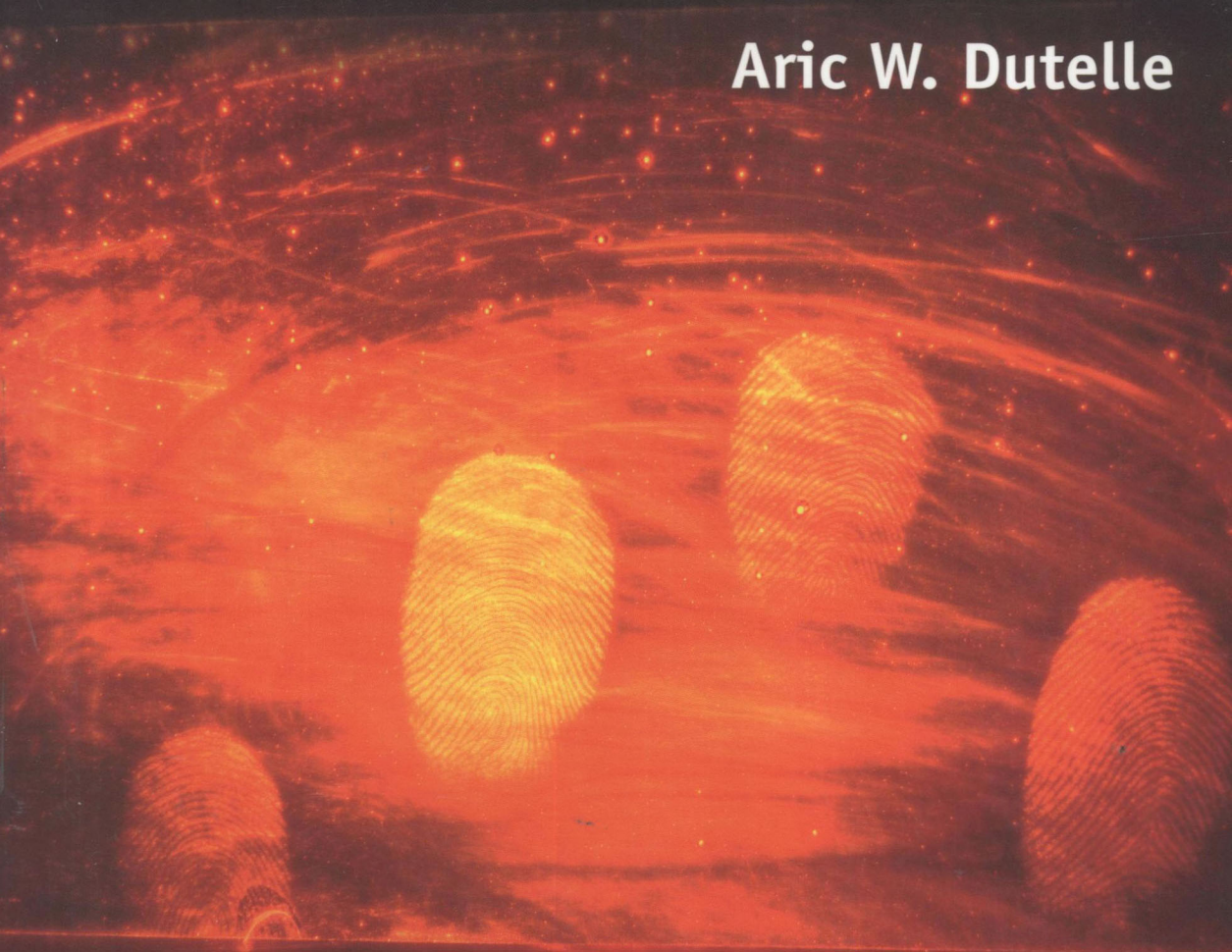


AN INTRODUCTION TO

Crime Scene Investigation

Aric W. Dutelle



AN INTRODUCTION TO **Crime Scene Investigation**

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AN INTRODUCTION TO

Crime Scene Investigation

Dedication



This book is dedicated to the victims of crimes and to their families. I am sad to think that since the beginning of humanity there has been crime, and there likely always will be. However, I hope that the knowledge and insight of those who will learn from this text, and the professionalism and dedication of the contributors to it, will help to bring you closure, and to right the wrongs.

To my family who could not be around to see the result . . . I think you really would have enjoyed reading this.

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Preface

At present I am, as you know, fairly busy, but I propose to devote my declining years to the composition of a textbook which shall focus the whole art of detection into one volume.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930)
Sherlock Holmes, in *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange*

In 2004 I was asked by the University of Wisconsin–Platteville to develop a program in forensic investigation. This opportunity intrigued me as it enabled me to attempt to fill a void that I had realized existed during my previous years of police and crime scene–related service. It was my experience as a new patrol officer that a large chasm existed about the topic of how to properly process a crime scene. The police academy provided a thorough education on search and seizure law, arrest control techniques, firearms, use of force, and driving tactics. However, the block of time devoted to the processing and documentation of crime scenes was typically less than one day, eight hours, in duration.

I thought that the academy lacked sufficient training on such a serious topic, and I was even more shocked when I was hired by a mid-size police department (100+ officers). During my six months of field training, not one hour was devoted to the topic of crime scene processing. We received a four-hour block given on police report writing, but there was no training on processing methodologies relating to fingerprint recovery, crime scene photography, sketching, and other processing-related topics. The disconcerting part of this observation was that each officer was issued, as part of his/her standard vehicle gear, a field latent processing kit.

Most people have the view (as a result of weekly primetime television) that crime scene personnel have received significant training in matters pertaining to crime scene processing methods. However, my

first experience with dusting for fingerprints was not in a training session, but was instead at a crime scene. After completing my report and reconsidering the manner in which the investigation was conducted, I began to take notice of my knowledge- and training-related deficiencies. At no time during my academic, academy, or police department training was I instructed on the investigative process as it related to the documentation and collection of physical evidence. My department soon realized the problem as well, and was proactive in the development of a Crime Scene Unit. This was a developing trend around the United States and not an isolated event to my department. However, as the reader of this text will find, and as I discovered during my time in law enforcement, it is not simply those crime scene technicians or crime scene investigators who must be educated on the methodologies and theories relating to crime scene investigation. It is also necessary for police officers, police administration, medical personnel, and a great many others to understand such matters. However, because I was unable to acquire such education prior to my employment, it was through trial and error and the mentoring from others (who were hopefully properly trained on such matters) that I learned how to process crime scenes.

My frustrations did not end when I left full-time duties in law enforcement to accept the position of creating a forensic investigation program for the University of Wisconsin–Platteville. Although I managed to find myself in law enforcement without crime scene–related training, there was now a mass movement toward the development of forensic programs and academic resources related to crime scene processing. However, the development of such programs did not necessarily mean proper information was available to those attempting to educate and be educated on the topic.

This book was designed with that chasm in mind. I hope that the reader will find that this text offers a single source reference for the topic of crime scene investigation, which assumes no prior knowledge of the topic, and is assembled to be easy to follow and easy to instruct.