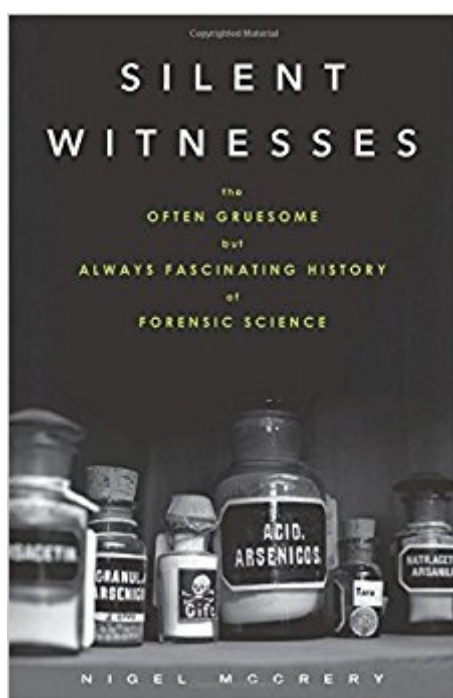


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Silent Witnesses: The Often Gruesome But Always Fascinating History Of Forensic Science



Synopsis

Crime novelist and former police officer Nigel McCrery provides an account of all the major areas of forensic science from around the world over the past two centuries. The book weaves dramatic narrative and scientific principles together in a way that allows readers to figure out crimes along with the experts. Readers are introduced to such fascinating figures as Dr. Edmond Locard, the "French Sherlock Holmes"; Edward Heinrich, "Wizard of Berkeley," who is credited with having solved more than 2,000 crimes; and Alphonse Bertillon, the French scientist whose guiding principle, "no two individuals share the same characteristics," became the core of criminal identification. Landmark crime investigations examined in depth include a notorious murder involving blood evidence and defended by F. Lee Bailey, the seminal 1936 murder that demonstrated the usefulness of the microscope in examining trace evidence, the 1849 murder of a wealthy Boston businessman that demonstrated how difficult it is to successfully dispose of a corpse, and many others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It is a fascinating story and makes for a thoroughly good read." *Guardian* "A convincing and readable history of a science defined by the simple maxim: 'Every contact leaves a trace.'" *Times* "For those looking for insight into the early days of forensics, this is a fascinating and informative work, a great entry point. Of special note is the chapter on DNA testing, where the author plays a role in identifying the remains of the Romanovs, the former Russian royal

family. [Publishers Weekly](#) "Where McCrery really shines is in his storytelling, which is no surprise given his background as a successful crime novelist. While certain technical portions may be difficult for some readers, true-crime enthusiasts will find the payoff worth the effort." [Kirkus](#) "Silent Witnesses is an easily accessible and well-written primer on the history of forensic science. It reads like a work of fiction but offers the reader a clear history of many of the most important advances in forensic investigative techniques... Silent Witnesses is a delightful journey through the evolution of forensic science and a very useful introduction to the subject. Highly recommended." [New York Journal of Books](#) "The book weaves dramatic narrative and scientific principles together in a way that allows readers to figure out crimes along with the experts." [BookTrib](#)

Nigel McCrery was a police officer before he joined the BBC in 1990. There he has worked on a number of documentaries and created various series, including the crime/forensics drama *Silent Witness*. He is the author of several crime novels, including *Still Waters*.

Most of the cases and history can be found in shows like "catching killers" and "forensic files", but the historical detail, and scientific information is refreshing. Great perspective and charmingly well-written. A great intro or brush-up on the field.

Really enjoyed this book, it is like taking a class ! Very easy to understand and a pleasure to read. Learned a lot about forensics which is a passion of mine. I would recommend this book to every body I know even my grandmother if she was still around. Enjoy and many happy returns !

This book is very interesting. We have all seen the television shows of this century called CSI. This book talks about how the forensic science got started. Which scientists are credited with the many aspects of the science. It also talks about many different murder cases over the years where the various methods of forensic science were used to prove or disprove how the victim was murdered. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who likes history, science, or even mysteries. I found it so interesting that it was hard to stop reading.

This was a fascinating read. The author did a remarkable job, researching the details and presenting each historic event covered. It should be read by every MD with any interest in the history of medicine. It exposes the evil intentions of many over the centuries, as they chose these

chemicals to destroy unsuspecting victims. Brilliant scientific minds overcame obstacles to bring justice to those innocent and suffering victims.

This was really interesting. Most books (for laypeople) on forensics talk about how they've been used in current cases. This goes back through the development of forensics -- how did we develop blood testing for identification? Fingerprints? Ways to identify poisons after the victim has died? etc. Along the way, he tells about how forensic tests were used in various historic and more modern cases, up to the identification of the Romanovs and of Richard III.

An excellent overview in the many aspects of Forensics in the solving of crime. The author gives a short history and then cases that were important in the use of the forensic category to solve the crime. Fingerprints, blood, ballistics etc. All worth the read for research, learning and even enjoyment to learn more about how crimes are solved. Beats watching CSI any day!

Very interesting history. I didn't expect it to be all about England but it just helped grow my world view. I liked how it covered different aspects and their roots. I'd highly recommend to anyone who enjoys history and true crime.

A very interesting read conveying the history of forensic science without being overly technical. Interwoven are actual cases that benefitted from this evolving science, bringing the application of forensics to life.

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