



A Hands-On Introduction to Forensic Science: Cracking the Case

By Mark Okuda, Frank H. Stephenson PhD.

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One failing of many forensic science textbooks is the isolation of chapters into compartmentalized units. This format prevents students from understanding the connection between material learned in previous chapters with that of the current chapter. Using a unique format, **A Hands-On Introduction to Forensic Science: Cracking the Case** approaches the topic of forensic science from a real-life perspective in a way that these vital connections are encouraged and established.

The book utilizes an ongoing fictional narrative throughout, entertaining students as it provides hands-on learning in order to "crack the case." As two investigators try to solve a missing persons case, each succeeding chapter reveals new characters, new information, and new physical evidence to be processed. A full range of topics are covered, including processing the crime scene, lifting prints, trace and blood evidence, DNA and mtDNA sequencing, ballistics, skeletal remains, and court testimony. Following the storyline, students are introduced to the appropriate science necessary to process the physical evidence, including math, physics, chemistry, and biology.

The final element of each chapter includes a series of cost-effective, field-tested lab activities that train students in processing, analyzing, and documenting the physical evidence revealed in the narrative. Practical and realistic in its approach, this book enables students to understand how forensic science operates in the real world.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Mark Okuda received his BA in biology with a minor in chemistry from the University of the Pacific. He went on to receive his MA in natural science from San Jose State University. Mark taught for 33 years at Silver Creek High School and currently serves as an adjunct faculty member at Evergreen Valley College teaching human heredity and forensic biology. During his tenure as a high school science teacher, Mark was the recipient of the Santa Clara County Teacher of the Year, Synopsys Outstanding Science Teacher Award, East Side Union High School District Innovative Teacher Award (Forensic Science), and National Biotechnology Education Conference Teacher Award and held a patent for a biotechnology kit marketed by Bio-Rad entitled "Secrets of the Rain Forest."

Frank H. Stephenson received his PhD in molecular biology from UC Berkeley and performed postgraduate work at UC San Francisco Medical School. He spent several years with Berlex Biosciences as a senior research scientist prior to joining the Technical Training Department at Life Technologies, where he teaches forensics, DNA sequencing, and real-time PCR. Frank has taught molecular biology with the UC Berkeley Extension program and, for ten years, served as a part-time faculty member with Foothill College, where he conducted evening classes in PCR. Dr. Stephenson has published several books in the biotech field, including *DNA: How the Biotech Revolution Is Changing the Way We Fight Disease* and *Calculations for Molecular Biology and Biotechnology: A Guide to Mathematics in the Laboratory*. This textbook evolved from summer workshops in forensic and DNA analysis given at Life Technologies to high school teachers and students in collaboration with his coauthor, Mark Okuda.

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