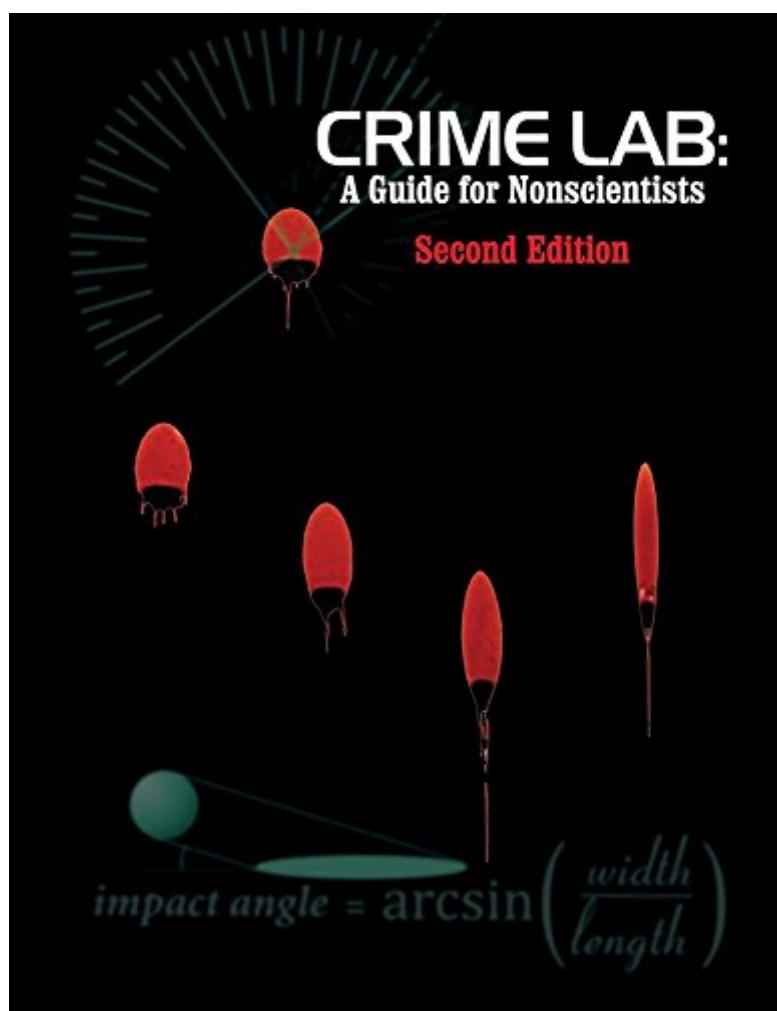


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# Crime Lab: A Guide For Nonscientists (2nd Ed.)



## Synopsis

Follow the evidence! Author and forensic scientist, John Houde, takes you on the cook's tour of a modern crime laboratory, explaining each test and procedure along the way. DNA, blood spatter, firearms, drug analysis, microscopy and more are explained in easy to understand terms and illustrated with real-life examples. This edition replaces the popular first edition, published in 1999, and includes 70 new illustrations and photographs. The second edition boosts the level of scientific discussion to that of a high school or first-year college student with a year of biology or chemistry. In addition, it has been re-edited for clarity and updated to reflect current methods of analysis. The 2nd edition also includes three appendices containing materials suitable for an introductory course in forensic science. Discussion questions, practical examples and even a short laboratory exercise are included. In 2000, the first edition of CRIME LAB won both the Benjamin Franklin Award (Publisher's Marketing Association) and the Independent Publisher Award. It was also a New York Public Library "Books for the Teen Age" selection. "This freshly illustrated edition is a bit less elementary in its approach and should be of great interest to agencies who use the crime lab as well as students who are exploring forensic science as a career," says author John Houde.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Crime Lab: A Guide for Nonscientists" by John Houde, ISBN 0-965-8286-2-X (HC), Calico Press 1999 - is a 205 page treatise by seasoned writer (20 articles) and publisher of quarterly CACNews. It is a superbly written and well illustrated (130) guide to understanding the basic principles utilized by criminalists in their forensic forays into known or suspected crime investigations. In 12 chapters Houde provides a brief history of forensics, depicts a crime scene (murder, assault, break-in, attempted arson) which is used as a ploy to submerge the reader into the probe as the investigation begins, describes encompassing the crime scene and how to record, photograph and analyze everything - from blood, saliva, sweat, vaginal secretions, pubic and body hair, animal and carpet fibers, and matching of probable murder weapons using well explained modern scientific devices including GC/MS, IR, SEM, polarizing microscopy, special tissue stains, ascertaining RI of glass, and details on collection, preservation and chain of custody of gathered evidences. They don't get any better.

Even though I thoroughly enjoyed the pictures, photographs, detail, and lay out of the book...I think I expected more than what I actually got. I've been interested in forensic science since medical school, and have read quite a few books. This one was fun, but it became less interesting and more preachy toward the end. I skimmed through the last part of the book, especially on the author's concerns over whether the public was adversely influenced by the OJ trial and the fiasco involved there. If I remember rightly, it was more the stupidity of the LAPD rather than the mistakes of the labs that stood out in everyone's mind. It is true that the FBI lab has come under more fire lately for mistakes, as should other labs if they do not do their job right. Lab work, whether for medical reasons or criminalists, can literally mean life-or-death, and it would be foolish to allow incompetence in either areas to flourish. For those just beginning to be interested in this field, especially those who think they may want to do this as their life's work, this is a good book for them to read. Be aware that the tests for DNA and other stuff is changing constantly, so what was written in the book, will now have changed...the field of Northern blotting, PCR, and other medical testing of blood components and DNA is changing about every six months, with new technology and more accurate methods of detection. It is difficult for any writer of this genre or neuroscience textbooks

even to keep up with the field. Karen Sadler, Science Education, University of Pittsburgh

Perfect condition. Loved the book!

I bought this for my wife who love studying about forensics and she does all of the Bones, CSI, NCIS and any other tv programs that deal with crime science solutions Seller got the product to us asap

Fear not, science-phobes, for a fun-to-read, exceptionally well-illustrated comprehensive book on what goes on inside a crime lab has finally been published. *Crime Lab: A Guide for Nonscientists* by John Hodge accurately and thoroughly depicts what criminalists encounter in their profession. It offers engaging reading to the layperson and professional alike, placing them first-hand into the processing of a crime scene. They are then taken for a ride on the back of the evidence through the crime laboratory as criminalists and analysts unlock the secrets hidden within. Throughout, concepts come alive through well-chosen snippets of real-life cases. The breadth of instrumentation and analyses that the author presents is impressive. He explains DNA typing, bloodstain pattern interpretation, gas chromatography, electrophoresis, ultraviolet spectrometry, Fourier transform infrared spectrometry, microscopy, DRUGFIRE, mass spectrometry, impression evidence, microcrystal tests, and scanning electron microscopy, to name only some. In the spirit of thoroughness, the author admits there are areas that he did not include in the book and provides a list of them. More important than the technical aspects of the crime lab is conveying the criminalist's mentality. The author has the reader view the evidence through the mind of the criminalist-considering alternative interpretations of the evidence, then using scientific principles and techniques to corroborate or refute them. He explains, "We don't have a personal stake in winning convictions or acquittals. We only care that our interpretations will be correct." Although written for the layperson, those in the profession will find this valuable reading. There is currently a trend towards specialization in criminalistics. It is not unusual to find lab personnel fully competent in their specialty, yet woefully ignorant about their coworker's areas of expertise. This book provides a breadth of basic knowledge that any good criminalist should have. It starts with the processing of the crime scene, then presents real-life problems and solutions encountered by every lab regarding packaging and sample collection. Resources every good criminalist should be aware of are listed and some of the "big players" in the field are mentioned. Courtroom testimony, accreditation, certification, and professional associations are also addressed. Continuing in the comprehensive

spirit of the book, there is an index for ready reference and a book list for further study. It includes over 100 beautiful and well-placed illustrations. For those who become caught by the criminalistics bug, the author discusses what it takes to become a criminalist. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and highly recommend it to potential jurors, those searching for a career, and forensic scientists.

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