Forensic Evidence in CBI Cases

What Is Forensic Science?

Forensic science is the application of sciences to matters of law. Forensic science can help investigators understand, for example, how blood spatter patterns occur [physics], learn the composition and source of evidence such as drugs and trace materials [chemistry] or determine the identity of an unknown suspect [biology].

The origins of forensic science can be traced back to the 6th century with legal medicine being practiced, by the Chinese. Within the next ten centuries advances in both medical and scientific knowledge will increase the usage of medical evidence in courts. Other types of scientific evidence were not evolved until the 18th and 19th centuries, a period during which much of our recent knowledge on chemistry was just starting to be recognized. Over the past few years, the forensic sciences have made histrionic scientific innovations.

Forensic evidence plays several roles in criminal investigations (Fisher, 2004)

- **Prove a crime has been committed or establish key elements of a crime.**
- **Place the suspect in contact with the victim or with the crime scene.**
- **Establish the identity of persons associated with a crime.**
- **Exonerate the innocent.**
- **Corroborate a victim's testimony.**
- **Assist in establishing the facts of what occurred**

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In recent times, two scientific and technological advances have reformed the field of forensic science: (i) DNA typing which facilitated body fluids to be individualized and (ii) Computerized data base of DNA, fingerprints, and firearms which can be stored and retrieved when require. Moreover, the types of evidence available have extended and the analysis has become more sophisticated. According to some research, there is a growing expectation held by victims, legal performers and judges that forensic evidence will be available and yield the "truth" about what happened in criminal activities.

Scientific evidences are vital in order to arrive at the reasonable consequence in determining large number of issues. Whether scientific evidence is worth have faith in or not is a key issue which can be encountered by a judge whenever scientific evidence is placed before him. The issue gains much more significance whenever a new scientific principle is to be applied as evidence in the court of law.

Most of the research examining the role of forensic evidence on case-processing outcomes has been haphazard, concentrating on just one or two decision stages, and only a few comprehensive studies exist that examine cases from arrest through sentencing. This is because of the challenges associated with tracing and gathering a huge data as cases pass through the various stages of investigation like arrest, laboratory analysis, adjudication, and sentencing. Studies which have been conducted, discover diversified conclusions for different verdict stages, with some indication of inconsequential role played by forensic evidence.

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Even though an item of forensic evidence has probative value, it may not be good news for an investigator or prosecutor because it does not fit their theory of the crime. The DNA profile may not match the suspect, thereby exonerating the suspect from the crime. A latent print can match a suspect but further investigation may reveal that the suspect can explain why the prints were at the scene and give proof that he or she was not at the scene when the crime occurred. Nevertheless, the forensic evidence has probative value because evidentiary facts have been established.