

# CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

# WHO DUNNIT?!

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes after a crime has been committed? From the minute that a crime has been carried out to the burial of a body, forensic science is used to help solve the crime and find out 'who dunnit'!

Forensic science has become an increasingly popular subject in recent times due to the advances in technology and the application of this into the law. It is used by many different law enforcement areas, such as:

- property crime
- drugs crime
- road policing
- international crime
- hi-tech crime

These are just a few examples – the list could go on! Forensics is used in day to day crimes such as burglary and road offences to large scale international crimes that could involve people from all over the world!

One of the most recognised jobs within forensic science is the scientist who actually works in the laboratories with dead bodies and also those who visit crime scenes to try and determine what actually happened before the crime was committed. Forensic scientists use a variety of techniques to carry out their investigations, from DNA profiling to analysis of bodily fluids and organs. If you're a fan of programmes such as *CSI* or *Waking the Dead*, you should be aware of the gory details involved in what are called 'cold cases' (those dealing with dead bodies).

### What qualifications would I need?

If you are interested in working within forensics then you will need at least four A-C passes at GCSE, including English, maths and science. You will need at least one A Level pass within a science subject (preferably biology or chemistry) and then you'll need to continue your studies to degree level. You can specifically study forensic biology and forensic biology and biochemistry here at the University of Portsmouth and work with Michelle Harvey, one of our lecturers who specialises in forensic entomology – maggots on dead bodies!



## Forensic facts

**DNA** – Deoxyribonucleic acid, is found in every cell in our bodies and is unique to each individual.

**TRACE EVIDENCE** – Physical evidence found due to the transfer of small amounts of materials, such as hair and textile fibres and gunshot residue.

**RIGOR MORTIS** – Energy supplies to the muscle runs out, leading to stiffness and a loss of elasticity. Muscles become rigid for 24-36 hours whilst the protein in the muscle breaks down.

**BALLISTICS ANALYSIS** – Analysis of what type of firearm was used in a crime. Tests will also determine the physical characteristics of how the gun was fired/used.

**BACK TO THE MAGGOTS...** Insects can be used to find out how long a body has been left for. Certain insects are attracted to a dead body at different times of the body's decomposition, therefore telling the scientist how long it has been dead for.

## CRIME SCENE WORKSHOP

### – solve a crime!

If forensics interests you then why not take part in our forensics workshop in February half term? For details and an application form visit our website

[www.upforitclub.org.uk/workshops](http://www.upforitclub.org.uk/workshops)