

SciTECH IDEAS IN ACTION

Jennifer (J. J.) Bryant

“CSI IN THE REAL World”

The SciTech Lecture Series held its last lecture for the Spring 2015 Semester on March 19, 2015 at the Forsyth Tech Oak Grove Center. The presenter, Ms. Jennifer (J. J.) Bryant, chose as her subject title, *“CSI IN THE REAL WORLD”* and her opening slide title, *“The CSI Effect: Fact vs Fiction”* brought even more intrigue to the lecture.

She explained that first and foremost and unlike today’s TV drama shows, a crime cannot be solved in an hour. There are countless hours involved in searching, documenting, collecting and packaging any and all evidence found at the scene. Even after this, a Crime Scene Investigator’s job is not finished. They have to file a written report and in some cases, testify in court.

Contrary to the *“CSI”* shows, Crime Scene Investigators do not interview the criminals; that is the job of the criminal investigators. In the real world, the Crime Scene Investigators do not wear white or fashionable clothing because it can be a very dirty job. They have uniforms in the form of coveralls and wear lots and lots of gloves. On the TV *“CSI,”* lights are not used to search and collect evidence, but in a real crime scene, flashlights and cameras are used to further enhance the overhead or existing lighting to reveal the evidence to be collected. In the real world, fingerprints are given numbers, not names, and on TV, labs can do everything—there is no limit to their scope. Quite surprisingly, she confirmed that Crime Scene Investigators are issued ballistic vests because they themselves can also become a target of the crime while collecting crime scene evidence. It is this evidence presented in court that can send a criminal to prison.

Ms. Bryant then shared some of the characteristics, to name just a few, that an individual needs to become a Crime Scene Investigator. They need to possess strong organizational skills, good analytical and critical thinking skills, a detail-oriented and methodical personality, excellent verbal and written skills and the ability to be flexible and adapt to various work environments, with some of them being very unpleasant.

To adjourn the meeting, J. J. invited the audience to the stage to see some of the tools used in criminal investigations such as tire tread impressions, shoe impressions and bullet casings. Her presentation most definitely brings reality to a very popular TV drama show. Please view the presentation on the following link: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=a6fpOEa-cq0>