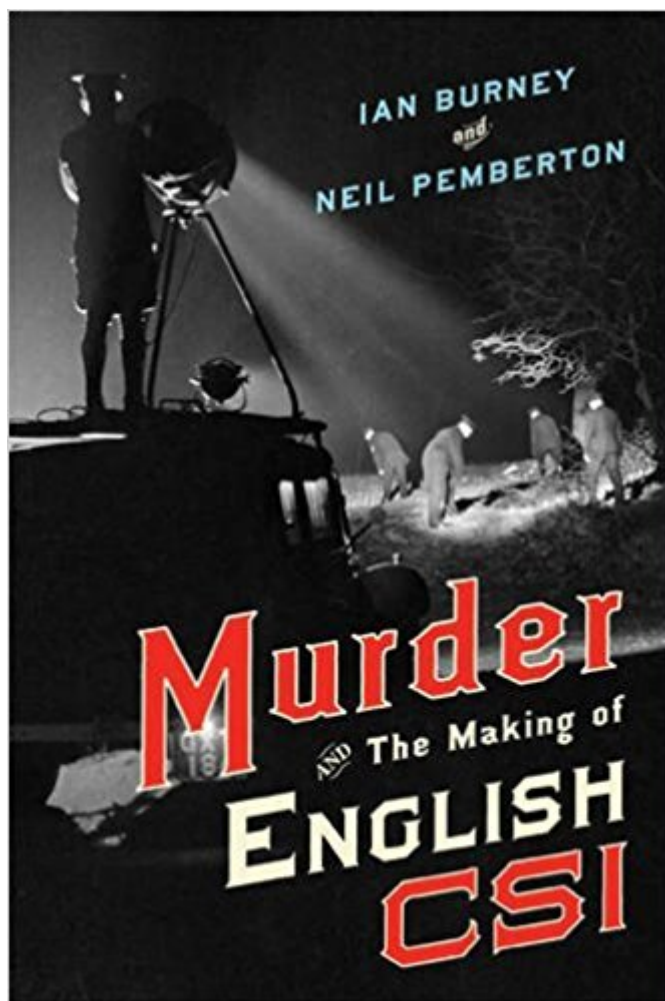


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# Murder And The Making Of English CSI



## Synopsis

Crime scene investigation—like CSI—has captured the modern imagination. On television screens and in newspapers, we follow the exploits of forensic officers wearing protective suits and working behind police tape to identify and secure physical evidence for laboratory analysis. But where did this ensemble of investigative specialists and scientific techniques come from? In *Murder and the Making of English CSI*, Ian Burney and Neil Pemberton tell the engrossing history of how, in the first half of the twentieth century, novel routines, regulations, and techniques—from chain-of-custody procedures to the analysis of hair, blood, and fiber—fundamentally transformed the processing of murder scenes. Focusing on two iconic English investigations—the 1924 case of Emily Kaye, who was beaten and dismembered by her lover at a lonely beachfront holiday cottage, and the 1953 investigation into John Christie’s serial murders in his dingy terraced home in London’s West End—Burney and Pemberton chart the emergence of the crime scene as a new space of forensic activity. Drawing on fascinating source material ranging from how-to investigator handbooks and detective novels to crime journalism, police case reports, and courtroom transcripts, the book shows readers how, over time, the focus of murder inquiries shifted from a primarily medical and autopsy-based interest in the victim’s body to one dominated by laboratory technicians laboring over minute trace evidence. *Murder and the Making of English CSI* reveals the compelling and untold story of how one of the most iconic features of our present-day forensic landscape came into being. It is a must-read for forensic scientists, historians, and true crime devotees alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"... A meticulously researched introduction to an important subject. VERDICT: Thoroughly readable with extensive source notes, this succinct exploration of the subject will appeal to academic and lay readers alike." (Library Journal)"A profile of a CSI investigator reveals a calm, focused observer who is not influenced by the sensationalism of the crime. This book is primarily for those with a serious interest in the mechanics of forensics and crime-solving, and wish to seek detailed knowledge of this fascinating field. Aficionados of crime and mystery literature will also find this an entertaining read. Recommended." (Choice)"A profile of a CSI investigator reveals a calm, focused observer who is not influenced by the sensationalism of the crime. This book is primarily for those with a serious interest in the mechanics of forensics and crime-solving, and wish to seek detailed knowledge of this fascinating field. Aficionados of crime and mystery literature will also find this an entertaining read. Recommended." (Choice)"Murder and the Making of English CSI is a thoroughly detailed and meticulously argued scholarly work focusing on the surprisingly neglected history of crime scene investigation. Although a nonspecialist audience would be engaged by this fascinating and highly readable book, its significant contribution to the (small but growing) academic literature on the history of forensic analysis is welcome." (Annals of Science)"Their [Burney and Pemberton's] book is timely and instructive." (Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books)"Out of some pretty gruesome parts, Burney and Pemberton have assembled a remarkably elegant account of the making of modern murder investigation. Their analysis combines scholarly sophistication with a clarity of prose that entertains, informs, and surprises. Murder and the Making of English CSI brims with insight about the historical path that led to our forensic present." (Mario Biagioli, UC Davis School of Law, author of Galileo's Instruments of Credit: Telescopes, Images, Secrecy)"Burney and Pemberton trace the transition of the forensic pathologist from the sole embodiment of truth to the team approach of modern crime scene investigation. Spellbinding cases illustrate the development of modern techniques of English forensic science and the waning authority of the English forensic pathologist. In a post-DNA world, the autopsy and crime scene are not forgotten and are neglected only at the risk of justice itself." (Jeffrey Jentzen, Director of Autopsy and Forensic Pathology, University of Michigan, author of Death Investigation in America: A History of Coroners, Medical Examiners, and the Pursuit of Medical Certainty)"For all the talk about CSI these days, there is very little history of it. This nuanced and

fascinating history of English crime scene reconstruction has an uncanny prescience for today's debates about how to manage crime scene evidence." (Simon A. Cole, University of California, Irvine, author of *Suspect Identities: A History of Fingerprinting and Criminal Identification*) "An accessible and thought-provoking history of English crime scene investigation. A must-read for anyone with a serious interest in the past, present, and future of reading a crime scene." (Val McDermid, bestselling author of *The Mermaids Singing* and *Splinter the Silence*) "This disturbing, powerful, and beautifully crafted book shows us how CSI has gained its iconic place in modern murders. Taking us deep into the grisly world of the crime scene, the mortuary, the laboratory, and the courtroom, the authors explain that forensic science, far from simply discovering truth, produces knowledge grounded in contingent and changing concepts, techniques, and institutions." (James Vernon, University of California, Berkeley, author of *Distant Strangers: How Britain Became Modern*) "In a world where the science of DNA appears to be squeezing out the other specialities, here is the unsqueezed history of extraordinary scientific discovery. A dazzling account of the evolution of crime scene and its management, *Murder and the Making of English CSI* is a full-on drama of scientific ingenuity and invention where CSI meets historical thriller." (Barbara Machin, creator, writer, and showrunner of BBC One's Emmy-winning crime series *Waking the Dead*)

Ian Burney is the director of the University of Manchester's Centre for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine (CHSTM). He is the author of *Bodies of Evidence: Medicine and the Politics of the English Inquest, 1830-1926* and *Poison, Detection, and the Victorian Imagination*. Neil Pemberton is a senior Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellow at CHSTM. He is the coauthor of *Rabies in Britain: Dogs, Disease and Culture, 1830-2000* and Leech.

tough read but worth it.

3.5 stars The term Crime Scene Investigation goes as far back as 1946. However, it was not until 2010 that the term, Crime Scene Investigation or CSI made the Oxford English Dictionary. This book concentrates on the English CSI, and it gives us some very interesting statistics and data. This is a researcher's book in my opinion. Someone who likes the day to day driven data and foot work that drives an investigation. The history of CSI is provided, and the forensic pathologist is given a lot of praise as a continuous presence in long term investigations. In this book, murder is the subject,

and in terms of violent homicide we learn that men are disproportionately the murderers, and women are disproportionately the victims. It seems to be the same everywhere. In the first half of the century, procedures, routines, regulations and techniques were the stuff murder investigations were made of. Now, the crime scene, analysis of hair, blood and fiber has changed the game. This book concentrates on two famous English investigations, Emily Kaye in 1924 and John Christie in 1953. Murder and mayhem, police procedurals and the characters who inhabit this world are my forte. I have not met too many mysteries that I have not liked. This book, however, got the best of me. It is a long, slow read, and forensic scientists and historians would be the most likely audience. Some good information, but this book is best left for the experts. Recommended For Some. prisob 06-07-16

“Murder and the Making of English CSI” is a study by two scholars from the University of Manchester’s Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, Ian Burney and Neil Pemberton, about the origins and evolution of contemporary crime scene investigation (CSI). The authors’ primary purpose is to “illuminate the historical circumstances through which one of the most recognizable features of the modern forensics of homicide – the crime scene as a highly choreographed space of investigation – came into being.” Secondary to that, the authors outline the continuous shifting relationship between the importance of forensic pathology of the victim’s body and laboratory forensics of traces (hair, fiber, soil, dust) in light of the recent battle between DNA fingerprinting and holistic forensic activity. The authors have chosen two “flash moments”, iconic murder cases in the history of English CSI, that illustrate the evolution of CSI that took place in the early 20th century through the post-War years, both in how investigators treat the crime scene and evidence and how the public perceives it. The cases are the 1929 murder and subsequent dismembering of Emily Kaye by her lover Patrick Mahon in a holiday bungalow on the beach near Eastbourne and the famous 1953 case of the murders of six women by John Christie in a ground floor flat at 10 Rillington Place in West London. The 1929 case created a starring role for pathologist Sir Bernard Spilsbury. The 1953 case required the expertise of a more integrated team of specialists, including pathologist Dr. Francis Camps and Lewis Nickolls of the Metropolitan Police Laboratory. The book begins with the origins of the ideas behind the modern crime scene, namely the book “Criminal Investigation: A Practical Handbook” by Austrian criminal jurist Hans Gross, published 1893, published in English 1906, to which the authors dedicate an entire chapter. That is followed by a

chapter exploring the origins of the “medical witness”, police pathologist, or medico-legal expert, again citing Gross’s work as well as that of French criminologist Edmund Locard and a couple of English influences. Then it is on to the pivotal homicide cases. Two chapters are dedicated to the Kaye murder case (1929). One takes us through the investigation, explaining the role of celebrity pathologist Spilsbury. The second chapter discusses the role of the press in creating the conception of the crime scene in the mind of the public. In contrast, the chapter about the Christie case (1953) places the discussion of forensics and of the press in the same chapter. This case has an interesting twist, though, in that contemporaneous records of the case were usurped in the public’s mind by a 1961 book by Ludovic Kennedy that reconsidered the evidence that Christie may have committed an additional two murders. The book’s Epilogue is dedicated to this development. In between discussions of the two cases, the authors present the work of the Departmental Committee on Detective Work and Procedure, under Arthur Dixon, the contributions of F.G. Tryhorn, a Hall University chemist who founded a detective school, and other advocates of modern forensics, who were collectively successful in institutionalizing the handling of trace evidence in the 1930s, which explains what we see in the 1950s. I enjoyed “Murder and the Making of English CSI”, but it is a book by academics written for academics. Studies of homicide investigation have tended to be practitioner accounts, rather than historical overviews, so this book is filling a void. It is concise, but making it readable was apparently not a priority. I found the later chapters flowed better than the early chapters. I’ve read about the development of fingerprinting and anthropometrics in the 19th century and their application to criminal identification and investigation, so the subject of CSI in the 20th century interested me. The idea of the “crime scene” as a construct and how it became so sheds a different light on all those television crime scene investigations. The information in “Murder and the Making of English CSI” is good, but the readability leaves something to be desired in places.

I am an absolute sucker for forensic books (I know, I just don’t know what else to call ’em). One of the first non-fiction books I ever read outside of school books was the autobiography of one of Scotland Yard’s first forensic scientists (time and memory have long since caused both the name of the gentleman and the book to fade... but I still remember the skull on the dustjacket). So I was really looking forward to this history of CSI in England, especially as it concentrates on two cases that held special interest for me for exactly opposite reasons; the first the tale of one Emily Kaye (1924) I had

never heard of and so wanted to relish the surprises; the second, the story of John Christie's serial exploits which I had followed through books and films with the relish others reserve for that Ripper chap. And the authors do justice to all three of their main goals; we learn the history of CSI, the tantalising facts of Ms Kaye's unfortunate demise and they even bring up a thing or two I hadn't know, or had forgotten, about Christie. So, why only 3 stars? Because, and you cannot begin to understand how much this pains me to say: The writing is just SO pedantic and dull. If you are interested in the subject, as I am, you should, indeed MUST read this... but don't start it before bedtime... you simply won't get very far.

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