



# CSSI - Crime Scene Investigators

## Essential Questions

- Why is it important to determine Fact from Fiction?
- What interdisciplinary skills go into crime scene investigation?
- How can we apply such skills to our daily lives and academics?

## Description

Do you know any good detective stories? Do you like to play CLUE? How about Murder Mystery meals with friends (or to make it more interesting, with enemies)? Do you watch crime shows on TV and gravitate towards mysteries in films? Have you ever wondered what really goes on during a crime scene investigation? Have you heard of the CSI Effect? Well, now it's time for what we call "The CSSI Effect: Fact or Fiction."

These questions and more will be the focus of The CSSI Effect: FACT OR FICTION? ECS. Through our studies of detective literature, TV, and film coupled with science labs and inventive writing where we will become CSS CIs ourselves, we will seek to find the answers to our questions. We plan to visit law enforcement agencies, prisons, mental institutions, laboratories, and coroners' offices, and we'll hear from professional experts in the field of detection such as detective writers, law enforcement, criminologists, and real-life CSIs.

**DO NOT CROSS**

**DO NOT CROSS**

**DO NOT**

# The Visit

By Sasha W-C. '25  
March 5, 2024

Today, we focused on the specific jobs at the Colorado Springs Police Department. We started the day by practicing our interviewing skills followed by how to act professionally and respectfully while conducting an interview. After our morning lessons, we piled into the vans and went to the CSPD. The experience of being inside the building and observing all of the behind-the-scenes activities was educational. Before visiting the CSPD, I had not realized how intricate the system is from when one makes a 911 call to the detectives, lawyers, and police officers who follow in the process. One of the most unforgettable moments of this visit was when we were shown into the storage area, where they keep evidence from homicides to domestic violence cases, including firearms, drugs, receipts, and money. Around the storage room, sliding shelves with paper bags full of bloody t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and shoes could be seen from top to bottom. Honestly, it was quite nerve-wracking to think about the people who had once worn the clothing and were victims of violent crimes. To see the white tags on each brown bag stating who the clothing had belonged to, where the incident had occurred, and whether or not there was blood made me realize some of the worst that humanity was capable of. Overall, the day opened my eyes to what happens behind the scenes during and after a 911 call and some of the many people it takes to make up a true crime scene investigation. I learned that by keeping ourselves educated on these topics, we can help to keep ourselves and our community safe.



DO NOT



# Breaking Prejudice

By Michael H. '25  
March 5, 2024

Today is one of the most meaningful and thought-provoking days I've ever been through. The visit we paid to the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) broke the "traditional prejudice" of mine about police officers and their duties, their way of treating crimes, and their working environment. Sgt. Newton, an awesome police officer with more than 20 years of working experience, showed us around the CSPD and patiently introduced almost everything in detail to us. But to be honest, he offered a big surprise to me right when we met. He gave me a chance to view the word "cops" in another way, because, personally speaking, cops are as strong as bulls and they are kind of "cold-blooded" -- serious, silent and...fond of donuts. However, Sgt. Newton is such a tall and thin police officer and left an impression of cheerful and positive on me that I once doubted whether he was the real thing. Of course, another reason is he didn't have his uniform on, which made me feel he was on intimate terms with us. The way Sgt. Newton spoke was so kind and heartfelt while humorous, sometimes convinced me that he was more a teacher and a friend than a police officer. He was totally different from cops who are in some TV shows or movies that create the image of the policeman as a brutal person who only knows how to arrest criminals and shoot guns, although he admitted that he did love donuts.

After his basic introduction of the CSPD, he took us to the community section, evidence unit, and so on, where he broke my second bias that workers in a police department only care about "big deals." He, with his coworkers, showed us that those working in a police department not only pay attention to crimes but also need to face trivial requests asked by citizens, like call takers might get a 911 call from a person who just wants to figure out how to cook a turkey for Thanksgiving. What's more, it really astonished me when I learned that they have a special room, which is the evidence unit, to keep all the guns, drugs, and things like that even though many cases occurred decades ago. Compared to my own country, I don't think the police officers there have such duties. Besides, on the way to those rooms, I noticed that the working environment of CSPD is very neat and tidy; there is even a nice smell in the air. In the TV show CSI: Criminal Scene Investigation the working environment of those police officers was kind of messy: files piled up on the desks, criminal's photos hanging on the wall, and tension filling the air. Compared to that, the decent working environment in CSPD in real life even makes me a little bit envious.

What really impressed me the most is the attitude that Sgt. Newton, who is on behalf of the workers in CSPD, maintains toward crimes and criminals. He mentioned that "Instead of arresting and shooting, the main task of cops is problem-solving," which means that sometimes he has to risk his life to ensure people's, including criminals', safety and property. It is always easier to judge a person or a crime by bias than to dig into the problems, making them clear and getting them solved. Sgt. Newton shared with us that he once wanted to quit because people held prejudices against police during the pandemic, but he still chose to stick to it because of his sense of pride and, more importantly, his sense of

responsibility and sympathy. He loves his family so much that he understands the importance of protecting other families' happiness; he cares about his kid so much that he realizes he needs to be more careful than normal when dealing with crimes that are committed against children. Such humanity totally breaks down the prejudice of "a cold-blooded bull."

I really appreciate that I got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pay a visit to CSPD. Well, at least I hope I won't get in there again for something stupid. Such experiences not only let local students gain a new understanding of "police," but also let an international student believe that the city is much safer than imagined because the police are there for us.

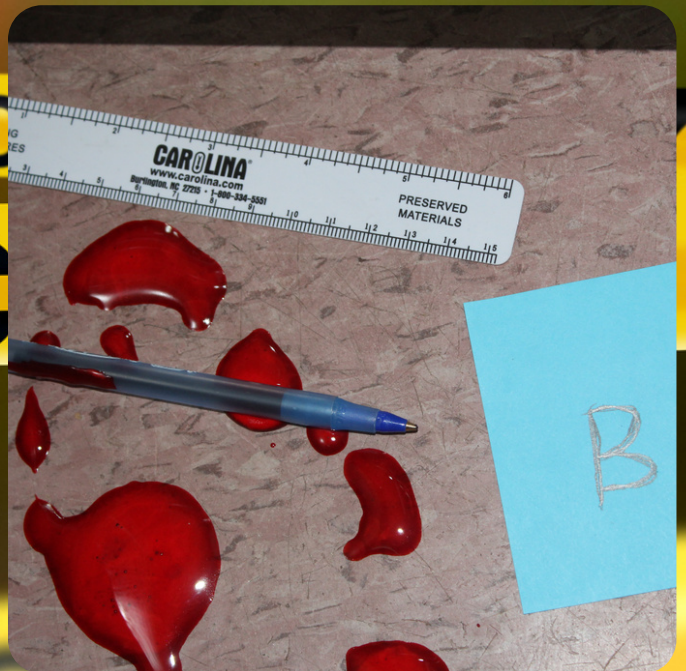




# Detectives' Monologue

By Michael H. '25  
March 6, 2024

Today was really engaging. We listened to a presentation given by homicide detectives and had our first crime scene investigation! It was such an honor to have four experienced detectives in our classroom giving us a presentation on their jobs after the day we had the tour of the CSPD. Because the communication with the police officer indeed brought me a brand new understanding of the word "cops," I was expecting that the detectives could also surprise me by showing something different from my "stereotype" of them. Honestly speaking, the presentation was not as interesting as the one that Sgt. Newton gave during the CSPD tour because their impression actually matches my "stereotype" pretty well. However, in some ways, they did break the "stereotype" by making me realize how mentally and physically hard detectives' duties can be. Facing an unimaginable crime scene, which also can be regarded as the darkest side of human nature, can be extremely overwhelming to me. It's fascinating that the detectives can stay calm and analyze carefully under such pressure. They introduced homicide and forensic science to us, quickly and succinctly, in about two hours, which made me feel like days while realizing the complexity of a detective's duties and his knowledge restoration. Later in the afternoon, we learned about fingerprinting techniques and had our first CSI. Both these activities didn't go really well because fingerprints are honestly challenging to pick up clearly and the team dynamic during CSI wasn't that great. Although everyone knew their own duty, they only worked on their own duty, including me, which meant it took time for a team to learn how to cooperate. Just imagine how incredible it would be for those four detectives to cooperate with each other and finish their job under time pressure! Such ideas let me respect detectives more and recognize how "helpless" we are.





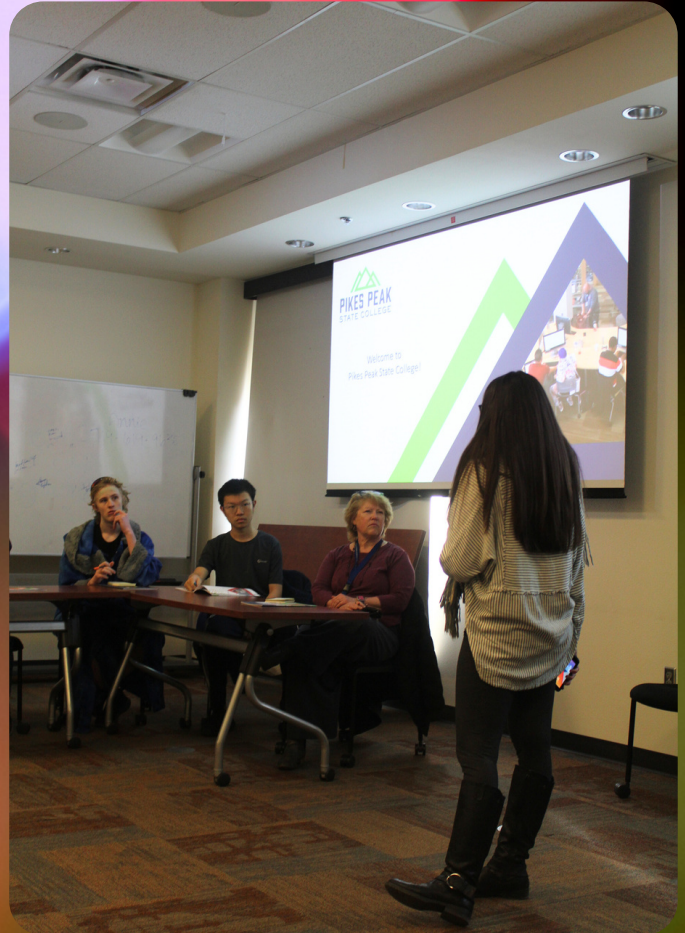
# From Criminal Justice to Criminal Law

By Isaiah L. '26  
March 12, 2024

To start off the day we went to visit Pikes Peak State College to learn about their criminal justice education program. Going on this trip was super helpful because it allowed us to see the campus firsthand and get a feel for the environment and culture. We checked out the facilities, talked to current teachers, and asked questions to help us make informed decisions about our future and the future of criminal justice education in Colorado Springs. It offered a great opportunity to explore different programs and see which ones resonate with us the most.

Criminal Justice education is all about studying the system of laws and institutions that enforce them. It covers topics like law enforcement, courts, corrections, and more. It can lead to careers in law enforcement, legal services, and even social work. It's an exciting field if you're interested in making a positive impact and promoting justice.

Later in the afternoon, we met with Ms. Tracey Eubanks, a juvenile criminal defense attorney here in Colorado. Ms. Eubanks told us about her job and some stories from her work while enlightening us on the truth of court disputes and criminal defense as well as prosecution. Criminal defense attorneys are legal professionals who specialize in defending individuals accused of committing crimes. They play a crucial role in ensuring that their clients receive a fair trial and that their rights are protected. Defense attorneys investigate the case, gather evidence, interview witnesses, and build a strong defense strategy. They advocate for their clients in court, challenging the prosecution's evidence and presenting arguments to support their innocence or to



CROSS

CROSS

DO NOT



mitigate the charges. Their goal is to achieve the best possible outcome for their clients within the boundaries of the law. It's a challenging but rewarding profession for those passionate about justice and protecting individual rights.

Juvenile crime refers to criminal offenses committed by individuals who are under the age of 18. It's a complex issue that requires understanding and addressing the underlying factors that contribute to such behavior. Rehabilitation and intervention programs are often implemented to help young offenders learn from their mistakes and turn their lives around. It's important to provide support and guidance to juveniles to prevent them from continuing down a path of crime.



**DO NOT CROSS**

**DO NOT CROSS**

**DO NOT**