

Forensic science on trial

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The key player in a movement challenging improper use of DNA testing and other elements of forensic science is the topic of a compelling cover story in this week's edition of *Chemical & Engineering News*. The story in the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society (ACS)—the world's largest scientific society—features the [Innocence Project](#), which, in the last two decades, has helped free nearly 300 wrongfully convicted prisoners.

C&EN Senior Editor Carmen Drahl uses a symposium on the Innocence Project held at ACS' Fall National Meeting & Exposition to discuss the accomplishments, challenges and rifts within modern [forensic science](#). The article explains that two members of O.J. Simpson's defense team founded the Innocence Project in 1992. Since then, the project has helped exonerate almost 300 innocent people. Innocence Project research concludes that improper use of forensics plays a role in 45 percent of wrongful convictions, second only to eyewitness misidentification as the most important factor in those miscarriages of justice.

Poor understanding of forensic science and a lack of vetting of common forensic techniques are a large part of the problem, Drahl reports. Even [DNA testing](#), whose accuracy has been scrutinized and affirmed by scientific studies, has become problematic as improved sensitivity makes issues of cross-contamination more prominent. A sidebar describes how scientists are attempting to improve traditional forensic disciplines, including bite mapping and gunfire-remnant identification, through new quantitative approaches.

More information: "The Case Of Forensics"
[cen.acs.org/articles/90/i37/Fo ... nocence-Project.html](http://cen.acs.org/articles/90/i37/Fo...nocence-Project.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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