



American Sherlock: Murder, Forensics, and the Birth of American CSI by Kate Winkler Dawson

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

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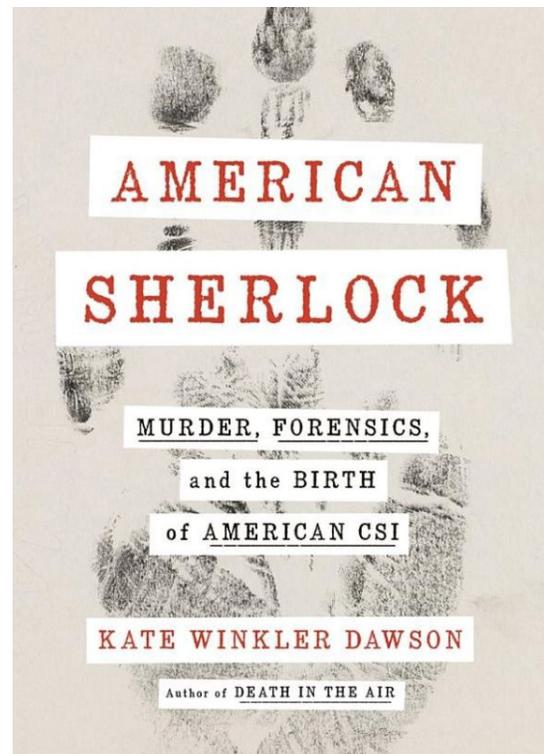
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Book summary

Berkeley, California, 1933. In a lab filled with curiosities—beakers, microscopes, Bunsen burners, and hundreds upon hundreds of books—sat an investigator who would go on to crack at least two thousand cases in his forty-year career. Known as the “American Sherlock Holmes,” Edward Oscar Heinrich was one of America’s greatest—and first—forensic scientists, with an uncanny knack for finding clues, establishing evidence, and deducing answers with a skill that seemed almost supernatural.

Heinrich was one of the nation’s first expert witnesses, working in a time when the turmoil of Prohibition led to sensationalized crime reporting and only a small, systematic study of evidence.



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However, with his brilliance, and commanding presence in both the courtroom and at crime scenes, Heinrich spearheaded the invention of a myriad of new forensic tools that police still use today, including blood spatter analysis, ballistics, lie-detector tests, and the use of fingerprints as courtroom evidence. His work, though not without its serious—some would say fatal—flaws, changed the course of American criminal investigation.

Based on years of research and thousands of never-before-published primary source materials, *American Sherlock* captures the life of the man who pioneered the science our legal system now relies upon—as well as the limits of those techniques and the very human experts who wield them.

Source: Author's website. (katewinklerdawson.com)





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Meet the author

Over the past two decades, I've become a Superfan of network television news programs I've come to lovingly refer to as "death shows." You may see them briefly on CBS or NBC and flip right past them because they're too gory, shows like *Dateline* or *48 Hour Mysteries*. I'm an ardent devotee, but not in a creepy way. My fascination with crime is everlasting and here's why.



As a field producer for Fox News Channel in San Francisco, I covered many atrocities. Remember when California Congressman Gary Condit was suspected of murdering his young lover and Capitol Hill intern Chandra Levy? I covered that case for two months in Modesto, California. There was a murder in Northern California suspected of being connected to the Smiley Face Killer (note: no connection). And of course I've reported on my share of local crime stories in London, New York, Boston and San Francisco. None of them were pleasant but all were intriguing. My father was a criminal law professor at the University of Texas in Austin for almost two decades. We both started teaching at the age of 28—he at UT and me at Fordham University in New York. In 2003 he decided to start a clinic to investigate cases of innocence aptly titled the Actual Innocence Clinic.

After working as a writer and producer at WCBS and ABC News Radio in New York I settled back home in Austin in 2005. When my father died I became involved in the clinic and organized a sort of metaphorical bridge between UT's journalism school and the law school class. I co-taught the clinic for several years: My journalism students learned about investigating cases and law students learned basic journalism skills. I escorted them into prison to interview prisoners; the



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students bristled at the sign that read: “We will shoot all hostages past this point.” We went over case files, searched court records and filed public information requests. It was one of my favorite classes. Back in college, I was a reporter for UPI in London for about six months. I studied the history of the city, including the Great Smog of 1952, one of the most intriguing periods in London’s history. I love investigations of any type—social injustice is fascinating, so this book has been a wonderful journey for me.

In my other life away from writing books, I’m a senior lecturer in broadcast journalism at UT-Austin. I’ve also produced almost two-dozen documentaries including longer form pieces for *Nightline*, WCBS and Fox as well as independent films. I consider myself a good storyteller, but I suppose you’ll be the judge. I’m also a good part Irish with a splash of Scot!

Source: Author's website. (katewinklerdawson.com)





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Recipes

Almond Fingerprint Cookies

- 7 ounces almond paste
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 12 ounces European-style unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 large egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup raspberry jam
- 1/4 cup apricot jam, puréed if chunky



Preheat oven to 325°F. Line 2-3 baking trays with parchment.

Tear almond paste into pieces and add to the food processor. Add sugar and pulse 10 times to break up the almond paste, then turn on and process until mixture resembles sand. Pour the almond/sugar mixture into the bowl of a standing mixer. Add butter and beat until creamy. Add egg and yolk, and beat until mixture is light and fluffy. Mix in vanilla extract. Add flour and pinch of salt and mix until just incorporated. Pull the dough together into a ball. Roll 1/2-ounce portions (about a tablespoon) into balls and place on baking sheets 2 inches apart. Lightly wet your forefinger or thumb and press down into the center of each ball making an indentation. Fill each indentation with a scant 1/4 teaspoon jam — half the cookies with raspberry, half with apricot.

Bake for 14 minutes, or until you can see a slight golden-brown edge at the bottom. Allow to cool in the pan until firm enough to transfer to a rack. Dust with powdered sugar.

Source: Cocoa & Lavender
(cocoaandlavender.com/2023/01/almond-fingerprint-cookies.html)



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Blood-Splattered Cookies

Start off with round cookies of your choosing.

Make the royal icing. The royal icing needs to be at its stiffest consistency when outlining the cookies, but it shouldn't be so stiff that it is hard to work with. If it's difficult to pipe, add small amounts of water until it pipes easily.

Outline the cookies with royal icing. Pipe icing around the rim of the cookies. Fill a pastry bag with icing. Use a small tip (I used tip #2) to pipe it around the rim of the cookie. Once this is done, let the cookies dry at room temperature for 1 hour.

Thin the Royal Icing and used to fill. Add 1 teaspoon of water at a time until icing is thin enough to slide off the back of a spoon. Pour the thinned icing into a squeeze bottle and apply it to the center of the cookies. Then use a toothpick or wooden skewer to push it to the edge, popping any air bubbles you see. Allow the filled cookies to dry overnight at room temperature.

Splatter the Cookies with Blood. First, thin the icing until it easily splatters, then tint it red with food coloring. Continue adding food coloring until it becomes a deep, rich red. Cover your workspace with newspapers to prevent a kitchen disaster. Dip a fork in the icing and fling away. Cackle evilly. Hoot with laughter. Repeat. Every cookie will look unique.



Source: Flavorful Journeys (flavorfuljourneys.com/blood-splattered-cookies)

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