

Award for Outstanding Achievement CSI: The Experience

*the forensic seal
of approval*



by Fort Worth Museum of
Science & History Staff

Imagine entering a crime scene and being the person responsible for noticing and collecting every trace of evidence. The pressure's on: you know the analysis of your evidence must be scientifically sound to crack the case.

You've seen the hit television crime drama, "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" on CBS. Now, there's a forensic science exhibit related to the TV show, as well as a web-based learning adventure. The groundbreaking exhibit aims to give visitors something close to the experience outlined above – and some profound science learning, as well. CSI: The Experience opened May 25, 2007 at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, then embarked on a national tour of science museums.

The exhibit and web adventure were developed through an unusual partnership: the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History as lead institution for the Science Museum Exhibit Collaborative; CBS Consumer Products; and the National Science Foundation, which provided \$2.4 million in funding for both the exhibit and a CSI "Web Adventure" targeted to underserved youth.

It has the American Academy of Forensic Sciences' seal of approval and deep involvement. Rice University's Center for Technology in Teaching and Learning created the online experience, and Bob Weis Design Island Associates led the exhibit's design.

"With the launch of this exciting new exhibit, we're extending the CSI brand beyond entertainment and licensed merchandise into an engaging learning experience," commented

Ken Ross Executive Vice President and General Manager for CBS Consumer Products. "It was essential that the integrity of the show was upheld in this endeavor and we feel that partnering with Fort Worth Museum of Science, Bob Weis Design Island and Rice University provided the perfect DNA match to make this an educational, authentic and fun experience for visitors of all ages."

CSI: The Experience is a completely immersive exhibit that invites visitors to enter "crime" scenes where they identify and record evidence. It takes them inside laboratories for scientific testing and to autopsy rooms for pathology analysis. Then it returns them to the office to build their case, based on the scientific evidence. The exhibit brings to life real scientific principles and the most advanced scientific techniques used today by crime scene investigators and forensic scientists.

From DNA and firearms analysis to forensic anthropology and toxicology, visitors are immersed in hands-on science in an exciting multimedia environment with dazzling special effects direct from the CSI TV series. Cast members from the TV show and CSI Executive Producer Anthony Zuiker welcome

guests into the exhibit from a large entry theater, lead them through the experience, and praise them for a job well done at the end. The exhibit is geared toward adults and to youth ages 12 and up.

"This project was extremely gratifying, because we had a strong collaboration between television producers and educators," says Bob Weis, lead exhibit designer for the project. "There was always a strong motivation to use CSI as a way to interest and motivate young people to get engaged in science and problem solving. It was a great example of the synergy that can happen when education and entertainment work hand in hand."

This is not the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History's first venture in the world of forensic science. The Museum also developed the exhibit, "Whodunit? The Science of Solving Crime," 13 years ago for the Science Museum Exhibit Collaborative – a consortium of seven of the nation's leading science museums. Whodunit? has toured 32 science centers since.

Advances in DNA science and information technology have dramatically changed the field of forensic science, so the Museum



Your experience inside CSI: The Experience:

Upon entering, you'll be briefed via video and then directed to one of three staged crime scenes. Once on the scene, you will use your investigator's notebook to examine the evidence and determine what you believe to be the important clues.

After you complete your crime scene investigation, you will compare your clues with those of real crime scene investigators and determine which clues need further analysis. Then, you will proceed to the labs to investigate your findings.

You will also visit the medical examiner for your autopsy report and note the important medical evidence. CSI characters and real-life experts are working via video in our virtual labs to explain tire track comparison, blood spatter analysis, firearms technology comparison, and much more. You'll use the data they provide to help you examine your specific crime scene clues in the lab. You may be asked to compare tire tracks, pollen fibers, DNA, or shell casings.

Finally, you will submit your report and conclusions at the end of your investigation and learn whether you have correctly solved the case.

CSI: The Experience is unlike most typical museum tours. The multimedia is an integral part of the exhibit and will be used by each participant as they proceed through the learning environment. Guests access the media at each station, rather than carry a guided museum audio commentary.

thought it was time for a new exhibit on the topic, according to Charlie Walter, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History's chief operating officer. "We're excited about our partnership with CBS and the CSI TV show, which will help us reach and engage a much larger audience in this field of science," he said.

"This project is a great example of how the two worlds of entertainment and museums can come together to the benefit of the public," said Van A. Romans, president of the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. "When you consider CSI's popularity, coupled with our Museum's ability to produce extraordinary learning exhibits and the work of some very important partners, we know this is going to be a powerful exhibit experience," he said.

The national tour schedule for CSI: The Experience is as follows:

- February 1 - April 30, 2008: Houston Museum of Natural Science
- May 24 - September 1, 2008: COSI, Columbus
- Fall 2008: Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
- Spring, 2009: California Science Center, Los Angeles
- Summer, 2009: Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Portland
- Fall, 2009: Fort Worth Museum of Science and History
- Summer, 2010: The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia

