CSI EFFECT ASSIGNMENT Name:

1. Go to: <http://projects.nfstc.org/csieffect/index.html>

Watch each section; Theory Overview, Prosecution, Defense, Judge. Ready the myth vs. fact on each page.

ANSWER: *What type of challenges do juror expectations and misconceptions bring to today’s courtroom?*

2. Go to: <http://www.vulture.com/2016/01/making-a-murderer-jurors-csi-effect.html>

Answer: Do you agree with University of North Carolina at Greensboro professor Kimberlaianne Podlas’s statement in which she “strongly denies the existence of any negative effect of *CSI*on ‘not guilty’ verdicts,” but contests that it could just as readily complicate the defense's claims of innocence as tax the plaintiff's burden of proof. In short, its impact is arguably negligible.

3. Read article below and answer questions:

[**The New CSI Effect: Everyone’s a Forensic Science Expert**](http://www.forensicmag.com/articles/2013/06/new-csi-effect-everyones-forensic-expert)(Click to read article online or just read from below.)

 For years we’ve been talking about the effect that popular TV crime shows has had on juries’ expectations with regard to evidence and forensic analysis techniques. The CSI effect, the popular belief by laypersons that they have some knowledge or expertise in the area of forensics because they have seen it on TV, is expanding.

 In April we ran a story in the Forensic Daily electronic newsletter about Irma Romero, a forensics student and former Army MP, who witnessed a shooting and rather than waiting for the experts to arrive on the scene began photographing and even packaging shell casings. The fact that she was studying forensics and had been taught to process a crime scene does not change the fact that she interfered in a crime scene in which she had no authority or qualifications to do so.

 As she herself told *The Monitor,* “In class you’re taught to document a crime scene a certain way, how to locate evidence in relation to a fixed object by triangulation. In class you can practice and practice, but until you’re there it’s not the same.”

 One concerned reader put it best when he said “I am left with the impression that she acted on her own and collected/tampered with evidence on the scene prior to documentation by a Certified or tenured and trained Crime Scene Technician or Officer. Secondly, I am concerned that her instructor praised her for taking action. With as many people as are watching all of the television shows, if they believe they know what they are doing they may do the same thing: Possibly destroying evidence on a scene.”

 It’s bad enough to have juries question forensic techniques based on science fiction technologies they’ve seen on TV.

 The aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing highlighted the fact that Romero’s actions were not one isolated event. Following the bombing, online forums like Reddit and 4Chan began threads in which readers presented and analyzed “evidence” which lead to an online hunt for the suspects.

 What is “fascinating is the apparently widespread assumption that the average person screwing around on the Internet is well-equipped to conduct forensics analysis of photographs,” a *Salon* article noted. “Yes, the FBI did ask the public to help, but what it wanted was witnesses and video or photographs taken by them. It did not request help in evaluating those images, or at least not from a gaggle of random untrained guys squinting at the screens of their home computers miles and miles away from the crime scene.”

 How will this new CSI effect develop and what will we need to do in the future to minimize the potential damage caused by amateur CSIs meddling in crime scenes. It is clear that the first responder’s task of securing the crime scene will become even more important, and in cases where tampering has occurred it will be critical that DNA and impression evidence be collected to identify possible contamination.

**Article Guided Questions**

***Answer the following questions in paragraph form after you have read the above article.***

* **What is the “CSI effect”?**
* **How does the “CSI effect” effect how jurors process the information given in a trial?**
* **What are some concerns with untrained people thinking they can investigate a crime based on what they have seen on TV?**
* **How could these “arm-chair investigators” affect the outcome of a case?**
* **What can be done to eliminate or lessen the “CSI effect”?**
* **Do you believe in the “CSI effect?” Why or why not?**