



The Criminalist: A Novel of Forensic Science Suspense

John Houde

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"CSI—Without the makeup."

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A Russian model and a reluctant forensic scientist must join forces to fight a dangerous sex trafficking ring.

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Paul Connert, just your everyday forensic scientist, keeps a dark secret as he combs through scenes of violent death. Then his world is rocked by the beautiful and desperate Vika Koslava, a Russian model who arrived in the US with her sister for an erotic photo shoot. When the sister disappears, he must join forces with Vika and use all his skills to stop a deadly sex trafficking ring before she meets a similar fate. *The Criminalist* is the story of forensic science at its best, and it's all about teamwork, but can everyone on Paul's team be trusted?

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It's been five years since PAUL CONNERT'S fiancée died of a drug overdose and he's never forgiven himself for not trying harder to help. Now he plans to atone. He seeks a woman who reminds him of his lost love and fantasizes about getting her into rehab, even if by force. But then he meets the feisty, alcoholic, VIKA KOSLAVA, a beautiful Russian model who was sent on an erotic website assignment to Santa Barbara with her heroin-addicted sister. When her sister goes missing, Vika is left homeless. Paul uses a clever means to meet Vika, but his intervention fantasy is quickly busted when he meets her, face-to-face.

Paul and his crime lab friends join forces to protect Vika by enrolling her in a secret clinical trial but also continue the search for her sister. We follow Paul and Vika as they go through their daily routines: Paul as he processes a murder scene, Vika as she is exposed to experimental nanoparticles as a part of her addiction therapy. When they get together and form a powerful alliance to fight the violent members of a sex trafficking ring, he will need to use all his scientific skills to keep her safe.

The Author says,

"When I retired from a twenty-five year career as a forensic scientist in southern California, I took home a treasure-trove of story ideas. I've been there, I've collected that and I've weathered the subsequent cross-examination, too. When I cooked up *The Criminalist*, I wanted readers to feel what it was really like to work in a crime lab. I drew from the colorful personalities I had worked with and blended in scenes from real-life cases. The story includes several strong female leads and a plausible, suspenseful plot. There are a few graphic (but not gory) crime scenes and a dash of courtroom drama. Running throughout is an engaging, romantic thread."

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John Houde, author of the award-winning nonfiction book, *Crime Lab: A Guide for Nonscientists*, has had a career in forensic science spanning four decades. Now he draws upon his experience to spin an intricately woven adventure in the world of truth and lies, love and hate, science and crime...

384 pages, 88,000 words.

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Alma Lewis:

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Zandra Woods:

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