



I recently had the pleasure of attending the Bloodstain Pattern Analysis II workshop organised by ANZFSS ACT earlier this year, held on the CIT Bruce campus, and led by the wonderful Ross Gardner of Bevel, Gardner & Associates. Being that this is my first year studying CIT's Forensic Science degree, I was a little apprehensive beforehand about my ability to keep up with the subject matter and fit in with the culture of the participants. I decided to jump in and give it my best anyway, and discovered nothing could have been further from the truth. I found my fellow participants warm, friendly, and the overall environment was very supportive and inclusive.

The majority of participants were not students but active in the industry and undertaking professional development. As a student with very little industry exposure it was an incredibly positive experience interacting with so many industry professionals. That being said, we were all learning something new which made me feel more like one of the group. By making friends and developing contacts, I was able to gain insights into what the industry is like directly from those working within it. Arranged during the course was a visit to the AFP Majura Forensics Facility, another great opportunity to explore part of the industry not available to most.

The six-day course itself was intense, very comprehensive, well-structured and paced. There was a good balance between theory, case studies and practical application, with a large emphasis on learning through hands-on experimental activities. We spent multiple days creating bloodstains to gain an understanding of how they form, in order to assist in reconstructing the events of crime scenes after the fact. In the final days of the course, our teams were tasked with putting what we had learned to the test and analyse a full crime scene. Ross' delivery was brilliant, both in terms of clarity and expertise. His energy and passion were as intimidating as they were inspiring. Throughout the course he suggested areas for future research to push the discipline forward. It really highlighted this as a progressive and changing industry within which everybody is capable of contributing. To other forensic science students out there, these opportunities are ones to look out for and embrace with both hands. The exposure you'll receive to the industry is priceless. The skills you learn at courses like these are definitely relevant to your professional and academic future, but it's the people you meet and the insights you gain that prove the most rewarding. I feel incredibly fortunate to have attended this course, and I have a BPA certificate to put on my CV too. This experience has introduced me to an interesting discipline, a possible future specialisation and an industry that is very supportive and welcoming of new blood.

Samuel Bottrill  
Student, BFS (CSE)  
Canberra Institute of Technology  
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