



*Evan McIntyre MA '09 is fascinated by how television shows such as CSI: Crime Scene Investigation affect the way people view crime and criminals. He explored people's relationship to the media in his Social and Political Thought master's program at the University of Regina.*

Evan McIntyre wants to know why people in North America are afraid of crime when they live in one of the safest times in history.

McIntyre tried to find an answer to this question while earning his master's degree in Social and Political Thought. He started his exploration by trying to understand how television shows such as CSI: Crime Scene Investigation affect the way people view crime and criminals.

"What I ended up arriving at is that in the CSI world crime is almost always random and almost always perpetuated by strangers," explains McIntyre. "So, it's actually very similar to our liberal ideology, which is the war of 'all against all' - individualism - and science is what is going to save us. Every crime is (detectable) through the objective eye of science.

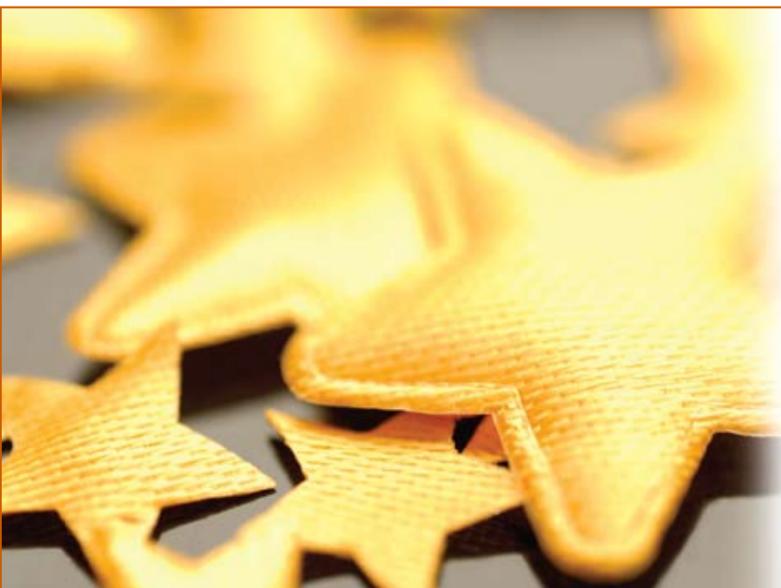
"People have an unrealistic, almost religious, view of science's role in the criminal justice system. In CSI, human fallibility is constantly contrasted with the perfection of science. They come in, hit a few buttons and - Bam! - they can find anything out from the smallest detail."

McIntyre adds that the popularity of these types of shows is a reflection of our environment. Crime became a hotly debated issue when people started to lose faith in the ability of the state to correct human behaviour and intervene effectively in human affairs.

"The purpose of this, if I was going to apply it to a larger social context, is we don't fully understand our relationship to media," says McIntyre. "We are basically unaware of it in our lives. What I would like to see, if I could snap my fingers and change anything, is education programs, starting at the high school level, maybe even younger, where people critically assess the role of media in our lives and how it affects our consciousness."

McIntyre appreciated the flexibility the Social and Political Thought master's program offered, as well as the level of input he received from the individuals guiding him through the process. The eclectic backgrounds of his graduate committee members ensured that the input he received was diverse. Murray Knuttila, professor of sociology and social studies, was his thesis advisor; William Stahl from the Department of Religious Studies and Phillip Hansen from the Department of Philosophy and Classics were also on the graduate committee.

In early June, at the 2009 University of Regina Spring Convocation ceremonies, McIntyre became the first graduate of the program.



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