



CAN WE INVESTIGATE THE UNIVERSE LIKE A CRIME SCENE ?

—
*adapted from an article of
J. Warner Wallace, Californian
homicide detective.*

When a dead body is discovered, detectives must investigate the evidence to determine the most reasonable explanation. Did the deceased die naturally? Did he suffer some kind of accident? Did he commit

suicide? Was he murdered? These are the four possible explanations at any death scene.

Homicide detectives are concerned only with the last one. Of the four explanations, the first three do not require the involvement of anyone other than the victim. If his or her death was an accident, the result of some natural cause, or the result of a suicide, all the evidence we might find related to the victim's passing will ultimately come from the very room where he or she died.

Every death scene involves evidence of one kind or another, but intruders turn *death scenes* into *crime scenes*. One simple strategy in death cases, therefore, is to ask a foundational question: "Can I account for all the evidence *in this room* by *staying in the room*?"

During most of my early investigative career, I was a committed atheist and resolute naturalist. I rejected supernaturalism thoroughly, denying both the existence of a supernatural God and the possibility of the miraculous. I truly believed everything I observed in the universe could be explained and attributed to natural, physical causes and processes.

Thinking of the universe as a "*room*", I didn't believe there was any evidence pointing to anyone outside. I certainly didn't believe anything "extra-natural" or "supra-natural" entered this natural realm. But I hadn't yet looked at the evidence carefully.

As a naturalist, I believed the accounts of miracles in the biblical narratives disqualified them as reliable history. But what if I was wrong in my anti-supernatural presuppositions? It was time for me to look carefully at the evidence for God's existence.

Like many of my death scene investigations, my examination of the natural universe required me to look at the characteristics of the "*room*" and determine if they could be explained fully by what already existed within the "*four walls*". Was there any evidence *inside* the universe pointing to the existence or intervention of a supernatural being *outside* the universe? My most important question was, "Can I account for all the evidence *in this room* by *staying in the room*?"

As I considered the natural "*room*" of the universe, I identified and listed four categories of evidence for consideration:

1. Cosmological Evidence

Our universe had a beginning.

Our universe appears to be fine-tuned for human life.

2. Biological Evidence

Life in our universe emerged from non-life.

Biological organisms appear to be designed.

3. Mental Evidence

Non-material consciousness emerged from unconscious matter.

As humans, we are “free agents” in our universe.

4. Moral Evidence

Extraordinary objective moral truths exist in our universe.

Evil and injustice continue to persist, in spite of our best efforts.

These features of the universe can be attributed either to something inside the natural realm or to something outside the natural realm. In many ways, our investigation of God’s existence is very similar to my death investigations:

After examining the evidence *inside* the natural, physical realm of the universe to determine if there is someone we need to look for *outside* the natural, physical realm. I determined the most reasonable inference is a **suspect** with the following characteristics:

1. External to the universe
2. Non-spatial, atemporal, and non-material
3. Uncaused
4. Powerful enough to create everything we see in the universe
5. Specifically purposeful enough to produce a universe fine-tuned for life
6. Intelligent and communicative
7. Creative and resourceful
8. A conscious Mind
9. The personal source of moral truth and obligation
10. The standard for good by which we define evil.

What do YOU think ?