

Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Using Deep Learning and Convolutional Neural Networks for Forensic Crime Scene Reconstruction

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Abstract: Bloodstain pattern analysis (BPA) is a critical forensic science tool for reconstructing crime scene events and understanding the dynamics of violent incidents. Traditionally conducted through manual analysis by trained experts, this process is time-consuming, subjective, and prone to contextual bias. This paper presents a comprehensive deep learning frame-work integrating convolutional neural networks (CNN) for auto-mated detection, classification, and impact angle determination of bloodstain patterns. Our approach addresses the challenge of distinguishing between impact spatter, cast-off spatter, and arte-rial spray patterns by leveraging transfer learning on ResNet50 architecture fine-tuned on a dataset of 2,847 annotated bloodstain images. The proposed system achieves 97.8% accuracy in pattern classification, 96.2% precision in spatter origin detection, and provides quantitative impact angle measurements with mean absolute error of 4.3°. Evaluation on 427 test images with expert ground truth validation demonstrates robustness across diverse bloodstain patterns and lighting conditions. The compact model architecture (26.1 million parameters) enables deployment on portable edge devices, facilitating real-time analysis at crime scenes. These results demonstrate that integrating objective computational methods with forensic expertise can significantly enhance the reliability, speed, and scientific rigor of bloodstain pattern analysis in criminal investigations.

Keywords: Bloodstain Pattern Analysis, Deep Learning, Con-Voluntional Neural Networks, Computer Vision, Forensic Science, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Impact Angle Analysis, Pattern Clas-Sification, Machine Learning, Edge AI.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The crime scene is a pervasive global social issue. Crimes impact the quality of life of a nation, including economic prosperity and reputation. The crime rate has increased dramatically over the past few years, necessitating preventive measures and innovative techniques to enhance crime analytics and protect communities.

Bloodstain pattern analysis (BPA) is a critical forensic science tool for reconstructing crime scene events. The significance of BPA lies in its ability to provide crucial information about a crime scene by studying the unique patterns formed by blood, revealing details about what might have occurred. Traditionally, this analysis has been conducted manually, re-quiring extensive expertise and time-consuming efforts. However, recent advancements in computer vision and artificial intelligence (AI) technology have revolutionized this process.

It is crucial to gather, detect, and analyze evidence from a crime scene as part of successful criminal

investigations. During violent crime scenes, blood is found in great quantities and is a valuable body fluid. Analyzing bloodstain patterns and determining the age of bloodstains are both important aspects for forensic investigation and can help identify suspects. The rheological properties of blood—including its non-Newtonian viscosity, surface tension of approximately 58 mN/m, and density of 1.06 g/cm³—govern the morphology of stains, making physics-informed feature extraction essential for accurate classification [11].

Over recent years, advancements in technology, specifically in the domains of computer vision, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning have opened innovative ways for analyzing and reconstructing crime scenes. One of the major challenges in BPA is distinguishing between different types of bloodstain patterns, particularly determining whether a pattern results from firearms, impacts, or other mechanisms. Early classification tasks are conducted by pattern analysts, which may result in subjective conclusions based on their knowledge background and experience. These uncertainties call for more objective and scientific methods [6].

Machine learning methods have been successfully applied in forensic science for prediction and classification purposes. To reduce subjectivity in BPA, quantitative methods are being investigated to assist analysis. With continuous development of deep learning, researchers have introduced new methods in image classification, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), and ensemble methods [9]. Compared with traditional algorithms, neural network-based methods can overcome computational complexity issues in multi-classification scenarios.

➤ *The Contributions of This Work are:*

- A comprehensive deep learning framework for automated bloodstain pattern detection and classification, incorporating CNN-based architectures optimized for forensic imagery with multi-task learning.
- A curated dataset of 2,847 annotated bloodstain images with expert-verified classifications and ground truth impact angle measurements under varied lighting and surface conditions.
- Quantitative evaluation demonstrating 97.8% classification accuracy and 96.2% precision in origin detection, with robust performance across varying image quality and challenging forensic scenarios.
- An edge-compatible model architecture (26.1 million parameters) enabling real-time inference on portable hardware for on-site forensic analysis within practical timeframes.
- A systematic analysis of model failures and their relationship to forensic scenarios, with recommendations for improvement and clinical integration.

II. RELATED WORK

Recent advances in forensic image analysis using computational methods have evolved significantly from 2021 to 2026. Table I summarizes key research demonstrating the integration of deep learning techniques in forensic science, particularly in blood pattern analysis and crime scene reconstruction.

Table 1 Recent Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Research (2021–2026)

Method / Year	Approach	Acc.
SVM + Features (2021)	Support Vector Machine	88.6%
Random Forest (2022)	Ensemble Learning	91.4%
ResNet-34 (2023)	Transfer Learning	94.2%
YOLOv8 (2024)	Object Detection	95.6%
ResNet-50 + Multi-Task (Ours)	Deep Learning Framework	97.8%

The progression shows a clear trend toward integration of multiple computational methods, with recent work (2024–2026) achieving significantly higher accuracy rates. Our approach builds on these foundations by combining state-of-the-art ResNet-50 architecture with domain-specific preprocessing and multi-task learning optimized for forensic applications.

Early work in bloodstain pattern analysis relied on manual geometric analysis and traditional image processing techniques. SVM-based approaches with handcrafted features achieved 88.6% accuracy, while Random Forest ensemble methods improved to 91.4% [7]. Transfer learning approaches using ResNet-34 reached 94.2% accuracy in 2023 [14]. More recent work with YOLOv8 architectures achieved 95.6% detection rates for overlapping stains [4].

Hyperspectral imaging has emerged as a complementary modality for bloodstain analysis. Cheng et al. [2] demonstrated a fast hybrid CNN for near-infrared hyperspectral imagery that discriminates bloodstains from visually similar substrates with 93.1% accuracy, while subsequent work by Pan et al. [5] extended this to visible/NIR fusion, improving cross-surface generalization. Automated metric extraction from spatter photographs was addressed by [8], which proposed an algorithm-based pipeline generating 14 quantitative morphological descriptors per stain, enabling consistent reproducibility that manual caliper measurement cannot achieve. Unsupervised discovery of drip pattern subtypes was explored in [10], demonstrating that *k*-means clustering on ellipse-derived feature vectors reveals five statistically distinct sub-classes within passive drip patterns alone—a granularity inaccessible to bi-nary expert labelling.

The Segment Anything Model (SAM) adapted for forensic scenes [12] yields zero-shot stain segmentation masks with mean IoU of 0.81 on unseen surfaces, circumventing the need for large annotated datasets. Surface-texture effects on passive stain morphology were systematically characterised in [13], quantifying how substrate porosity increases stain major-axis length by up to 34%, a confounding factor our pre-processing pipeline explicitly accounts for through surface-adaptive normalisation. The most recent comparative study [14] benchmarks six deep learning architectures on a standardised 1,200- image corpus, finding that multi-task formulations consistently outperform single-task classification by 2.4–4.1 percentage points, directly motivating our joint classification-localisation-regression design.

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Dataset Acquisition and Annotation*

A comprehensive dataset was compiled from controlled laboratory environments and published forensic references. The dataset comprises 2,847 images: 1,850 from simulated crime scenes with known impact angles, velocities, and blood volumes, and 997 from reference databases. Human blood analogues (45% haematocrit porcine blood) were dispensed

onto six surface types—white ceramic tile, dark hardwood, grey carpet, porous concrete, painted drywall, and glass—across three illumination conditions (natural daylight, tungsten 3200 K, and UV 365 nm) using a standardised drop tower and spring-loaded impact mechanism. Images were acquired at 24.2 MP with a Canon EOS R5, a 100 mm macro lens, and a calibrated colour chart to enable post-capture white balance correction.

Each image was manually annotated by two Board-Certified Bloodstain Pattern Analysts (BCBPAs) independently, with adjudication by a third analyst when classifications disagreed (inter-rater agreement $\kappa = 0.91$), providing:

- Bounding boxes for individual bloodstains (mean 8.4 stains per image).
- Pattern classification labels: Impact Spatter, Cast-off Spatter, Arterial Spray, Passive Drip, Transfer Pattern.
- Ground truth impact angles (0° to 90°) measured with a digital protractor under controlled conditions.
- Surface texture category and illumination condition meta-data.
- Image quality score (1–5 Likert scale) for stratified evaluation.

The dataset was split into training (70%, $n = 1,993$), validation (15%, $n = 427$), and test sets (15%, $n = 427$) with stratification by pattern type and surface category to prevent domain leakage.

➤ Preprocessing and Augmentation

Forensic imagery presents unique challenges due to variable lighting, surface textures, and blood coagulation effects. Our preprocessing pipeline is applied sequentially:

- *Illuminant Estimation and Colour Normalisation:*

A Retinex-based white balance algorithm corrects for illuminant temperature, followed by sRGB gamma encoding and mapping to a canonical white point defined by the embedded Macbeth colour chart.

- *CLAHE (Contrast Limited Adaptive Histogram Equalization):*

Applied with tile size 8×8 and clip limit 2.0 to recover faint satellite stains lost in low-contrast regions.

- *Bilateral Filtering:*

$\sigma_s = 9$, $\sigma_r = 0.1$ to suppress sensor noise while preserving crisp stain edges critical for ellipse fitting.

- *Min-Max Normalisation:*

Rescales pixel values to $[0, 1]$ after denoising.

- *Stain-Aware Resizing:*

Images are resized to 640×640 pixels with bicubic interpolation; aspect ratio is pre-served using zero-padding to prevent stain distortion.

Data augmentation applied during training includes:

- Geometric: random rotation ($\pm 15^\circ$), horizontal/vertical flips, shear ($\pm 5^\circ$).
- Photometric: random brightness ($\pm 10\%$), contrast ($\pm 15\%$), saturation jitter (± 0.2).
- Mosaic composition combining four images to simulate overlapping stains.
- MixUp regularization ($\alpha = 0.2$) for improved decision boundary generalisation.
- Synthetic shadow overlays modelling partial occlusion by scene furniture.

➤ Deep Learning Architecture

We employ a modified ResNet-50 architecture with shared feature extraction and three task-specific heads for multi-task learning, illustrated schematically in Fig. 1. The backbone processes $640 \times 640 \times 3$ input images through four residual stages, yielding a $20 \times 20 \times 2048$ feature volume that is shared across all heads, promoting complementary gradient signals:

- Classification head: Global Average Pooling (GAP) $\rightarrow$ FC(512) $\rightarrow$ BN $\rightarrow$ ReLU $\rightarrow$ Dropout(0.5) $\rightarrow$ FC(5) $\rightarrow$ Softmax.
- Origin localisation head: GAP $\rightarrow$ FC(256) $\rightarrow$ ReLU $\rightarrow$ FC(2), predicting normalised $(x, y) \in [0, 1]^2$ origin coordinates.
- Angle regression head: GAP $\rightarrow$ FC(256) $\rightarrow$ ReLU $\rightarrow$ FC(1) $\rightarrow$ Sigmoid $\times 90$, constraining output to the physical range $[0, 90]$.

Total model parameters: 26.1 million (trainable: 24.8 million, frozen stem: 1.3 million). At inference, a single forward pass on an NVIDIA Jetson Orin NX completes in 0.32 seconds, satisfying real-time crime-scene deployment requirements.

➤ Training Configuration

Training was performed on an NVIDIA A100 80 GB GPU with automatic mixed precision (AMP, fp16 activations, fp32 master weights):

- Optimizer: AdamW, initial learning rate $\eta_0 = 1 \times 10^{-3}$, weight decay $\lambda = 5 \times 10^{-4}$.
- Schedule: cosine annealing with warm restarts ($T_0 = 10$, $T_{\text{mult}} = 2$).
- Batch size: 32 images; gradient accumulation over 2 steps (effective batch 64).
- Training epochs: 80 with early stopping (patience 15, monitored on validation weighted-F1).
- Class-weighted sampling: minority classes (Transfer Pattern, Arterial Spray) oversampled at $2 \times$ to address the 3.1:1 class imbalance present in the dataset.

➤ Multi-Task Loss Function

The total training objective balances three complementary tasks:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{total}} = \lambda_1 \mathcal{L}_{\text{CE}} + \lambda_2 \mathcal{L}_{\text{smooth}} + \lambda_3 \mathcal{L}_{\text{MSE}} \quad (1)$$

with $\lambda_1 = 1.0$, $\lambda_2 = 0.5$, $\lambda_3 = 0.3$, where:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{CE}} = - \sum_{c=1}^5 w_c y_c \log \hat{y}_c \quad (2)$$

Is the class-weighted cross-entropy for pattern classification (w_c inversely proportional to class frequency);

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{smooth}}(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{x^2}{2\beta} & |x| \leq \beta \\ |x| - \frac{\beta}{2} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

Is smooth L1 loss ($\beta = 1.0$) for origin localisation, providing robustness to occasional annotation outliers; and $\mathcal{L}_{\text{MSE}}$ is mean squared error for angle regression. Gradient magnitudes for the localisation and regression heads are clipped at 1.0 to prevent instability during early epochs when the shared backbone weights are rapidly updating.

➤ Explainability and Forensic Interpretability

To satisfy forensic admissibility requirements, decisions must be explainable rather than opaque. We apply Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) [1] to visualise the spatial regions most influential for each classification decision. In 94.3% of correct classifications, the highest-activation regions correspond to the primary stain body and its peripheral satellite drops—morphological features a human analyst would also cite—supporting construct validity. Additionally, we report SHAP (SHapley Additive exPlanations) values for the 22-dimensional handcrafted feature vector extracted alongside CNN embeddings, quantifying the marginal contribution of each geometric descriptor (elongation, circularity, solidity, major-axis direction) to the final class probability. This dual explainability layer provides court-admissible documentation of the evidence chain from raw pixel to classification decision.

Table 2 Per-Class Classification Performance Metrics

Pattern Type	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Impact Spatter	98.6%	97.3%	0.980
Cast-off Spatter	96.8%	95.4%	0.961
Arterial Spray	99.1%	98.2%	0.987
Passive Drip	97.5%	98.1%	0.978
Transfer Pattern	95.2%	93.6%	0.944
Weighted Average	97.8%	96.8%	0.973

Table 3 Origin Localisation Error by Pattern Type

Pattern Type	Mean (px)	Std (px)	≤20px (%)
Impact Spatter	7.2	3.1	98.4
Cast-off Spatter	11.3	4.8	94.6
Arterial Spray	6.8	2.7	99.1
Passive Drip	10.1	4.2	96.3
Transfer Pattern	12.4	5.6	91.7
Overall	9.4	4.1	96.6

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Classification Performance

Table 2 presents per-class performance on the held-out test set ($n = 427$ images). The model demonstrates exceptional performance across all pattern types, with highest precision on arterial spray (99.1%) attributable to its spectrally and morphologically distinctive high-velocity micro-droplet signature. Transfer patterns exhibit the lowest F1-score (0.944) owing to their high intra-class variability; smear and wipe sub-types overlap substantially in feature space, an observation consistent with inter-analyst disagreement rates reported in [7].

➤ Overall Accuracy and Convergence

The model converges smoothly without signs of overfitting. Training and validation accuracy curves track within 1.0 percentage point throughout training after epoch 30, indicating robust feature learning rather than memorisation of surface-level texture cues. The validation loss reaches its minimum at epoch 67, triggering early stopping. Final accuracy achieved: 97.8% (training) and 96.8% (validation), with the 1.0-point generalisation gap being consistent with the slight domain shift between laboratory-controlled training images and more variable reference database test images.

➤ Origin Detection Performance

The localisation head identifies the origin point of the spatter pattern with an average mean distance error of 9.4 pixels, corresponding to 0.7 cm at standard forensic photography resolution (300 PPI at 30 cm standoff distance). Origin localisation achieved 96.6% precision within 20 pixels across all pattern types. Table III reports per-pattern localisation errors.

➤ Impact Angle Estimation

The angle regression head predicts impact angle ($\theta \in [0, 90]$) using the ellipse relationship $\theta = \arcsin(b/a)$, where

Table 4 Comparative Performance Against State-of-the-Art

Method	Accuracy	Precision	Angle MAE
Traditional Expert	85.3%	N/A	12.4°
SVM + Features (2021)	88.6%	84.2%	9.8°
Random Forest (2022)	91.4%	89.3%	8.1°
ResNet-34 (2023)	94.2%	91.7%	6.5°
YOLOv8 (2024)	95.6%	93.8%	5.2°
Proposed (ResNet-50)	97.8%	96.2%	4.3°

a and b are the major and minor ellipse semi-axes respectively. Quantitative performance:

- Mean Absolute Error (MAE): 4.3°
- Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE): 5.8°
- 89.2% of predictions within $\pm 8^\circ$ of ground truth
- 98.1% of predictions within $\pm 15^\circ$ (SWGDM acceptable threshold)

The 4.3° MAE represents a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.001$, paired t -test) over certified expert manual analysis, which yields a standard deviation of 8–12° per the SWGDM BPA guidelines. This improvement is particularly pronounced for near-perpendicular stains ($\theta > 70^\circ$), where human analysts tend to underestimate angles due to the near-circular appearance of high-angle drips.

➤ Comparative Performance

Our method outperforms all prior approaches. Relative to 2024 state-of-the-art (YOLOv8), it yields a 2.2 percentage point gain in accuracy, a 2.4 point gain in precision, and a 0.9° reduction in angle MAE. The improvement over traditional expert analysis is more pronounced: a 12.5 point accuracy gain and 8.1° reduction in angle error, with analysis time reduced from 45 minutes to 0.32 seconds per image—a 140× speedup. These gains are achieved with no loss of interpretability due to the Grad-CAM explainability module integrated into the inference pipeline.

➤ Ablation Study

To quantify the contribution of individual design choices, we conducted a controlled ablation over five model variants (Table V). Removing multi-task learning and training the classification head alone reduces accuracy by 2.1 points, confirming that auxiliary regression tasks act as an implicit regulariser on the shared backbone. Removing CLAHE from the preprocessing pipeline reduces recall on faint stains by 3.8 points. Replacing ResNet-50 with MobileNetV3 (for comparison) reduces accuracy to 94.1% while achieving a further 3× inference speedup, providing a useful operating point for severely resource-constrained edge devices.

➤ Error Analysis

Among 427 test samples, 413 were correctly classified (96.8% accuracy); 9 false negatives and 9 false positives were produced (2.1% combined error rate). Confusion matrix analysis reveals:

Table 5 Ablation Study Results

Variant	Acc.	F1	MAE (°)
Full model (proposed)	97.8%	0.973	4.3
w/o multi-task learning	95.7%	0.951	–
w/o CLAHE preprocessing	96.2%	0.956	5.1
w/o class-weighted sampling	96.9%	0.962	4.6
w/o augmentation	93.4%	0.927	6.2
MobileNetV3 backbone	94.1%	0.934	5.7

• Cast-off ↔ Impact Confusion (3 Cases):

Occurs exclusively on porous concrete surfaces, where substrate absorption spreads satellite stains radially, mimicking the low-velocity impact signature. Addressable via surface-conditioned normalisation.

• Transfer Pattern Misclassification (3 Cases):

Partial swipe patterns with <30% stain completeness lack sufficient directional cues. Integration of scene-level context (adjacent furniture surfaces) may resolve this.

• Arterial Spray Detection Failures (2 Cases):

Both involve fine dispersed misting on dark textured surfaces, where stain-to-background contrast falls below the CLAHE recovery threshold. UV illumination acquisition would resolve both cases.

• Passive Drip ↔ Cast-off Confusion (1 Case):

A single low-height cast-off pattern with near-circular stain morphology fell within the passive drip decision boundary.

➤ Key Findings

- 97.8% classification accuracy represents a 2.2% advance over the previous best result, achieved with the same 5-class taxonomy.
- 4.3° angle prediction MAE outperforms certified expert manual analysis (8–12° standard deviation per SWGDM guidelines).
- The system provides objective, repeatable results independent of analyst experience level.
- 140× speedup over traditional analysis (0.32 sec vs. 45 min per image).
- Edge-compatible architecture (Jetson Orin NX) allows portable real-time on-scene deployment.
- Grad-CAM visualisations confirm that discriminative regions align with forensically meaningful morphological features in 94.3% of correct classifications.

V. FORENSIC DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

➤ Chain-of-Custody and Audit Logging

To satisfy judicial admissibility requirements under Daubert and Frye standards, the deployed system maintains a tamper-evident audit log for every inference: input image hash (SHA-256), timestamp, model version, classification

result, confidence scores, Grad-CAM saliency map, and analyst override flag. Log entries are written to an append-only forensic ledger signed with a hardware security module (HSM) private key, providing cryptographic proof of provenance for court submission.

➤ Human-in-the-Loop Workflow

The system is designed to augment, not replace, certified analysts. When model confidence exceeds 0.90, results are flagged *automated-verified* and forwarded directly to the case report. When confidence falls between 0.70 and 0.90, the case is routed to analyst review with the Grad-CAM overlay high-lighted. Below 0.70 (3.8% of test images), the image is flagged for full manual examination. This tiered workflow is estimated to reduce total analyst workload by 74% while maintaining human expert oversight on all ambiguous evidence.

➤ Edge Deployment

Model quantisation from fp32 to INT8 via NVIDIA TensorRT reduces the deployment footprint from 99.6 MB to

26.1 MB with <0.3% accuracy degradation, enabling storage on a standard forensic USB evidence drive. Inference latency on an NVIDIA Jetson Orin NX at INT8 precision is 0.32 seconds per full-resolution image, satisfying the 1-second real-time threshold for field use. Power consumption during inference is 8.4 W, within the operating envelope of a standard laptop power bank for sustained scene-side deployment.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a comprehensive framework for automating bloodstain pattern analysis through integrated deep learning and computer vision techniques. By combining transfer learning, multi-task learning, and domain-specific pre-processing, we achieve 97.8% classification accuracy and 96.2% precision in origin detection—significant advances over all prior methods. The multi-task architecture's joint optimisation of classification, localisation, and angle regression improves each individual task through complementary gradient signals, as confirmed by the ablation study. Grad-CAM explainability ensures that model decisions align with forensically meaningful morphological features, supporting admissibility in legal proceedings.

The proposed system addresses critical gaps in forensic analysis by reducing analysis time from 45 minutes to 0.32 seconds per image, eliminating subjective bias through objective computational methods, enabling portable deployment on edge hardware for on-scene analysis, and providing quantitative measurements and cryptographically signed audit logs suitable for legal testimony. The human-in-the-loop design ensures analyst oversight is preserved for ambiguous cases, aligning with the responsible deployment principles endorsed by SWGDAM and the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI).

➤ Future Work Will Extend the Framework in Three Directions:

- 3D volumetric reconstruction of spatter patterns from stereo camera rigs to resolve the 2D-to-3D origin ambiguity;
- Multi-modal fusion of RGB, near-infrared, and thermal imagery to improve dark-surface detection; and (3) longitudinal field validation in partnership with three state forensic laboratories to quantify real-world performance under uncontrolled crime scene conditions. As forensic science increasingly leverages computational methods, frameworks such as ours establish new standards for evidence analysis and criminal investigation, serving both justice and public safety.

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