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The View from the Bench, a
Forensic Analyst's Perspective

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Since most forensic labs are not equipped as well as many research labs, and are typically limited to UV, FTIR, GC-FID, and GCMS, the challenge is to find ways to analyze a rapidly changing array of compounds using technology on hand. Traditional techniques such as TLC, spot tests, and microcrystalline tests are frequently brought in to supplement instrumental data. Most laboratories are set up to handle the traditional drugs like marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin. The introduction of fentanyl, synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones, tryptamines, NBOMe, NBOH, THC edibles, and a myriad of modifications to existing structures is making the life of a seized drug analyst more challenging by the day. Obtaining reference material for comparison also presents many challenges, mostly financial. The days of "dilute 'n' shoot" drug analysis are long gone.

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