



1905 N. Wilcox Ave. Ste. 329
Los Angeles, CA. 90068
(323) 379-9113

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Forensics Meets Fashion: Real-life CSI's Apparel Line Hits One-Year Mark

For Crime Scene Investigator Erika Di Palma, fingerprints have long been a staple in her everyday life; now the Los Angeles-based 29-year old has successfully parlayed her forensic background into a venture that puts the fun in functional, with a fashionable twist; In May 2012, Erika launched **My Own Fingerprint**, an apparel/accessories collection featuring individuals' fingerprints imprinted on customized items. One year later, the cutting-edge company continues to evolve, marking a successful career crossover for the CSI-turned-CEO.

After receiving her Master's Degree in Forensic Science from George Washington University, Erika began her career as a Forensic Identification Specialist and has since lifted hundreds of fingerprints from actual crime scenes. Last summer, after responding to a high number of murders, she would unwind with long hikes, in an attempt to clear her mind from what most of us only see on our prime-time lineup. Noticing the conventional workout gear of her fellow hikers, it dawned on her, "What better way to show off your individuality than with a fingerprint on your clothes!" From there the concept was born, followed by the first prototype: a track jacket bearing a fingerprint on the back; now, in addition to t-shirts and sweatshirts, the collection includes watches and acrylic art pieces. "Fingerprints are my life," Erika explains. "I not only lift them from crime scenes and compare them to individuals but also think they are fascinating works of art. They are, in essence, our physiological autographs."

As with any innovative idea, there are plenty of naysayers, in this case those who aren't comfortable with having their fingerprint displayed for the world to see. Erika downplays the overzealous concerns with some good-natured humor: "Many of them watch too much crime TV!" Fortunately, fanatical fans of forensic shows are not the target audience of MOF's progressive President; her wide-range demographic includes everyone from kids and parents to members of the law enforcement community, with an emphasis on Crime Scene Investigators, Forensic Specialists and Latent Print Examiners. She's also tapping into the tech-savvy 18-34 year old sect, who dominate the viral vortex via continuous browsing and up-to-the-minute trending.

My Own Fingerprint's unique process takes the DIY movement to a new and innovative level. After selecting the item that they'd like printed, (via MOF's website), customers receive their *My Own Fingerprint Collection Kit*, where the capturing of their masterpiece begins; stick that fingerprinted card in the mail and in a few weeks, their one-of-a-kind t-shirt, watch or acrylic block will arrive. MOF's prices are equally user-friendly, with items ranging from \$19. Currently, fans are clamoring to get their hands (& fingers!) on the latest must-have item, the slap-n-go *My Own Fingerprint Color Watch*, which will be released later this week. Available in a multitude of hip, slap-happy colors, these fun timepieces make a bold personal statement that will speak volumes about your identity. In a world full of trend-setters, My Own Fingerprint says it's time to "**Identify Yourself.**" And look good doing it! For info, go to www.myownfingerprint.com

Contact:
Erika Di Palma
CEO/President
My Own Fingerprint
identity@myownfingerprint.com

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