The Magnolia Print

Official publication of the Mississippi Division of the IAI

Greetings from the Office of the President,

As you all know, the Mississippi Division of the International Association for Identification (MDIAI) has completed another successful year of providing exceptional training in the area of Forensic Science for our members and conference attendees. We are more than pleased that Jeff Gurvis provided his expertise in the area of bloodstain pattern analysis and from the results of our conference surveys; our attendees certainly felt the same.

The mission of the MDIAI has always been to bring quality, professional, and educational material to our members as well as the law enforcement and forensic science communities. As such, we have elected and brought together a diverse group of individuals from law

enforcement and forensic science that have been hard at work finding new ways to accomplish our mission.

With the help of the Forensic Science Society at the University of Southern Mississippi, the 2017 Annual Educational Conference is planned and rapidly approaching. We have put together a program that continues our history of providing quality training in the State of Mississippi. Our conference this year, “From Crime Scene to Courtroom,” will be highlighted by our guest instructor Dr. Laura Pettler. She will be joined by a host of guest lecturers. Additional details about Dr. Pettler and our speakers can be found later in this issue of the Magnolia Print.

You may have noticed that you haven’t received a copy of our newsletter lately. I would like to extend my sincere apologies for the delay in delivery. The Board of Directors and Officers of the organization have been busy updating our procedures to more accurately reflect the business model we have developed for the organization. This includes rebranding ourselves with new logos to emphasize the positive changes that are taking place in the organization. We are working to ensure that future issues of the Magnolia Print are delivered in a timely manner.

As we enter this new year our committees are already in full swing. The 2017 conference schedule, location, and events are planned and as registrations for attendance are rolling in we are eager to share our organization with you. Additionally, our resolutions committee has been working tirelessly to prepare new resolutions for presentation to our membership and the parent body of the IAI. Reinstating the position of Editor and creating a new membership tier for inclusion of our student

population are just two of the new resolutions to be added to our constitution and by-laws. As you may know, the forensic science programs at the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of Mississippi are highly reputable in the forensic community. We at the MDIAI want to make sure they are exposed to as many educational opportunities as possible on their journey.

I will close out this message with a call to action. The MDIAI is for our members and is successful because of our members. As we approach the 2017 Conference that includes the Annual Business Meeting and elections of officers, we welcome new ideas to improve our organization. We are looking for motivated individuals, with an eye to the future, interested in educating law enforcement and forensic professionals. If you are a member of the organization and feel like you would be interested in serving as an officer, Board of Directors Member, Committee Chair or Committee member, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. If you are not a member, we strongly encourage you to take that next step and join the MDIAI. Engage yourself in all we have to offer and with those we serve. We will be happy to sit down and discuss with you the many opportunities this organization provides.

I hope to see you all in Hattiesburg at the 2017 Conference!

Jason Pressly, President

2016 Educational Conference

This three day workshop lead by Jeff Gurvis introduced the basic principles of bloodstain pattern analysis with a major focus on pattern characteristics and documentation. Attendees completed hands on exercises geared to increase their understanding of the potential value of bloodstain patterns as well as provide a methodology for the

documentation and collection of blood evidence.

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to everyone who made the MDIAI 2016 Educational Conference a great success. We look forward to seeing you this April at our 2017 Conference in Hattiesburg, MS

2016 Educational Conference Vendors

We would like to extend a special thank you to the vendors of our 2016 Educational Conference.

AFIX Technologies, Inc.

Lynn Peavey Company

Charlie Spillers

3M

Foster+Freeman

William Carey University

JusticeTrax

2016 Educational

Conference Door Prizes

- Mississippi River Kings
- Bally's Casino
- Baptist Memorial Hospital
- Edible Arrangements
- MS Coroner Association
- Filling Station Grille
- Firehouse Subs
- Memphis Zoo
- Five Guys
- Desoto County Tourism
- KDL Solutions
- Lenny's Sub Shop
- Memphis BBQ Company
- LifeWay Christian Stores
- Newk's Eatery
- Malco Theatres
- Qualtrax
- RS&A
- Swankys Taco Shop
- Tanger Outlets
- Vanity Fair Outlet
- Tri-Tech Forensics
- Wise Guys Pizza
- Southern Thunder Harley-Davidson
- Yankee Candle

Conflict>Resolution>Benefit Theory of Intimicide and Identifying Staging in Intimicide Cases

By Laura G. Pettler, PhD

Abstract: Murder can be simplified into three phases: Conflict, Resolution, and Benefit (CRB). CRB Theory is new, yet effective in helping pare down complicated homicide cases into clear and understandable terms. Because crime scene staging in homicide cases is a function of the victim-offender relationship, when a crime scene is staged, it is a critical indicator for investigators from the offender that says, “I knew the victim!” Preceding conflict is always present in some form prior to the victim’s death in staged homicide cases. The offender chooses murder to resolve this conflict, then because murder is the only kind of death where offender’s benefit, often the conflict is canceled out and offender-post-murder behaviors are illustrious of both the conflict and resolution.

The most dangerous phrase in homicide and crime scene investigation is “because we’ve always done it this way.” And nothing cripples a death investigation faster than failing to consider alternatives. Keeping an open mind, starting the investigation where the investigation actually starts, reaching out to others for ideas, partnership, and additional resources, many investigatory obstacles can be overcome. Homicide

investigation today has shifted to becoming victim-centered. In decades past, the suspect-centered paradigm was the norm, largely leaving out much of the vital information about person everyone is rallying for and the reason for why the case exists in the first place…the death of the victim.

Human beings are *Homo sapiens. Homo* is the Latin word for man and *cide* in Latin combines the word kill with the act of killing. So homicide is a term that broadly defines as the killing of one human being by another human being. There are many types of homicide, such as fratricide, which is the killing of one's brother or uxoricide, which is the killing of one's wife.

Violence against women is a problem worldwide. It is not specific country's problem. Rather, violence against women in an international problem that affects women across the globe from the richest to the poorest of countries. Violence against women is exhibited in many ways, such as verbal abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, all the way to sex trafficking, deprivation of liberty through slavery, and sexual assault.

Generally speaking, *intimicide* (in-TIM-i-side) is the killing of one intimate partner by another former, current, or temporary intimate partner. However, intimicide deaths do not include those intimate partners who fall victim to a serial predator through the act of solicited sex for profit. Like many other countries, intimicide is a problem in the United States of America. According to the Violence Policy Center (2015), just in 2013 alone, men killed more than 1,600 women across the United States. The offenders were known most victims in most instances, as they were men with whom the victims were intimately involved as wives and girlfriends. In the majority of these cases, these male offenders used firearms to shoot their female intimate partners during the course of an argument.

Cases that involve the death of a female victim by firearm used by her male intimate partner are often difficult to move forward in criminal investigation. Physical evidence, such as DNA or fingerprints is expected to found because the crime scene is often the marital residence or a mutual environment to both the victim and the offender. Another reason intimicide cases can be challenging to resolve is because the crime scene does not always put the weapon back in the hand of the offender. This is the situation in cases of murder when the offender the manipulates the physical evidence in the scene before

the arrival of the police and then most often his or her behavioral evidence as well to misdirect the investigation towards his desired outcome.

Arguments are conflict. Murder is conflict resolution for the offender. And even in "emergency murder" or unplanned murder that occurs as the result of spontaneous combustion of the victim-offender relationship, the offender always benefits from the death of victim if it means only that he feels better, his anger is satisfied, and the conflict is now over. Intimicide is most often underpinned by the pervasive pattern of domestic violence and the core of domestic violence is power and control. The core of intimicide is also power and control, but while all intimicides are grounded in the ultimate power and control of the victim, some intimicides also are about anger and some are not. Regardless, holding the balance in his or her hands as the victim transitions from life to death is the ultimate power and control for the offender.

The relationship between the victim and the offender is not *part* of the investigation in these cases it *is* the investigation. The victim-offender relationship is what tells the story of the how the victim became a victim and how the physical and behavioral evidence recovered from the crime scene relates to the case in context. For this reason and for many others, the fact that victimology should be thoroughly conducted within the first 48-hours of a death investigation cannot be understated.

But, even though it might be easy to state all of the above, working in the field of crime scene and homicide investigation in intimicide cases can be daunting even for the seasoned and well trained investigator. This is where Conflict>Resolution>Benefit Theory (CRB) can help. Murder is actually simple to understand when it is categorized into three stages: Stage 1 - Preceding Victim-Offender Conflict; Stage 2 - Conflict Resolution; Stage 3 - Offender Benefits. Preceding victim-offender conflict can be anything, such as an spontaneous or ongoing argument, an impending divorce, a child custody issue, a child support issue, an adulterous affair, an impending breakup, financial debt, an unwanted pregnancy, the need to keep a secret, or a classic conflict for murder…rejection. So the first step of using CRB in the field is to identify any victim-offender conflict.

Again, murder is conflict resolution for the offender. Stage 2 of CRB is Resolution or the fact that the offender chooses murder to resolve the conflict with the victim. Stage 2 is where investigators identify all the crime scene characteristics, including injuries to the

victim in context of how he or she relates to biological, physical, and behavioral evidence recovered at the scene. Some investigators get tunnel vision focusing on just the physical evidence, “No physical evidence, no case” kind of thinking. But murder is the “interactionary” result of the Offender-Weapon-Victim Force and Intensity Continuum. The weapon did not kill the victim; instead the offender’s behavior on one end of the weapon killed the victim.

While the crime scene is definitely the reflection of the offender’s personality the crime scene is arguably also a reflection of the offender’s most authentic self as well. One very good reason for this could be because the act of murder between two people behind closed doors is just as intimate as the physical act of sex between them. The physical act of sex generally occurs privately and what goes on before, during, and after is only known to the two people engaged in the sexual act. So by listing all the observable crime scene characteristics, investigators learn more about the victim, more about the personality of the offender, more about the physical and behavioral evidence, more about how all of these pieces interrelate, and the before-during-after activities. Interestingly, along with the aforementioned, well-trained professionals might also observe a reflection of the motive for murder in the crime scene because the crime scene often mirrors the preceding victim-offender conflict as well.

Third, the offender always benefits from the victim’s death in some way. Even satiation the offender’s anger towards the victim is at very least an organic benefit of the victim’s death. Stage 3 of CRB is where investigators identify and record all the ways the offender benefits from the death of the victim (e.g., financially, anger, child custody, avoid costly divorce, moves on with new love interest, etc.). Further, many times the Stage 1 Preceding Victim-Offender Conflict with link to items listed Stage 3 Offender Benefits. But applying CRB requires precise investigatory efforts because reverberations of domestic violence are wide spread far beyond the scope of what is immediately medically observable in the wound pattern on the victim’s body in the crime scene. It takes time to build the intimicide murder case. And in many cases it takes extra time because so often intimicide is linked to crime scene staging. But there is fast and effective tool investigators can use to raise awareness that a scene might be staged by answering the three key questions of the Staging Trilogy.

The Staging Trilogy is designed only to build awareness and to raise the question “could this scene be staged?” not to tell investigators that the scene is staged. When

investigators arrive on scene, it is highly recommended to begin by asking, “Is there someone in conflict with this victim? Who is in conflict with this victim?” and similar questions. Then ask, “Who discovered the victim?” Then, “Who called 911?” Have the 911 call tape pulled and listen to it before entering the scene. This is not to create or enhance investigator bias, but rather to start the investigation where the investigation starts…with the call to 911 to report an incident. If preceding conflict is found between the victim and the person who discovered the victim and that person also called 911 proceed with caution especially if the person called 911 to report the victim committed suicide with a firearm during the course of an argument.

Because CRB and the Staging Trilogy have been so well received by investigators and students worldwide during presentation of the Crime Scene Staging Symposium, Laura Pettler & Associates in partnership with colleagues, Alabama State Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Bill LaPradd, and former investigator now IT Specialist Bret Rusnak are building an App that investigators will be able to use in the field to help bring awareness potentially staged crime scenes in intimicide cases. The app will contain information about victim-offender conflicts, victim discovery, 911 call triaging, crime scene characteristics in relation to physical and behavioral evidence. “For law enforcement to have a tangible application like the CRB Trilogy App in the field is like having Dr. Pettler standing next to you on the scene,” said Bill LaPradd, “Think of the logical, look for the probable, and expect nothing reasonable.” The app will be user friendly and fast to use in the field.

The first part of the App will collect demographic information about the case and individuals involved. The App will save this information each time the screen advances to the next screen. At the end of the Case Information Section, the App will save the information into a case file and a case file number can be entered manually or be assigned. Once a user is finished using the App, the entire case file can be exported to another device like a laptop or desktop computer in a useable file format.
Pursuant to CRB, the APP will contain Stage 1: Conflict icons the user will click on after entering the Case Information. The Conflict icons will then also appear in the Results screen later in list form towards assessing which of the conflicts are resolved by the victim’s death and how the offender might benefit from the victim’s death by that conflict having been resolved. Users will be able to select as many conflicts as they can identify

and go back to add additional conflicts as the investigation and victimology are both fluid in all investigations, thus, the App adapts to the needs of the investigation.

Victim Discovery is the second prong of the Staging Trilogy. Research has shown that most crime scene stagers discover their victim's. The staged crime scene is only limited by the imagination of the crime scene stager, his or her physical ability, and his or her enthusiasm and ambition for staging the scene. It is arguable that staging is also a function of an individual's *envirosocioculturalism* or the way an individual's environment, the facets of the social structure where he or she resides, and the cultural aspects of both them influence the way someone lives and the way he or she kills.

The App will continue with screens that categorize information about the crime scene and staging elements if those are present. The App will end with a results section that summarizes the events of the case. The first test run of the App launched for Android in January 2017.

Dr. Laura Pettler specializes in crime scene staging in homicide cases and focuses her practice on domestic violence homicide and serial cases. Dr. Pettler is the author of the world's first book exclusively dedicated to crime scene staging and consistently invents field-friendly models and methods for homicide investigators to address the unique challenges of circumstantial intimicide cases.

Reference:

Violence Policy Center. (2015, September). More than 1,600 women murdered by men in one year, new study finds. Retrieved from http://www.vpc.org/press/more-than-1600-women-murdered-by-men-in-one-year-new-study-finds/

Searching and Examining a Major Case Crime Scene

By H.W. Rus Ruslander, CSCSA, CLPE

The crime scene examination and subsequent search should be done in a careful and methodical manner. After talking to the officer(s) who were the first ones on the scene and learning from them of any changes that might have been made to the scene since their arrival, such as turning lights on or off or opening doors or windows, start the examination by working your way into the body using great care to avoid disturbing or destroying any evidence as you do.

Carefully observe the floor or ground surrounding the body. Look for items of evidence or of evidential value such as stains, marks, etc. Remember to look up too; every crime scene is 3 dimensional. Another technique to you assist in locating evidence is to shine a flashlight on the ground at an oblique angle. Yes, even in the daytime. Look at the items where they are located. Pay close attention to everything as you approach the body at this time; do not dismiss anything until its evidentiary value can be determined. Are there any footprints or drag marks? Is there anything on the floor or ground that may be

stepped on or destroyed? Only one investigator at a time should approach the body! Determine what, if anything has been moved or altered by the suspect(s) or anyone else prior to your arrival. Has the body been moved, if so, by whom and for what reason? Never move or alter the positioning of the body! Make close visual examinations of the body and the area immediately around it. Look between the arms and legs

without moving them. Look at the arms, hands and fingers. Are there defense wounds? Is there anything under the nails that you can see at this time? If you can, try to determine the cause of death and the instrument or method used.

Take careful notes of the external appearance of the body and the clothing or lack of clothing. Look at or for lividity, decomposition, direction of blood flow patterns, remember the law of gravity. Is the blood flow consistent with it? Make detailed notes. Describe the clothing, and especially the condition of the clothing. Do folds or rolls indicate the body had been dragged, if so, in what direction? Note those folds and rolls, diagram them then photograph them. They could assist you in determining the method of transportation or placement of the body at the location where it was found. There could be trace evidence in the folds and rolls too.

Describe the location and appearance of wounds, bruises, etc. Make careful and detailed observations. Describe not only what you see, but also what you do not see! Forget about what you think you see! If something is missing, note it. For example, if you observe an area on the wrist that is not tanned by the sun, note it. DO NOT state that a wristwatch is missing. What if the victim had an I.D. bracelet or sweatband on instead? Never ASSUME!

I remember one time I read a report that stated “there was an area on the left wrist of the victim that appeared lighter than the rest of the arm. This indicated to me that the victim had been wearing a watch with a SPANDEX BAND”! I wonder to this day how that person could determine that the watchband was spandex!

Examine the scene for the presence and absence of blood. If any is located, note the amount, size and shape of the drops and degree of coagulation or separation of it. Photograph it using a scale and always taking the pictures from a 90-degree angle. At this time, you should be making a sketch of the scene. It can be a rough, freehand sketch drawn on a blank piece of paper or in your notebook. You should include in the sketch things like the location of all doors, windows, furniture, the victim and anything

else you feel it is necessary to document. A sketch should be made in all murder cases and any other case involving a death where there is any question of cause or at the discretion of the investigator. Measurements can then be made of the location to show the size of the area drawn, the width and height of doors, windows, tables, the bed or any other items needed. This will also geographically locate the victim's body and items of evidence within the scene. If the investigator is reasonably sure this is not a natural death and he/she is going to proceed with the investigation as if it is a murder, then at a later date, a detailed formal diagram should be drawn using drafting tools, a scale and a uniform format. Photos of the scene can give a distorted view of the relationship of the body to other fixed objects due to camera angle, size of lens, lighting, etc. To accurately depict the scene it is possible to use photos in conjunction with the finished diagram. Something to keep in mind about the sketch is this, you should have enough information in it so you could give it to another investigator and that person would be able to complete a finished diagram without the need to revisit the scene.

Once the photos are taken, the investigator should make a detailed examination of the victims' condition. Are the eyes and/or mouth open or closed, what is the color of skin, of the nails and hands or lips. Is there a presence or absence of blood, saliva, vomit, lung purge, and their direction and flow pattern? The best idea is to begin at the head and work down to the feet. Look for cuts, bruises, stab wounds or bullet holes. The investigator should document maggot activity if present. When the body is moved, check the underside of the body for wounds and underneath the body for items of an evidentiary value. Record the temperature of the body, the surface it is laying on, and the interface area between the two. Obtain the ambient temperature. If a maggot mass is present, take the temperature of the mass. Do not attempt to learn the victims' identity by going through the pockets of the victims clothing. If his/her identity cannot be established by other means at the scene, the investigator can obtain this information when it is made available at the Medical Examiners office later. Identification photos and finger and palm prints should be taken at the Medical Examiners office too. In some jurisdictions these things can be done at the scene. If the Medical Examiner is comfortable with the competency of the crime scene investigators or if their forensic investigators are present to observe and document the actions of the crime scene investigators, some Medical Examiners will not have a problem with these things being done at the scene.

Notifying the Medical Examiner

The crime scene investigator, the detective or the supervisor on the scene should notify the medical examiner of the type of death case they are investigating. Since the determination of cause and manner of death often depends on the evidence recovered at the scene, the Medical Examiner may elect to respond to the scene personally or send one of his forensic investigators in his place. The agency's relationship with the Medical Examiners office is crucial to the successful investigation of any case. A relationship of trust and honesty is essential. Since any investigation requires a team effort, steps must be taken to ensure that a harmonious atmosphere is in place and remains that way. There are certain notifications that must be made during the preliminary investigation. The Medical Examiners Office should be notified and apprised of the situation as soon as possible after a murder has been discovered. They should also be notified if there is any unattended or suspicious death being investigated. If any change in status in the case occurs, they should be made aware of it. Florida law charges the Medical Examiner with determining the cause and manner of death in any case that he deems necessary, including but not limited to murder, unattended death cases, suicides and cases involving communicable diseases or public health hazards. The prompt notification will also result in the timely arrival of trained professionals who can assist the investigator in the determination of an approximate time of death.

Continuing the Search

Search the immediate area around the body (divide the room into a grid and work outward from the body). Have another investigator retrace your steps and recheck the grids for any missed evidence. REMEMBER, all scenes are three-dimensional, never forget too look up too! Do not touch areas or articles that have the possibility of being processed for latent fingerprints.

Expand the search to the remainder of the building or scene. Personal notepads, diaries, phone books and answering machines or the tapes in them are good sources of information. Check the caller I.D. unit. Missing personal belongings or items that have been moved or removed may provide valuable information.The scope or intensity of the search of the scene depends on the particular situation and the conditions present. It would be difficult to proceed with a detailed examination of a scene without adequate

lighting. To do so would probably result in the overlooking of evidence or the destruction of trace or latent evidence. It is impossible to describe all the possibilities that could occur in an improper search of a scene. In the end, it depends on the training, experience and judgment of the investigator and upon the same factors relating to those he/she calls on to assist. One final note, be cognizant of someone's expectation of privacy or legal standing. If that possibility exists, a search warrant or written consent to search must be obtained.

Fingerprint Evidence

Latent prints that are left by the contact of the palmar surfaces of the hands and/or bare feet of a person are probably the most valuable piece of evidence at any crime scene. The term "latent" means hidden, not visible. However, for the purpose of this instruction, a latent print is considered as one that is obtained in conjunction with an investigation involving a possible identification. There are three main types of prints which may be obtained in an investigation, they are; 1) visible or patent prints, 2) molded or plastic prints and 3) latent prints. Visible or Patent Prints are those prints which have been made by transferring a foreign substance, such as ink, blood, grease or dust from the crests of the papillary ridges to the surface of the object touched. The most common type is the dust print. When a finger comes in contact with a thin layer of dust, some of the dust sticks to the friction ridges. When the finger subsequently comes in contact with or against a clean surface, a fingerprint results or, when the finger is removed from the surface, the ridges pull away the dust, leaving the fingerprint. This print in some cases may be so clear that it can be successfully searched in a single fingerprint file. An excellent print may also be left when other substances such as ink, soot, flour, paint, facial oils, etc contaminate the finger. Fingerprints in blood are not uncommon in murder investigations, but can be indistinct and less reliable for identification. They could require chemical enhancement to make them identifiable. Molded or Plastic Prints are those prints that occur when the finger touches or presses against a soft pliable surface such as putty, wax, an adhesive, grease, drying paint, blood or soap. Impressions in the skin of a deceased victim have also been observed. A negative or reversed impression of the friction ridge pattern is thereby produced as a molded or plastic print. Such a print may also be found in paint or recently painted objects or surfaces. Latent Prints are those prints made by natural skin secretions such as perspiration, sebaceous oils and dirt being deposited on an object touched from the details in the friction ridge patterns.

Latent prints are usually found on objects with smooth, polished surfaces or on paper. Under favorable conditions, however, they may also appear on rougher surfaces like tightly woven materials, starched fabrics, vegetation, wood or even human skin. Photographing Prints found at the scene should always be photographed prior to attempting to lift them. This is recommended since it is much easier to introduce print evidence into court if it has been recorded. Especially since parts of the object on which the print was located will also be visible in the photograph. If a good lift is obtained during the investigation and it is identified as being that of the suspect, it may be necessary to have the photograph enlarged. Copies of the photos can also be made available for the attorneys and jurors. When taking the photos of the prints always use a scale or other measuring devise and take the photo at a 90 degree angle to the surface to prevent any distortion to the print when it is being photographed. Make sure the scale is visible in the picture and that the inches or metric notation is visible.

It is also a good habit to indicate where up is in the picture since the orientation of the print can be useful information. Prints from sources other than fingers are also obtained at crime scenes. While it is usually true that more fingerprints are obtained in investigations than prints from any other papillary skin surface, it should be mentioned that any palmar (palm, wrist) or plantar (foot, toe) skin designs can also serve to positively identify the suspect. In some cases, lip and ear prints have also been recovered and used to identify the suspect and confirm his or her presence at the scene.

Expanding the Search

Once the investigators have completed their examination and the body has been removed, the investigators should take time to systematically check the remainder of the house, business, vehicle or location and carefully note items of evidence or conditions which may shed any additional light on the investigation. These can include; doors are they locked or bolted (from the inside or outside), are there marks of forced entry, do the doorbell work, are there a doorknocker, are there scratches around the keyhole, etc. Windows, what type, are they locked or unlocked, open or broken, note the type and position of curtains, drapes or blinds. Newspapers and mail, is the mail unopened or read or not, check the postmarks on envelopes and the dates of newspapers. What about lights? Which ones were on when timers, motion sensors or switches discovered the crime, how they are controlled. Can they be seen from the outside? Are the bulbs

broken or unscrewed? Are there any smells and odors? Do you or did the first responding officer notice the smell of gas, tobacco, alcohol, perfume, gunpowder or anything else unusual. What about you? Are you one of those people who use aftershave or cologne? If so, maybe you should consider refraining or greatly reducing the amount you use. Your own scents *could* cover over the scents and smells already at the scene! Kitchens, was food being prepared, if so, what kind (it may or may not correspond with the victims stomach contents). Is there food that was partially eaten, utensils, glasses or plates? Is the stove warm or still on, are there signs of attempts to burn or wash away evidence. Are there signs of clean up attempts? Heating/Air Conditioners, what type is it, is it vented or unvented (carbon monoxide can kill). What is the thermostat setting? Are there signs of a party, such as empty bottles (note the labels, brands, types of liquor, etc.) are there cups, glasses and what is their contents, how many are there, is lipstick on any of them, how many places are set at the table. Note contents of ashtrays, cigarette packs and butts, brands, the way in which the cigarettes were extinguished, are there tooth marks or lipstick on them. Remember, DNA is easily obtained from the butts, preserve them properly. Contents of wastebaskets and trashcans, has anyone been going through them looking for anything, is the trash in proper order (dates on newspapers, letters, etc.). Clocks and watches are they wind-up or electric. Are they running, do they show the right time, what time are alarm clocks set for? Check timers on VCR's, microwave ovens, etc. Bathrooms and vanities are towels, rags etc. damp to touch or dry. Are they bloodstained? Check for signs that the suspect cleaned up afterwards or was injured and bled at the scene. Is the toilet seat and lid left up? In a woman’s house, this could be a piece of important information. Check medicine cabinets for drugs; check the tanks of toilets, that is a great place to hide things. General disorder, is there evidence of a struggle, is the place just dirty, etc. Shootings, how many bullets were fired, account for all of them if possible, find cartridge cases (number and location found) if there are any bullet holes (number and location), was the weapon left at the scene. There may be expended cartridge casings found lying on the floor, rug or on furniture. It is recommended to mark these items, after photographing them first, with numbered markers to prevent their being moved, altered or damaged. If necessary, they may be protected by placing water glasses over them. Stabbing and beatings, was the instrument left at the scene, could it have come from that location or was it brought to the scene by the suspect. Blood, document the location, degree of coagulation, type (spots, stains, spatters, pooling, etc.). Sketch and photograph the bloodstains.

Remember, when a body fluid begins to decompose, it will discharge reddish brown fluid which resembles blood, when describing this, be objective, call it what it is, a reddish brown fluid. Blood spatter analysis may be used to reconstruct violent crimes. Carefully photograph all blood patterns using scales. DO NOT cover up patterns with the scales if possible. Remember, always look up, cast-off spatter will probably be on the ceiling. Hangings and strangulation, what instrument or means was used, was it obtained in the house or brought to the scene, are there any portions remaining. If a suspected autoerotic death, look for signs of prior activities such as rope marks on doorframes or rafters. Be prepared for scene re-arranging by ashamed family members. Remember; do not cut the victim down if he/she is obviously dead until all aspects of the investigation have been covered. Never cut through the knot and always use a piece of string tied to each end of the cut to re-connect the circle.

Look at stairs, hallways, entries and exits to the scene, check for footprints, debris, discarded items and fingerprints. Attempt to determine the route used to enter and exit the scene by the suspect and avoid contaminating it. Presence of items that do not belong there, many suspects, in the heat of the moment, will leave items of great evidential value, don't overlook this possibility. Are there signs of ransacking, to what degree, if any, has the scene been ransacked? Was anything taken (relatives and friends can assist in making this determination).

Look for hiding places for weapons which the suspect may have had to conceal quickly, check behind stoves, on top of tall furniture, behind books, among bedclothes, under the mattress, on the roof.

Personal Information

Is the victim married or in a relationship? Determine as much about the state of the marriage or relationship as possible, for example, abuse, infidelity on either partners part, drug or alcohol abuse, monetary problems. Is there a suicide note, if so does it appear genuine or staged? Process for prints, get handwriting samples from the other occupants of the location. Has the victim threatened suicide recently, has he/she been despondent, what has happened recently to prompt or preclude such actions? Check the victims' computer.

Curious Onlookers at the Scene

Curious onlookers at the scene cause many additional problems when a body is discovered. The major concern is, of course, to protect the scene from destruction or contamination by onlookers and curious police officers. The latter group usually presents the most problems. Police Officers are naturally curious and generally have to see things for themselves. Detailed follow-up investigations of many crimes have revealed that various items initially thought to be of great evidential value were actually left by curious police officers. It will never be known how much valuable time has been wasted and how much evidence has been destroyed by the mere presence of policemen. Just standing around or leaning against a doorway may grind evidence into the ground or smear a good fingerprint. The investigator should explain these facts to the officers present and if the officers are not needed, request that they leave the scene. Most officers are cooperative and no difficulty should be encountered if the matter is presented properly. Occasionally, a problem presents itself when a high-ranking officer appears on the scene. If it becomes apparent that their presence could result in the destruction of evidence, their cooperation should be elicited in leaving the scene. The use of a log or name list of everyone entering the crime scene also helps discourage the curious. When good latent fingerprints are found, every person who has been present at the scene, including the victim must be fingerprinted for identification and/or elimination purposes. The police should use tact and courtesy when dealing with civilian witnesses and crowds. This approach serves several purposes. It will gain as much cooperation from people as possible under the circumstances and it may result in a witness, who is an onlooker, coming forward with valuable information. This is especially important in areas where past experiences indicate that the hostility of onlookers is easily aroused. In some situations, the mood of the crowd may become so ugly that the police are forced to leave the scene before they can complete their investigation. Populated areas usually consist of streets, sidewalks, communities, etc. and require the presence of officers to protect the scene. If not, physical barriers such as crime scene tape, vehicles or sawhorses may be needed. In some cases, a detailed search of an entire area may be necessary. This can be done most effectively by cordoning off the area and dividing it into manageable sections to be searched individually. Remember, when setting the boundaries of the crime scene; make it cover as large an area as possible. It is much easier to shrink it down later that to try to expand it once the boundaries have been established. And a news cameraman is standing where you want to expand the scene to. To avoid destroying evidence in areas of heavy weed or brush, a pathway may be

marked off using string or flags and used as the sole entrance and exit to the scene until the search is finished. The pathway should be carefully examined first to ensure no evidence is lost. Officers should never overlook the potential of any items found at or near the scene. Investigators should conduct a neighborhood canvass for witnesses. In Rural Settings, many problems will present themselves that are found in urban settings. These are handled in the same manner as an urban investigation. However, there can be significant differences in a rural setting, these could include, Accessibility or the lack of it. Are 4 wheel drive vehicles needed? Can it only be reached by boat or helicopter? Do you need to pack all your equipment in with you? Length of time a body has been there prior to discovery. This will cause many changes to the scene such as decomposition, animal activity and weather related destruction of the evidence. Use care not to disturb the ground that may have footprints or tire marks imbedded in it. Employ aerial photography. It will provide information about routes or egress and exit to the area, traffic patterns and location of homes, etc. This is true in both rural and urban settings.

Evidence

As a rule, in the absence of a crime scene investigator, the removal and submission of evidence should be restricted to the lead investigator or lead uniform officer. When evidence is discovered by persons other than the investigator, these items should be, if possible, pointed out to the investigator for his collection and removal to avoid a long list of witnesses or links in the ever growing chain of custody needed for court at a later date. Remember if a crime scene investigator is working the scene, that is their scene. They are in command of the scene itself. All other Law Enforcement personnel present are there to assist that investigator. There can be situations where the finder of the evidence should collect and log it rather than give it to the investigator. This will reduce the chain of custody but still requires the finder to advise the investigator of its discovery, location and identity. Any evidence so moved must be photographed first. Evidence can be marked for proper identification. This can be nothing more than the recording of a serial number or the physical placement of your unique mark directly on the item. If marking items, make sure you do not cause the destruction of latent prints or other marks such as tool marks or ballistic identifiers. When submitting evidence; give a complete description of all evidence submitted including, date, time, location recovered and who recovered it. Illustrate the chain of custody and indicate who will be needed to

testify in court about that specific piece of evidence and why. If a search warrant was obtained, include that information. List the evidence recovered in a chronological order and include the exact location of recovery. This could include measurements. A suggestion to consider is when you are filling out the section of the property record, on each line where you list the individual items, *never* put a dollar value on any item **except** official currency and coins! You are not an appraiser and have no idea the value of items. Use the term “unknown” instead. On the line where you list the description of the item, consider adding information such as *“One mans Hanes brand men’s tee-shirt, white in color size XL with BLS (blood like substance) on it. Recovered from kitchen floor an 0128 hours.* This way, when you get back to the office you have the information readily available to you for your follow-up reports.

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