# Principles of Crime Scene Investigation

## Essay

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## **Abstract**

Crime scene investigation is the meeting point of science, logic and law. "Processing a crime scene" is a long, tedious process that involves purposeful documentation of the conditions at the scene and the collection of any physical evidence that could possibly illuminate what happened and point to who did it. There is no typical crime scene, there is no typical body of evidence and there is no typical investigative approach.

Every CSI (crime scene investigation) unit handles the division between field work and lab work differently. What goes on at the crime scene is called crime scene investigation ,or crime scene analysis, and what goes on in the laboratory is called forensic science. Not all CSIs (crime scene investigator) are forensic scientists. Some CSIs (crime scene investigator)work in the field only they collect the evidence and pass it to the forensic lab.

#### Key Words:-

- Crime scene investigation.
- Physical evidence.
- Forensic science.

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# **CONTENTS**

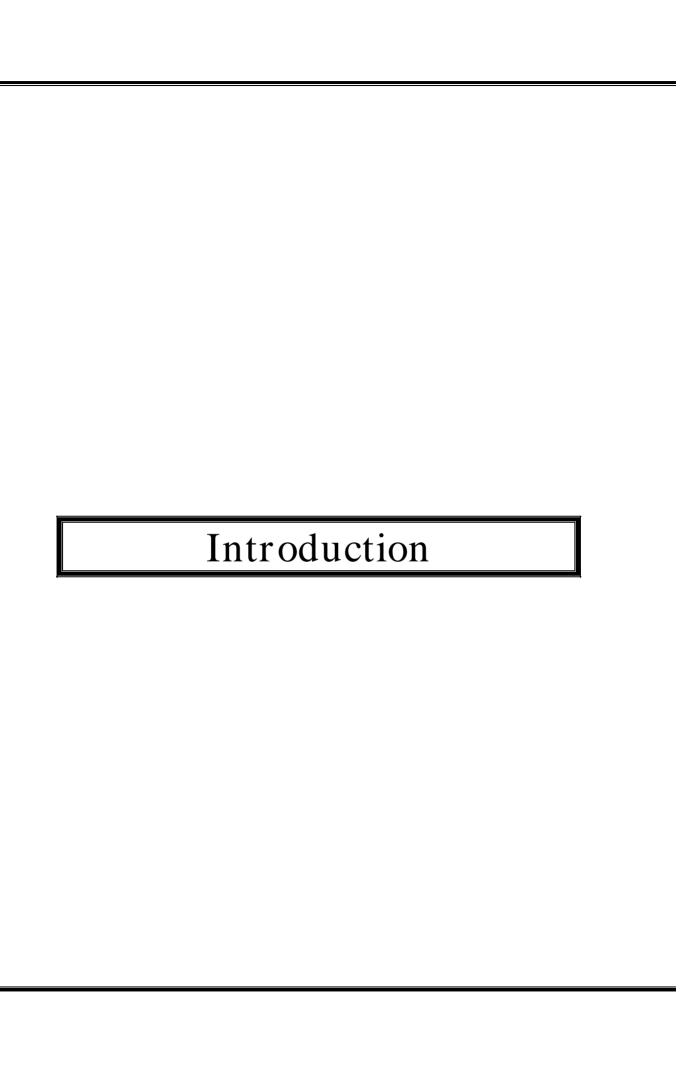
List of Figures	
Introduction and aim of work.	1
Chapter (1): Nature of the Crime scene	
Classification of Crime Scene	4
Information Obtain from Examination	6
of Physical Evidence	
Crime Scene Search	8
Crime Scene Reconstruction	11
Crime Scene Contamination	15
Case study 1	17
Health and Safety at a Crime Scene	18
Chapter (2): Characteristics of Physical Evidence	19
Physical Evidence	21
Purpose of Examination of Physical Evidence	22
Characteristic of Physical Evidence	25
Evidence Environment	26
Physical Evidence Reports	27
Chapter (3) : Evidence Transfer	
General classification	32
Trace Evidence	34
Chapter (4): Processing of Crime Scene	39

Materials Needed for Crime Scene	39	
Methods for Documentation of the Scene	40	
Searching the Scene	45	
Collection and Packaging of Physical Evidence	47	
General Collection Techniques	49	
Obtain Controls	51	
Chapter (5): Special Evidence Collection	52	
Blood Stains and Samples	52	
Saliva, Seminal Stains	55	
DNA	56	
Hair	57	
Fibers and Thread, Glass	58	
Paint	60	
Flammable fluid	61	
Firearm Evidence	63	
Case study 2	66	
Tool marks	67	
Controlled substance	68	
Medical preparation, Questioned Documents	69	
Latent fingerprint	71	
Footwear marks	73	
Entomology Evidence	74	
Chapter(6): Legal Aspects of Crime Scene		

Legal consideration at the crime scene	77
Evidence, Common forms of Evidence	78
Value of Physical Evidence	80
A chain of Custody	81
Crime Scene Access	82
Recommendation Summary	
Appendix	
Arabic Summary	107

# **List of Figures**

Number	Title	Page
Figure 1	Linkage of person, scene and objects	7
Figure 2	Steps of scientific examination of a crime scene	8
Figure 3	Fact – gathering aspect of crime scene reconstruction	15
Figure 4	Latent fingerprint for identification and comparison	26
Figure 5	Rough sketch	45
Figure 6	Finished sketch	46
Figure 7	Searching the scene	49
Figure 8	The direction of blood splash or cast off	55
Figure 9	Fibers found on knife blade	60
Figure 10	Comparison of glass fragments	62
Figure 11	Gun Powder and Shot pattern	68
Figure 12	Photography of granular powdered fingerprint on drinking mug	73
Figure 13	Cast made of footwear mark impression	75
Figure 14	Chain of Custody	85
Figure 15	Description of Crime Scene	86
Figure 16	Physical Evidence Report	87
Figure 17	Search Warrant	88
Figure 18	Search warrant Affidavit	89
Figure 19	Evidence Collected Report	90
Figure 20	Property Report	91



# Introduction

Most police investigations begin at the scene of crime. The scene is simply defined as the actual site or location in which the incident took place. It is important that the first officer on the crime scene properly protect the evidence. The entire investigation hinges on that first person being able to properly identify, isolate, and secure the scene. The scene should be secured by establishing a restricted perimeter. This is done by using some type of rope or barrier. The purpose of securing the scene is to restrict access and prevent evidence destruction (Ashbaugh , 2003).

Once the scene is secured, the restrictions should include all nonessential personnel. An investigation may involve a primary scene as well as several secondary scenes at other locations. On major scenes a safe space or comfort area should be designated at the crime scene to brief investigators, store needed equipment, or as a break area (Aveni, 2005).

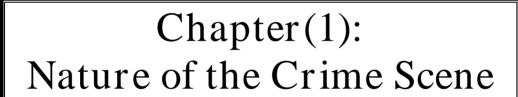
Crime scene investigation is more than processing or documentation of crime scene but, is it nor the collection, package of physical evidence, and, finally, scene reconstruction (Dehaan, 2006).

Every crime scene is unique and, with experience, a crime scene investigation will be able to use this logical and systemic approach to investigate even the most challenging crime scene to a successful conclusion (Aveni, 2005).

The physical evidence collected by (Crime Scene Investigation) CSIs e.g. fingerprints, footprints, is then transferred to a lab, in strict accordance with chain-of-evidence procedures. In the lab, technicians, including forensic chemists, forensic biologists and forensic toxicologists, analyze the samples (Guio Qiang, 2004).

### Aim of Work:

This essay aims to review the different aspects of crime scene investigation, methods employed in them, and the principles of physical evidence collection.



# Nature of the Crime scene

A crime scene is a location where an evidence of a crime may be located. It is not necessarily the location the crime took place. Indeed, there are primary, secondary and often tertiary crime scenes. For instance, the police may use a warrant to search an offender's home, and even though the offender did not commit the crime at that location, evidence of the crime may be found there. In another instance, an offender might kidnap a person at one location (primary crime scene), transport the victim (the car is a secondary crime scene), commit another crime at a distant location (murder, for instance) and then drop the body at a fourth scene (Byard and Wilson, 2004).

Crime scene investigation is the beginning point for the successful use of physical evidence by forensic laboratory and criminal investigator. Legal concepts impacting the usefulness of evidence in the court apply to the recovery of evidence whether or not a crime actually occurred at that location (Cummins and Midol, 2007).

Crime scene reconstruction is the use of scientific methods, physical evidence, deductive reasoning, and their interrelationships to gain explicit knowledge of the series of events that surround the criminal act (Ben Yosef et al.,2003).

### Classification of the Crime Scene:-

#### 1- According to the location of the original criminal activity

### \* Primary Crime Scene:-

The primary crime scene is an area where the incident occurred or where the majority or a high concentration of physical evidence will be found ,e.g. where there has been a sudden suspicious death (Byard and Wilson , 2004).

#### \* Secondary Crime Scene:-

Secondary crime scene/s are places or things where physical evidence relating to the incident may be found. The potential physical evidence will usually be transported away from the primary crime scene Some examples include:

- -The deceased.
- -The get away vehicle in crimes of armed robbery.
- -The suspect's environment.
- -The suspect's vehicle and;
- -The weapon used in the crime (Goddard, 2001).

#### 2- According to the size of evidence or scene:-

\*Macroscopic crime scene:-

Many of the crime scenes are macroscopic. For example, a gun shot victims body dumped in a field.

### \* Microscopic crime scene:

Microscopic classification is more focused on the special type of physical evidence found at macroscopic crime scene. For example, gunshot residue around the wound (Boglioli and Money, 2003).

#### 3 -Other classification:-

- \* According to the type of crime committed e.g.
- # Vehicle (e.g. car, bicycle) accidents.
- # Vehicle number falsification and restoration.
- # Accidental death (multitude of circumstances including misadventure) death.
- # Suicidal death.
- # Homicidal death.
- # Sudden death (with or without suspicious circumstances).
- # Forced entry onto premises (houses, factories).
- # Forced entry into money containers (safes).
- # Sexual assault
- # Assault with a weapon (hammer, screw driver).
- # Difficult victim identification (mummification and putrefaction).
- # Disaster victim identification (dealing with multiple casualties).
- # Fire scene investigation.
- # Drug investigations (importation of drugs).
- # Firearm offences (Boglioli and Money, 2003).
- \* According to the condition of the crime scene (organized or disorganized).