

Principles of Crime Scene Investigation

Essay

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Presented by

Marwa Ali Mostafa Mawaheb

M.B.B.CH

Demonstrator of Forensic Medicine and Clinical Toxicology
Faculty of Medicine - Fayuom University

Supervised by

Prof. Dr. Fatma Abd – Elhamid Ahmad

Professor of Forensic Medicine & Clinical Toxicology
Faculty of Medicine – Cairo University

Prof. Dr. Raanda Mohiey El –Din El-Shinawy

Assistant Professor of Forensic Medicine & Clinical Toxicology
Faculty of Medicine – Cairo University

Dr. Alaa Mohammad Shehab

Lecturer of Forensic Medicine & Clinical Toxicology
Faculty of Medicine – Cairo University

Faculty of Medicine
Cairo University
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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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Introduction

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.

Chapter(1): Nature of the Crime Scene

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).