CHAPTER 2 NOTES

THE CRIME SCENE
Dr. Edmond Locard: Every criminal can be connected to a crime by small particles carried from the scene.

- Whenever 2 objects come in contact with one another, a cross-transfer of physical evidence can occur.
- The **intensity**, **duration**, and **nature** of the materials in contact determine the **extent** of the transfer.
Evidence

• **Direct evidence** - first hand observations (*eyewitness* account, *videos, confessions*)

• **Circumstantial evidence** - *indirect* evidence that can be used to *imply* a fact but does not directly prove it. Example: finding a suspect’s gun at a crime scene is circumstantial evidence that the suspect was there.
Types of circumstantial evidence:

a) **Physical** evidence: synthetic fibers, weapons, bullets, shell casings, paint chips, documents, imprints and prints (shoes, tires, etc.), tool marks, soil, drugs, etc.

b) **Biological** evidence: body or body parts, body fluids, hair, leaves or other plant parts, natural fibers, feathers, wood

c) **Trace** evidence: **Small** but measurable amounts of physical or biological material found at a crime scene. Examples: **strand** of hair, fingerprint, DNA, **drop** of blood, pollen, gunshot residue
Evidence can also be divided into:

**Class evidence**: narrows evidence to a **group** of persons or things

i. Example: **Blood** Type- can be A, B, AB, O. Finding one type at a crime scene narrows down the suspects to a smaller group.

**Individual evidence**: narrows evidence down to a **single** person or thing.

i. Example: Fingerprints, handwriting, DNA, and sometimes physical matches.
Determine the 3 types of evidence for this example:

- Direct or circumstantial?
- Physical or biological?
- Class or individual?
Importance of Evidence

i. Can **prove** a crime has been committed and set the scene for the investigation.

ii. Can **back up** witness testimony or prove it **false**.

iii. Can **link** a suspect with a victim or with a crime scene.

ii. Can determine the **identity** of people associated with a crime.

ii. Allows investigators to **reconstruct** a crime.
The Crime Scene Investigation Team:

• First Police Officer on the scene
• Backup Police and possibly a **district attorney**
• **Medics**
• Investigator/**Detective**
• **Medical Examiner**
• Photographer and/or Field Evidence Technician
• Lab Experts
Seven S’s of Crime Scene Investigation:

1. Secure the scene
2. Separate the witnesses
3. Scan the scene
4. See the scene
5. Sketch the scene
6. Search for evidence
7. Secure and collect evidence
Securing the Scene:

The first responding police officer must make sure the scene is secure by first making sure all individuals in the area are **safe** and second by **preserving evidence**.

1. Obtain medical assistance if needed
2. **Arrest** suspects
3. **Isolate** the area
4. Request additional needs for investigations
Separating the Witnesses:

Witnesses must not be allowed to talk to one another. This prevents them from working together to create a story (collusion).
The Innocence Project.org

- Created in 1992, the goal was to **reexamine** post-conviction cases.
- When evaluating eye witness testimony, the investigator must discriminate between **fact** and **opinion**. What did the witness **actually** see?
Scan the Scene:

i. Forensic examiners scan the scene to see where **photos** should be taken. The primary and secondary crime scenes must be determined.

1. The primary crime scene is where a crime actually **occurred**.
2. A secondary crime scene is in some way related to the crime but is not where the actual crime **took place**.
See the Scene:

i. A crime scene examiner looks at the scene. The **Photography Unit** takes photos of the overall area and close up photos with and without a measuring **ruler**.
Sketching the Scene:

1. **North** should be labeled and a scale of distance should be included
2. All important objects (weapon and body) should be measured from **two immovable landmarks**
3. Any other objects in the vicinity of the crime should be included in the sketch (ex. Doors, windows, furniture, trees, vehicles, etc.)
4. Also include: **Date**, **time**, **location**, case number, and **names**

(Sketched by and Verified by)
Search for Evidence:

Spiral:

Grid:

Linear:

Quadrant or Zone:
Securing and Collecting the Evidence:

i. All evidence must be properly packaged, sealed and labeled using specific techniques and procedures.

ii. Packaging Evidence

1. Metal or plastic **forceps** may have to be used to pick up small items.

1. Plastic **pill** bottles with lids are preferred containers for hairs, glass, fibers, and other kinds of **trace** evidence.

1. Liquids and arson remains are stored in **airtight**, unbreakable containers.
Druggist’s Fold for Evidence:

Most biological evidence is stored in breathable containers so the evidence can dry out, reducing the chances of mold contamination. After the evidence has air dried, it is packaged into a paper bindle (or druggist’s fold) then placed in a paper or plastic container.
Evidence Log & Chain of Custody

- Each person who comes in contact with a piece of evidence must use proper procedure and protocol in order to maintain responsible handling of evidence from crime scene to courtroom in order for the evidence to be admissible in court.
Control Samples:

**Control** samples should also be taken from the victim for purposes of **exclusion** (blood, hair, etc.)

Standard/Reference Sample- Physical evidence whose origin is **known**, such as blood or hair from a suspect, that can be **compared** to crime-scene evidence.
Analyze the Evidence:

a. A forensic lab processes all evidence the crime scene investigation team collected.

b. Forensic lab technicians are specialized and process one type of evidence, unlike CSI TV shows where they may process many.
Crime Scene Reconstruction:

Crime scene reconstruction allows the detectives to form a hypothesis of the sequence of events from before the crime was committed through its commission.
Legal Considerations:

a. Any removal of evidence from a crime scene must be in accordance with the Fourth Amendment.

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”
A warrantless search can be conducted:

- under **emergency** circumstances (danger to life or limb)
- if there is immediate danger of the loss or destruction of **evidence**
- if there is probable cause — the search of a person and their immediate property in conjunction with a lawful arrest
- with the **consent** of the involved parties