The Crime Scene Sketch
Introduction

- The crime scene sketch:
- Accurately portrays the physical facts
- Relates the sequence of events at the scene
- Establishes the precise location and relationship of objects and evidence at the scene
- Creates a mental picture of the scene for those not present
- Is a permanent record of the scene
Overview

- A crime scene sketch assists in:
  1) Interviewing and interrogating persons
  2) Preparing an investigative report
  3) Presenting the case in court

- The sketch supplements photographs, notes, plaster casts and other investigative techniques.

- Two types of sketches
  - Rough sketch
  - Finished or scale sketch
The Rough Sketch

- The rough sketch is the first pencil-drawn outline of the scene and the location of objects and evidence within this outline.
- Usually not drawn to scale
  - Although distances are measured and indicated in the sketch
- Sketch after photographs are taken and before anything is moved.
- Sketch as much as possible.
Sketching Materials

- Paper
- Pencil
- Measuring tape
- Ruler
- Clipboard
- Eraser
- Compass
Steps in Sketching the Crime Scene

- Observe and plan
- Measure distances
- Outline the area
- Locate objects and evidence within the outline
- Record details
- Make notes
- Identify the sketch with a legend and a scale
Measure and Outline Area

A steel tape is best
  - It doesn’t stretch

Use conventional units of measurement
  - Inches
  - Feet
  - Centimeters
  - Meters
Measure and Outline Area

- North should be at the top of the paper.
- **Determine Scale**
  - Take the longest measurement at the scene and divide it by the longest measurement of the paper used for sketching.
  - $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'$ small rooms
  - $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ large rooms
  - $1/8'' = 1'$ very large rooms
  - $\frac{1}{2}'' = 10'$ large buildings
  - $1/8'' = 10'$ large land area
Measure and Outline Area

- **Measure from fixed locations**
  - Walls
  - Trees
  - Telephone poles
  - Corners
  - Curbs
  - Outlets
  - Any Immovable Object
Plot Objects and Evidence

- Plotting methods are used to locate objects and evidence on the sketch.
- They include the use of:
  - Rectangular coordinates
  - A baseline
  - Triangulation
  - Compass points.
Rectangular Coordinates

Uses two adjacent walls as fixed points as distances are measured at right angles.
Baseline Method

- Run a baseline from one fixed point to another, from which measurements are taken at right angles.
Triangulation

- Common in outdoor scenes
- Uses straight-line measurements from two fixed objects to the evidence to create a triangle with evidence in the angle formed by two straight lines.
Compass Point Method

- Uses a protractor to measure the angle formed by two lines
Cross-Projection Method

- Presents floors and walls as if they were on one surface.
Make a Legend

Contains:

- Case number
- Type of crime
- Investigator
- Persons assisting
- Direction of North
- Identifying information in sketch - Key
- Scale