

**Warmup:** Look closely at the crime scene sketch on **page 47**, then answer the following questions.

1.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

**Get Started Immediately!**

# 1.6: Documenting the Crime Scene

**SFS1. Students will recognize and classify various types of evidence in relation to the definition and scope of Forensic Science.**

- c. determine the proper techniques to search, isolate, collect and record physical and trace evidence
- d. evaluate the relevance of possible evidence at the site of an investigation,
- e. organize relevant information to accurately develop and submit both scene and analysis reports

**8/9/16**

## Part I: Physical Evidence and the Crime Scene

- as automobiles run on gasoline, crime laboratories “run” on **physical evidence**
- **physical evidence** = any object that can establish that a crime has or has not been committed or can link a crime, victim, perpetrator together
  - **not all** physical evidence at a crime scene is collected (the deluge of material would quickly immobilize the crime lab)
  - physical evidence is most valuable when it’s been collected by someone with extensive knowledge of the crime lab’s techniques, capabilities, and limitations
  - current technology gives crime labs capabilities far exceeding those of past decades, but these advances are no excuse for complacency on the part of investigators



- current technology gives crime labs capabilities far exceeding those of past decades, but these advances are no excuse for complacency on the part of investigators
- not all crime scenes require retrieval of physical evidence, and **limited resources** and personnel have forced many police agencies to restrict their efforts in this area to crimes of a more serious nature
- **crime laboratories do not solve crimes**—only a thorough and competent investigation will lead to successful criminal investigations
  - forensic science is, and will continue to be, an important element of the total investigative process, but it is only one part of team effort
  - investigators must properly recognize and preserve physical evidence since no amount of sophisticated instrumentation can salvage contaminated evidence



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**SELF-CHECK  
QUESTION!**

**True or False: All physical evidence is collected at every crime scene.**

**False**

- investigators must properly recognize and preserve physical evidence since no amount of sophisticated instrumentation can salvage contaminated evidence

## Part II: Securing and Isolating the Crime Scene

- once the commitment is made to completely process a crime site for physical evidence, certain fundamental practices must be followed
  - first priority should be given to medical assistance for need of it and to perpetrator
  - the first officer arriving on the scene of a crime is responsible for **preserving** and **protecting** the area as much as possible





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- as soon as possible, extensive efforts must be made to exclude (using crime scene tape, ropes, barricades, etc.) all **unauthorized** personnel from the scene, such as:
  - higher-level police officials (until given clearance),
  - members of the press,
  - emotionally charged family and neighbors, and
  - curiosity seekers
- every person who enters the scene is a potential destroyer of physical evidence, even if it is by unintentional carelessness



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- the officer(s) charged with the responsibility for protecting it must have the authority to **exclude everyone**, including fellow police officers not directly involved in processing the site or in conducting the investigation
- once the scene has been **secured**, a lead investigator starts **evaluating** the area

**SELF-CHECK  
QUESTION!**

**Who is responsible for  
preserving and protecting  
the crime scene?**

**the first officer arriving  
on the scene of a crime**



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- once the scene has been **secured**, a lead investigator starts **evaluating** the area

### Part III: Recording the Crime Scene

- investigators have only a limited amount of time to work a crime site in its untouched state, so the opportunity to **permanently record the scene in its original state** must not be lost
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- once the scene has been **secured**, a lead investigator starts evaluating the area:
  - first, he or she determines the **boundaries** of the scene, and then establishes the perpetrator's path of entry and exit
  - then, obvious items of crime-scene **evidence** must be documented and photographed
  - an **initial walk-through** of the scene is done to gain an overview of the situation and develop a strategy for examining and documenting the entire crime scene
  - **photography, sketches, and notes** are the three methods for crime-scene recording

## **Crime Scene Photography/Videography**

- the most important prerequisite for photographing a crime scene is for it to be **unaltered**

# Crime Scene Photography/Videography

- the most important prerequisite for photographing a crime scene is for it to be **unaltered**
  - unless **injured** people are involved, objects must not be moved until they have been photographed from all necessary angles
  - if objects are removed, positions changed, or items the photographs may not be admissible at trial
  - if evidence has been **moved** or **removed** prior to photography, the fact should be noted in the report, but the evidence should **never** be reintroduced into the scene in order to take photographs

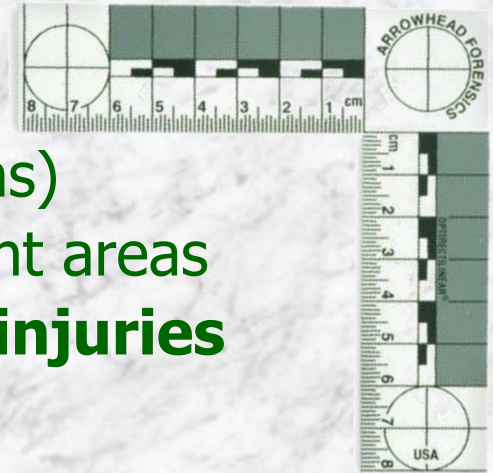




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- types of photographs taken:

- **overview** (entire scene, from all directions)
- points of **entry/exit**, crime-scene adjacent areas
- shots of the **body**, including close-ups of **injuries**
- after body is moved, surface **under** body
- **weapons**, including bullet casings/holes
- position of any other **movable physical evidence** (before being moved), with measurement devices next to them to show size
- **videography** is useful and becoming more accepted as quality of video improves, but still photography is still considered "standard" due to the higher degree of detail it provides





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**SELF-CHECK  
QUESTION!**

Should evidence that had  
to be moved be put back  
into the crime scene to  
take pictures?

No, but it should be  
noted in the report



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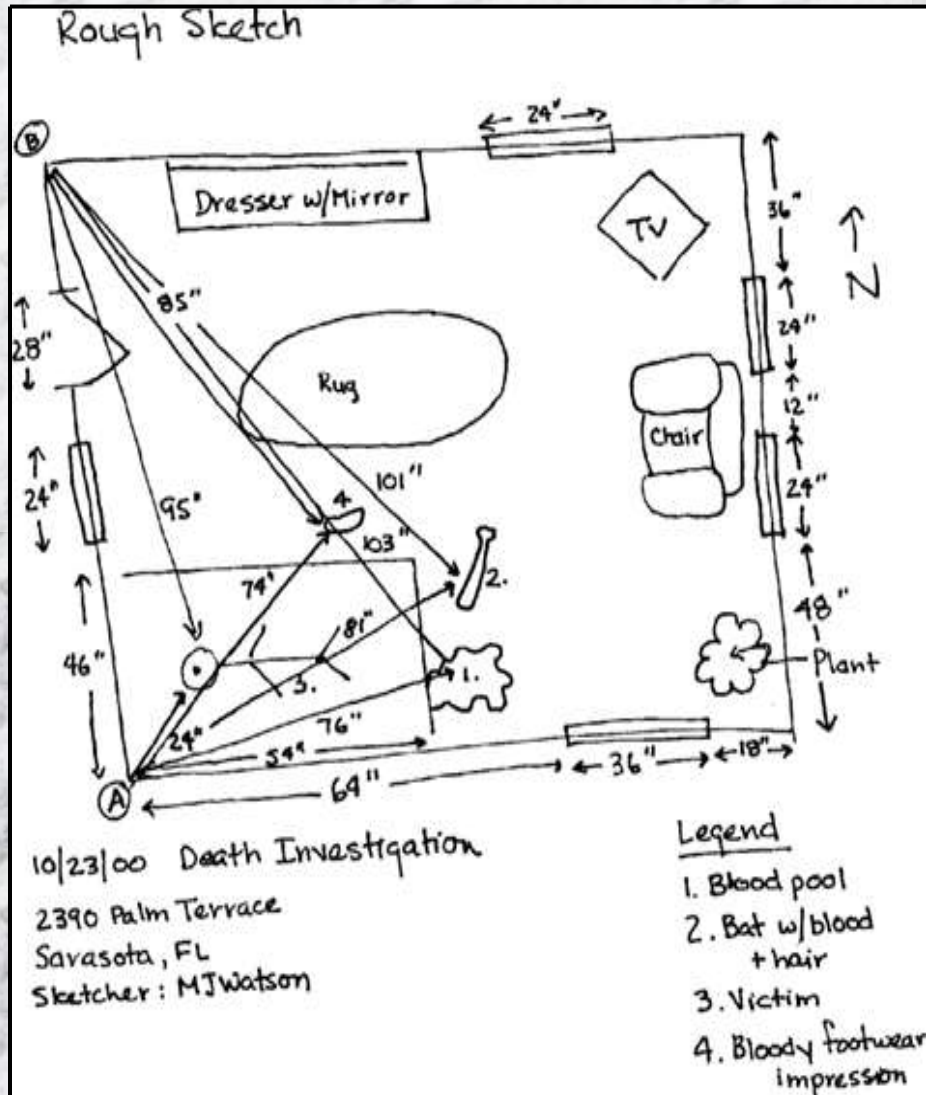
## Crime Scene Sketches

- after photographs have been taken, the crime-scene investigator sketches the scene
- **rough sketch** = sketch drawn at the crime scene that contains an accurate depiction of the dimensions of the scene and location of all objects having a bearing on the case

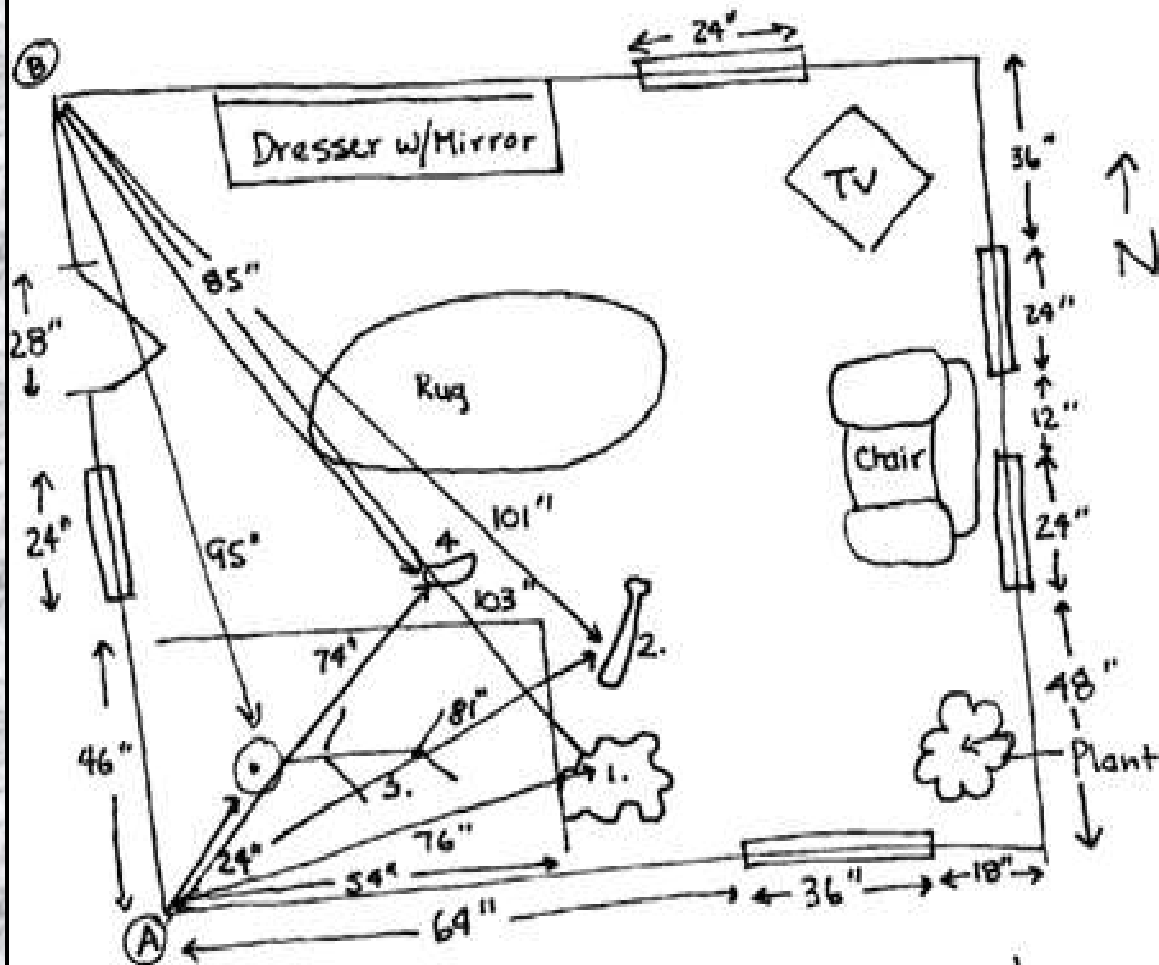


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# Rough Sketch

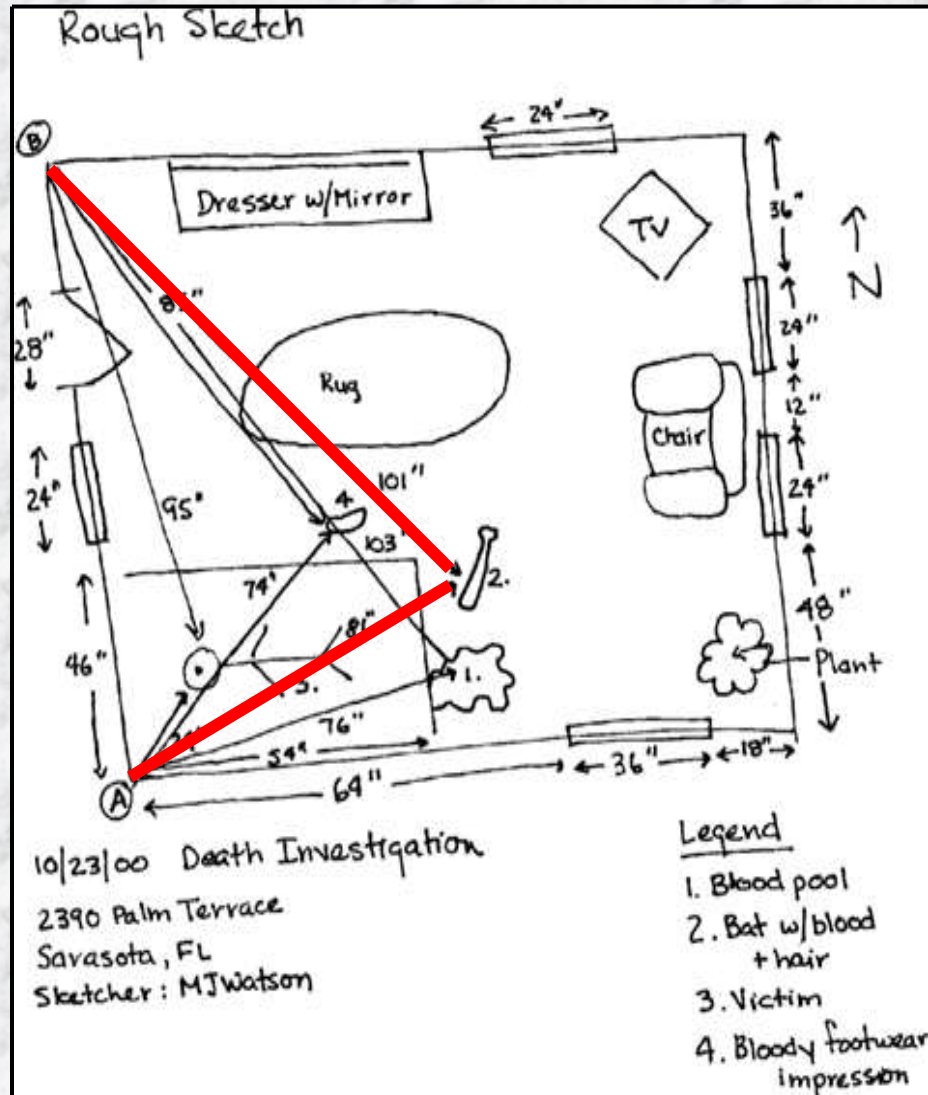


10/23/00 Death Investigation  
 2390 Palm Terrace  
 Sarasota, FL  
 Sketcher: MJ Watson

- Legend
- 1. Blood pool
  - 2. Bat w/blood + hair
  - 3. Victim
  - 4. Bloody footwear impression

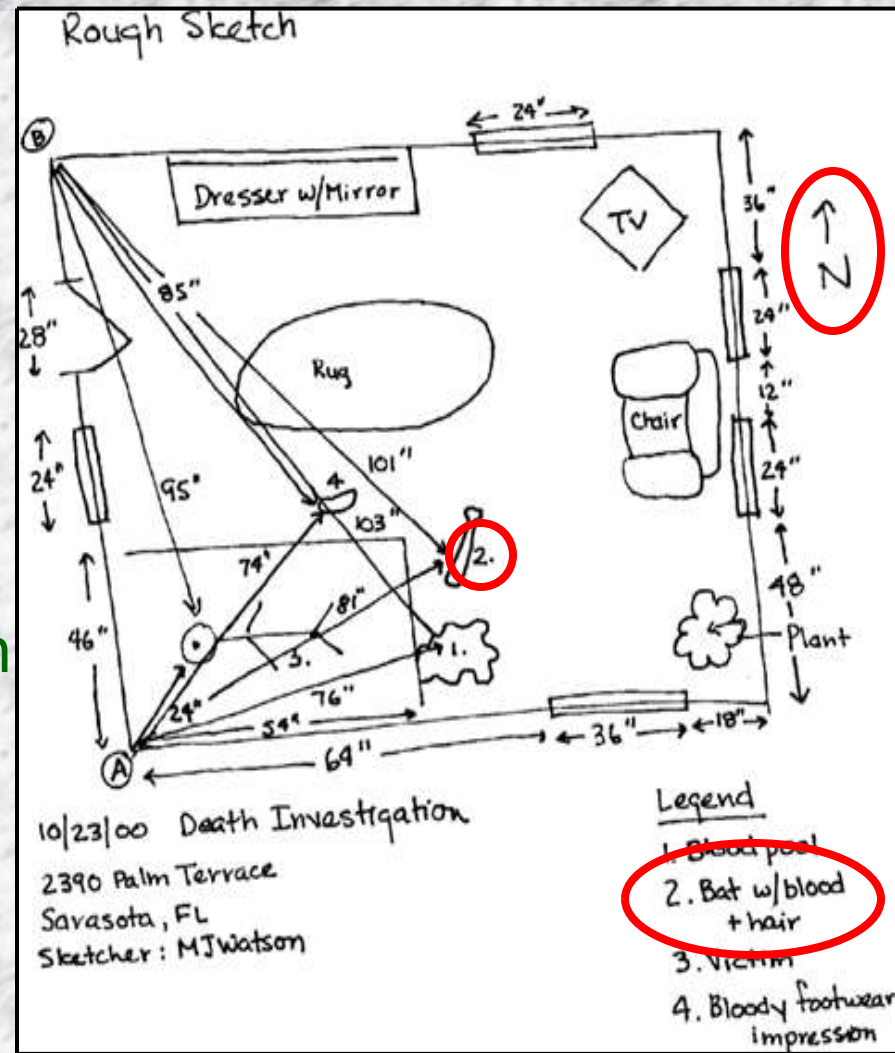
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- **rough sketch** = sketch drawn at the crime scene that contains an accurate depiction of the dimensions of the scene and location of all objects having a bearing on the case
- objects are located in the sketch by **distance measurements from two fixed points**, such as the walls of a (distances shown on the must be accurate, so all measurements are made with a tape measure)



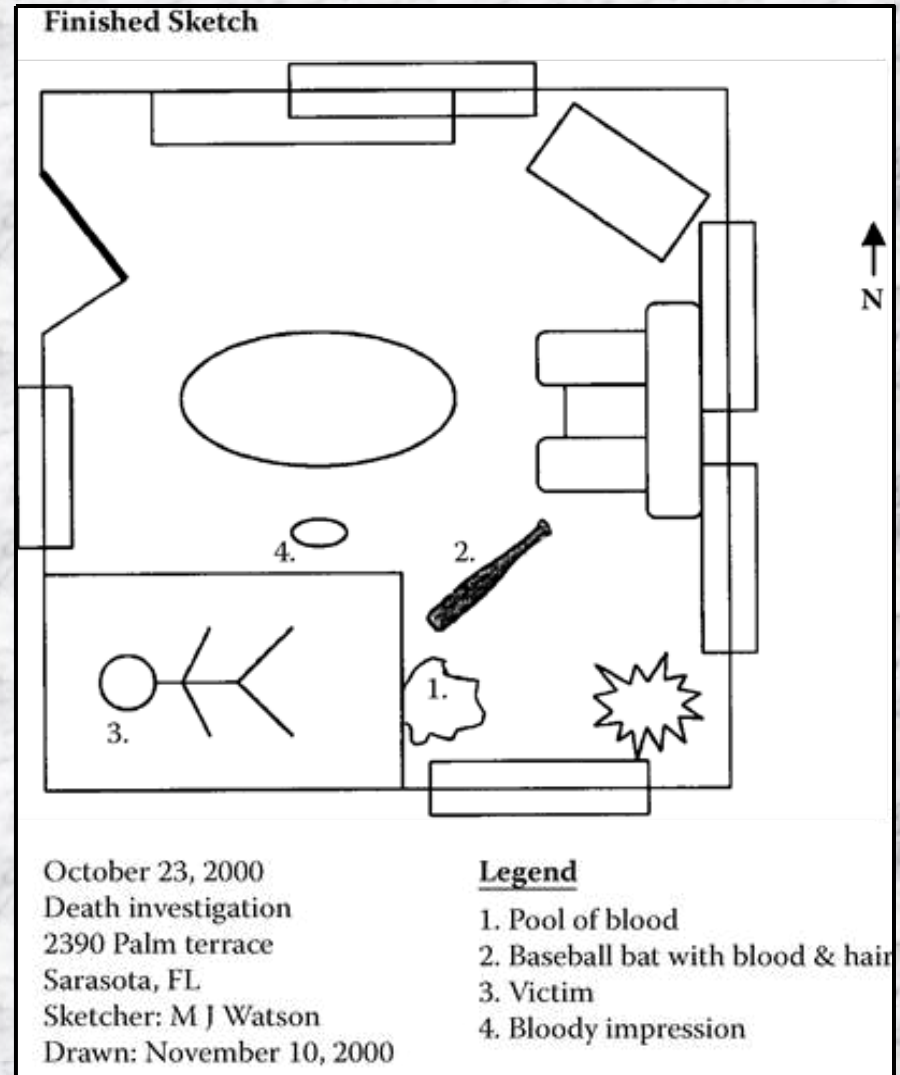


- objects are located in the sketch by **distance measurements from two fixed points**, such as the walls of a room (distances shown on the sketch must be accurate, so all measurements are made a tape measure)
- **items** are designated in a sketch with assigned numbers/letters (a **legend** or list placed below the sketch then correlates the number/letter to the item's description)
- the sketch should also show a **compass heading** designating north

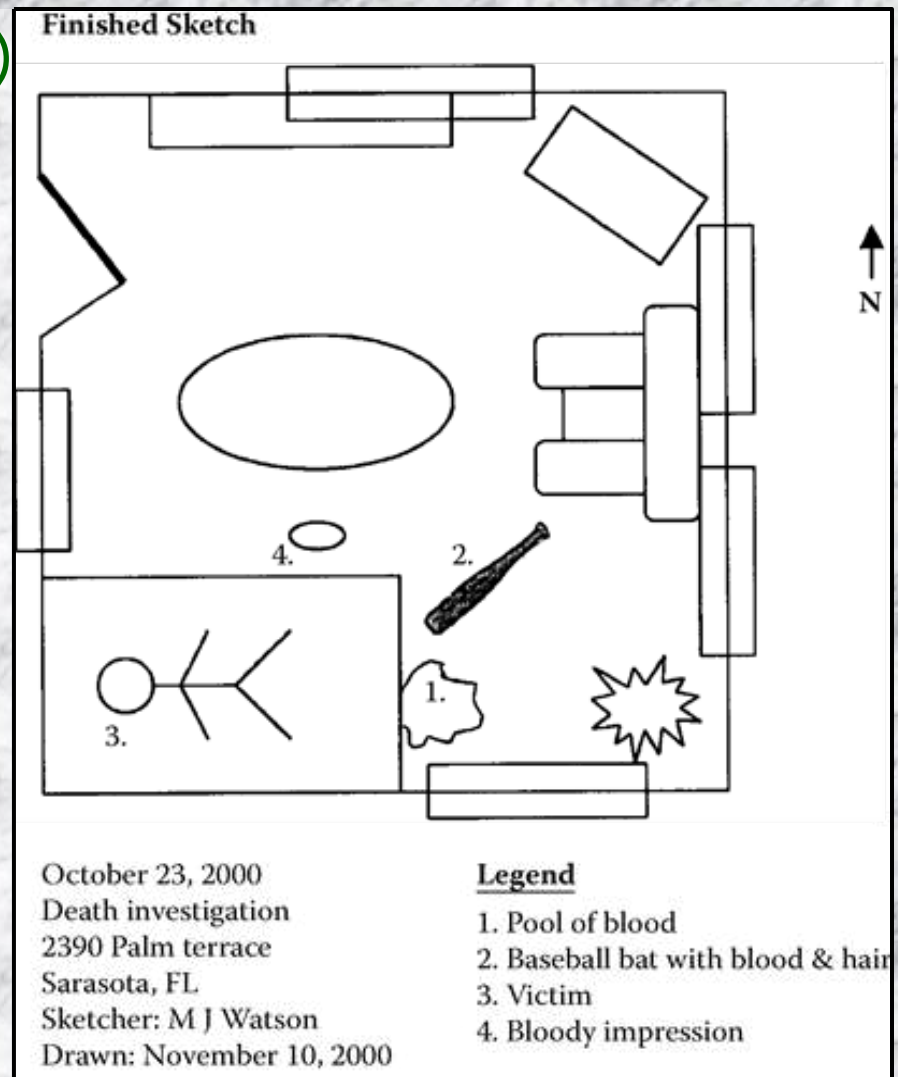




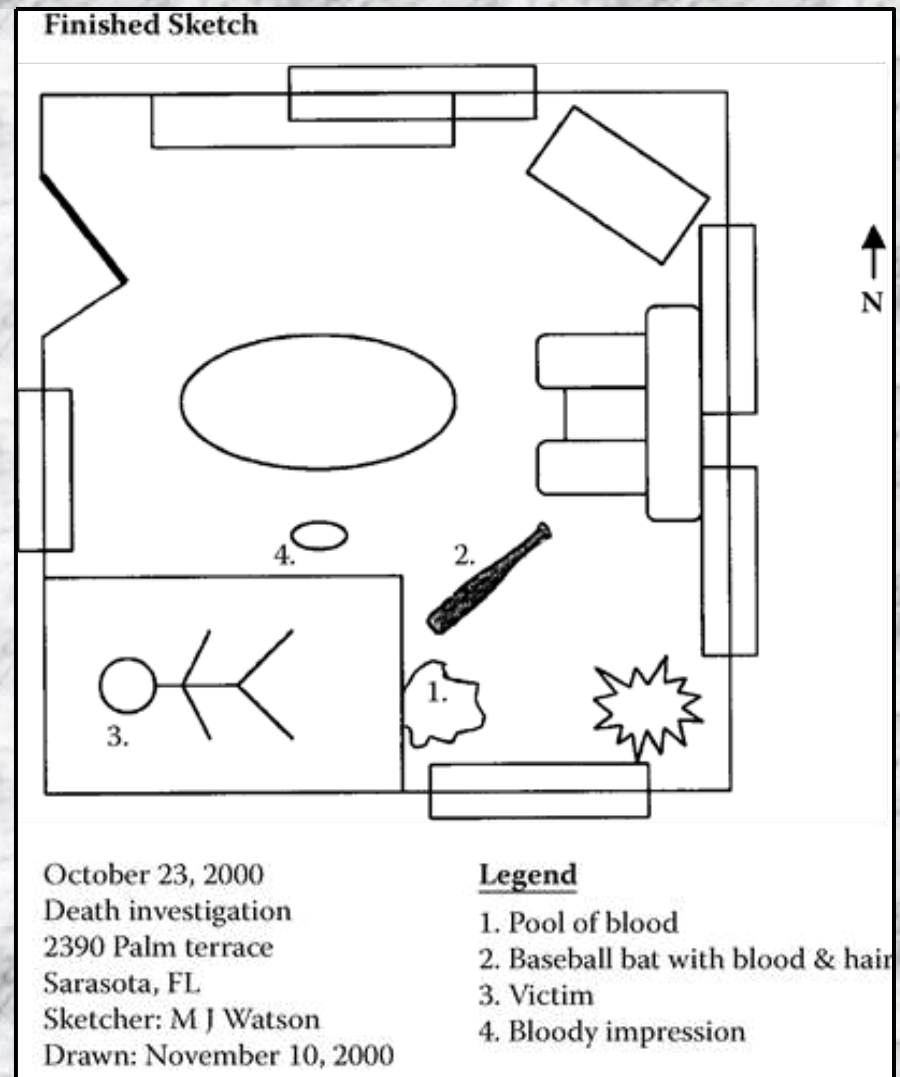
- the sketch should also show a **compass heading** designating north
- **finished sketch** = a precise rendering of the crime scene, usually drawn to scale
  - when the finished sketch is completed, it must reflect information contained within the rough sketch in order to be admissible evidence in a courtroom
  - **computer-aided drafting (CAD)** has become the norm to reconstruct crime scenes from rough sketches



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  - software contains **pre-drawn** intersections and roadways or buildings and rooms onto which information can be entered
  - **symbol library** provides the operator with a variety of images that can be used to add intricate details such as blood spatters to a crime-scene sketch

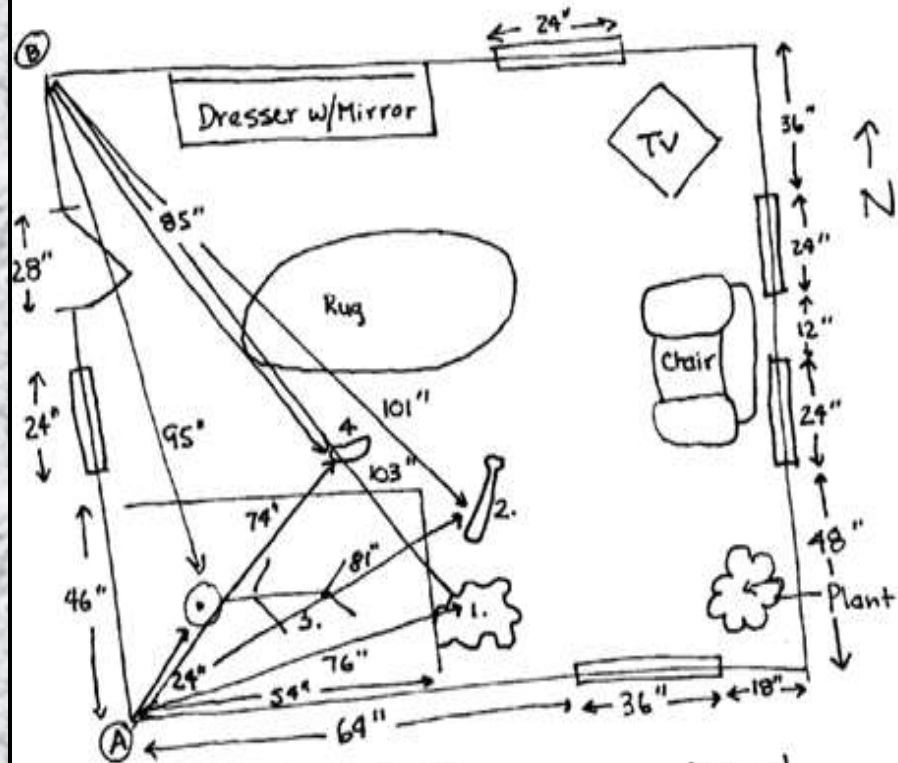


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- CAD programs allow the operator to select **scale** size so that the ultimate product can be produced in a size suitable for courtroom presentation





# Rough Sketch

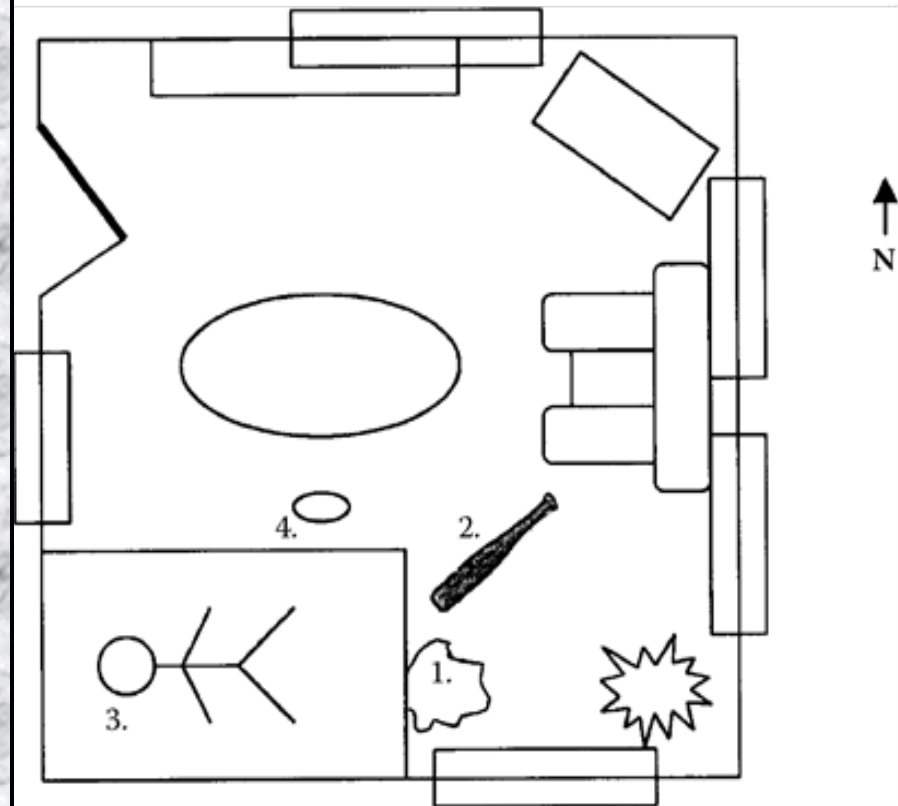


10/23/00 Death Investigation  
 2390 Palm Terrace  
 Sarasota, FL  
 Sketcher: MJ Watson

## Legend

- 1. Blood pool
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- 3. Victim
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# Finished Sketch



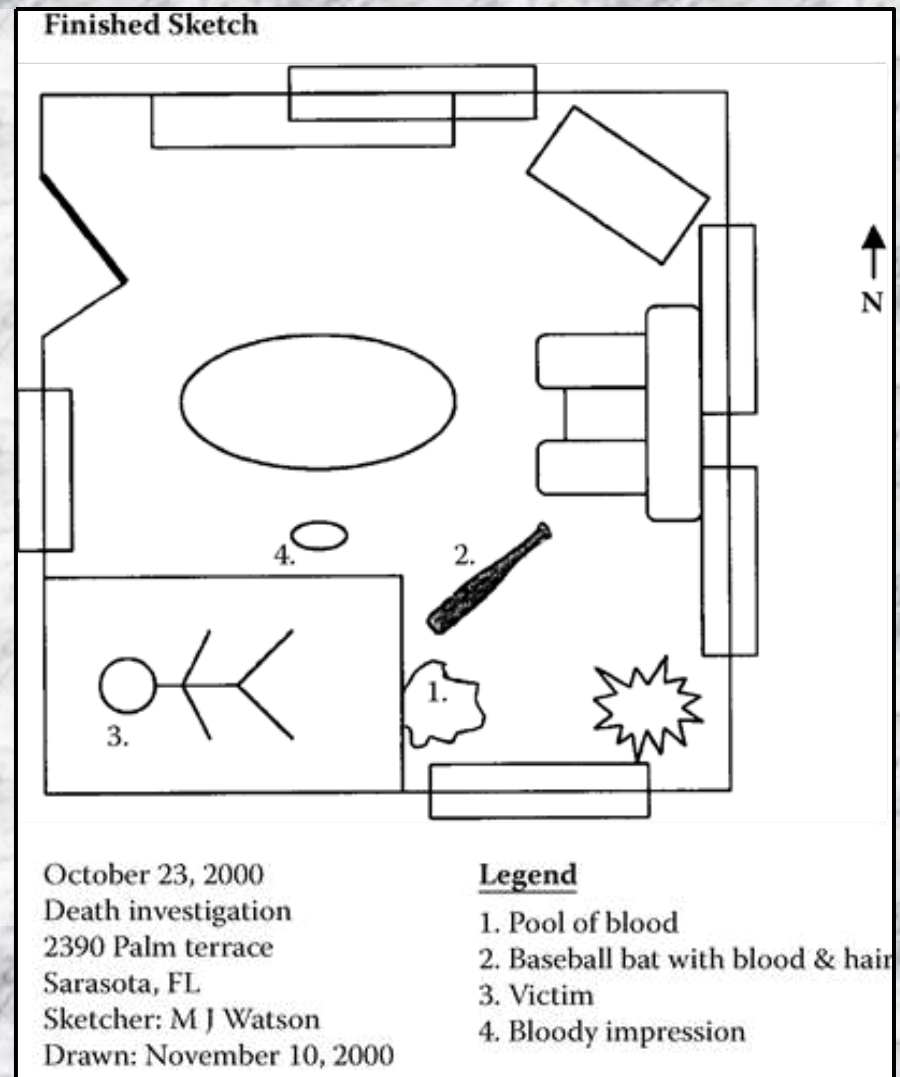
October 23, 2000  
 Death investigation  
 2390 Palm terrace  
 Sarasota, FL  
 Sketcher: MJ Watson  
 Drawn: November 10, 2000

## Legend

- 1. Pool of blood
- 2. Baseball bat with blood & hair
- 3. Victim
- 4. Bloody impression



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**SELF-CHECK  
QUESTION!**

What is missing from the  
finished sketch?

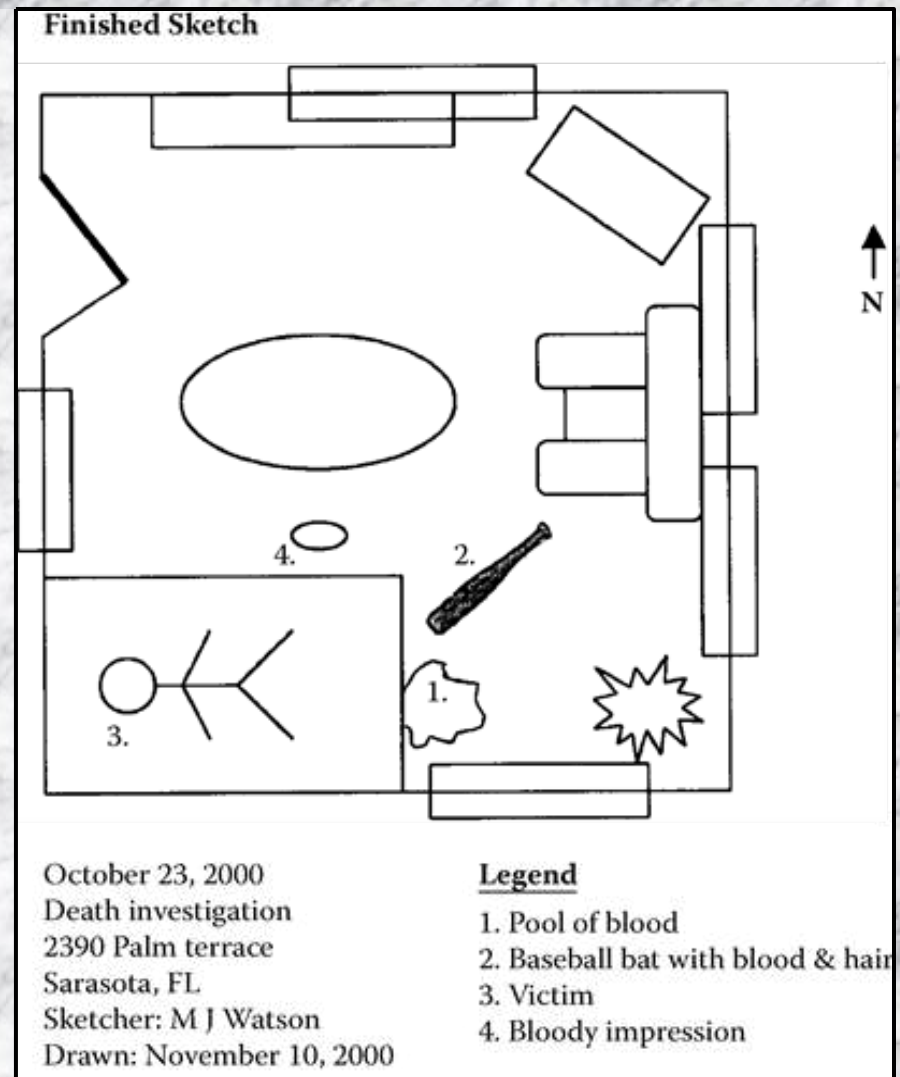
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## Crime Scene Notes

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- crime scene notes must:
  - include a **detailed written description** of the scene with the location of items of physical evidence recovered
  - identify the **time** an item of physical evidence was discovered, by whom, **how** and **by whom** it was packaged and marked, and the **disposition** of the item after it was collected
  - must be sufficiently **detailed** to suffice as the only written source of information for refreshing one's memory months, perhaps years, after a crime has been processed
- **tape-recording** notes at a scene can be advantageous—detailed notes can be taped much faster than they can be written

- **tape-recording** notes at a scene can be advantageous—detailed notes can be taped much faster than they can be written
- another method of recording notes is to **narrate a videotape** of the crime scene (this has the advantage of combining note taking with photography)