

Describing crime scene

Law



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The paper " Describing Crime Scene " is a good example of an assignment on the law. Day 1 0130December 10thThe temperature outside is -5°C. The night sky is clear. You are in bed. You live 10 miles from the police station - where your equipment is - and you receive a telephone call on your mobile. ' Sorry to wake you, it's the operations center here. We have murder in Bridge and the duty DI is asking for you to attend. A female has been found dead in a field. Can you attend?' " Can you tell me what happened?' " A man was walking his dog, apparently 45 minutes ago, and found the body of a female on a footpath. He called 999 from his mobile and waited at the scene. The first patrol says she has been in a fight and looks like she has run from her home or been dumped as she is half-dressed.' " " Where is the scene?' " They say you will know it. Its 500 meters from Bridge Medical Practice, up a path at the top of a field. You have to cross the road from the doctors' practice and walk into the field.'Task 1: list here any sources of contamination of the crime scene which may concern you. 5 marks

- The man who was walking the dog could have touched the body leaving his fingerprints on it or he could have stepped on a trail of blood or footprints. The dog could have contact with the body which will interfere with the fingerprints and any useful evidence like blood marks. A crime scene should be free from any unauthorized intruders (Eckert 1997).
- The first patrol has examined the body and there he has either touched it or moved it. This could have interfered with traces of evidence.
- The temperatures are extremely low and it could be snowing. When the snow falls on the body it could conceal or reduce the clarity of any

fingerprints and marks that could be on the body. In the cold weather, the man and the patrol officer could have been wearing gloves that could rub off any traces of blood or fingerprints.

- The biological evidence could be contaminated by microbial organisms. There could be contamination from bacteria or fungi in the area environment.
- If there are any fresh traces of blood they could dry up due to clotting and if there is a pool, it could be absorbed by the soil (Baldwin & Puskarich).

Day 1 0200 You have established that there is an RVP in the car park of the Bridge Medical Practice which is on Patricxbourne Road in Bridge. The police have cropped the padlock on the gates for access. An ambulance and three police cars are parked in the car park. The field is cordoned off and a PC is standing at the area of fence which was flattened - years go - by a tractor. The rusty gate to the footpath (just to the right of the hole in the fence) is wonky and overgrown. Task 2: the public footpath has been closed by the police officers who attended before you. Is this legal? Justify your answer. 3 marks

The Closing of the Public footpath is legal since it prevents any interference of the public with the evidence that could be in the surrounding. Any trampling in a crime scene could force the investigators to use higher forensic techniques like DNA comparison, trace analysis and blood splatter interpreting. These too could prove troublesome depending on how much the crime scene is trampled (Schomburg, Hazelwood & Burgess 2008). Task 3: has anybody formed a hypothesis yet? If so, what is it? 5 marks

No there is no hypothesis as yet since there are very few indicators that could lead to a

conclusive report. I intend to give a hypothesis later after I have checked all the evidence that I have so that I can make a conclusion. I am thinking that the culprits decided to throw the body here since there is a rusty gate which shows that the place is not visited frequently and also the right of the fence is overgrown and wonky which are indicators that this is a deserted place and the culprits thought that it would take time for the body to be found. The body could have stayed there for days since the marks are not fresh. The man at the crime scene too is suspicious since he was walking his dog at a weird hour of the night. I would not rule out anything that is on the crime scene (Schomburg, Hazelwood & Burgess 2008). You log in with the PC at the head of the Common Approach Path. He advises you that this CAP is on the right side of the field and starts at the entrance into the field to the left of the gate; it then follows the public footpath. Considering that a body is lying at the top of the hill, do you think this is the best route to placing the CAP? Task 4: what should you do? Justify your answer. 5 marks That is not the best route to take to the CAP since it could lead to the trampling of any tracks that were left by the culprits that committed the crime. I would make sure that the entire perimeter around the crime scene is free from trampling. This will avoid complications in the case where I could be held liable for any insufficient evidence due to tampering and unauthorized people on the crime scene (Nickell and Fischer 1998). Day 1 0210 You made it to the top of the hill without incident and you are confronted by: PC Smith - he was the first attending officer and met the informant after he called the police and ambulance. PC Smith climbed up the embankment from the A2 DI Jones - she was the duty DI and came from Canterbury Police Station. She is relatively new in the post and seems nervous. Mr. David Parsons - he was

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walking his dog at night and found the body. The dog is with him. You greet all three and look at the body under torchlight. It is a white female, blonde, approximately 30 years old. She is lying face down on the ground some 10 meters from the gate at the top of the field. This gate leads to a footpath that runs alongside the A2. She is wearing a blouse which is quite obviously open to the navel, and a pair of jogging trousers which are pulled halfway down her legs. She has no obvious underwear underneath. She is not wearing footwear. She has abrasions to her forehead and there are grass and mud in her right hand and on her bare feet. 'Can we roll her over so I can see her face please?' asks the DI. At this stage, you are acutely aware that you have only seen her back and that the first priorities of the DI are to establish a very rough time of death and the victim's identity. These two facts could point to the nature of death and save valuable time. Task 5: what should you do now? You need to be aware that - if this is a murder - your next move could see you criticized in any subsequent court hearing or - if you mess up the investigation - you could be accused of gross professional misconduct. 5 marks Before turning the body, I will collect any traces of hair and fiber on the body and seal them in a clear bag. I would not allow the turning of the body just yet since the face is only important for identification and that can be done later. The important thing at the moment is any traces of evidence that could be on the body. I would speculate that the body was raped since the pair of jogging trousers are pulled halfway down and there is no underwear beneath (Garrison 1994). I would consider carrying the body away to the lab just as it is. I would then look around the crime scene for shoes and tire tracks. This hasty moving of the body from the crime scene should be done with care first, to stop the snow from falling on the body and

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secondly to avoid the curiosity of the public and any interference of evidence. DI Jones is rather frightened and at her state, I would rather avoid turning the body around. Bearing in mind that it's a murder and there was a struggle, I would ensure that I collect as much evidence on the scene as possible so as to provide the court with credible and sufficient information. Again, with only PC Smith and The DI, I do not have enough staff for a complete investigation since the PC should be preventing any onlookers from entering the crime scene. By making sure that these two officers do not touch the body, I will be avoiding a case of gross professional misconduct (Dale & Becker 2007).