

Crime Scene Awareness





Safety

- Some Hazards
 - Armed subject
 - Subject with altered mental status
 - Body Fluids (Blood-borne pathogens)
 - Perpetrator
 - Chemical Suicide
 - Clandestine Drug Labs
 -

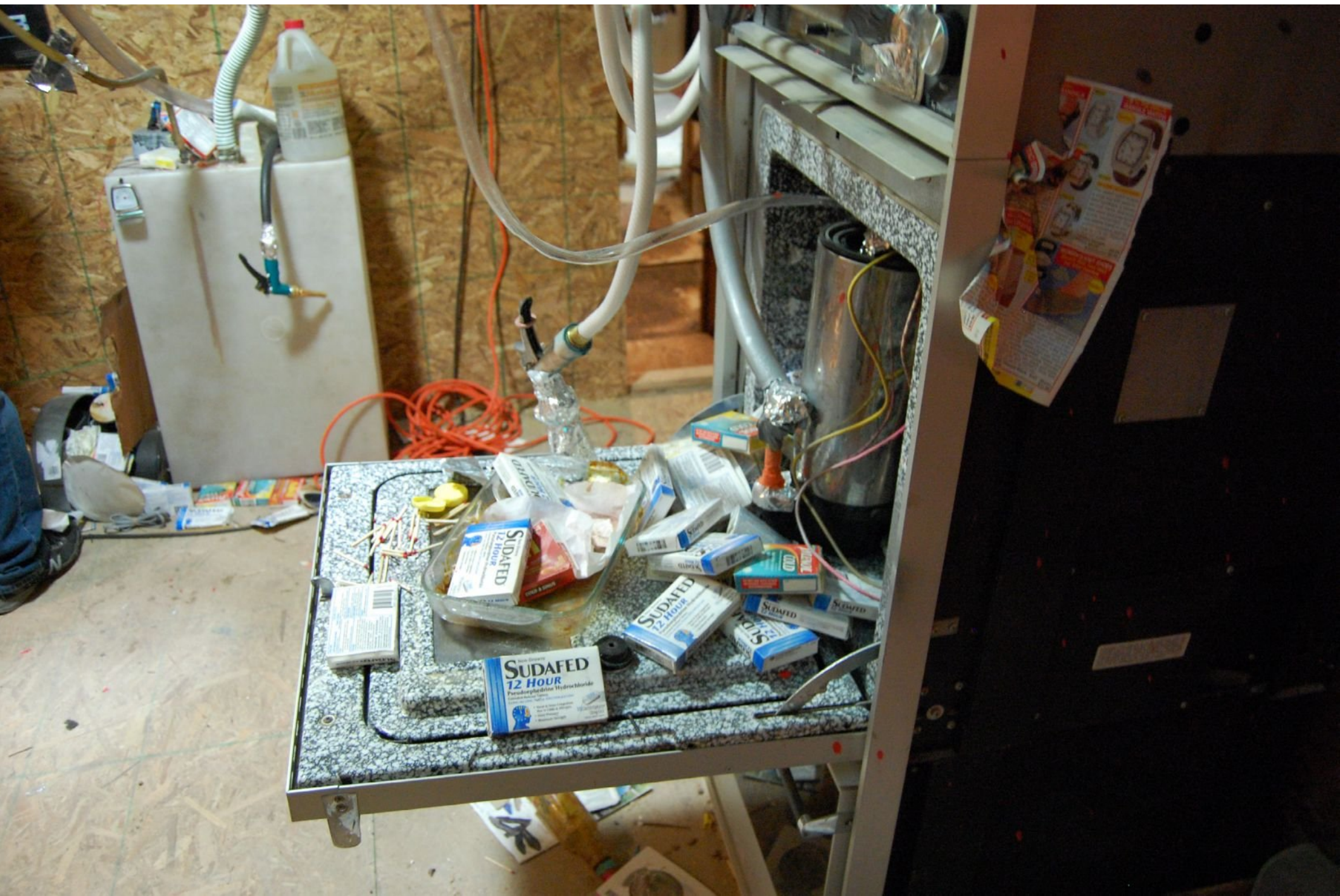


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Minimal Disturbance Documentation Maintain Chain of Custody



Situations

- Obvious crime scene
 - Clearly deceased subject
 - Subject possibly in need of medical care
- Potential Clue
 - Influencer of LKP

Obvious Crime Scene



Public Domain: "Lady of The Dunes" Unidentified Deceased Female, 1974 Provincetown, MA

It is going to end up in court



Search Crucials

- Search is an Emergency
- Search is a classic mystery
- Search for clues not just the subject
- Know if the subject leaves the search area
- Close grid search as a last resort
- **Manage by objectives**
- Search management is information management

Principles

- Contamination (limit and document)
- Containment
- Restraint
- Call



Defense needs to raise reasonable doubt



- Uncertainty
- Untrained investigators
- Too many different observations/observers

Actions To Take

- Limit and record contamination
 - Minimize disturbance of the scene
 - “Hold the Line”
 - Everyone flags their location and backs out
- Begin a log
- Establish an exclusion zone
- Quiet Notification – preferably via phone

Quiet Notification

- Preferably via phone
 - Radio can be and is legally monitored
 - Radio may be overheard at ICP
 - Cell phones can be illegally monitored
- Call to appropriate jurisdictional Law Enforcement authority
- Pre-planned code may be appropriate to communicate with IC.
- Minimum information necessary
 - Location and time of find. Do not elaborate

Things not to do (Restraint)

- No picture taking
- No discussion of the crime scene with each other
- Absolutely no deploying canines as a “training opportunity”
- No social media activity

Leave investigation
to the investigators.



Chain of Custody

- The **written** record of **all individuals** who maintained **unbroken control** over evidence.
 - Who had contact with the evidence
 - When was the evidence handled (dates and times)
 - Why was evidence being handled
 - What changes were made to the evidence

Handover

- Only relinquish the scene to a properly identified LE officer (uniform, badge)
- Log the time, log your handover of the scene.
- You retain a log with one entry – time you handed crime scene and everything else over to LE.
- LE gets all materials, with a log with a last entry of your handover of the scene and documentation.
- Relinquish all materials to the LE officer.
- Remove yourself and all other SAR personnel to an identified location for debriefing by investigative LE.
- Discuss nothing about the matter to anyone, including each other.
- Investigative authorities need just the facts, as immediately observed, without your inferences

Possibly Deceased Subject



Possibly Deceased Find

- Emergency medical care takes priority, preservation of evidence is an additional concern.
- If medical care is not necessary (per local medical protocol, e.g. decapitation, extreme dependent lividity, rigor mortis), preservation of evidence becomes primary concern.
- Critical incident stress mitigation
 - If you don't need to see it, don't go look.

Clues can be

- Seen
- Heard
- Elicited in investigation
- Felt
- Smelled

Evidence

- Physical
- Incorporeal
 - Document it to make it physical.

Interactions with people encountered on the search

- Ask if they saw the missing person
- Downplay the situation
 - e.g. comment about it being nice day
- Observe their behavior – go with your gut instinct, if something feels wrong...
- Get a name and a callback number
- Document the interaction



Potential Clue

Actions to take on finding a potential clue in the absence of LE interest or present involvement

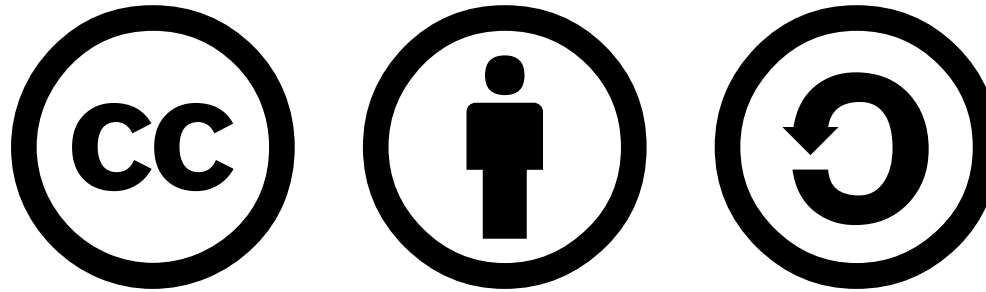
- Call it in, get instructions
- Record the location.
- Mark the location with flagging tape
- **If** the authority having jurisdiction has approved it: Take a photo with a disposable camera (which will be handed over to search management).





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