

FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

FOR INFANT DEATH SCENES

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Understand** the principles of forensic photography.
- **Identify** essential camera equipment and settings for scene work.
- **Apply** the overall-to-close-up photographic methodology.
- **Demonstrate** proper lighting techniques for varied conditions.
- **Utilize** scale and identifiers effectively in photos.
- **Address** ethical considerations in photographing sensitive scenes.

1

Accuracy

2

Objectivity

3

Completeness

4

Relevance

5

Clarity

PRINCIPLES OF FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT



- Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) or Mirrorless Camera
- Standard (Kit) Lens
- External Flash Unit (or Built-In)
- Tripod
- Extra Batteries & Memory Cards
- Scales/Rulers

File Format

Raw: Uncompressed, retains maximum image data for post-processing.

ISO

Lowest Possible (100-400): Minimizes digital noise, maximizes detail.

Aperture

f/8 to f/16 (or higher): Maximizes depth of field to keep entire scene in focus.

Shutter Speed

Adjust for Exposure: Typically not a primary concern if using flash on manual

White Balance

Ensures accurate color representation.

Flash

External, Manual Mode: Allows precise control over light output.

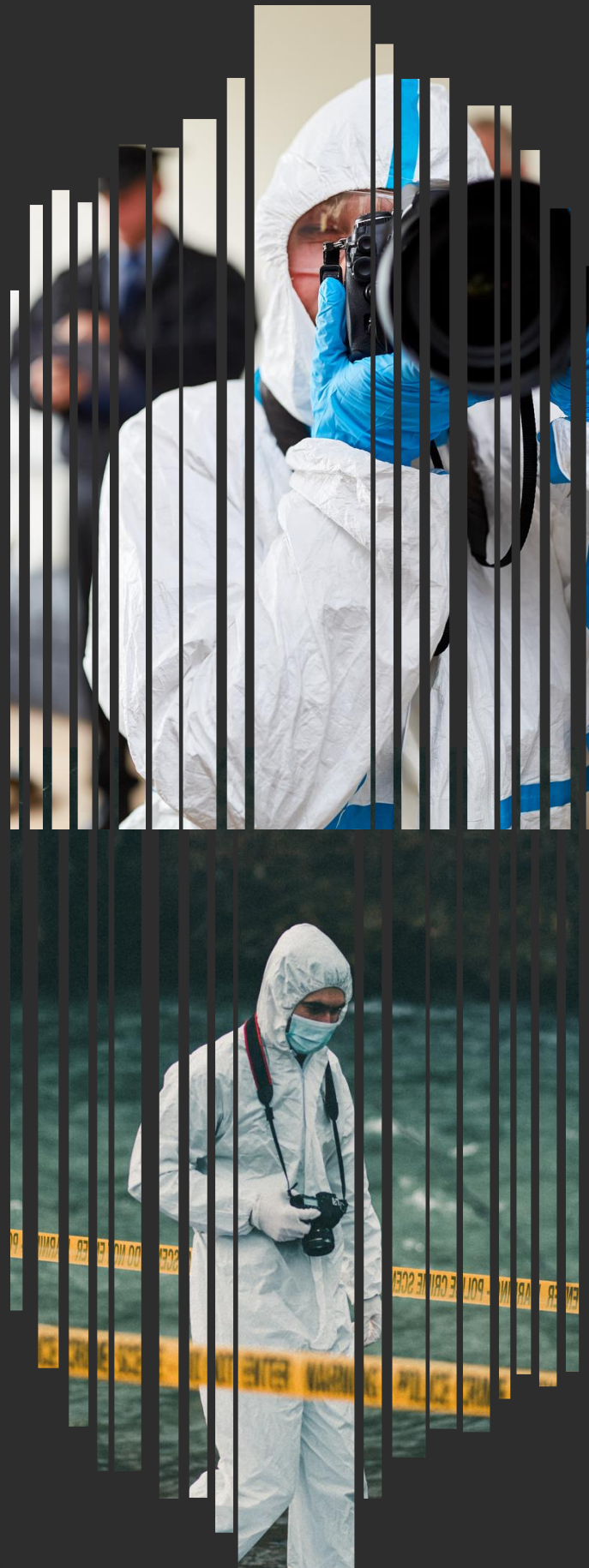
CAMERA SETTINGS



- **Systematic Approach:**
 - Ensures comprehensive coverage.
- Overall/Establishing Shots
- Mid-Range Shots
- Close-Up/Macro Shots:

OVERALL-TO-CLOSE METHODOLOGY

OVERALL SHOTS IN DETAIL



- **Purpose:** Orient the viewer to the entire scene.
- Exterior
- Interior
- Entry/Exit Points
- No Distortion
- No Evidence Markers

MIDRANGE SHOTS IN DETAIL



- **Purpose:** Show the relationship of evidence to its immediate surroundings.
- Focus on Specific Areas
- Include Context
- Use Evidence Markers
- Vary Angles

CLOSE SHOTS IN DETAIL



- **Purpose:** Capture minute details of individual evidence.
- Fill the Frame
- Use a Scale
- Lighting
- Sharp Focus
- Injuries/Body Details

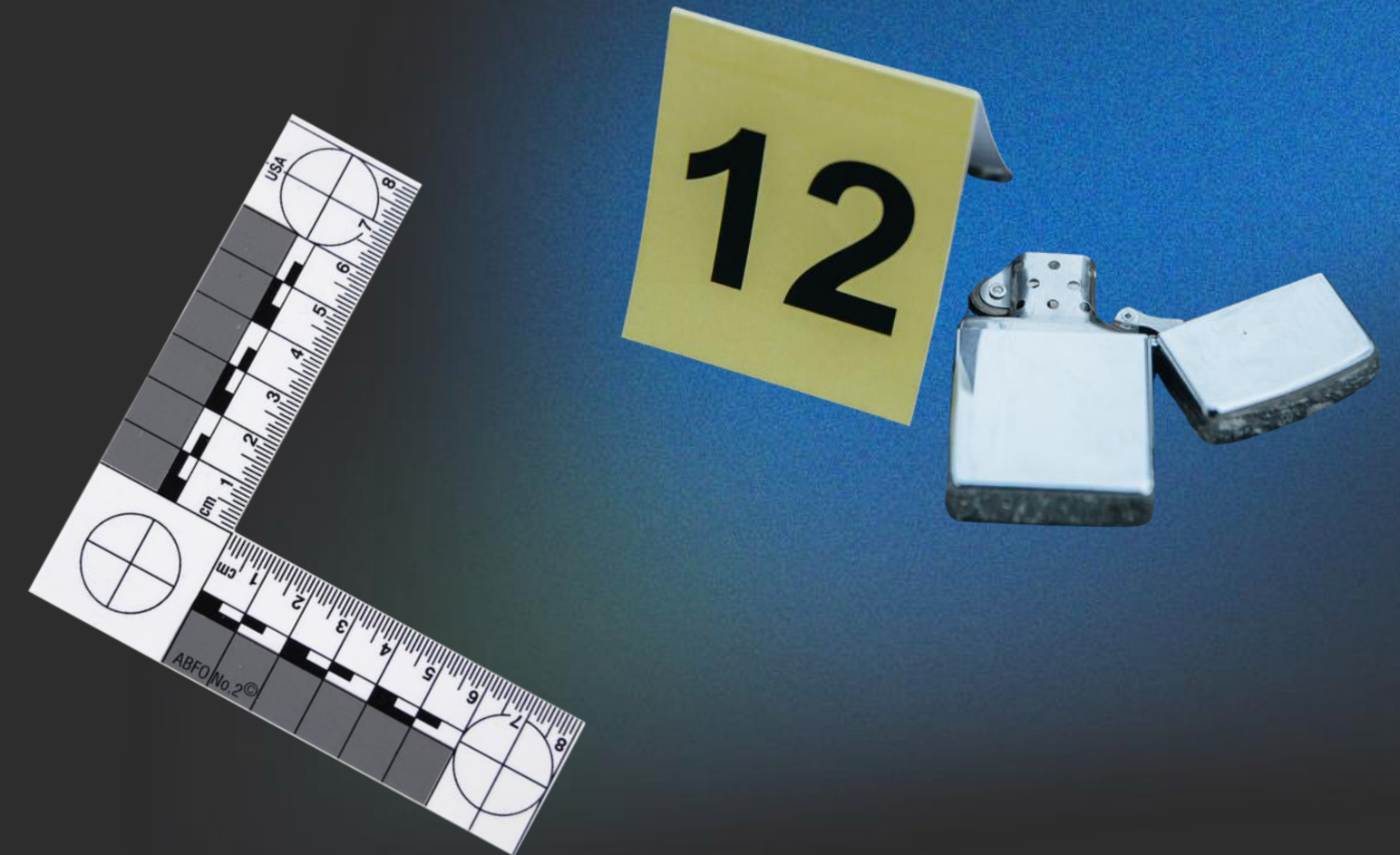
LIGHTING TECHNIQUES FOR SCENE PHOTOGRAPHY



- Natural Light
- Ambient Light
- External Flash (Recommended)
 - Direct Flash
 - Bounced Flash
 - Off-Camera Flash
- Oblique/Side Lighting
- Painting with Light

USING

- **Purpose of Scale:** Provides accurate size reference, allows for measurement.
- Types of Scales (Varies by Use Case)
- **Placement:**
 - Same plane as the evidence.
 - Does not obscure evidence.
 - Clearly visible in frame.
- Evidence Identifiers/Markers
 - Numbered cards, cones.
- **Placement of Identifiers:** Near evidence, visible but not obscuring.
- Consistency is Key



SCALE & IDENTIFIERS

1

Sensitivity of Subject

2

**Small Scale of
Evidence**

3

**Delicate Nature of
Infant Skin**

4

Confined Spaces

5

Poor Lighting

6

Clutter/Disturbance

CHALLENGES IN INFANT DEATH PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHING THE DECEDED



- Ethical Considerations First
- In Situ Photos
- Multiple Angles
- Close-Ups of Face, Hands, Feet
- Clothing, Layers On/Off
- Specific Injuries/Findings
- Post-Removal Photos



- Overview, Mid-Range, Close-Up
- Lighting:
- Scale
- Color Reference
- Multiple Angles
- Distinguish: *Ante-mortem* vs. *post-mortem*
- ALS Integration

DOCUMENTING INJURIES & ANOMALIES

EXAMINING SLEEP SURFACE & BEDDING



- In Situ
- Full View
- Contextual
- Close-Ups
- Indentations/Disruptions
- Material & Condition
- Product Labels/Tags

INVENTORYING ROOM ENVIRONMENT



- Overall Room Shots
- Environmental Factors
- Light Sources
- Odor Indicators
- Correlators to Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

IMG_1691	3/27/2025 12:00 PM	JPG File	9,185 KB
IMG_1692	3/27/2025 12:02 PM	JPG File	9,691 KB
IMG_1693	3/27/2025 12:03 PM	JPG File	10,348 KB
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IMG_1707	3/27/2025 12:05 PM	JPG File	6,926 KB
IMG_1708	3/27/2025 12:05 PM	JPG File	8,932 KB
IMG_1709	3/27/2025 12:05 PM	JPG File	9,113 KB

- **Photo Log or Supplemental Report**
 - Case #, Date, Time, Photographer
 - Camera settings (optional)
 - Description of subject, location, etc.
 - Unique photo number
- **Chain of Custody:** Maintain integrity of digital evidence.
 - Download directly to secure storage.
 - Backup copies
 - Limit access
 - Document all transfers

PHOTO LOG & CHAIN OF CUSTODY

- Complementary, Not Standalone
- Cross-Referencing
- Consistency
- Visual Aid for Review
- Legal Admissibility



INTEGRATION WITH OTHER DOCUMENTATION

CASE STUDY: PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION STRATEGY

Scenario: Infant found supine unresponsive in adult bed co-sleeping with parents. Loose sheets and pillows surround the infant. A space heater is directly next to the bed, and the window is shut. There's only one lamp in the room for illumination and it's a small desk lamp.



Outline your photographic strategy:

- What are your initial overall shots?
- What mid-range shots would you focus on?
- What close-up shots are critical, and where would you place your scale?
- What lighting considerations are important for this scene?
- What environmental factors need specific photographic attention?

PITALLS TO AVOID



- Blurry/Out of Focus
- Poor Exposure
- Harsh Shadows/Hot Spots
- Lack of Scale
- Missing Context
- Incomplete Coverage
- Reflections

- Formal Photography Courses
- Workshops/Seminars
- Practice
- Peer Review & Mentorship
- Stay Updated



**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT &
TRAINING**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Principles:** Accuracy, objectivity, completeness, relevance, clarity.
- **Equipment:** DSLR/Mirrorless, external flash, tripod, scales are essential.
- **Settings:** RAW, low ISO, high aperture (f/8+), manual white balance/flash.
- **Methodology:** Overall-to-close-up for comprehensive coverage.
- **Lighting:** Control shadows, enhance details with external/oblique flash.
- **Scale/Identifiers:** Crucial for measurement and labeling.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Dignity, privacy, chain of custody are paramount.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

- **National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST):**
<https://www.nist.gov/document/standard-guide-crime-scene-photography>
- **Organization of Science Area Committees (OSAC):**
<https://www.thename.org/osac-standards->
- **American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM):**
<https://www.astm.org/news/crime-scene-photography-nd19>



THANKS

FOR ADDITIONAL OUTREACH
OR ASSISTANCE, CONTACT:

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