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### **E81 The Hand-Drawn Composite — Old School Still Works With New Tech**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand that new is not always best. Often, an older procedure or approach will stand the test of time and technology. This is most certainly the case with the discipline of forensic art. The use of desktop publishing, Adobe® Photoshop®, and scanning images have assisted Forensic Artists (FAs) in their work; however, computer facial software programs have not eliminated this discipline. Strong, detailed images that can elicit a public response or corroborate or eliminate known facts are still needed in criminal investigations. The failure of most software programs to produce strong images and be flexible to use in the field has contributed to insuring the FA's workload. Across the nation, the majority of these images are hand drawn and should not be discounted.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting a complex case and the flexibility used with an old-school approach — the hand-drawn sketch. Presented here is a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) case of battery, kidnap, and rape, from the South Los Angeles station. This case will demonstrate the use of two forensic composites that worked as corroborative evidence once the suspects, three years later, were identified through DNA.

These forensic composites were drawn in 2011 at the emergency room of Harbor General Hospital, in Carson, CA. The victim was badly beaten; her jaw was broken into many pieces, among other injuries. Her speech was arduous and very limited. The LASD FA responded to these conditions by using an unorthodox method. She asked the victim if she could draw and, when she agreed, gave the victim the paper and pencil. The victim drew very basic images of each suspect that highlighted the features she remembered. Her images were strong and had character. The FA used these visual images as descriptors, just as if the victim had verbally described them to her. The FA worked from these drawings to develop initial images that the victim then modified and these were adjusted accordingly. The hectic and busy Emergency Room (ER) was not the ideal place for an interview or for completing a drawing, but drawings were finalized. The drawings by the victim were also preserved as evidence, treated like the composites that were created by the FA.

This case did not move along quickly as no one responded to the composites nor did the DNA from the victim assist at that time. The suspects, as it turned out, were ages 17 and 18 and had no prior offenses that incurred the documentation of DNA. Three years later, at ages 20 and 21, they committed crimes for which they were arrested and DNA samples were taken. At this point, South Los Angeles Station Detectives were notified that their unsolved case was viable and had new information.

This case was adjudicated in 2014. The victim and the FA testified, among others. The jury appreciated the victim's sincerity and that the composites looked like the defendants. The composites worked and supported the case. Both suspects received heavy sentences due to the high number of offenses involved, including the use of a gun.

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#### **Forensic Art, Hand Drawn Composite, Forensic Art Communication**