**Crime Scene: The Journalist’s Account**

I am giving you separate instructions for the first and final drafts of the journalist’s account, as you will be writing this piece “in layers.” (Draft 1 is a fairly narrowly prescribed task, whereas in Draft 2 you will embellish your draft with additional layers of information and detail.)

**Draft 1:** Keep your focus completely on the office/crime scene. You will just describe the scene itself, absent of any people. Do not mention the lead detective or describe his or her examination of the crime scene.

**“Raw Material” to Work With:** the crime scene evidence, the office décor, Louisa Sutton’s personal items.

**Goals:** **1) Bring the crime scene to life for the reader**. Let them vividly see the evidence. (As a journalist you would use the detective’s report and crime scene photos as your raw materials.)

**2) Help the reader see Louisa Sutton as a real person.** Try to convey some of her personality or character through her belongings. Suggest what was going on her life. (In addition to the already mentioned materials, you’ll use the Office Décor List and the additional Journalist photographs of her belongings.) **3) Try to engender an emotional response or connection**. Think of specific emotions that you want the reader to feel, and in what ways they might identify with Sutton. (Same raw materials as above.)

**Rhetorical Context**: in this assignment, you are using the same raw materials as in the Detective’s Report, but consider how different the rhetorical situations are. Your purpose is not the same. Your audience will be quite different, and will not have the same needs or demands as the detective’s audiences (fellow detectives, prosecutors, defense attorneys). What’s at stake has changed, which means that as a journalist you enjoy certain freedoms that our lead detective did not.

**Another Way of Thinking About This:** Think of yourself as a craftsman or artist. The crime scene office is the raw material that you must create with. You want to use those materials thoughtfully to create the most powerful, effective, and moving piece that you can.

**What You Can and Cannot Do**

* **YOU CAN:** speculate and make assumptions that you could not make in the Detective’s Report. That being said, you still need to be careful and make it clear when you are speculating. (You cannot state something as fact that has yet to be verified by forensics or further investigation.) For example, you might speculate that some of the items on the floor had originally been on the desk and knocked off in the struggle. Anything you speculate about should be, if not obvious, at least highly likely to have happened. **Overall, do not go overboard with the speculatio**n. **YOU CANNOT**: completely invent scenarios to explain the evidence, or choreograph a highly detailed altercation between Louisa and her assailant(s). It is one thing to wonder aloud whether a certain object was used as a weapon, or whether Louisa was hit in the head with the printer cartridge. It is something else entirely to give a blow-by-blow account of an imaginary physical struggle (that only exists in your mind).
* **YOU CAN:** draw conclusions about Sutton from her office décor and personal items. You will use her stuff to create this image of her for the reader. You can: a) subtly “show” her through her stuff, or b): more explicitly “show and tell” where you state your conclusions about her personality and illustrate with her belongings. You can also *gently* speculate about her and her belongings. (“Was this, the young man in the photos, her fiancé?” “A broken piece of jewelry dangled from a leg of the overturned chair. Had it been given to her by her fiancé?”) **YOU CANNOT**: invent facts or background information, history, etc. For example, you cannot write: “A broken piece of jewelry dangled from a leg of the overturned chair. It was the necklace that her fiancé, Mason, had bought Louisa on their first vacation together. They had been walking arm in arm in downtown Sacramento….”