

Types of Crimes Associated with A Composite Sketch



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Abstract

Background: Composite sketches are used for different reasons. This review sought to identify the types of crimes where victims or witnesses can escape and provide a description to a forensic artist.

Methods: Google and Google News were searched for news reports that have released composite sketches. Search terms used included "composite sketch" or "composite drawing" as well as a state or country.

Results: 335 composite sketches were found through Google News and Google. Data was plotted based on the latitude and longitude of the offense, the country, the state/province, the police department/organization that completed the sketch, and the crime.

Conclusion: A composite sketch may be useful for when a suspect sexually assaults, murders, and/or shoots a victim. Specifically, composite sketches may be able to be used when a suspect causes death to a victim by shooting with a sexual component (though most cases where a composite sketch is used do not involve a sexual component). Most of the time a composite sketch is drawn when a homicide occurs (18.21%).

Keywords: Composite Sketch; Crimes; Sexual Battery; Attack

Introduction

A composite sketch is an image used to help identify a suspect in a crime or to generate leads from witness memory [1-3]. In the United States, reasonable suspicion allows for temporary suspension of fourth amendment rights on the basis that criminal activity is about to occur, or has occurred previously [4,5]. Higher than reasonable suspicion is probable cause, which allows for an arrest to be made based on a prior commission of a crime [6]. Not quite being classed as an identification method (depending on the circumstances [2], a composite sketch can support reasonable suspicion, or in some cases probable cause [7-12]. A composite sketch can allow for law enforcement officials to interview a suspect [11], make an arrest [8,9,11] or support prior extrajudicial identification [6]. This review aims to outline the primary types of crimes that are associated with the production of a composite drawing. This information suggests that certain types of crimes are associated with more victim-perpetrator interactions. These crimes indicate when a composite sketch may be used. Most of the current research seems to focus on improving rates of composite sketch identification. Awareness of how to use a composite sketch as a tool for investigations is less clear. This information may be useful for a criminal investigator.

Materials and Methods

Google Search and Google News were queried from October 29th, 2022, to December 19th, 2022. The term "composite

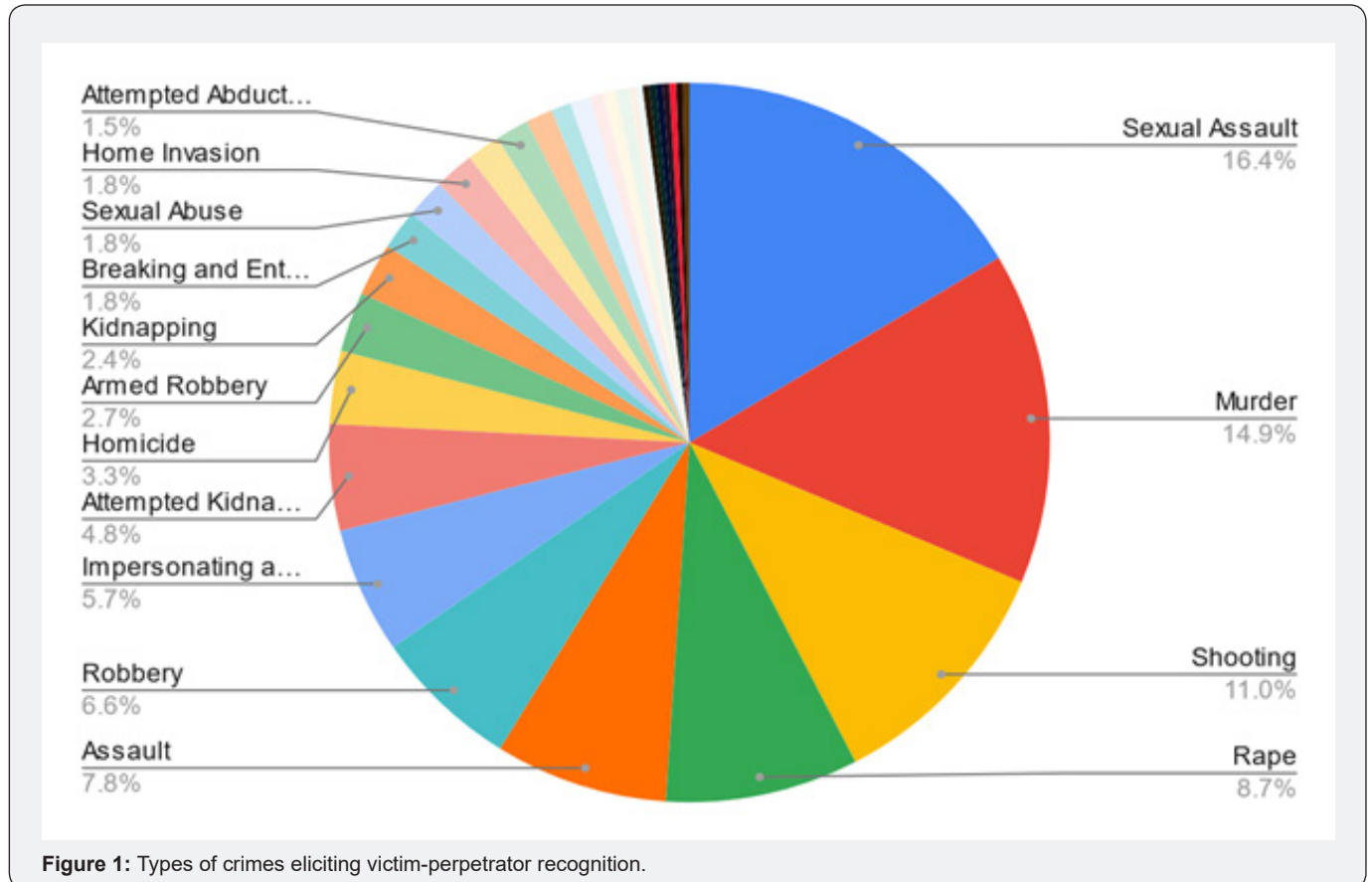
sketch" or "composite drawing" along with the name of a state was used to find applicable news articles. News articles were to be from the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. Location was not a restriction in this review. News articles were deemed to meet the inclusion criteria when the article represented an ongoing forensic case (currently closed or open). Twenty-eight different types of crimes were found (with overlapping classifications, depending on location). These included kidnapping, sexual assault, robbery, shooting, murder, armed robbery, homicide, bombing, burglary, attempted abduction, abduction, breaking and entering, assault, indecent exposure, rape, threatened rape, sexual battery, incident, sexual abuse, home invasion, stabbing, attack, attempted kidnapping, impersonating a police officer, hit and run, and carjacking. Some news articles mentioned multiple crimes committed by the same perpetrator, in these cases, the first crime mentioned was counted. Some repeated articles were found, and they were omitted.

Results

(Figure 1) In total, 335 composite sketches from news articles released by the media were able to be found. The three most common types of crimes where a composite sketch was used were sexual assaults (16.42%), murders (14.93%), and shootings (11.04%). A composite sketch may also be employed for a sexual battery, indecent exposure, carjacking, attack, an

incident, attempted rape, threatened rape, extortion, and bombing. In 55 cases, the suspect sexually assaults the victim. In 13 cases for a sexual assault, the victim may be traveling (walking, running, jogging), and the suspect will molest (grab, attack, or sexually assault) the victim. In those cases, the victim may be

running or walking at a public park. In six of 13 cases, the suspect may lure the victim into a car and then sexually assault them or abduct them. The suspect in these cases may lure a victim into a car, drive them away, sexually assault them, and then let them go afterwards. In 50 cases, the suspect murders the victim.



In 85% of the murder cases, the suspect employed a gun as a weapon over the course of the offense. In 37 cases, the suspect will shoot the victim (and they may or may not die). In 29 cases, a victim was raped. In 26 cases, the suspect will assault the victim. In 22 cases, the suspect will rob the victim. In 19 cases, the suspect will impersonate a police officer. In 16 cases, the suspect will attempt to kidnap a victim. In eight cases, the suspect will kidnap a victim. In seven cases, the suspect will sexually abuse the victim. In six cases, the suspect will unlawfully enter a house by breaking and entering. In five cases, the suspect will burgla-

rize a home, or will attempt to abduct the victim. In four cases the suspect will abduct the victim. In three cases the victim will be stabbed or be hit, and the suspect will leave the scene. In two cases, the suspect indecently exposed themselves, sexually battered the victim, or was involved in arson. In one case, a suspect will bomb a location, extort a victim, threaten, or attempt to rape the victim, be involved in an incident, attack the victim, steal the victim's car, be involved in a suspicious death, or be involved in a bogus payroll check scheme (Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage of Types of Crimes Associated with a Composite Sketch.

Percentage (%)	Type of Crime	Number of Composite Sketches
16.42%	Sexual Assault	55
14.93%	Murder	50
11.04%	Shooting	37
8.66%	Rape	29
7.76%	Assault	26
6.57%	Robbery	22
5.67%	Impersonating a Police Officer	19

4.78%	Attempted Kidnapping	16
3.28%	Homicide	11
2.69%	Armed Robbery	9
2.39%	Kidnapping	8
1.79%	Breaking and entering	6
1.79%	Sexual Abuse	6
1.79%	Home Invasion	6
1.49%	Burglary	5
1.49%	Attempted Abduction	5
1.19%	Abduction	4
0.90%	Stabbing	3
0.90%	Hit and Run	3
0.60%	Indecent Exposure	2
0.60%	Sexual Battery	2
0.60%	Arson	2
0.30%	Bombing	1
0.30%	Extortion	1
0.30%	Threatened Rape	1
0.30%	Attempted Rape	1
0.30%	Incident	1
0.30%	Attack	1
0.30%	Carjacking	1
0.30%	Suspicious Death	1
0.30%	Bogus Payroll Checks	1

Discussion

Taylor, Mancusi, and Streed all mentioned sexual assault victims for composite sketches [5,12-15]. Most of the data shows this to be the case.

Conclusion

Although sexual assaults make up most cases, it seems that overall, it may be non-sexually related crimes that prompt the conditions necessary for a composite sketch to be produced (71% non-sexually related vs 29% sexually related crimes). A composite sketch may be most useful in cases involving both sexual assault and murder, usually paired with a gun component. Homicide cases make up 18.21% of the circumstances that allow a composite sketch to be drawn.

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