



Thirty Winnipeg police officers search for 'evidence' at St. Boniface Industrial Park as part of a crime scene training session yesterday.

MARCEL CRETAIN Sun

Crime scene training produces 'the best'

CARY CASTAGNA
Police Reporter
ccastagna@wpgsun.com

Winnipeg police Const. Richard Munroe isn't a big fan of the popular TV show *CSI*.

"It's crap," the veteran forensic scientist told reporters yesterday. "The thought process is there, but they juice it up all the time."

In the real world, crime scene investigations are painstaking and they're not solved in less than an hour, he said.

Unrealistic expectations

"You don't walk into a scene and go, 'There it is (a key piece of evidence). OK. Case solved. Let's go for coffee,'" Munroe said, adding his biggest beef with the television series is that it gives the public unrealistic expectations. "It affects us in court. It affects the jury pool."

Munroe, who has more than 20 years' experience in police investigations and forensic identification, held a crime scene training session yesterday for 30 city cops — the first of four classes that will get a hands-on look at locating and investigating mock murder scenes.

"We're supposed to be good at what we do, but I want to be the best," Munroe said.

A week before the exercise, Munroe gave the course participants a mock suicide note that would lead them to the mock dumping site of a serial killer in St. Boniface Industrial Park.

At the crime scene yesterday, officers collected evidence and performed grid searches, which eventually led them to at least one mock grave site.

Munroe — who spent eight months last year in Port

Coquitlam, B.C., aiding RCMP and Vancouver police in the investigation of accused serial killer Robert Pickton — instructed the officers on how to properly excavate and examine a burial site.

'Critical'

"You just never know what you're going to find," he said, adding the first 48 hours of a homicide investigation are critical.

Munroe believes a crime scene can be more important than testimony from a witness because forensic evidence doesn't lie.

"The locating, recording, collection, preservation and interpretation of forensic evidence are critical to the successful prosecution of any case," he said. "We must be able to understand what the victim has told us, even from the grave."