**KITCHEN – TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS**

Crime Classification – Suicide

Manner of Death – Suicide

Mode of Death – Poisoning with Rat poison

**SCENARIO**

Mrs. Thomas, the bitter estranged wife of Mr. Thomas killed herself with a poisoned cake. She asked him to come over to her house to discuss the terms of their divorce and after he left, unhappy with his refusal to come back to her, she baked the poisoned cake and killed herself. She left a note to implicate Mr. Thomas, saying that he had made the cake for her as a peace offering, to get her to grant him a divorce. Tiny amounts of rat poison were found under her nails, proving that she had poisoned the cake. Also, in the letter, she claimed that she was baking the cake when he came over, left him unattended in the kitchen, and baked it while he was there.

September 22, 1920 at 2:15pm, in Baltimore, MD

The local policeman was called to the scene when Mrs. Franklin found her neighbor, Mrs. Thomas, dead in her (Mrs. Thomas') kitchen. Mrs. Franklin told the policeman that she had been trying to chat with Mrs. Thomas all day, but to her surprise, Mrs. Thomas had not left the house that day. After lunchtime, having not seen her neighbor and suspecting that she might have taken ill, she knocked on the door and got no response. When she opened up the back door, "just to see if she needed me!", she saw the body on the kitchen floor. Mrs. Franklin told the policeman that she had screamed and nearly fainted on the spot. "In my whole life, I've never seen someone look so awful!"

After cordoning off the house, and going to the closest callbox to ask for more officers, the first officer looked around the kitchen scene. He found that the body of Mrs. Thomas was found in a arched position, with a rictus on her face, and a bluish color to her lips and fingers.

**KITCHEN – STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

You will read the scenario provided and search for evidence in an attempt to determine what took place. You will have access to limited laboratory examinations.

One group member will act as a note-taker, listing all physical evidence which is found and all pertinent questions relevant to the processing of the crime scene. One of the group members is the “Know It All” resource person who can represent witnesses or impart laboratory results.

Nothing in the case is to be touched, moved, or removed unless the instructor gives permission to do so.

SCENARIO

This is a kitchen in a small townhouse in Baltimore, MD. The time of the exercise is 2:15pm on September 22, 1920. You are the policeman responding to the scene. After cordoning off the scene and going to the closest callbox to call in for more officers, you are investigating the scene.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Victim is dead
2. Stiffness of the doll is realistic
3. Fingerprints are too small for this scale – you will provide likely locations to investigate
4. Nothing seems to have been touched when you arrive

(ADD SUSPECT LIST HERE)

INFORMATION FOR “KNOW IT ALL”

DO NOT REVEAL ANY INFORMATION UNLESS DIRECTLY QUESTIONED ABOUT IT!

* The cake contains rat poison. (ADD A TEST WITH ALTERNATE RESULTS HERE)
* Mrs. Thomas shows the signs of poisoning by rat poison (asphyxia, vomiting, arched back.)
* There are traces of rat poison under her fingernails.
* The letter, addressed to her friend, left on the counter, which reads: (ADD ALTERNATE WRITING SAMPLES TO COMPARE—MRS. THOMAS, MR. THOMAS, MRS. FRANKLIN)

Dear Diane,

I am very sorry to report that Michael has refused, once again, to return to me. He and his floozy want to be married! As if I would ever allow the sanctity of my marriage vows to be overturned! Michael will come around eventually. He came over today, while I was baking my famous strawberry cake. I was right in the middle of mixing it up when he came, so I let him in and let him sit in the kitchen. He wanted a few of his things, so I went and got them for him--I wasn't going to let him muddle around in what is now MY house!

Oh, Diane, he looked so tall and handsome--why won't he come back to me?

I'm sorry I haven't asked about Jack or little Nell. How are they? Send them my love, and my love to you, as always,

Sally

* Her neighbor, Mrs. Franklin, remembers seeing Mr. Thomas come at 1:00pm, and that shortly after he left, around 1:30pm, Mrs. Thomas was baking a cake. Mrs. Franklin came over to hand her a piece of mis-delivered mail around 2:00pm, and commented on the delicious smell of the cake baking. Mrs. Thomas commented, "Oh, yes, that's my famous strawberry cake. It's for my husband."
* The fingerprints in the house are a mixture of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas’ fingerprints. (ADD FOUND AND COMPARISON FINGERPRINTS FOR THREE SUSPECTS)
* Mr. Thomas has been estranged from Mrs. Thomas for 2 years, but this he did live in this house with her before the estrangement.