

# SUMMER 2010 UPDATE

By Don Stahl

## Hello, Forensic Artists.

It seems high time we connected again, with summer drawing to a close, vacations wrapping up, and the mood around the workplace returning to a “get-down-to-business” mindset. Stop laughing. It feels like that around my office, anyway. Whatever the case where you are, I wanted to touch base with you on a few things, perhaps answer a question or two for you, and give you an idea of where your Forensic Art Subcommittee is heading over the next year.

I was fortunate to attend the 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference in Spokane, Washington. We were blessed with some excellent presenters, and of course there is nothing like an opportunity to interact with our fellow artists and to see them at work. That’s always a privilege. I have heard quite a few compliments about our educational program for this and recent years, but to be fair, there has been the occasional criticism too. Of course we won’t always please everyone, but we will always take our best shot at it. I’m constantly looking for ways to improve upon whatever we’ve done in the past, and planning is already underway for Milwaukee in 2011.

Our goal is to achieve a balance of presentations that will appeal to the beginners among us, while keeping the more experienced artists engaged, giving each of you the feeling that your money was well spent. When I hear positive feedback from both of those groups, I consider our conference a success. Spokane was my ninth conference, and I still consider the IAI to be the best source for *continuing education* in forensic art.

Please rest assured that your input is important to the job that your Subcommittee and Certification Board are doing. We are all working forensic artists like you, some full time, and others in addition to our full-time duties. As volunteers in our positions with the IAI, we’re here because we care about our field, and we’re always looking for ideas on how to make our contributions to its advancement. Make yours by sending me your suggestions on how we can better assist you. *(continued on page 4 ...)*

## Contributing Writers

**Ray Clark**, Forensic Artist, McKinney Police, McKinney, TX, shares a composite hit.

**Suzanne Lowe**, Forensic Artist, Texas Dept. of Public Safety, Austin, TX, shares some insight into the subtle adjustments we can make to our sketches to gain great results in portraying features realistically. When she first mentioned the idea, Suzanne was eager to show some of the improvements she’d made to her drawings over the years, through things she’d learned in training, through peer advice and independent study. Although she was a little reluctant to assume the role of instructor to such an experienced audience, we agreed that if anyone at all could benefit, it was worth the effort. Her article is an excellent first in a series, with participation from other artists planned in future issues.

**Steven Mancusi**, Forensic Artist, *ForArtist*, Peekskill, NY, gives us a sneak preview of his new book “*The Police Composite Sketch*,” which is to be released this month by Humana Press.

**David P. (Paul) Moody**, Forensic Artist, Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office, West Palm Beach, FL writes an entertaining and insightful review of **Betty Edwards’** “*Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*.”

**Joe Mullins** of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Alexandria, VA, provides a brief review of the conference in Spokane.

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Thanks to all who contributed to this edition of the Forensic Art Review.

# Can you teach me how to draw?

by Paul Moody

I was in deep concentration and putting the final touches on a really cool race car while in my seventh grade Social Studies class when suddenly, the teacher reached over my shoulder and grabbed the piece of paper from my desk. He promptly announced that instead of listening in class, THIS is what Mr. Moody has been doing. The attempt to embarrass and shame me into conforming backfired when the class broke into a unanimous "Ooooooo" and a couple classmates asked if I would "do one" for them. Unfortunately, that set the teacher's temper to boiling and I spent several long hours in detention.

And it set into motion the repetitious question of "can you teach me how to draw"? No one ever knew the tailspin that sent me into. The best I could ever do would be to let them watch me draw and then tell them that's the way it should look when done. It was worthless instruction. I simply couldn't translate a process into words that I didn't understand myself.

Then along came a book titled "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain", by Dr. Betty Edwards. Finally, there was an understandable explanation for what I had been floundering with for so long. Dr. Edwards does an excellent job of explaining the physiological trans-

formation that takes place in the brain when processing visual information. She begins by detailing the individual functions that the right and left lobes of the brain play in our lives and how these functions are applied to a variety of activities. The left brain controls the right side of the body and is the dominant lobe. It is the analytical, rational and logical side and makes every attempt to maintain control. The right side of the brain is the intuitive, non-temporal and spatial side and drawing is largely an R-mode function.

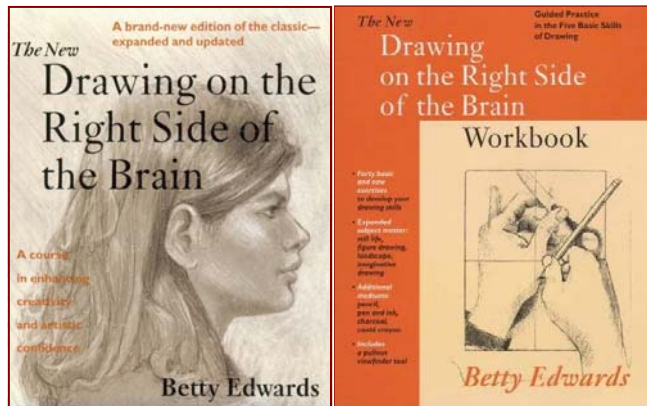
But nothing drives this explanation home more than the drawing activities addressed in the book. Exercises such as, Drawing the Face/Vase, Drawing in Negative Space and

explains how to recognize the shift from L-mode to R-mode and, over a period of repetition, allow the artist to recognize what the shift "feels" like and empower the artist to consciously make the shift.

I know this all sounds like something out of a movie so I challenge all of you to get the book and study this for yourself. Over the years, I have proven the physiological process to myself when I ran into difficulty attempting to draw a likeness of someone, especially of those persons close to me. But I am here to tell you that upside down drawing will cause the left brain to relinquish control to the right side and allow the creative juices to flow. By simply turning your reference photo upside

down and drawing exactly what you see, you'll end up with a very close likeness and not even realize that's what you were doing. This is also explains why many artists feel that after hours of drawing or painting, hardly any time has passed at all when, in reality, many hours have passed.

This is the best book I've ever read when it comes to TEACHING YOURSELF how to draw and how to recognize what happens to you when you're caught in that creative wave. The book and an accompanying workbook can be purchased at [www.drawright.com](http://www.drawright.com) or any of the major booksellers. Have a great time with it.



Drawing Upside Down can make you a believer after trying them yourself and seeing the results. Better yet, Dr. Edwards also ex-

## The 2010 Conference, Spokane Washington

By Joe Mullins

The IAI Conference is Spokane Washington (July 11-17, 2010) was an awesome experience. Every year is awesome, but this year we seemed to bring in some new faces to the Forensic Art family. The conference is a great opportunity to network with other artists, learn new techniques, share stories and open up communication lines between all of us so we can improve the services we provide as Forensic Artists. The workshops offered up this year were impressive ..

**Chuck Jackson** and **Gil Zamora** shared their

composite sketch skills, **Gloria Nusse** did



Forensic Artists and friends at Luigi's in downtown Spokane

an incredible workshop on Juvenile Facial Reconstruction and **Lisa Bailey** and **Wes Neville's** 2-D Facial Reconstruction class is always filled up with eager students, ready to learn or practice their forensic skills. If you have the opportunity to make it to next year's conference in Milwaukee, I'm sure it will worth your time. We're continuing to grow and set up even better workshops and lectures. So if Forensic Art is your thing ... The IAI is the place to be. Come mingle, share experiences and help us continue to help these victims.

# Frequently Seen Mistakes in Composite Drawing, Part One

By Suzanne Lowe

Nothing is more frustrating, and even downright embarrassing at times, than to see less-than-professional-looking composite drawings in the media. The worst result of these renderings is that they have less of a chance of doing their job: **getting the person-of-interest recognized**. However, they also serve to make our field appear “simple,” unsophisticated, and they attract negative comments and smirks from viewers. (Just take a few minutes to read the “Comments” sections under Internet articles sometime). Of course the general public isn’t aware of all the variables we encounter and must work with throughout the interview / composite drawing session. Still, it should still be a goal of ours to constantly improve our work, and therefore the reputation and of the field.

At the risk of offending the more sensitive reader, we’ve decided to address some of the “Most Common Mistakes” seen in completed composite drawings. Many of you may already know what we’re talking about: irises that are too large, noses that are too long, a pencil-thin line for the jaw line and chin instead of shading, etc. I’ve chosen to simply sketch out my own examples, rather than actually re-printing any published sketches that have exhibited traits which, over time, I’ve learned to correct. Future contributors to this series may choose to use samples of their own past composites.

The purpose for this series is, of course, not to embarrass anyone, but rather, to share our own learning experiences with those who may benefit. We DO NOT want this section to become a platform for objections, debate or other negative responses. We are simply wishing for readers to be able to recognize some of their own errors, habits, “signatures,” even. The artists may not even realize that these details may have made their drawings anatomically incorrect in the past, or that the features could simply have been drawn just a little **better**, more professionally, giving the finished product more depth and “pop”.

I will jump right into this by embarrassing myself: I’m willing to put myself out there for the greater good! I will be the first to admit that I needed to improve (and I have) over time, by continuing to learn, by taking training, and by **listening** to other artists who have given me great advice. Although I am still learning, here is an example of a before & after of my work:

**Drawing A is very FLAT.** I have neither shaded enough, nor correctly. I have the skin tone shade correct for this Hispanic male in his thirties, but he appears too young. I have made the classic mistakes: The eyes are “football-shaped,” (and the left one is even off-centered),

and they are much too wide from left to right. From corner to corner should also not be so symmetrical. Usually the lateral corner is slightly higher than the medial one. This is simply biology, in order for our tears to drain. However, some persons do appear to have “droopy” eyes, in which the outer corners do, in fact, appear lower, due to the way the skin has formed and folded over time. I’ve made the eyelids come **just** to the edges of the irises, when I should have covered part of the “perfect circle” with flesh. The nose is MUCH too long, especially for Hispanics, and the bridge and tip are missing necessary shading. I have used only simple lines for his chin, jaw line and neck. I should have made them thicker / blunter and included appropriate shading to allow for shadows, and to represent the correct age of this man. I also should have asked about, and perhaps included, the “Adam’s-apple,” if appropriate. His lips and moustache appear flat. The image is also overly darkened on the scanner.



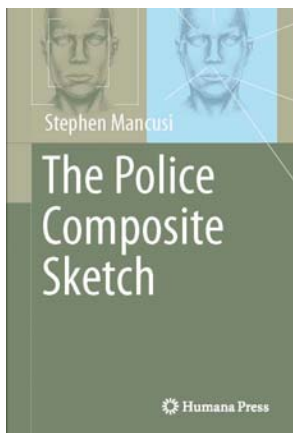
A. The early days of my composites many years ago



B. Getting better.... thankfully! Practice, training, and humility!

[Note: These drawings are NOT of the same face – hopefully that is obvious.]

**Drawing B is much more anatomically correct**, although even now, I see some things I could have done better (like the ears). But overall, this is a much better representation of a Hispanic male in his thirties. This man is heavier than the subject in Drawing A, which is evident in the cheeks, jowls, jaw line and weight in the neck. (Also why his “Adam’s-apple” doesn’t show). His general expression was explained to me as, “mean, frowning, with a thick, heart-shaped mouth.” This nose is much more appropriate, both to the victim’s description and her



## New In Print

### The Police Composite Sketch

by Stephen Mancusi

Humana Press

Release Date: September, 2010

*The Police Composite Sketch* is primarily a book about how to conduct a police composite session. The composite sketch, one of the most crucial investigative tools in law enforcement, is developed during a composite session an intense display of communication and art in which the words of a victim or witness are transformed into the features of a suspect. Despite the incredible technological leaps made in investigative work, the forensic art of composite sketching still relies on the basic

elements of drawing skill, interviewing ability and the spoken word. Another goal of this book is to answer some of the perplexity and dilemmas about this technique for the aspiring and accomplished forensic artist as well as the average interested reader. Due to the complexity and diverse skills associated with the composite session, the information will be explored within a standard operating procedure as well as straight forward rules, basic guidelines, notable concepts, tips and tangent narratives. These accounts will reveal a conduit into a successful philosophy, strategies and solutions about how to create the police composite sketch.

See the recent NPR video featuring Stephen Mancusi at

<http://www.sciencefriday.com/videos/watch/10328>

## Composite Hits

### By Ray Clark

McKinney Police Department  
McKinney, Texas

I was called to do a composite on an Aggravated Robbery of a jewelry store. The owners of the jewelry store were both elderly and somewhat difficult to work with but we eventually made it through.

I use color on a case by case basis. In this case a prominent feature was the suspect was wearing a white baseball cap green with green Baylor University logo, he also had two piercings that would have been very difficult to show in black and white.



I completed the composite and it was published in a local Crime Stopper program as well as the local news. Shortly after being shown the investigating agency got a call from a lady who said she knew the suspect by name because he was friends with her ex husband. She named the suspect and said she recognized the cap and sunglasses as being those of her ex husband.

In this case I think using color for the cap and sunglasses was the key that caught the eye of the witness  
*We'd like to post more hits in each issue. [Send us your hits.](#)*

## Summer 2010 Update (cont'd)

### *Subcommittee and Certification Board*

I had the pleasure of meeting the then incoming, now official IAI President, Phil Sanfilippo, in Spokane. He attended the Subcommittee and Certification Board meeting and shared some of his goals for the coming year as well as some feedback he'd received from the membership. Our conversation was constructive, and it will be a pleasure to work with Phil over the next twelve months. The chair of the Certification board, Wesley Neville and I presented our recommendations for filling the vacancies on both panels, and pending Mr. Sanfilippo's approval, there will be some new talent on the list when it's published. I'm pleased to report that these two panels will have representation from all over the Country, with members from New York, Virginia, Maryland, Michigan, Florida, Texas, California, Oklahoma and New Jersey.

I receive questions from time to time, about how one can have the opportunity to serve on either the Forensic Art Subcommittee or Certification Board. There are a few ways that can occur. You may indicate your interest in the space provided on the membership renewal form. This notifies the President that you're interested in serving. The other way is to make your interest known to the members of both panels. Your attendance and participation at the annual educational conferences is the best way to become known and to therefore be recommended for a vacancy on either panel. A seat on the Certification Board requires that you, yourself be certified. Certification isn't required for service on the Subcommittee, but it is recommended. Attendance at conferences is rather critical for those who hold positions on either panel. No one knows better than I that funding is tough to come by sometimes, but while communication goes on throughout the year between office holders, there's no substitute for the amount of business we're able to get done at conferences. Sometimes it's just impossible to get to a conference. We're all facing demands from our full time jobs. Unfortunately though, missing too many distances you from what's happening. The bottom line is, if you want to participate, your energy and point-of-view are both needed and welcome. Please come to conferences and make your wishes known.

Your Forensic Art Subcommittee is enthusiastic about the year ahead. Ideas were flying when we met in Spokane for things we want to accomplish. Stay tuned. In the mean time, get the most out of your membership and show your support for your discipline. **Pursue that certification** you've been putting off. **Get involved with the IAI as a representative of Forensic Art. Write something up on your work and send it to the *Identification News* or the *Journal of Forensic Identification (JFI)*.** Send a hit you're proud of to us for posting in the next Forensic Art Review.

Thanks for reading, and for the work you do. See you in Milwaukee.

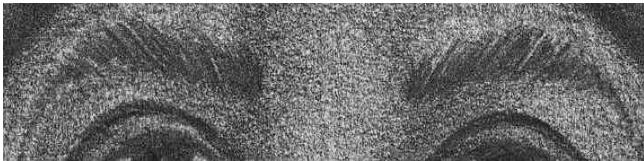
## Frequently Seen Mistakes (cont'd)

references from photographs, as well as to the subject's ethnicity. The eyes show depth, skin folds, age and expression, whereas the eyes in Drawing A appear blank and as if he is wearing eyeliner! The eyes I draw now are no longer perfectly "almond-shaped," and I'm not afraid to cover parts of the irises anymore! The overall size of the iris has been reduced – that in itself makes a big difference. I usually do NOT put eyelashes on male drawings, but in this case, the victim was insistent that they were very obvious. Even so, my reference to his lashes is subtle.

As we progress, each newsletter will focus on a different area of the face, so as not to take up too much space. In the above examples, we just wanted to show "overall faces." Since they're mine, I can say it: I wanted to give examples of a not-so-human looking drawing, versus a better representation. If anyone reading ever has suggestions of subjects to address, and/or examples, we welcome them.

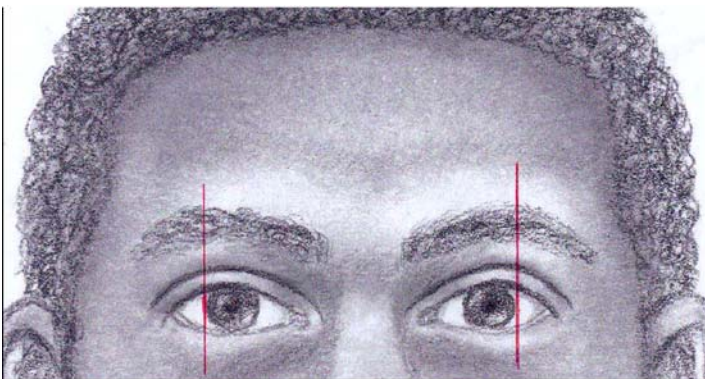
Our first subject will be **EYEBROWS!** One of the often-occurring situations is that they are placed **too high** above the eyes. It is so important to discuss with the witness not just the shape, color, amount of hair, hair consistency, height (vertically), and width (horizontally) of the brows, but also **WHERE** the eyebrows are in correlation to the eyes. If you just verbalize this question they may not know what you mean. You could lightly sketch one eyebrow out on a piece of tracing paper and place it on top of the existing composite, sliding it closer to, and further from the eye to let them see the difference. The witnesses can then just advise you when to "stop" – which is much more helpful than their usual common answers, such as, "Oh, not too far." "An average amount of space." "Kind of close."

The other mistake I'd like to address is the **DIRECTIONALITY** and **CONSISTENCY** of the eyebrow hair. Be careful that you are not making every individual strand of hair look exactly the same. The growth pattern changes as the brow forms over the bone. The hairs closest to the bridge of the nose **USUALLY** are more upward-directed. As you move laterally across the brow, the hair tends to grow more sideways. The latter end, closest to the ear, **USUALLY** grows in a slight downward direction. The change in directionality comes at the position which is directly above the lateral (outside) edge of the iris. In fact, that position can even make a slight point, especially in men. You can see in the illustrations the brows that are drawn correctly and those that are a bit off, when speaking generally.



**EXAMPLES** of eyebrows where *the hair is too uniform* throughout the brow. Almost every strand is going in an upward direction. These are also on African-American suspects. The hair strands should be shorter, and coarser. The red lines indicate the lateral iris borders, indicating where the "point" in the brow should be, and the change in directionality of the hair growth for lateral ends of the brows.

Regarding the **consistency** of the hair, I'm speaking largely to the difference between African-American hair and that of a Caucasian, Hispanic or Asian. It is usually slightly coarser, and the individual strands are much shorter and curlier. I would advise against drawing long pencil-thin streaks for African-American eyebrows – it just doesn't look correct. See examples.



**EXAMPLE** of "more correct" brows for an African-American male. The hair consistency fits his head hair and ethnicity. The medial hairs are drawn in a slightly upward direction, changing to sideways, and then growing slightly downward near the outside edges. The highest points of the brows are seen above the outside edge of the irises.

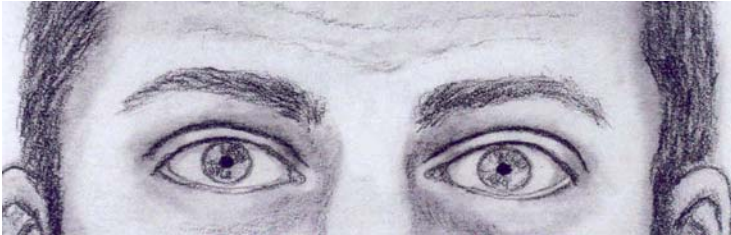
One more tip concerning eyebrows: They are easily altered with expression. So keep in mind, we are trying to portray how this person-of-interest **generally** appears. (i.e., not necessarily their raised eyebrow, wide-eyed look when they attacked). This is not normally how he will be recognized by others, or how he will appear in previous mug shots, driver's license photos, etc. He will carry a more casual look in everyday life and in posed pictures. Also, if your

agency uses facial recognition systems on your drawings, the proportions / spatial distances will be off if you add in too much expression. Rarely, if ever, does a person have a relaxed, normal facial expression that shows the sclera (white part) **ABOVE** their irises! Rather, this would be attributed to the expression of the moment. I would advise lowering that upper eyelid slightly, to touch, if not even cover a bit of the iris.

## Frequently Seen Mistakes (conclusion)

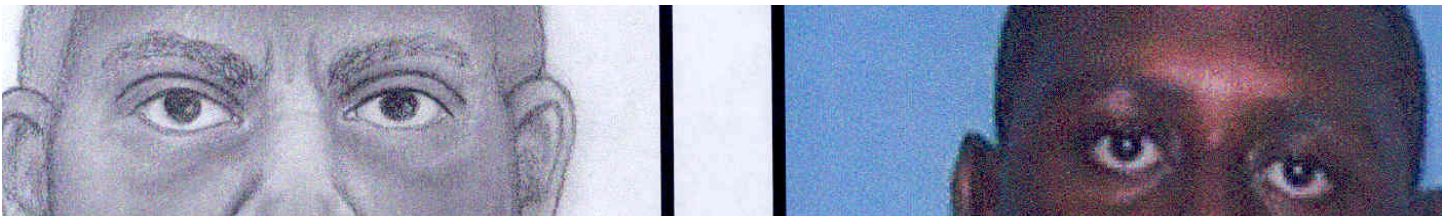
**EXAMPLE** (below) of one of my earliest sketches from years ago with a “wide-eyed” expression.

**It looks pretty bad ! Mistakes:** People usually don’t look like this in real life. The look is one of surprise, showing too much of the irises and sclera, and placing the eyebrows too high. Also, one of the irises is off-center, the pupils are “too perfect,” the medial canthii are crooked, etc. Learn from my mistakes!



A common comment received regarding the sketches, is that the witnesses say, “It looks like him but he looks too nice.” Tips to capture that intense expression, without altering the facial features so much that he won’t be recognized in his everyday life, are to lower the inside corners of the eyebrows just a little and indicate the inter orbital furrow if your witness makes some type of comment indicating he needs to

look “meaner, or angrier.” Further tips are to narrow the pupils, make the eyes slightly more “squinted,” and to tighten the corners of the mouth.



**COPY** of my actual composite and the resulting suspect. In his DL picture, (which was taken a year and a half prior to this sketch being completed), he does not look stern, but yet is still easily recognizable to the sketch. His normal expression carries raised irises; these were not due to the expression on his face during the assault.

We are neither advocating drawing something the witnesses did not see, nor changing what they say when you apply those words to paper. Obviously we as forensic artists are bound to document their memories as they express them to us, not inferring anything. And there will be those witnesses that will say something along the lines of, “Well, that’s the way I saw him,” meaning – the bug-eyed, surprised look. We are simply giving some tips as to how to attain the expressions your witnesses are describing, while still keeping the images recognizable to others who see these men walking around WITHOUT aggressive, surprised looks or scowls on their faces every day.

We will continue to address other issues on other parts of the face in further issues of the Forensic Art Review. Much more time will be spent in the future on EYES, as they are a complicated area, and one on which we spend much time during the composite drawing interview. This is also the area in which we see so many mistakes in published drawings. Again, we welcome your examples and input.

Remember: “When we know better, we do better.” Challenge yourself with a critique or a peer review!

### Forensic Art Subcommittee

Chair: Don Stahl  
La Plata, Maryland

Lisa Bailey  
Quantico, Virginia

Suzanne Lowe  
Austin, Texas

Stephen Mancusi  
Peekskill, New York

Paul Moody  
West Palm Beach, Florida

Joe Mullins  
Alexandria, Virginia

Gloria Nusse  
Richmond, California

### Forensic Art Certification Board

Chair: Wesley Neville  
Quantico, Virginia

Secretary: Charles Jackson  
New Haddon Township, New Jersey

Evelyn Grant  
Baltimore, Maryland

Barbara Martin-Bailey  
Pontiac, Michigan

Traci Schinnerer  
Norman, Oklahoma

We’re hoping this reaches a few forensic artists who aren’t members of the **International Association for Identification (IAI)**, so forward it on to forensic artists out there. If you’d like to join the IAI, visit their web site, at [www.theiai.org](http://www.theiai.org) .

If you have questions or comments about anything you’ve read here, contact me at [stahld@ccso.us](mailto:stahld@ccso.us) .

