

The **artist** should sit far enough away from the witness so that were he or she to extend his or her hand, it would not reach the witness.

Since almost all witnesses probably thought they were going to die during the crime they survived, they are understandably skittish about people being near them. Some survivors might not mind someone they just met sitting next to them. However, many crime victims feel revolted by others and even have irrational urges to physically attack their own loved ones as a reaction to their ordeal. Considering the added stress that could be imposed by working near a witness who is too polite to ask them to move away, the **artist** should not take a chance and sit next to *any* witness. This small incursion into the witness's personal space could affect the quality of the sketch created in ways that would diminish its impact on the case. See Figure 1.18 for an arrangement of the witness and **artist** that works best for maintaining the comfort and privacy of the witness.

Figure 1.18

Here is the suggested arrangement for maximum witness comfort. The **artist** is far enough from the witness so that he or she could not be reached with an outstretched hand. The easel creates a barrier between witness and **artist** and allows attachment of visual aids directly to the drawing board (photo by author).

The **artist** should use an easel.

The basic, time-honored piece of equipment, the easel, is indispensable for serious drawing.¹⁷ For the forensic **artist**, an easel has special features that greatly enhance the interview with a witness. When the easel is set between the witness and the **artist**, it serves as a "shield" that keeps the two from seeing each other unless the **artist** leans slightly to the side and peers around the drawing board. This barrier helps witnesses feel as if they are somewhat alone and enhances

their concentration as they peruse the visual aids. The drawing board on the easel keeps the witness from focusing on the artist's face, and keeps the witness from feeling like he or she is being stared at.

Besides the comfort of the witness, an easel gives the **artist** maximum comfort during the stressful forensic sketch interview. Additionally, true professional artists know the best drawing mechanics dictate positioning between drawing and **artist** that only an easel offers. **Brian Curtis**, in his 2002 drawing textbook, *Drawing from Observation* (McGraw Hill), states, "When you draw it is important to position the surface of your

