



Pattern and Impression Evidence on the Human Body - Case Reports

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CRIME: Attempted murder and kidnapping
EVIDENCE: Photographs of patterned bruises on victim's face, suspect's gloves
SYNOPSIS: The victim's boyfriend beat her with gloved fists and a hammer and left her for dead. A previously undiagnosed genetic condition resulting in an unusually thick skull prevented her from dying as a result of massive head trauma.
RESULTS: Comparison of the questioned impression on the victim's face with the suspect's gloves revealed they were consistent in size, shape and orientation.
STATUS: The suspect was convicted and is currently serving a 41.5 year prison sentence.

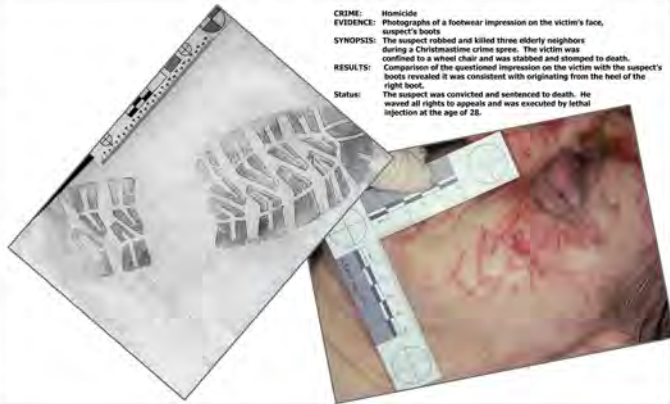


Patterns and Impressions are observed in evidence on a wide variety of substrates. One of the most challenging substrates on which to examine these types of evidence is the human body. Human skin tissue is pliable and conforms to an object upon direct contact. It is subject to pre- and post-mortem bruising, swelling and blood pooling. It immediately begins the healing process in a survivor and can decompose rapidly in a deceased victim.

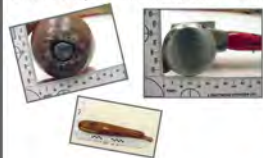
There are many factors to consider when examining questioned pattern and impression evidence on human beings. Blood migration often causes distortion of an impression in an injury that has begun to heal. Changes in the body's position at the time of or after a forceful contact can result in the questioned pattern or impression misaligning when compared to the standard. Overlapping impressions can also be a complicating factor in impression comparisons.

Evidence in a variety of cases involving pattern and impression evidence on both skin and bone is presented.

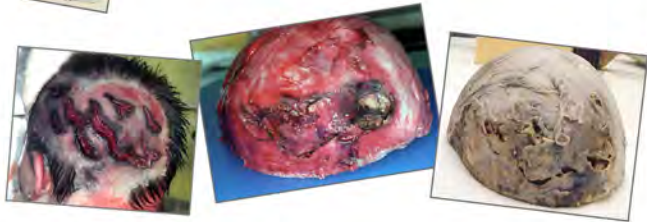
CRIME: Homicide
EVIDENCE: Photographs of a footwear impression on the victim's face, suspect's boots
SYNOPSIS: The suspect robbed and killed three elderly neighbors during a Christmastime crime spree. The victim was confined to a wheel chair and was stabbed and stomped to death.
RESULTS: Comparison of the questioned impression on the victim with the suspect's boots revealed it was consistent with originating from the heel of the right boot.
Status: The suspect was convicted and sentenced to death. He waived all rights to appeals and was executed by lethal injection at the age of 28.



Possible weapons submitted for examination



CRIME: Homicide
EVIDENCE: The victim's skull cap with multiple injuries and impressions; various tools
SYNOPSIS: This victim was tortured and murdered in what is believed to be a drug-related crime.
RESULTS: Comparison of one impression on the skull cap with the hammer and club revealed it was consistent with the hammer in size and shape and was different from the club in size.
STATUS: Unsolved



CRIME: Multi-car accident
EVIDENCE: Tire impressions on a victim's lower back
SYNOPSIS: The victim had been sleeping in the passenger side of a vehicle when it was involved in a multi-car accident. She stepped out of the vehicle into the highway and was struck by at least three passing vehicles. A partial tire impression was photographed and lifted from the victim's lower back at autopsy.
RESULTS: Comparison of the partial tire impression from the victim with four models of tires revealed three of the tires could be eliminated as possible sources of the questioned impression. The fourth tread design could have caused the impression.
STATUS: The case was investigated and closed. No charges will be filed.



CRIME: Homicide
EVIDENCE: Photographs and a lift of a partial footwear impression on the back of the victim's arm; suspect shoes
SYNOPSIS: The husband and wife suspects in this case conspired to rob the victim, however, the male suspect murdered the victim without his wife's knowledge. The victim's body was processed with super glue and fingerprint powder revealing a partial footwear impression on the back of the victim's arm. The impression was lifted using an epoxy casting material. The couple was arrested in Florida while driving the victim's vehicle.
RESULTS: Comparison of the questioned impression on the victim's arm with the suspect's shoe revealed it was consistent with originating from the toe area of either of the male suspect's shoes.
STATUS: The male suspect is serving 25 years to life for murder and aggravated burglary. The female is serving an 8 year sentence for aggravated burglary.

