

# The Re-examination of the Case of the Quivering Latent Print

by  
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After reading the September article concerning the case of the quivering latent print, where upon a suspect burglar touched a pan of orange jello; I was intrigued by the process of transferring



**Photograph of rubber lifter  
(reverse position)**

the latent from the jello to another medium. As a criminal justice professor at Fairmont State College teaching the criminal investigation class on campus, I proposed this assignment to my class. I received a lot of interest in this process.

One of my student's, Tasha Cox, had the simplest and easiest method. Ms. Cox touched the jello establishing her latent print. Ms. Cox then pressed a drinking glass onto the jello latent. To our amazement, a transfer took place. Ms. Cox was asked to conduct a demonstration in the classroom. Ms. Cox did so and yes it did work.

The latent print was very visible on the drinking glass. We then processed the glass with regular black powder and lifted the print with a rubber lifter. Most likely we should have attempted to photograph the latent before the lift, but that equipment was not available to us. By using a simple process, a latent print was transferred.

# Born Without Fingerprint Patterns

by  
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*Fingerprint Specialist*

Can fingerprint patterns tell all? What if you were born with a rare skin disease, which left you without fingerprint patterns? Could you be identified anyway? Certainly. In fact, this is what happened to the man without fingerprint patterns.

At approximately 11:30 am on the first day of July 1995, Officer Sylvia Boone, from the Central Cell Block, of the Metropolitan Police Department (DC) was faced with such a predicament. The paperwork on John Doe needed to be processed, but Mr. John Doe did not possess any fingerprint patterns. Officer Boone then consulted fingerprint specialist, Mr. Willie Higginbotham.

Since there were no apparent fingerprint patterns or friction ridges on the rolled or plain impressions of the fingerprint card, Mr. Higginbotham recognized this as a case of unusual circumstances. In

the absence of friction ridges on the fingers, the fingerprint specialist decided to get prints from the sole of his feet. Unfortunately, the results were negative.

Following this dilemma, Mr. Higginbotham questioned, Mr. Doe and discovered that he had been born with a skin disease. As a result, Mr. Higginbotham chose to obtain palm prints from Mr. John Doe. The LEFT palm displayed no friction ridge detail, but the RIGHT palm revealed very faint characteristics near the BOTTOM, known as the HYPOTHENAR AREA of the PALM. (See figures A & B)

Mr. John Doe was positively identified by Mr. Willie Higginbotham and verified by Mr. Tom Burse III.

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**Figure A  
Left Palm  
No Friction Ridges**



**Figure B  
Right Palm  
Friction Ridges**