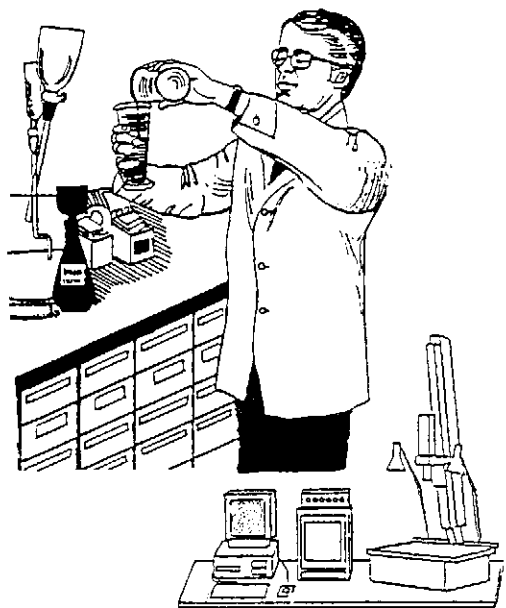


# WILL POWDER BE PUT TO PASTURE?



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A few years ago, a well equipped latent print lab consisted of gray and black powder for nonporous objects. Ninhydrin, iodine fuming, and silver nitrate were used for porous objects. A select few had access to luxuries like an argon or Yag laser, Rhodamine 6G and Gentian Violet. Photographs were taken of latents of value and compared if a suspect was provided or filed until there was a suspect.

Well, hello to the phenomenal technology of the 1990's, like live image scanning and faxing fingerprints. Today's latent labs are stocked with many ninhydrin analogues. Today's latent examiners are using substances like Multimetal Deposition and Physical Developer and prints can be developed "PDQ" using MBD, SPR, and DFO.

Dark objects that previously would not fluoresce under laser illumination are now quite visible with the new alternate light sources. The words menu and mouse have taken on new meaning in the world of computer technology. Latent fingerprints of value with no suspects are no longer simply put in file but are now searched in AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems) and in many cases, suspects are developed and cases cleared. Latents of value that are superimposed, too light or too dark, would sometimes prevent an AFIS search. Well, hold on to your hat, because IES (Image Enhancement Systems) have arrived.

Without a doubt, latent processing and analysis require more training, time, and energy today than in yesteryears. Now, who said latent examiners were not forensic scientists!