

SUPER GLUE STICKS IT TO THE BAD GUYS!

As best as can be determined, the first super glue case to be adjudicated in the Commonwealth of Virginia Circuit Court System occurred on March 1, 1983. This was a case from the Newport News, VA, Police Department involving fifty-six plastic bags of marijuana. The bags were processed in August of 1982, with six fingerprint identifications of a suspect by Technician Larry Roberts. The defendant entered a not guilty plea through all the proceedings, but was found guilty of possession with the intent to distribute marijuana.

Since March 1, 1983, there are nine known cases of super glue identifications having been adjudicated in the Commonwealth's Judicial System; all resulting in findings of guilty as charged! At present time, there are no known cases whereby the use of super glue as a processing medium have been challenged.

In the Commonwealth's Western Regional Laboratory area, three cases have been introduced into the judicial system. The cases dealt with the offenses of Murder, Possession With Intent To Distribute Marijuana, and Vandalism; all of which ended in a verdict of Guilty.

In the Western Regional Laboratory area, consisting of thirty-four counties, numerous cases have been processed using various brands of super glue with sodium hydroxide treated cotton. The results have been mostly satisfactory with few exceptions. The type of items processed has been quite varied with successful results obtained on the following items: Brass door knobs, wax candles, tin foil, plastic bags, cigarette cartons, glass, beer cans, oil cans, wood and metal surfaces of weapons, color photographs, cellophane cigarette pack wrappers, tear gas cannisters, spray paint cans, credit

cards, cartridge cases from weapons, burglar tools, car steering wheel and various other items.

Within the past month a discovery was made involving the use of super glue to process plastic bags from two drug cases and a petit larceny of a black powder pistol kit. In the first case sixteen baggies were processed in the conventional manner with only one showing a little ridge detail of no value for identification. While holding the bag up to the light for better viewing it slipped out of the examiner's hand which was protected by the use of rubber surgeon gloves. Upon examination of the area that was under the thumb and forefinger, where the bag was held, it was noted that ridge detail had "appeared"; white ridges with a very light brown colored background! Further deliberate "rubbing" of the bag with the rubber surgeon's glove produced two fingerprints of value for identification. Subsequent treatment of the remaining fifteen bags resulted in two more fingerprints of value, two of which were later identified as the fingerprints of one of the suspects. Similar treatment of the cellophane wrapped pistol kit produced a palm impression of extreme clarity, showing even the fine pore structure of the ridges. The latest case entailed the processing of eight bags of cocaine. Conventional methods produced no discernible ridge detail. However, use of the "rubbing" technique supplied the examiner with two fingerprints later identified as those of one of the suspects.

The "rubbing" technique appears to change the black powdered surface to a shade of light brown with the ridge detail appearing in white. Very vigorous rubbing seems to enhance the ridge detail rather than delete it, as you might expect. We would be happy to hear from anyone trying this technique as to their experience and the final results.

Also in the experimental stage, is an idea for applying color to a white surface by the use of super glue and other additives. So far limited success has been achieved by using iodine crystals present in "Iodettes" manufactured by the Sirchie Company. The finely mixed substance from an "Iodette" bottle is sprinkled onto a cotton pad saturated with sodium hydroxide, then super glue is applied. At present, we have been able to develop prints on a plastic cup with a very waxy surface and on a piece of white lined notebook paper. Other experiments have so far proved unacceptable.

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