

# Novel Forensic Technique To Be Applied To Decade-Old Murder Probe

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A pioneering forensic scientist at Northamptonshire Police and the University of Leicester is being called on by US force officers to tackle a decade-old murder case.

Dr John Bond, Scientific Support Manager at Northamptonshire Police and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Leicester Forensic Research Centre, is collaborating with Bristol Police Department, Connecticut.

He is being asked to probe the murder of a well-known and respected businessman who was shot in the bedroom of his own home. Later this month a detective from Connecticut, Detective Garrie Dorman, will meet with Dr Bond at Northampton in order see if his pioneering research technique can shed new light on the crime.

Dr Bond has [developed a method](#) that enables scientists to ‘visualise fingerprints’ on metal (eg bullet casings) even after the print itself has been removed. He and colleagues conducted a study into the way fingerprints can corrode metal surfaces. The technique can enhance - after firing- a fingerprint that has been deposited on a small calibre metal cartridge case before it is fired.

The technique has been cited by Time Magazine as one of the top 50 inventions of 2008.

Detective Dorman said: “On February 10, 1998, Louis "Pete"

LaFontaine was found shot to death in his home on Stafford Avenue in Bristol, Connecticut. Mr. LaFontaine was a resident of Bristol for many years and owned operated a successful appliance repair shop on Park Street. Mr. LaFontaine was well known throughout the City of Bristol, and his murder shocked the community and devastated his friends and family. The Bristol Police have conducted an extensive investigation into the murder of Mr. LaFontaine, but despite interviewing countless individuals, analyzing forensic evidence, and executing a number of search warrants, the murder remains unsolved. Despite this, the murder is still being actively investigated by Bristol Police Detectives and the State's Attorney's Office.

“I want to thank Dr. Bond and his staff, as well as the Northamptonshire Police and the University of Leicester Forensic Research Centre for providing us with assistance in this investigation. Dr. Bond's procedure is a tremendous advancement in forensic science, and has the potential to be a valuable tool in many criminal investigations. Detectives have logged countless hours into this investigation since 1998, and have developed a great deal of information on the facts and circumstances surrounding the murder of Mr. LaFontaine. Fingerprint evidence on a shell casing would certainly bring us much closer to identifying Mr. LaFontaine's killer.”

Dr Bond has already worked with a number of US police forces on reopening 'cold cases' and has found latent prints on shell casings.

Dr Bond said "We very much look forward to Detective Dorman's visit and hope we are able to assist his enquiry. We have found fingerprints on shell casings in a number of cases recently that are assisting police in the US and are confident that if fingerprint corrosion is present on Detective Dorman's casings we will find it."

The Force hopes to sell the process - which has been patented worldwide

- to interested buyers who could run the operation on a commercial basis or manufacture units to sell on to law enforcement agencies worldwide. This could generate benefits for both organisations.

Provided by University of Leicester

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