

***Fingerprint and DNA Evidence***

1. The lack of fingerprints found on some of the items appears to have caused a great deal of unease. There are also two items from the scene from which it was not possible to recover DNA.
2. It should be borne in mind that the primary scientific objective would have been to identify any third party DNA or fingerprints. The lack of such evidence is an important factor which should not be overlooked. Scientific evidence can only ever be corroborative to other evidence and one must look at the case as a whole and not the science in isolation.
3. It is fair to say that the scientific results in this case are entirely in line with the expectations of experienced detectives and scientific practitioners; including the lack of scientific evidence of third party involvement. There is nothing unusual in the apparent failure to recover scientific evidence. If this was not the case then there would be a 100% success rate in the recovery of DNA and fingerprints. The actual rates are considerably less.
4. Dealing first with the DNA; the items from which no profile was obtained were the mobile phone and the spectacles. A leading UK Forensic Service Provider have provided the following statistics with regard to the success rate in recovering a usable DNA profile:
  1. Mobile Phone 30%
  2. Spectacles 20 %
5. These figures rise to 63.5% and 67% respectively if the items are examined at the lab under strict sterile conditions. Unfortunately this is prohibitively expensive in cases where there are multiple exhibits such as this. These figures are from 2010 and it is likely success rates have crept up since 2003
6. Using these figures as a guide it is therefore entirely unsurprising that DNA profiles were not recovered from these items.

7. It should be pointed out that these figures and the fingerprint statistics that follow are from a fairly small sample.
8. With regard to fingerprint retrieval, the manager of Thames Valley Police fingerprint bureau provides the following explanation. The manager has successfully completed the National training programme to advanced fingerprint level and is registered with the National Register of Fingerprint Experts as an expert in friction ridge detail identification.
9. The manager states: I have been a fingerprint officer with Thames Valley Police Fingerprint Bureau for 30 years and in my experience the fact that no finger marks are recovered from some articles examined in a case is not unusual, there are many factors affecting the successful recovery of identifiable latent ridge detail.
10. A latent finger mark is produced when sweaty deposits on the ridges of the fingers come into contact with a surface and to visualise these marks requires the application of powders, chemicals or light (or a combination).
11. The way in which an article is handled prior to any examination may not always result in latent finger marks being left or it may have been handled in such a way that whilst there may be evidence of finger marks present no identifiable ridge detail is revealed. This applies in particular to items that are repeatedly handled prior to seizure.
12. The surface of the article will also affect the successful recovery of latent marks. For example, a smooth surface is far more receptive than a grained or pitted surface but finger marks on a smooth non porous surface are fragile and can easily be damaged, particularly if freshly deposited. Even transporting exhibits from a scene in packaging may risk damage or removal of the marks. Furthermore, if the surface is contaminated in any way with dirt or grease etc. this can impede the recovery also.
13. During the course of my training and the training of others I have been involved in the experimentation of developing marks on different surfaces. For this we would use planted marks from a known donor and it is evident that

some donors leave more easily developed marks than others. So whilst an article may have been handled the handler will not necessarily leave a latent mark.

14. Finger marks on articles left unpreserved and exposed to the elements can deteriorate quickly therefore chances of recovering identifiable latent marks diminish where articles have been recovered from outdoor locations. Similarly those that have been exposed to changes in temperature can result in condensation interfering with any finger mark recovery attempts, e.g. items moved from a refrigerator into a warm environment.

15. Data from Thames Valley Police shows that a typical success rate for the recovery of finger marks from selected items is as follows:

- i. Knives            Approximately 30%
- ii. Water Bottles 26% (2002-03)
- iii. Spectacles    14% (2002-03)

16. The above figures also tend to confirm that the results in the Dr Kelly case are in no way remarkable.

17. As with the other relevant evidence in this case Lord Hutton's Inquiry team were kept updated with the scientific findings through the statements and reports from the appropriate people.