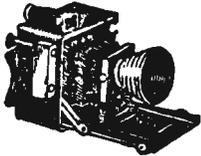




THE PRINT

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Sniper Case May Prod States to Upgrade Fingerprint Technology

(This article was downloaded from www.newhousenews.com. Thanks to President Steve Tillmann for the suggestion.)

By CHUCK McCUTCHEON
Newhouse News Service

The use of fingerprint databases to help nab two suspects in the Washington-area sniper attacks is expected to prod police nationwide to upgrade their technology.

The FBI's \$640 million Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) is the world's largest fingerprint database, with more than 44 million prints on file. It is available to all state law enforcement agencies, but only 19 states are capable of using it online, said John Iannarelli, an FBI spokesman in Washington.

Alabama -- where 17-year-old John Lee Malvo left a fingerprint at a Montgomery murder scene in September -- is not among them, Iannarelli said.

Fingerprint data can be shared by law enforcement agencies within the state's borders, but to use the IAFIS database, Alabama must mail fingerprints to the FBI. And while an electronic filing can produce a state-FBI match within two hours, a typical mailing can take days.

Malvo's print was not forwarded to the FBI until a tipster -- now believed to be one of the suspects -- linked the unsolved slaying in Montgomery to the sniper attacks. That expedited the processing of the evidence, which otherwise might have languished in the Alabama system.

It proved a crucial break. Because Malvo's prints were on file with the FBI and the Immigration and Naturalization Service -- he is a Jamaican-born immigrant who was fingerprinted by the INS in Bellingham, Wash. -- authorities investigating the sniper case were at last able to identify a suspect.

Malvo and John Allen Muhammad were arrested before daylight the morning after they were named in a warrant.

Several fingerprint experts say many states have been slow to link electronically to the FBI's system because of the expense of storing and forwarding data. Depending on a state's population, that cost can be between \$3 million and \$15 million.

"I expect now that some state legislators will certainly look at recapitalizing the connectivity (to the FBI) of their system and be buying new equipment," said Peter Higgins, who established and managed the FBI program office for IAFIS before retiring in 1995.

The FBI provides free software, computers and training to states unable to sink large sums of money into a new system.

But “that requires a person in the state to be trained, and most of them are already successfully running cases against their local (fingerprint) system,” said Higgins, now a Washington consultant and lecturer on identification technology. “They’re solving so many cases locally that it’s one of the awful tradeoffs.”

Even large law enforcement agencies have only recently connected electronically with the FBI’s database.

Steven Tillmann, a Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department fingerprint analyst, said his agency got online with the federal system about six months ago.

“Hopefully this (sniper arrest) will be something that will trigger a response in everyone’s mind and get something going nationwide,” said Tillmann, president of the Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers. “It’s great they caught these guys through the use of fingerprints.”

Increasing use of DNA technology to link suspects with crimes has dampened the willingness of some agencies to invest in fingerprint database upgrades, Tillmann said.

“There’s been so much emphasis on DNA recently that the fingerprint aspect gets pushed to the back, but it’s still the best means of identifying someone,” he said.

The IAFIS system has its roots in the 1960s and 1970s, when the FBI began looking at the feasibility of automating fingerprint identification. It became fully operational in 1999.

The system was intended to handle 64,000 fingerprint submissions per day, but Higgins said it has been processing more than 80,000. Slightly more than half of those requests involve background checks of applicants for federal jobs.

“In this decade, there will come a point where there will have to be an upgrade,” Higgins said. “They’re already 30 percent over their design capacity, and that’s just going to keep growing.”

A subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corp. is studying how to integrate electronic fingerprint data into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system, a computerized index of criminal information available to all law enforcement agencies.

Chip Nickerson, director of FBI programs for Lockheed’s information technology division in Clarksburg, W.Va., said that at present only New Jersey can do fingerprint searches through the NCIC. “It’s a very limited number of searches, a handful a day,” he said.

But any technological breaks in a case depend on whether officials believe a crime merits entry into the system. Higgins noted that sniper suspect Muhammad was arrested on a shoplifting charge in Washington state, but that the warrant was not posted to the NCIC.

Federal officials also are trying to integrate IAFIS with the INS’ separate IDENT fingerprint identification system. Since 9/11, the INS has worked with the FBI to incorporate data from IAFIS’ “wants and warrants” file into IDENT.

“This effort has been extremely successful and has already resulted in the identification and apprehension of over 3,100 individuals wanted for felony crimes,” Michael Cronin, INS’ assistant commissioner for inspections, told the Senate Judiciary Committee earlier this month.

But the process has gone slowly. Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine told the committee in June that full integration of the two systems “remains years away.”

[Editor -- It is always nice to see our association’s name in print. But more importantly, it is great to see such a newsworthy case solved, as Steve said, “through the use of fingerprints”. It is unfortunate that the next article is all too understated about the problem of backlogs. How many homicides (let alone lesser felonies) have yet to be submitted to IAFIS? How quickly do all of those lesser latents get input into even the local AFIS system? I look forward to the day when, even those burglary latents will be searched within hours of recovery. How many crimes could be prevented?]

**... said Tillmann, president of the Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers.
“It’s great they caught these guys through the use of fingerprints.”**

Sniper Clue Sat for Weeks in Crime Lab in Alabama

(This article is reprinted from the The New York Times. It was downloaded from the October 26, 2002 edition at NYTIMES.com.)

By **DAVID M. HALBFINGER**

MONTGOMERY, Ala., Oct. 25 — The evidence that cracked the sniper case was sitting in an Alabama crime lab throughout the three-week shooting spree, law enforcement officials here said today.

City detectives investigating the Sept. 21 killing of a liquor store manager here lifted a latent fingerprint from a magazine left at the scene and sent it to the Alabama Bureau of Investigation on Sept. 24, for comparison against a database of fingerprints from people in Alabama and neighboring states.

“Most crime happens in your own backyard,” said a spokesman for the city police, Sgt. Scott Martino, explaining why detectives did not immediately send the print to the F.B.I. for comparison to a national database.

But the result of the state bureau’s search showing no match to anyone in its system did not arrive for 27 days, coming only on Monday, after federal investigators had already connected the liquor store killing to the sniper shootings in the Washington area.

An F.B.I. agent arrived in Montgomery the same day to pick up the fingerprint and fly it to Washington. Within hours, federal investigators matched the print to those of Lee Malvo, a Jamaican-born teenager who had gotten into some scrapes with the law and whose fingerprints were on file at the F.B.I. and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Capt. Hugh McCall, a spokesman for the Alabama Department of Public Safety, said the state crime laboratory had only four examiners of latent fingerprints to handle crimes from all over the state, and that there was a backlog of cases ahead of the Montgomery liquor store shootings.

Nationwide, a shortage of fingerprint examiners is hobbling detectives and slowing manhunts. New technology has eliminated lower-level jobs where examiners cut their teeth, and the number of new examiners has not kept up with growing ranks of police officers and new cases. Nationally, The Baltimore Sun reported in March, there are only about 2,000 examiners. In Baltimore, the crime laboratory is 1,000 cases behind; in Phoenix, an understaffed laboratory has a 6,000-case backlog.

Montgomery police officials avoided any suggestion that a speedier search of fingerprint databases might have brought a faster conclusion to the sniper shootings and spared some of the victims.

Instead, at a morning news conference outside the ABC Beverages store where Claudine Parker, 52, was killed and Kellie D. Adams, 24, was shot through the head but survived, a buoyant Chief John Wilson vowed to seek the death penalty against both Mr. Malvo, 17, and John Muhammad, 42, accused in Washington-area sniper shootings. Even as he spoke, Chief Wilson said, a magistrate was signing warrants for the two on capital murder charges.

“We do intend to charge Malvo as an adult, and to seek the death penalty against both him and Muhammad,” he said.

But District Attorney Ellen Brooks cautioned later today that a grand jury would first have to indict both men, and would also have to consider any mitigating factors before deciding whether to seek the death penalty by lethal injection against either man. Ms. Brooks did emphasize however, that she would seek the highest penalty possible, and she suggested at least two aggravating factors, either of which could justify the death penalty: that the Sept. 21 murder was committed in the course of a robbery attempt, and that it was the first in a series of similar crimes.

The close-range killing in Montgomery, Ala., was very different from the distant, apparently concealed sniper shootings in the Washington area that began 11 days later, but Ms. Brooks said her office was looking into whether the sniper killings could be considered a series of crimes that began with the liquor store shootings.

With the sniper suspects in custody, Alabama officials joined prosecutors in Maryland, Virginia and Washington in making their case to be the first to bring Mr. Muhammad and Mr. Malvo to trial. “A strong argument can be made that, because Ms. Parker and Ms. Adams were the first victims, the suspects should first be tried in Alabama,” said Gov. Donald Siegelman.

But District Attorney Brooks acknowledged that prosecutors in Maryland had a natural advantage in that footrace because Mr. Malvo and Mr. Muhammad were in their custody, citing the “law of sheet metal” “When you’re driving down the road, whoever has the most sheet metal wins the battle.”

1001 USES FOR DUCT TAPE

(This article is reprinted from vol. 56, no. 3, July-Sept. 2002 issue of the Lone Star Forensic Journal.)

By **CHARLES PARKER AND NOE VILLARREAL**
Austin Police Department

One of the most versatile inventions ever made has been duct tape. Who in this country does not have a roll or two of duct tape in his/her home for that sudden emergency that arises quite unexpectedly? Duct tape has been used to temporarily fix everything from glasses to automobile parts.

Just when you think you have seen everything, somebody comes up with something new. That was the case on June 25, 2002, when firearm evidence was received in the lab for latent print processing. The evidence was a Charter Arms 44 magnum revolver. After documenting the weapon's condition, the lab personnel opened the cylinder and extracted five cartridges. When the cartridges were finally removed, it was noticed that these cartridges were not the usual run-of-the-mill ammunition.

To be exact they were .38 special cartridges that had the base wrapped in duct tape so they would fit in the .44 magnum (see photo). Now the tape did not cover the entire casing, but only 5/8 of an inch from the base. When shown to other personnel in the lab, the discussion did not center on whether the tape might contain latent prints, but exactly what the outcome might be if the revolver was discharged using the very unconventional type of ammunition. Needless to say, we could not get a quick volunteer to test fire the weapon with that type of ammunition.

Eventually the tape was removed and processed for the presence of friction ridge detail, and we would have loved to end this story by saying that sufficient friction ridge detail was developed and identified to the felon caught carrying this firearm, but alas, that was not to be. But interesting physical evidence always makes our day go faster.



Letter (email) received regarding the SCAFO Seminar

Ronan Shouldice from the San Francisco PD CSI Team here. I just attended my first SCAFO event and would like to offer a few observations on the seminar:

On the plus side-

1/ It was an excellent course with the obvious attractions of renowned speakers on topical issues;

2/ Your accommodations and arrangements (coffee, lunch etc) were considerate and welcome indeed;

On the minus side:

1/ There was no effort to assimilate the attendees to each other or to give an overview of the general representation; how about a class register?

2/ There was no effort to explain the absence of key presenters previously heralded in the attendance solicitations; this was especially unforgivable regarding Dr. Babbler despite the fact that Alice Maceo did an outstanding job in his place; ditto with the casual last minute reference to Jeff Graham despite Pat Wertheim's obvious abilities to include his presentation within his own;

3/ The holding of a SCAFO in-house meeting (swearing in etc) midstream in day two was inappropriate, especially prior to the Pat Wertheim presentation; this kind of stuff has no place within any seminar where multiple agencies are represented and is as out-of -place as the incessant barrage of raffle ticket solicitations. (to much, too often, and who wants Richard Ramirez's print on their daily brew anyway??)

On SCAFO and Membership:

I by no means assume to demean the great efforts involved in hosting such an event, but I do think that the predominant "in-house" mentality shrouding the event was not at all typical of other such seminars I have had the good fortune of attending. For example, as a CLPE and a dedicated professional in the field, I was a bit dismayed to find that membership in SCAFO requires various nominations, appearances, and recorded attendance at meetings etc. Not even the California Division of the IAI places such demands on aspiring members, and God help us if the International body ever goes your way! My every good intention of becoming a participating member of SCAFO was immediately scuttled by my inability to predict my future schedule or to adhere to an unreasonable set of attendance demands most adults will place in a descending scale when pitted against more immediate obligations.

I recognize SCAFO for the collaborative contributive effort it's board and membership provide, and I wish there were a northern California equivalent! I think that your membership rolls would manifestly increase if you were less parochial and that the exchange of membership experience, exposure and location were more honestly explored and exploited! You are isolating your organization and shooting yourselves in the collective foot in a most myopic fashion.

If established professional organizations with extensive membership rosters from not only nearby counties, but from adjacent states and even nearby countries, can claim to be representative of the profession.....well, I wonder how SCAFO can boast such claims when you impose such ludicrous limitations upon your membership. How can someone in San Francisco, Seattle, Tuscon or Las Vegas join SCAFO and commit to an unreasonable attendance obligation as you demand?

Consider this contribution from one who is wholly with you in spirit, but not in organization. I recommend you throw this out there for your own membership to consider and perhaps we could amend the approach if deemed appropriate. If not, the CSDIAI and IAI will forever be the flagships in this State and SCAFO will remain an entity unto itself, where it seems to be too comfortable at present. Print this.....let's debate!!

Please feel free to publish this if you so desire, with my blessings, or if you think some debete is warranted! I can be contacted at Romim@aol.com, or at SFPD CSI (415) 553-1506.

Thanks for a great conference. It was worth every penny. Let's open the forum up here!

[Editor--This letter is reproduced as received without editing. As editor, I responded to Mr. Shouldice. My response is on page 6.]



**Upcoming
SCAFO Meeting**

December 7, 2002

Installation of Officers
Special Guest Appearance -- Joseph Wambaugh
(bring your book to be autographed)

Signature Holiday Buffet -- \$26.00

Dinner Meeting:
Harbor Inn - Naval Base Point Loma
140 Sylvester Road
San Diego

Hotel Information:
Shelter Point Hotel & Marina
\$110 SCAFO rate
(800) 566-2524

Dinner reservations:
Gina Russel Durgin (760) 839-4770
rrussell@ci.escondido.ca.us

*Regular meeting announcement
with directions to be mailed.*

Response to Mr. Romin Shouldice

Dear Mr. Shouldice:

I wish you could have spoken to me or to one of the Board members during the seminar. Personal conversations (versus written discussions) can often provide more insightful explanations. However, I will try to address some of your concerns.

Thank you for your “plus side” comments. They are truly appreciated.

Regarding the “minus side” comments:

1) The preparation of name tags for nonmembers and the requirement for members to wear their SCAFO name badges would encourage recognition and interaction among attendees. However, creating a class register or roster presents some challenges because of the way the registration is handled. Your recommendation will be passed on to next year’s planners.

2) Dr. Babler was not listed as a speaker in the latest issue of *The Print* (September) or in the seminar information posted on the SCAFO website (September 3). On Friday, the SCAFO President was informed that Jeff Graham would not be available to speak. When it was announced Saturday morning that the schedule would be changed, I suppose President Tillmann could have expounded that he didn’t know why Mr. Graham wouldn’t be there, but to do so would have been in poor taste.

3) The seminar replaces a bimonthly dinner meeting, and, therefore, it is necessary to conduct business matters. (Nonmembers are not obligated to attend the business portion of the seminar.) The tradition of having door prizes is a well-established practice and is supported by most of our members. As for your comments about Richard Ramirez’s print on someone’s daily brew, I can only say that you don’t know how many cases of those mugs have been sold during the last ten years. They have become “collectibles”.

Regarding SCAFO and Membership:

It is unfortunate that you are offended by the “in-house mentality”. However, for more than ten years, the SCAFO seminars have been designed to provide educational benefit to the membership. SCAFO has an open door policy that allows nonmembers to attend and to benefit from the education, but the seminars are primarily designed to benefit the members.

Your consternation and distress over the membership joining requirements is unfortunate. The requirements are a long-standing process within the organization. SCAFO has never suggested that other organizations (including CSDIAI and IAI) should adopt that type of membership process. It is unfortunate that you had the desire to become a member of SCAFO and that the attendance requirements may prohibit you from joining. (I would point out that we do have a few members from Northern California who were able to make the meetings and fulfill the membership requirements. One is a frequent attendee and serves on the executive board.) My questions to you are: (1) Why would you want to join an organization if you cannot attend the regular meetings? and (2) How did you think you could

be a “participating” member of SCAFO, if you could not attend the meetings? (You may subscribe to the publication or download it from the SCAFO website, without membership.)

As for shooting ourselves in the foot, SCAFO has never attempted to be anything more than a local organization. Hence, the name **Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers**. A few of our members are from outside the Southern California area, and they are always welcome, but SCAFO is not “boasting” to be representative of the profession, other than as a local organization with three hundred plus members. I am a past president of both CSDIAI and SCAFO. I have always viewed the organizations as distinctly separate. Both organizations fulfill completely different personal needs and provide different opportunities for learning and establishing professional networks.

I feel very fortunate to be a part of the identification community in Southern California. There is a tremendous wealth of knowledge, talent, and interest within a reasonable driving distance. The founding fathers of SCAFO desired a local forum in which to meet and exchange ideas about fingerprints. I believe their insight was not myopic, but was somewhat visionary. They set forth a pattern of meetings which did not follow in the footsteps of IAI or CSDIAI. SCAFO has never claimed to be the “flagship” of organizations within California. I don’t believe these fine organizations are or should be in competition. Like IAI and CSDIAI, SCAFO has stood the test of time (sixty-five years). All three have survived, prospered, and gained recognition as separate entities. SCAFO enjoys a fine reputation on a national and even an international basis, while maintaining its identity as a Southern California organization. And the bottom line can be found in your words -- you “wish there were a northern California equivalent!”

SCAFO tries to encourage participation from the Southern California identification community. We gain little benefit from recruiting subscribers or members from other areas. Mailing fees from members barely cover the cost of the publication, so we don’t gain anything by trying to enlarge our circulation. The real benefit we gain from new members is their presence at the regular meetings, where we can share information and build a stronger network within the local identification community. Having additional nonparticipating members on our roles does little to further the purposes of the association.

Your comments will be published in the next issue.

Alan McRoberts, Editor
Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers

President's Message

My year as President is coming to a close. The 11th Annual S.C.A.F.O. Seminar was a huge success. We had close to 200 participants each day. I would like to thank our speakers Andre Moenssens, Alice Maceo, Stephen Meagher, Laura Fulginiti, Pat Wertheim, and Alan McRoberts. Each did an outstanding job and gave of their time and talents to make our Seminar such a success. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Bill Leo and Alan McRoberts for their insight and help in putting this Seminar together. A big Thanks to all of the Board Members and Directors for their help at the Seminar. Last but not least, I would like to thank all of the *SCAFO* members and others who attended the Seminar. I hope everyone was able to take a little something away with them that will help them in the future with a better understanding of Daubert, the basis for friction skin, or any of the other topics discussed.

I would also like to congratulate the 2003 board and wish them success in the new year: President, George Durgin; 1st Vice President, Ed Palma; 2nd Vice President, Denis Uyeda; Secretary, Susan Garcia; Sgt at Arms, Gina Russell Durgin; Treasurer, James Lawson; Historian, Bill Leo; Editor, Alan McRoberts; Parliamentarian, Clark Fogg; and Directors Tom Washington, Elaine Sena Brown, Craig Johnson, and Lisa DiMeo.

Our December (Christmas) meeting is set for December 7, 2002 and will take place at the Harbor Inn on the Naval Base Point Loma, in San Diego. I hope to see a large turnout. Come out and spend the weekend in beautiful San Diego.

The year has gone by quickly (as they all do as we get older). The main focus of this year for the identification community would have to be the Daubert challenges to the Science of Fingerprints. Although we have not lost any challenges to date, we must keep abreast

of future cases and continue with education and dissemination of information to all fingerprint and identification experts across the country. Please continue to check the websites that are dealing with these issues, (e.g., Ed German's website at www.onin.com; Kasey Wertheim's website at www.clpex.com; the SWGFAST website at www.swgfast.org; and, of course, our website at www.scafo.org.) I truly believe that if the courts see and hear that we, as a fingerprint community are unified (teaching and testifying to the same principles), it will only strengthen the case for the uniqueness of fingerprints.

It has been a pleasure serving as the President of S.C.A.F.O. This has been a very rewarding opportunity for me. When I joined S.C.A.F.O. in 1993, I would never have believed that 9 years later I would be this involved in the organization and never thought that I would go through the chairs to eventually be President. Thank You for the opportunity and for a great experience.

Fraternally,
Steve Tillmann

The minutes of the October Seminar business meeting were not available at the time of publishing.

"Every man owes a part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."

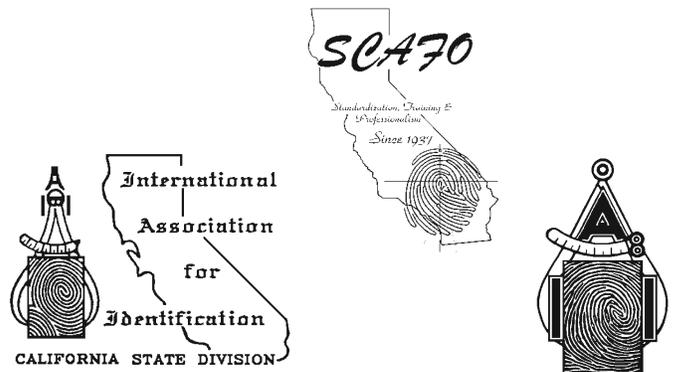
- President Theodore Roosevelt, 1908

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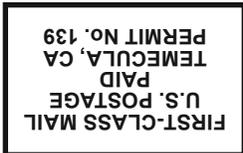
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SCAFO Members
get "yourname@scafo.org"
See instructions on the
website's email page.

-- Upcoming Events/Schools/Seminars--

- December 7, 2002 *S.C.A.F.O. Meeting*
George Durgin
Orange County Sheriff's Department
- January 6-10, 2003 Laser Fingerprint Development Workshop
Center for Forensic Studies
Texas Tech University
- February 1, 2003 *S.C.A.F.O. Meeting*
Elaine Sena-Brown
Santa Monica Police Department
- February 17-22, 2003 AAFS Annual Meeting
Chicago, IL
- May 4-8, 2003 C.S.D.I.A.I. 87th Annual Training Seminar
Palm Sprints, CA
Marvin Spreyne
- July 6-11, 2003 International Association for Identification
Ottawa, ON, Canada

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An Association for Scientific Investigation and Identification Since 1937