

## NEVER SAY NEVER

Twenty-six years ago when I started in this profession and we found a firearm which was wet from rain, or even a summer morning dew, my mentor, the old Sarge would say, "Forget it kid, you'll NEVER get prints off that." I would try anyway and as usual he was right. Well, times have changed and our attitudes must change also.

Recently Sgt. Robert Browning and I responded to the scene of a shooting. There were two victims and both had been shot with a shotgun. One was dead. The investigators related to us that the perpetrator had fled on foot to another street, where he had left his vehicle parked, and at that point had thrown the weapon into a canal next to the road.

As the divers were getting ready, we all discussed how to handle the weapon. I recalled attending an advanced crime scene school at Metro-Dade where the instructors had us conduct an experiment by placing glass with a latent into water on Monday and

then on Friday finding the print to still be there. Of course that was ideal conditions; a glass surface, indoors, constant temperature and a perfect latent print. This would NEVER work in the field, especially with a firearm that had been lying for hours on a dirty, brackish salt water canal. However we decided to try the impossible.

The first step was to instruct the divers (as stupid as it sounded to them) to be careful how they handled the weapon and to leave it in the water until we were ready to transport it. The weapon was taken from the water and within fifteen minutes brought into our lab and processed by Sgt. Browning. He first lightly dried the weapon for several minutes using a hair dryer on the low setting. When it was close to dry, but still damp, he placed it in a chamber and fumed it with cyanoacrylate for 10 minutes. When it was removed from the chamber a close examination revealed ridge detail in the area of the breach. A fine white powder was dusted lightly

to further develop the ridges. As this was being done the weapon had already started to display rust and therefore photographs were taken and the print immediately lifted. When I put my glass to it I was shocked to find a good latent print. Can't be the bad guy says I, "NEVER."jd

Subsequently, that day the detectives arrested a suspect and I obtained his record tenprint card from the booking room. I compared the latent print from the firearm with the subjects record prints and made an identification.

This is most probably not the first time someone has recovered an identifiable latent print in a case like this, however it is a first for me and I can find a couple of good morals to the story.

1 - You CAN teach an old dog new tricks.

2 - NEVER say NEVER

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## POSITION WANTED:

Seeking position in the Brevard County, FL area as Latent Print Examiner or Fingerprint Technician.

**EXPERIENCE:** Currently Forensic Fingerprint Expert, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Tampa, FL. Eleven years in fingerprints, including classing and searching and comparison of latent prints. Court acceptance as qualified expert.

**EDUCATION:** FBI Basic Classification Course, FBI Advanced Latent Comparison Course, Advanced Palm Print Identification Course, and Administrative Advanced Latent Print School, FBI Academy, Quantico. Several training conferences.

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### FINGERPRINT ANALYST II

**\$24,226 \$ 34,084**

**Nature of Work:**

This is a complex technical work in the classification, searching and filing of fingerprint materials, and operations of the Automated Finger Information Systems (AFIS) in the Broward County Sheriff's Office Fingerprint Identification Unit.

**Requirements:**

1. Graduated from high school or equal.
2. Successful completion of FBI Basic Fingerprinting Course.
3. Two (2) years of full time paid fingerprint analysis and classification experience.
4. Possession of FCIC/NCIC certification.

College or university credits may substitute for up to one year of experience at a rate of 30 college credits equals one year of experience.

**Application Procedures:**

Applications may be obtained in Personnel Division and may be accepted up to 4:30p.m. May, 5, 1995, or until position is filled.

**To Apply:**

Broward County Sheriff's Office, 2601 West Broward Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312 or call (305) 321-4400 Mon. - Fri. 8:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Applicants qualifying will be subject to an extensive screening program based on fingerprint check, interview, polygraph may be given, employment record and personnel background check, medical exam and urine drug test.

BSO IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER AND DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF HANDICAP. VETERANS PREFERENCE PER FLORIDA LAW.