



AFIS Tip By: Doede Rijpkema

During the more than 25 years that I'm working as a fingerprint-specialist I think this was the most remarkable case I came upon.

On a warm Thursday evening in August 1996 a couple walked towards their apartment building in one of the suburbs of Amsterdam. Suddenly two men approached them on a bike. One of them took hold of the woman and tried to get her purse. The other, wearing a ski mask, threatened her husband with a handgun. This man however, six feet tall and in good shape, appeared not to be an easy victim.

It started a fight with his attacker and the blows fell thick and fast at both sides. Eventually it ended in a struggle on the ground. The villain had him in an iron grip and [the victim] feared an imminent defeat when he suddenly saw a hand in front of his face. He didn't hesitate a second and bit the nearest finger. So hard, he bit off the fingertip.

The robber cried out in pain, dropped his gun and his hood and ran away with his accomplice. Not until then the victim realized he had a fingertip in his mouth.

He went with his wife to the police station nearby and an official report was taken. When the man handed the fingertip, the officer on duty was astonished and actually had no idea what

to do with it, so he put it in the refrigerator.

The weekend passed and on Monday morning the protocol landed on the desk of sergeant-detective Joop Reder. A die-hard with a lot of experience who saw immediately the prospects of the fingertip, as well as the risks. He realized the victim had taken an enormous risk by biting. Imagine the robber was a drug addict with a dangerous disease as hepatitis-B or even Aids. He instantly called me and explained what had happened. Of course I told him to bring this fingertip to my department.

The pain this villain must have had! His finger was bitten off just below the core and the nail was still on it. (See photo 1 and 2)

I made several rolled impression (see image) of the tip and went to the AFIS-system.

The victim had stated that it was the little finger from the right hand, which I found doubtful because it looked like a left loop. It was anyway a little finger, so I started a search for finger number 5, 100 respondents. Search processor respondents: 808643. No result.

The second search: no finger number, 100 respondents. Search processor respondents ten times as many: 8,086,430. Within five minutes the hit

was made, first place on the list, score 4180 (second: 2010). As I expected: a left little finger.

Sergeant-detective Reder was thrilled and started an immediate search for the robber.

On Thursday a patrol car spotted the man and he was arrested. He had not seen a doctor, afraid as he was to expose himself. And even now it was hard to persuade him to go to the hospital. When he finally agreed, he appeared to be just in time to save his finger.

The hospital also tested his blood and it was a great relief they didn't find a contagious disease as mentioned above.

Eventually he was convicted for this armed robbery and went to jail for several years.

The Printrack Company organizes every year a conference for their AFIS-users and during this conference there is a Hit Of The Year contest. This was one of the submitted cases and awarded as Hit of The Year! *(This piece was in The Detail on www.clpex.com and is also a reprint from Fingerprint Whorld, the official publication of the fingerprint society in the U.K.)*

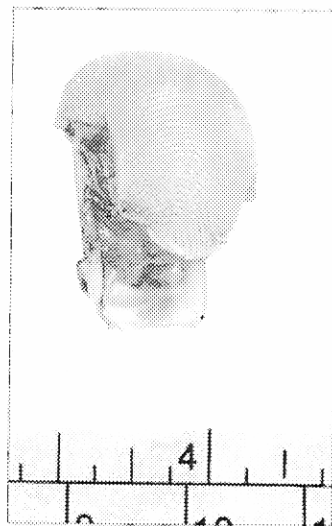


Photo 1

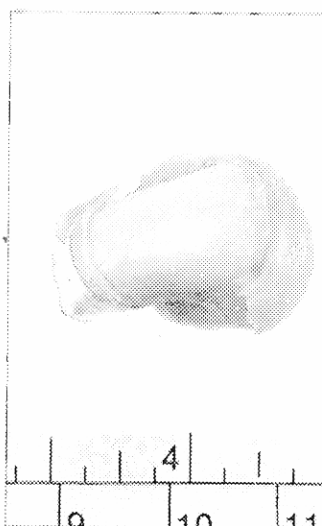


Photo 2