

New Fingerprint Technology Could Result In New Evidence For Innocent People

Dr. Xanthe Spindler has preliminarily developed a new technique that has the capability of recovering usable latent fingerprints from old evidence and difficult surfaces. Dr. Spindler is a forensic science researcher at the University of Technology (UTS) in Sydney, Australia. Dr. Spindler's development is one of the most significant advancements in fingerprint technology since it first began to be used by law enforcement more than a hundred years ago.

Traditional fingerprinting methods either can't detect or accurately identify a latent fingerprint that is aged, dry and weak. Dr. Spindler's method uses antibodies designed

Erskine Johnson from p. 4

ed him a new trial. The court ruled in, [Erskine Leroy Johnson v. State of Tennessee](#), No. W2010-01800-CCA-R3-CO (TN COCA, 12-9-2011):

As noted by the trial court and this court, Ms. Starks was a "very important" witness for the State. Although Mr. Perkins's identification and Mr. Williams's trial testimony have not been overcome, Mr. Perkins's testimony was "significantly impeached, and perhaps discredited," while Mr. Williams's testimony now corroborates Ms. Starks, who has likewise been significantly impeached and discredited. We conclude that evidence tending to impeach Ms. Starks's testimony and forge a link between her and the Brown Gang, when considered in conjunction with multiple pieces of evidence implicating the Brown Gang and the evidence at the trial, including evidence that the sole eyewitness identifying the Petitioner as the shooter had his testimony significantly impeached, may have resulted in a different judgment had it been presented at the trial. We conclude that the trial court erred by denying the petition.

In consideration of the foregoing and the record as a whole, we reverse the judgment of the trial court, vacate the Petitioner's felony murder conviction, and remand the case for a new trial.

Johnson now goes by Ndume Olatushani, and he remains imprisoned as he awaits his retrial.

to target amino acids that are present in sweat which is deposited in most fingerprints. In an announcement about Dr. Spindler's research on the UTS website she explained, "... existing methods are most effective recovering fresh fingermarks that contain a reasonable level of moisture. That has meant that people with dry skin are weak donors and evidence is rapidly degraded in dry conditions or after long storage."

Dr. Spindler stated that her immunogenic technique can be expected to enable the reliable recovery of latent fingerprints more than three hours old from human skin. She said, "Current techniques of powdering and fuming have never worked well on skin, with the ability to only enhance fingermarks less than three hours old."

Dr. Spindler also stated: "We've been able to successfully target amino acids on non-porous surfaces for the first time, with promising results in enhancing aged and degraded fingermarks that typically give poor results with traditional powdering and cyanoacrylate fuming. The potential is there to go back to old cases to see what might now be recovered."



Latent fingermarks identified on aluminium foil using the immunogenic method developed by Dr. Xanthe Spindler (Dr. Xanthe Spindler)

Robbery Conviction Tossed For Man Walking Near Crime Scene

Ryan Omar Butler was convicted on September 9, 2010 of the attempted robbery of an armored truck on December 21, 2007 in Nassau, The Bahamas. Butler was shot in the parking lot where the attempted robbery took place. He claimed he was caught in cross-fire between the robbers and the police as he was walking to a grocery store to purchase milk for his girlfriend who was recuperating from surgery. The store was in the shopping center where the attempted robbery took place.

Witnesses said two men were involved in the robbery and they didn't wear masks. No eyewitnesses identified Butler as one of the robbers, and he didn't have a gun on him.



Dr. Xanthe Spindler (Terry Clinton)

Although the new fingerprint technique may be able to aid law enforcement in solving cold cases, it also has the potential to aid wrongly convicted persons by obtaining the new evidence of latent fingerprints from crime scene evidence that can identify the

actual perpetrator.

An article about Dr. Spindler's research was recently published in *Chemical Communications*, a journal of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

In addition to Dr Spindler, investigators and personnel involved in the new fingerprint identification research include Professor Claude Roux the Director of the UTS Centre for Forensic Science, Professor Chris Lennard from the University of Canberra, Professor Oliver Hofstetter from Northern Illinois University and Dr Andrew McDonagh from UTS.

It is not known when the new fingerprint technique will be available for general use by laboratories.

Source:

"[A step towards a revolution in law enforcement](#)," UTS: Sydney, June 2, 2011.

"[Enhancement of latent fingermarks](#) on non-porous surfaces using anti-L-amino acid antibodies conjugated to gold nanoparticles," Xanthe Spindler, Oliver Hofstetter, Andrew M. McDonagh, Claude Roux and Chris Lennard, *Chem. Commun.*, 2011, 47, 5602-5604.

He was charged with being one of the robbers solely based on his wound. Butler, who represented himself during his trial, called as a witness a woman who was also shot in the shopping center. She testified that she believed a police officer shot her. The jury convicted Butler.

Another man accused in the robbery, Raymond Bastian, was free on bail when he was gunned down in a drive-by shooting two days before the start of his trial.

The Bahamas Court of Appeals quashed Butler's conviction on March 16, 2011, ruling there was insufficient evidence Butler was involved in the crime. He was released after six months imprisonment.

Sources:

[Verdict expected](#) today in attempted armed robbery case, *The Nassau Guardian*, September 9, 2010.

[Man convicted](#) of armoured truck robbery attempt has conviction quashed, *The Tribune* (Nassau, Bahamas), March 17, 2011.