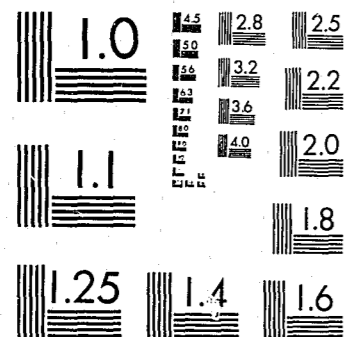


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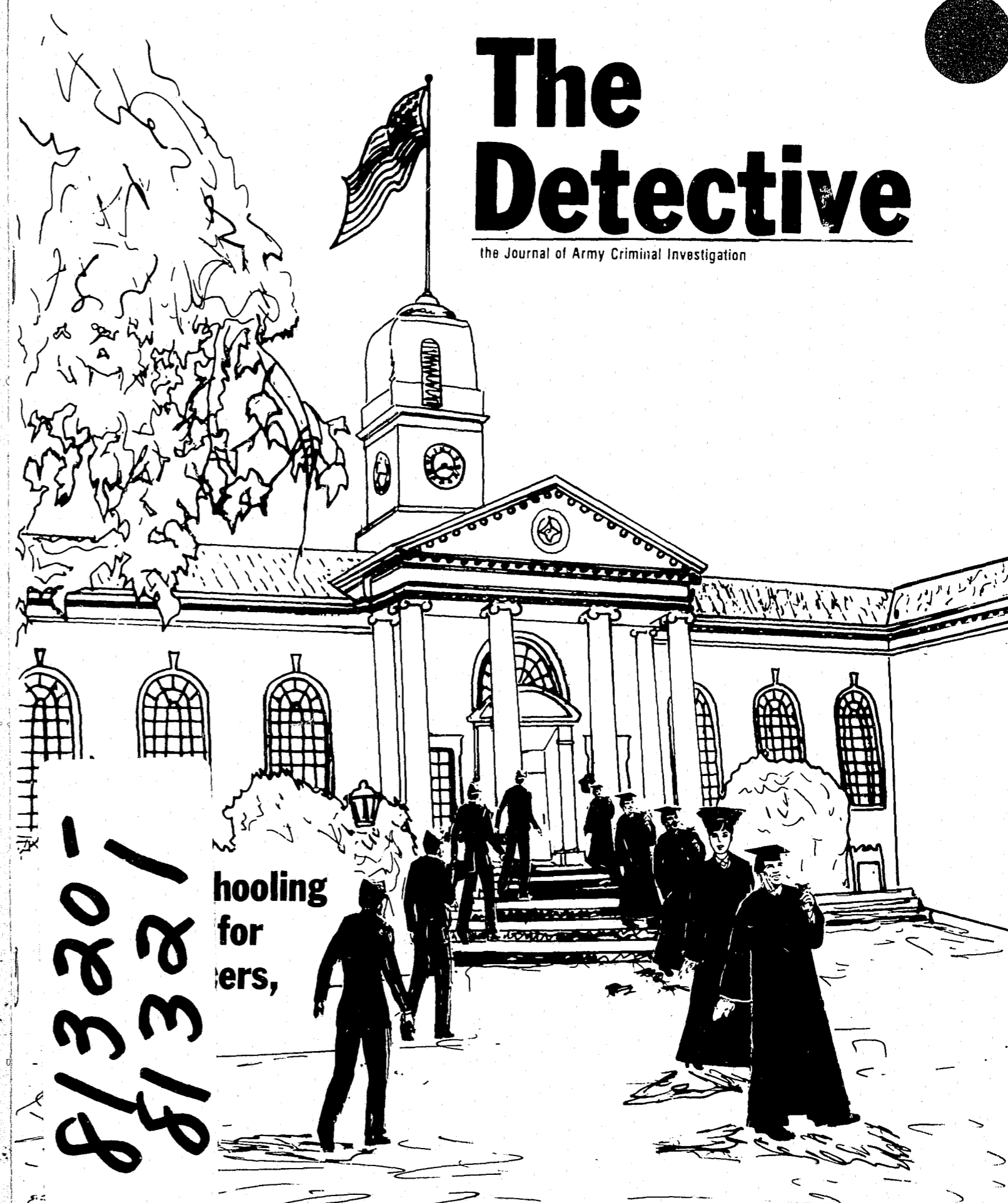
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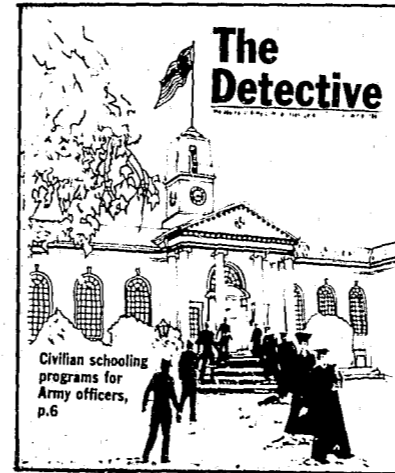
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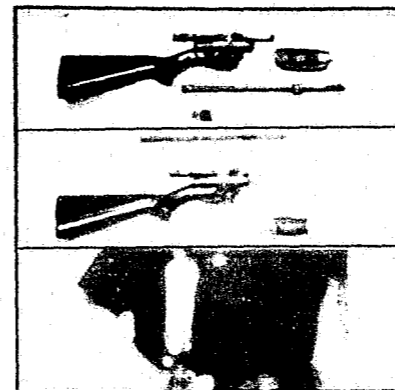




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A "Kiss" for the Prosecution

by Special Agent
Robert W. Burns
USACIL-CONUS

Latent Fingerprint
Examiner

Assume that you receive an anonymous letter at your home address after a major investigation which resulted in numerous arrests.

The letter, from a "friend," contains a threat warning that you have received "the kiss of death" for your part in the investigation (fig. 1).

You then decide to have the anonymous letter processed by the Questioned Document and Latent Print Divisions, U.S. Army Crime Laboratory. Handwriting analyses are inconclusive and there are no identifiable latent prints. This shows you have a "good" suspect but, other than the letter, you assume there is no physical evidence linking the suspect to the letter, right?

Wrong! You have probably overlooked one of the lesser known, but newer, methods of identification — lipprint identification.

Identification Techniques

There are many techniques of personal identification. One of the newer methods involved "lipprints" (kiss marks). In 1950 LeMoyn Snyder pointed out that wrinkles and cracks of the lips have the same characteristics as do fingerprints. In other words, one individual does not have the same lip groove pattern as others.¹

Lipprint terminology

The wrinkles and grooves in the ruddy part and the zone of transition of the human lip were examined by Y. Tsuchihashi and K. Suzuki and were named "sulci labiorum rubrorum" as these structures are grooves. The figure formed by these "sulci" was called "figura linearum labiorum rubrorum," that is, in general "lipprint."^{2 2-6}

Classification of lipprints

Tsuchihashi classified lipprints into six types according to the shape and course of the grooves:

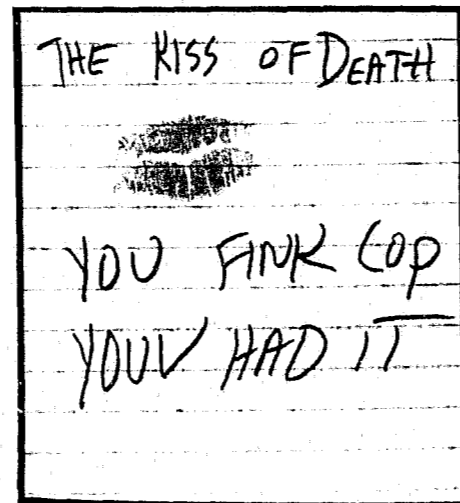


Figure 1.

Methods of Recording

Various methods of taking record lipprints have been tried. The following are recommended field expedients because human lips are so mobile that the strength and direction of the pressure applied can affect the accuracy of the record lipprint taken and because these methods can easily be adopted by the field investigator.

Photography

Photograph the lips, close-up, making use of lighting techniques to achieve contrast in the wrinkles and grooves. A portion of a measuring device (ruler) should be included in the close-up photograph. In the event lighting techniques do not produce the desired contrasting results, a thin layer of dark colored lipstick may be applied to the lips to enhance the grooves.

Lipprinting

Recommended Equipment. The basic equipment required for taking record lipprints is dark colored lipstick, white 8 X 10-inch paper, two rubber bands, tissue paper, and a rolling device, such as the inner portion of a Xerox paper roll (fig. 8).

Taking lipprints properly

To obtain clear, distinct lipprints, it is necessary to apply the lipstick in a thin, even coat onto the lips. The lipstick should be applied while the

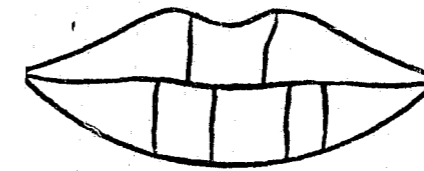


Figure 2. Type I: The grooves are straight and run across the entire breadth of the ruddy part of the lips.

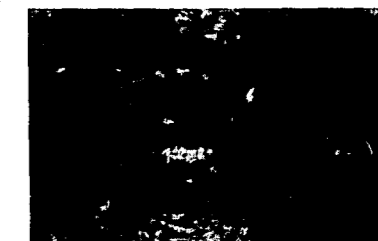
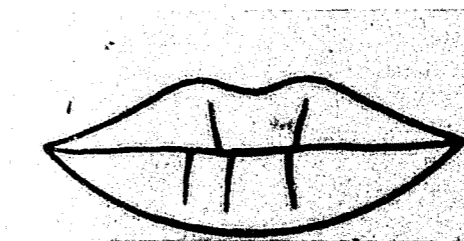


Figure 3. Type I: The grooves are straight, but do not cover the entire breadth of the lips.

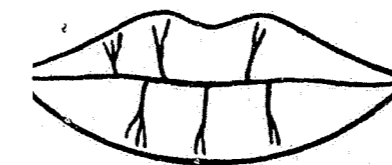


Figure 4. Type II: The grooves are branched.

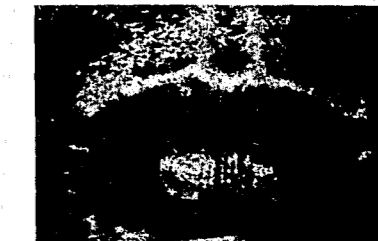
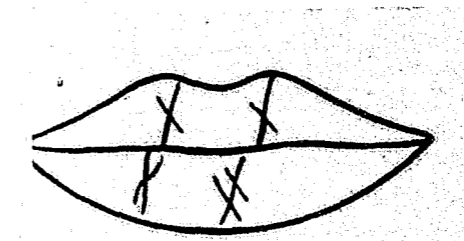


Figure 5. Type III: The grooves intersect.

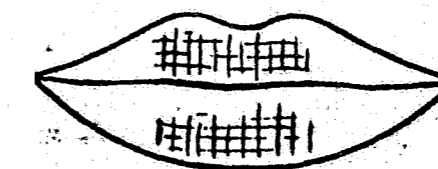


Figure 6. Type IV: The grooves form a network.

subject is seated erect and with mouth closed and lips slightly open (puckered). The paper is placed onto the paper roller and held in place at each end by the two rubber bands. The paper bearing roll is then pressed to the subject's lips using a slight "dabbing" motion (fig. 9).

Three impressions, going across the paper and applying the same amount of "pressure" should be taken before application of additional lipstick. These three impressions are identified as a "group" (fig. 10).

Normally, three to four of these "groups" can be recorded on a piece of 8 X 10-inch paper and two or three pages of record lipprints should be taken. After having recorded the lipprints, the following information should be recorded on the record lipprint paper:

- Name and signature of the person taking the prints.
- Date printed.
- Name and signature of the person printed (fig. 10).

Causes for Unsatisfactory Prints

Indistinct or illegible prints are usually caused by one or more of the following factors.

- Failure to reproduce the entire lip area can be caused by the lipstick not being applied to the entire surface, the subject's mouth not slightly "puckered," or inadequate pressure applied while recording.
- Allowing the subject to move the lips and too much pressure on the roll will result in smears, blurs, or false appearing patterns. The subject

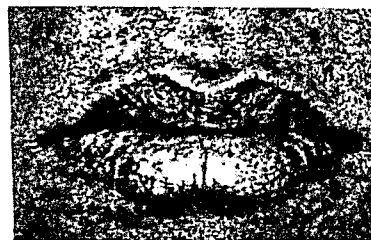
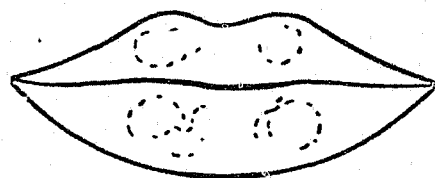


Figure 7. Type V: The grooves do not belong to Types I-IV and cannot be differentiated morphologically.



Figure 8.

should be instructed to keep the lips slightly puckered, not to try to "assist" and remain "passive" throughout the printing procedure.

•Failure to thoroughly clean the lips of foreign substances could cause the appearance of false markings or the disappearance of

grooves. Wet tissue paper, rubbing alcohol, or soap and water may be used to clean the lips.

•The use of too much lipstick can obliterate or obscure the grooves. The lipstick should be applied evenly and the grooves should be visible after application.

•Insufficient lipstick will result in the impression being light and faint. (Note: The second and third recording in each "group" will appear lighter and fainter than the preceding one in each group.)

Legal aspects of acquiring record lipprints

Legal authorities have determined that taking record "lipprints" falls within the same legal category as taking record "fingerprints and palmprints." It is recommended that before taking record lipprints, consultation with the local trial counsel be affected.

Comparison

Comparison of lipprints is accomplished by comparing the grooves present in the latent lipprint (found at the scene) with those present in the record lipprints (taken under controlled conditions from the suspect).

Footnotes

¹L. Snyder, *Homicide Investigation* (Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1950), p. 65.

²K. Suzuki, "Forensic Odontology and Criminal Investigation," *Acta Criminalologica Japonica*, 36(3): 1970, pp. 88-102.

³Y. Tsuchihashi, "Studies on Personal Identification by Means of Lipprint," *Forensic Science*, 3, 1974, pp. 233-48.

⁴K. Suzuki & Y. Tsuchihashi, "New Attempt of Personal Identification by Means of Lipprint," *Journal of Indian Dental Association*, January 1970, pp. 8-9.

⁵K. Suzuki & Y. Tsuchihashi, "Personal Identification by Means of Lipprint," *Journal of Forensic Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Apr.-June 1970, pp. 52-57.

⁶K. Suzuki & Y. Tsuchihashi, "Two Criminal Cases on Lipprint," *Acta Criminalologica Japonica*, 41(2): 1975, pp. 61-64.



Figure 9.

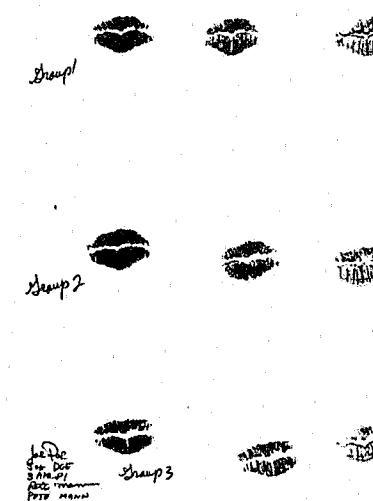


Figure 10.

END