

Simon Bunter BSc(Hons), MCSFS, FFS **Personal Qualifications and Experience**

I have a First Class Bachelor of Science Honours (1996) in Applied Science and Forensic Measurement, I am a Professional Member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences and a Fellow of the Fingerprint Society. In 2017 I won The Dr Ann Priston Award for Excellence in Casework.

I have been employed as a Fingerprint Specialist since 1997, initially with North Yorkshire Police as a Fingerprint Expert and latterly with Keith Borer Consultants in an enhanced role as a Forensic Scientist. As a Fingerprint Expert I specialise in the identification of fingerprints and establishing whether errors have occurred. I am experienced in scrutinising the practices and procedures of Police Fingerprint Bureaux and have provided several reports questioning fingerprint comparison methodology and accuracy of results.

As a Forensic Scientist my expertise includes determining how items and surfaces were touched or handled and commenting on the potential age of fingerprints. I have had articles published in scientific journals with regard to cognitive bias, placement of prints and the age of fingerprints at crime scenes. I also give presentations to solicitors, barristers, Forensic Scientists, Fingerprint Officers and University students on such matters. I have carried out this type of work in several countries overseas including Ireland, Bermuda and Cyprus.

At Keith Borer Consultants I participate in a Continuous Professional Development Scheme within which I have successfully completed independent fingerprint competency tests from different providers. I also undertake regular training and development in the field of Fingerprint Evidence, including attending and speaking at conferences.

I have examined fingerprint evidence and provided expert reports in the following notable cases:

Regina v Smith – A high profile case in the fingerprint community, in which I provided oral evidence to the court refuting the correctness of the police Fingerprint Experts' 'identification'.

Regina v Walker – Fingerprints of a local male were found on a security gate damaged during an attempted robbery. I showed that it was impossible for the male to have placed these prints during the offence; the prints had actually been placed 10 years earlier when the male was undertaking work experience in a metal fabricator's workshop.

Regina v Diiriye – It was agreed that there were 45 similar ridge characteristics but crucially I found one clear difference, meaning that the comparison did not meet the criteria for an 'identification'. The Crown dropped the case despite the high number of similar features.

Regina v Bogle – My thorough forensic examination of the drainpipe at the scene showed that the defendant's thumb print could easily have persisted for the 10 year period since he fitted the drainpipe to the property.

Regina v Williams – The police Fingerprint Expert claimed to have found 14 corresponding ridge characteristics whereas I only observed 7. When the police expert was asked to show where she found the other 7 characteristics, she declined, stating that it was not bureau policy to do so. The defendant was found not guilty.

Regina v Honey – I was able to show that, despite the door in question being painted over and thoroughly cleaned down, the defendant's fingerprint and palm print had persisted for several years since the defendant had legitimate contact with it.

Regina v Kiseliov – A poor quality palm print in blood was identified with the police expert alleging that 18 ridge characteristics matched. I found that only one of these characteristics clearly corresponded and explained to the jury that the procedure followed by the police experts exposed them to the risk of cognitive bias.

Regina v Homans – An arson case where the defendant's fingerprints were allegedly found on sheets of 'burnt' newspaper. I showed that the newspaper was not burnt and the positions of the fingerprints were consistent with the defendant reading the newspaper.

Regina v Jordan – I was able to demonstrate that the fingerprint lift had not been recovered from the item as alleged by the prosecution.

Regina v Calkin – What sounded like a thorough cleaning regime by the complainant was shown not to have removed the prints of the defendant who had previous legitimate access several months or even years earlier.

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