

A Blunt Force Footwear Pattern Injury



CASE FILE: THE YORKSHIRE RIPPER

A SHORT ESSAY BY KYT LYN WALKEN, MAY 2022



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KYT LYN WALKEN

*"I love Kyt's passion for Mantracking.
This girl is on fire"*

Joel Lambert, 10 year Veteran of Navy SEAL Teams

Kyt Lyn Walken is an authentic enthusiast and trader of the Ancient Art of Human and Animal Tracking. This skill is still very effective nowadays from Search and Rescue, Tactical dimension, Forensic Science until Wildlife Conservation.

She has been entitled "Official Representative of Hull's Tracking School" in 2018.

Mike Hull is her Mentor.

In the same year she has become a Conservation Ranger after attending a two weeks course in Poland led by C.R.O.W. (Conservation Rangers Operations Worldwide).

Kyt Lyn has also studied "Forensic Photographs on Crime Scene", by UK Forensic Advisor and former Royal Marines Robert Kendall.

Currently she runs Man and Animal Tracking courses all over Europe, and she is regular writer for some US and UK webzines on Survival and Prepping.

She has been entitled "Directora de la Escuela de Rastreo Humano Carcayú - Spain". She is Guest Instructor for Veteranen Search Team (The Netherlands).

She is author of the Manuals "The importance of being a Tracker", "The Urban Tracker" and "Tracking Compendium" (with Andy Martin), "Jungle Warriors - SAS in Malésia and Borneo" and the essay "Tracking, Anti-Tracking and Counter-Tracking during Colonialism" (with Professor Timothy J. Stapleton).

www.thewayoftracking.com

Introduction

The notorious quote "Every contact leaves a trace" (Doctor Edmond Locard) appears to be more than true when it comes to document a crime scene in order not only to collect useful clues, but also to preserve what was found for future investigations.

Criminals actually leave shoeprints behind at any single crime scene, no matter if it took place indoor or outdoor (or both).

Some of them can be extremely flashy, like transfer of mud, blood, oil or whatsoever. Others happen to be more latent. For this reason the employment of specific equipment like Electrostatic Dust Lifter is required.

Footprints are like fingerprints.

In fact, due to the particular nature (and percentage) of wear, soles can be used as DNA of a footwear. But there is much more than meets the eye.

Their uniqueness can reveal interesting details on:

- sex of the individual
- approximate age
- approximate height
- approximate weight
- job
- habits
- intentions

The more we investigate into a single footprint, the more we can gather as a precious amount of informations. By putting clues together applying logic and deduction, we proceed towards a precise phase: profiling the author of the footprints, and tracking him down.

WILLIAM J. BODZIAK: Directing the attention to the top portion of the chart, one of the primary purposes of footwear comparison is ultimately to examine the footwear impressions from the crime scene, which is depicted here on the right side, (Indicating), with shoes of suspects that might be obtained during the investigation. In this particular chart I've shown, as an example on the right, an impression from a crime scene, a test impression made from the shoe of the suspect, and on the left side a reverse photograph of the shoe of the suspect. This comparison involves the class characteristics first of the shoe, that is, the physical shape and size, the design or pattern on the bottom of the shoe, which leaves its print in the impression, and then subsequently we will draw its attention to wear characteristics. Maybe the heel may begin to wear on the edge and other wear that might be evident and would change the pattern of the shoe. The fourth area of comparison, after the size design and wear, would be things such as accidental characteristics, such as a cut mark that would also show up in the impression and would be found on both the test impression and the known shoe. These cut marks or changes to the pattern of the shoe are what makes a shoe unique and would possibly enable, if there was an adequate number of these, the positive identification of this shoe having made the impression at the crime scene.

Testimony of William J. Bodziak, former F.B.I. Agent, during Direct Examination of Mr. Goldberg on O.J. Simpson case.



Photo credits Getty images

An overview on the Yorkshire Ripper

1975, October 30th, Leeds.

The corpse of a woman, brutally battered, has been found by a milkman.
The police commenced the first surveys.

The victim is Wilma McCann, 28. She used to work as a prostitute. Since her bag has been stolen the officers considered it only a tragic robbery attempt.

1976, January 20th.

The stabbed corpse of Emily Jackson, a 42-year-old prostitute, has been found in Chapeltown.
During the furious attack, the killer also left his shoeprint on the victim's thigh, causing a blunt force footwear pattern injury.

1977, February 5th.

The third victim is Irene Richardson, 28. The homicidal pattern happens to be the same.

1977, April 22nd. 32-year-old Patricia Atkinson has been discovered inside an apartment. A bloody imprint determines that the DNA is the same found on the previous scene.

It is now clear that a serial killer is prowling around on the loose. The press nicknamed him The Yorkshire Ripper because of some similarities with Jack the Ripper, the killer who in the previous century sowed terror in Whitechapel.

1977, June 26th. The body of sixteen y.o. Jayne MacDonald has been discovered in a playground in Chapeltown.

1977, October, 9th 1977. The sixth victim was found, this time in the Manchester area. Jean Jordan, 20-year-old prostitute.

At the end of 1980 more than 20 between killings and other attacks took place.

The police followed a series of leads but none of them seemed able to lead to the person responsible. The investigation was now long and characterized by an innumerable amount of files in which it seemed impossible to extricate oneself.

January 2nd. 10:30 pm.

Peter Sutcliffe has been arrested due to suspicious activities.
Bradford as his hometown and he works as a truck driver.

Peter Sutcliffe's name had already appeared inside several papers of the investigation, but there were so many leads connected to the case that he moved undisturbed all over the years.

The presence of numerous other leads of investigation that were pursued and ended in nothing allowed him to act basically undisturbed all that time.

The suspect initially denies everything.

Nonetheless, the evidences gathered throughout the years forces him to confess.

During the trial Sutcliffe pleaded guilty. Nonetheless he claimed to suffer from mental disorders.
Four psychiatric examinations performed against him proved he had paranoid schizophrenia.
Despite this, the judge refused the request for a lesser sentence.

After two weeks of trial, the jury sentenced Peter Sutcliffe to life imprisonment.

Blunt force footwear pattern injury in the Yorkshire Ripper's case

"[...] The police had found themselves overwhelmed with information, and a card system they created was improperly cross-referenced, causing key facts to be misplaced. Details about his appearance, such as a gap in his teeth and size seven feet, were not flagged.

During one of his interviews, officers showed Sutcliffe a picture of the Ripper's boot print near a body but failed to notice that he was actually wearing the boots in question [...]"
NBC News, November, 13th, 2020

"His shoe size was an eight-and-a-half, which was very similar to the shoe size of the offender. And I noticed that one of the boots was quite worn on the right-hand sole, which was a point made out on the tracks that'd been left, the footprints [...]"

It gave an indication of his mental state at the time. There was no reason for an assailant to stamp on the lady's thigh. More than enough had been done already. Killing her wasn't enough. He had to show his disgust as well [...]"

Andrew Laptew
The Sun, December, 16th, 2020

Injuries inflicted to the skin are clustered into two main categories.

The first one refers to those caused by sharp forces.
The second is determined by blunt forces.

Blunt force trauma can involve abrasions.
They can be caused by footwear stamped on skin. They are typical in violent crimes.
The offender can stamp, or kick on the victim, or even run over by resorting to a vehicle.

The forensic examination of a blunt force footwear pattern (when the footwear is already provided) implies the very same expertise and procedures of footwear comparison.
Blunt forces injury provide an incredible amount of informations, especially when a footprint has been already determined inside the crime scene or in a the seriality of it.

In fact, the pattern of the shoe can be identified inside a specific footwear database and it can be matched with other details recovered from other crime scenes.
Additionally, a valuable force is required to stamp or kick on the victim in order to leave the footprint marks.

Even if skin cannot be considered the ideal medium to retain it, some several good measurements can be taken if the examinations are conducted in the proper way and in the early stages of the examination.

These kind of injuries are simply the result by blood accumulating under the skin.
A color value is provided by this specific result. Every single body reacts in a very different manner to the pressure exerted by a blunt force.

The only effective approach to preserve such an injury is to take photographs of it.

The accumulation of internal blood tends to become darker after force has been put into action.

On corpses the blood tend to appear darker and even more intense as time passes by.

Over time, in fact, abrasions and bruises will no longer return the typical geometry of the sole pattern, making the documentation work extremely complex.

It is also important to underline that even adverse atmospheric agents, smog, dusts, gases, polluting liquids and any other significant element can initiate a rapid degradation of the blunt force trauma.



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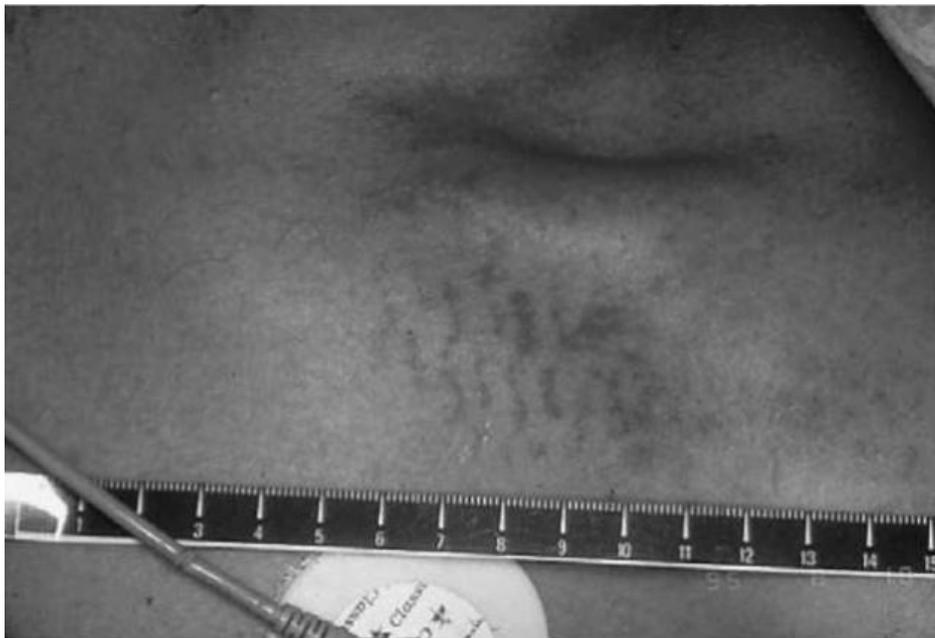


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