

## Fuming for fingerprints: a new method catches crooks — and sales

A revolutionary process for locating and exposing latent fingerprints is winning world-wide recognition — and sales — for a Canadian company.

Visuprint "fumes" the object or area being examined with a special chemical vapour. After about ten minutes, any prints present become visible and permanent.

The portable unit is produced and marketed by a high-tech company, Payton Scientific Inc. in Scarborough, Ontario.

Visuprint will develop latent fingerprints on more surfaces in a single process than any other conventional method. Hitherto difficult and often impossible surfaces, such as plastic bags, plastics, aluminum, firearms, stainless steel, chrome, silverware, wood, cardboard, paper and many others, all become excellent possibilities with this simple new piece of equipment and process. There is also a strong possibility that this method will develop prints on human skin.

The inventor is Constable Paul Bourdon of the North Bay Police Identification Bureau. It took him five years, with assistance from the National Research Council of Canada, to perfect the "fuming" process.

Two-year-old Payton Scientific — part of the Payton group set up in 1967 to handle forensic science equipment — last

year obtained manufacturing rights and has already sold Visuprint to a number of law enforcement agencies in Canada and abroad.

### Sales abroad

Payton's president Robert W. Baker, who has an engineering background, said his firm is running a large-scale, direct mail program in the United States and Canada. He recently spent three weeks demonstrating the equipment in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Britain "and the response was excellent".

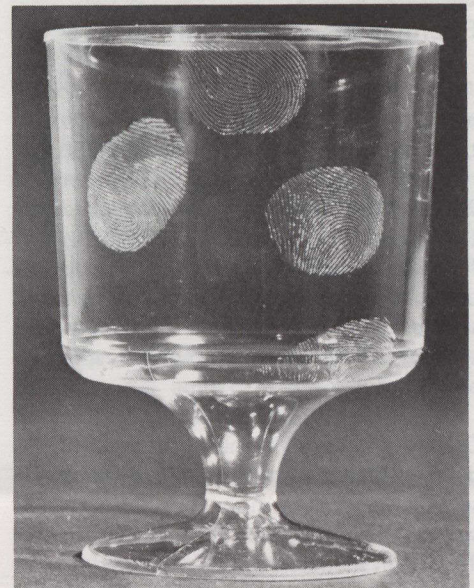
The Payton group has a regular schedule of marketing missions and exhibits at international trade shows. Vice-president Sydney J. Platel, also an engineer, was on a US selling tour in the spring.

The 10.4-kilogram Visuprint kit costs \$1 500 (US) and is already used by Metro Toronto Police and the Ontario Provincial Police. Identification officers at both headquarters said the invention was a big asset in crime detection. It works quickly and is easy to use.

### Sizable orders

Mr. Baker anticipates "sizable" orders. "If we sell only to half the 42 000 identification officers in the US, that would mean a lot of export dollars."

Mr. Bourdon says the common method in developing prints — dusting with pow-



*The "fuming" process brings out fingerprints and preserves them.*

ders — had problems. "Too heavy a hand and the gentle brush becomes a broom, sweeping away the delicate evidence," he said.

Using vapour as the detecting material avoids this danger. In his research Mr. Bourdon evaporated solvents, paints, glue and other chemicals in closed containers with samples of plastic film bearing his own fingerprints.

Operated by either main supply or battery, the unit can be used in the lab or at the scene of a crime. It can also "fume" the interior of an entire room or automobile.

The system has already scored many successes:

- during a break-in at a service station, a criminal was disturbed while stealing the cashbox. He escaped, throwing the box into a pool of oil on the garage floor. Visuprint revealed fingerprints leading to the arrest and conviction of the criminal;
- an empty whisky bottle was found floating in the bilgewater of a stolen motorboat. After being carefully dried, the bottle was fumed — revealing a print again leading to a conviction;
- a handgun was found at the scene of the crime. Using traditional methods, no prints could be found. The gun was put on a shelf. After four years, a detective decided to try Visuprint on it and found a perfect print which led to a conviction.

The entire system, including the chemicals and use of the process is now fully protected by patents in Canada, the United States, and are presently pending in Europe where application for a German distributorship has been received.



*Latent fingerprints soon become visible after Robert Baker, president of Payton Scientific, places a plastic wineglass into the compact Visuprint container which will accomplish its task in ten minutes.*

Ministry of Industry & Tourism photos