

Exculpatory DNA Evidence

Since Ron's trial lawyers failed to utilize the services of an investigator, there was no examination of forensic materials at the crime scene for DNA. Several years later, a team of investigators hired by Pamela Phillips' legal team decided to see if DNA was present on any of the bomb fragments. Though the possibility of finding DNA on fragments that had been exposed to extreme pressure and heat seemed very remote, the investigators cited a Texas case where DNA survived an explosion. In October 2013, 28 bomb fragment items were sent from Pima County Sheriff's evidence locker to Serological Research Institute in Richmond, California. After their analysis, the lab found male DNA on three pieces of the bomb fragments*:

1. On the threads of a screw that had been embedded in corkboard—Ronald Young was excluded as a source of the recovered DNA.
2. On the threads of a screw that had been embedded in wood—Ronald Young was excluded as a source of the recovered DNA.
3. On the sticky side of a piece of electrical tape that had been folded onto itself—Ronald Young was excluded as a source of the recovered DNA.

Although no DNA matches were found in the national database, the results conclusively demonstrate that Ronald Young was not the bomb maker. It is believed that the DNA survived the blast because the two screws had been protected by the corkboard and wood in which they had been embedded. The electrical tape was folded on itself and stuck together, thereby protecting the DNA.

The DNA found on the electrical tape is particularly significant because it could only come from the person using it to build the bomb. This is because the sticky side of such tape is exposed only when it is actually pulled off the roll of tape by the person using it.

It cannot become contaminated with DNA prior to its final use due to the following:

- It is produced by machines at a manufacturing plant, wrapped in plastic by machines, packed in shipping boxes by machines, all prior to its shipment to customer warehouses or retail stores.
- At the retail location, store employees unpack the shipping boxes containing the individually plastic-wrapped tape, and either stack it on shelves or hang it on display racks. Up to this point, no human has had access to the unwrapped tape, let alone the sticky side.
- It is not typical for a customer to unwrap the tape packaging prior to checkout (one reason is that the barcode that is needed to scan the price at the cash register is on the packaging), nor is it customary for the check-out person to do so.

Electrical tape is typically only unwrapped by the customer when ready to be used, and only then does the actual tape come in contact with a human. Further, human contact with the sticky side of the tape would happen only when it is being unwound and used. The conclusion is that the DNA found on the tape could only come from the person who constructed the bomb. Not Ron Young.

** Full lab report by SRI available upon request.*