Criminalistics Review of Forensic Firearms Examination

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**Introduction**

Forensic Firearm Examination is defined as a process that refers to the examination of the characteristics of firearms along with any material that is left behind at crime scene and it includes bullets and cartridges (Wallace, et al., 2018). In this field of examination, a specialist is given the task to link bullets and cartridges to the weapons that are found at the crime site. There are different characteristics of firearm examination, taking into account that they play a major role in the analysis of crime scene. Firstly forensic firearm examination is related to the analysis of the crime site so as to find anything associated with firearms such as a bullet, shell of a bullet, burn or hole caused by a bullet, traces of gun powder and any weapon such as a gun (Wallace, et al., 2018). It is significant to note that the most significant reagent used in this department is Nitric Acid. Examiners also look to find out the fingerprints on weapons found at the crime scene. It is asserted that the majority of cases related to forensic firearm examination are solved by taking fingerprints from the weapon, where these fingerprints are collected, photographed and analyzed either by using a comparison microscope that is operated manually or by matching a fingerprint to a criminal database (Wallace, et al., 2018). There are numerous examples that illustrate use of firearm examination.

**Example**

One of the examples was the exoneration of Charles Stielow because of the murder of his neighbors (Monturo, et al., 2019). After an analysis of investigation, he was found guilty and sentenced to death. He appealed to Charles S. Whiteman who was the governor of New York. After knowing the detail of the case, he was not convinced with the evidence that was used to consider Stielow as a convict (Wallace, et al., 2018). Whiteman made efforts that halted execution and formulated a board that was meant to re-investigate the case. After detailed analysis, it was found that there was not a single bullet that have been shot by the firearm belonging to Stielow that was found from the victim. After using the technique of compassion microscope, also called, “Firearm examination” in the broader term, used by Clavin Goddard and Philip O Gravelle, the results were quite different. The weapon was compared with another weapon by analyzing the marks that were left on the cartridge (Wallace, et al., 2018). After firing, the exemplar, as well as questioned cartridge, were analyzed simultaneously. After the analysis of difference between the marks on cartilage it was found that Stielwo was not the actual criminal (Monturo, et al., 2019).

**Discussion**

After analyzing this case it can be found that the examination of firearms is one of the major strategies that could be used to analyze the underlying truth in criminalistics. It reflects remote techniques in which finding a weapon near any victim was capable of leading an individual to death or imprisonment without knowing if there are underlying truths or not. Even in the case of Steilow, using the technique of taking fingerprints would also have helped a lot because it is one of the easiest ways of identifying criminal but some criminals use gloves and other strategies to prevent their hands from getting imprinted (Wallace, et al., 2018). Although it is a very old case still it is termed as one of the cases that have acted as a pioneer to the framework of firearm examination because it has contributed a lot to the criminal justice system.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, firearm examination in the present time is one of the tributes to intelligence and forensics that have brought a great revolution in the criminal justice system by mitigating the chances of innocents to be dragged and alleged with crimes. Firearm examination has added to justice.

References

Monturo, C. (2019). Forensic Firearm Examination. Academic Press.

Wallace, J. S. (2018). *Chemical analysis of firearms, ammunition, and gunshot residue*. Crc Press.