

Insufficient Detail

“Insufficient detail” - The most unreliable statement in any friction ridge analysis report.

So, what does it mean? In the highly subjective world of latent print examination, it literally can mean anything. I.e.,

- * The print was truly insufficient for any purpose.
- * The Print was not sufficient for identification purposes but could be used to exclude a subject.
- * The print was sufficient for identification purposes but was outside the skillset of the examiner.



In several cases I reviewed last year in Canada there were several instances of the words “insufficient detail”. Most of those subjective determinations were incorrect. Some of those latent prints were identified, some were excluded but very few latent prints actually fit the insufficient for any purpose category.

Forensic Identification supervisors would be well advised to review those determinations before the report is released.

Keep that in mind the next time you see the words “Insufficient Detail”. You may be glad you did.