

TOUCH DNA LEADS TO DEATH PENALTY CONVICTION

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The objective of this presentation is to show the value of touch DNA if carefully collected and examined can help secure a death penalty conviction in a double homicide case.

This presentation will look at a double homicide case involving the murder of a husband and wife along with their dog at their Cleveland car dealership, where touch DNA was the key in identifying the suspect and ultimately solving the case.

The evidence from the scene was collected by Cleveland Police and submitted to the Cuyahoga County Regional Forensic Science Laboratory for examination. Swabs collected from the victim's clothes, within the car dealership, and from the recovered stolen vehicles were among the evidence items tested for touch DNA.

A DNA profile was developed from one of the victim's back pockets, swabs from an AT&T modem, and swabs from the steering wheel and inside driver's door handle of one of the recovered stolen vehicles that belonged to the same individual. This profile was entered into CODIS and hit to an offender. This individual was arrested and later tried for the murders.

The touch DNA in this case was the key evidence that linked this individual to the crime. The death penalty was pursued in this case and the defendant chose to represent himself. The defendant was found guilty on all counts and was sentenced to death.