



*This print showing the tire tracks will be used to identify the vehicle as well as evidence in court despite the fact that the tire track melted within minutes after the picture was made.*

## On-the-Spot Photographs Solve Small Department's Evidence Problems

MANY PERSONS WOULD undoubtedly question the photographic needs of a three man police force in a town with a total population of 2700 persons. However, I'd like to point out that photographic evidence is just as important to us, if not more so in certain cases, as it is to much larger departments. In several instances, photographic evidence we have presented in court has meant the difference between a conviction and dismissal in cases which we've investigated and apprehended a suspect.

Our size does present several major problems, though. We work on a small budget. Because of this, we couldn't afford to purchase expensive equipment, set up processing facilities and assign officers to nothing but photographic duty. In addition, none of us has any photographic training needed for acceptable evidence photography. We needed something simple and easy to use.

Because we did not have our own photographic capacity, we were dependent on the Vermont State Police photographers to do most of our evidence photography. Since they serve most local agencies, there could be delays of several days before they got to us. There were occasions

*Continued on page 30*



by Chief DANA L. THOMPSON  
Manchester (Vt.) Police Department  
Reading Time: 6 min. 24 sec.

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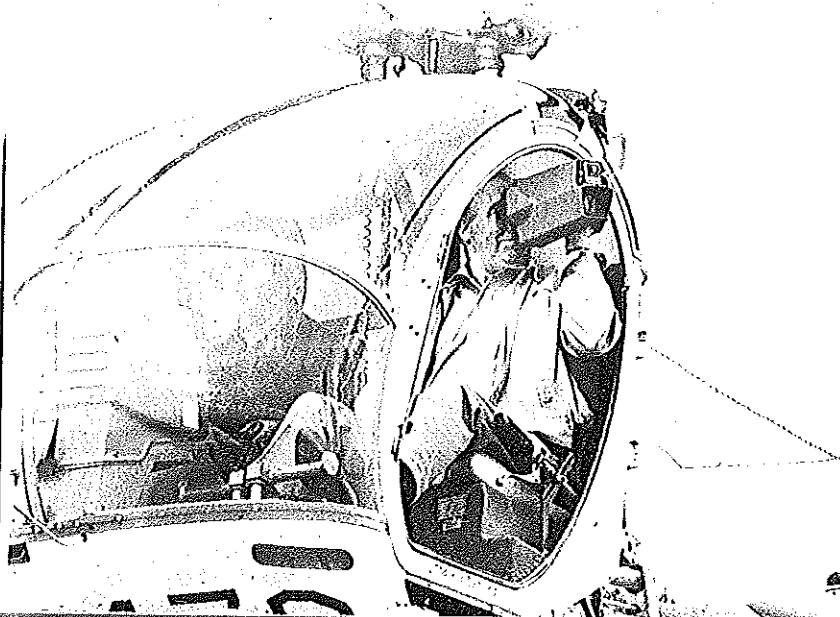
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## with the Mark 1610 Stabilized Binocular.



### Evidence Problems . . . page 100

where evidence was lost while we were waiting for prints.

Last month, we took steps to eliminate these problems, and in doing so became totally self-sufficient photographically — and at minimal expense. Now the department is equipped to handle any photographic assignment ranging from an accident scene to recording latent fingerprints at the scene of a crime.

The solution to our problem was found in two Polaroid Land cameras that deliver finished color and black-and-white pictures in a matter of seconds. We obtained a standard Polaroid Color Pack Camera for overall shots of accident and robbery scenes, and a Polaroid CU-5 Fingerprint and Evidence Recording Camera, with portable DC power supply, especially designed for making instant close-up pictures. This we use for recording latent fingerprints, weapons, tool and pry marks, paint fragments, body bruises, etc.

#### NEW YORK DETECTIVES USE CU-5

The CU-5 camera and portable power pack, I might add, are the same units currently being used by all detective squads on the New York Police force for recording latent fingerprints.

The CU-5 is a lightweight, extremely durable and compact unit designed for hand-held operation, and includes built-in electronic flash for perfect exposure and balanced illumination. However, one of the most significant features as far as we're concerned is the fact that it does not require any prior photographic training or knowledge to use.

Special spacing frames which clip onto the front of the camera determine the exact distance from camera to subject for each shot, eliminating tricky focusing. The spacing frames also outline the subject area and tell whether the object being photographed will fit within the picture format at a given reproduction ratio.

We purchased a complete set of accessories, including spacing frames and ratio multipliers, allowing us to make pictures at seven different reproduction ratios, including 1/4:1, 1/3:1, 1/2:1, 3/4:1, 1:1, and twice and three times life size.

Correct exposure is predetermined by flipping a switch on the camera to either the black and white or color setting, depending on the type of film being used. If a photo is too light or too dark, this can be corrected by adjusting the lighten-darken control on the DC portable power pack. This increases or decreases the power to the

electronic flash ringlight.

A polarizing filter is available which makes it possible to get sharp pictures off reflective surfaces, such as a rear view mirror or a highly polished gun, etc.

The snap-on design of the camera and accessories permits easy interchange of lenses and components enabling us to change from one ratio to another with no time lost.

The CU-5 camera uses standard, eight-exposure Polaroid Land film packs, Type 108 for finished 3/4 x 4/4-inch color prints in sixty seconds and Type 107 for black and white pictures in fifteen seconds. The film packs drop easily into the back of the camera, and can be loaded and changed in the field in seconds.

#### PORTABLE POWER SOURCE

The recently introduced DC portable power supply contains a replaceable 510-volt battery that is sufficient for over 1000 flashes. The battery pack is lightweight yet built of tough acrylic plastic to withstand harsh treatment.

We use the CU-5 mainly to photograph latent fingerprints and evidence uncovered at homicides, burglaries, and breaking and enterings. These crimes are occurring with increasing regularity.

Part of this is due to the fact that the population figure of 2700 persons does not even come close to the actual number of persons living here. Because Manchester is located in the heart of the ski country as well as a major hunting and fishing area, the population of this area might swell at any given time during the year to as much as 15,000. And, it's a well recognized fact that as more money comes into an area, the crime rate climbs proportionately.

For latent fingerprint photography, we use black and white film and take the pictures 1:1 since the eye is trained to recognize fingerprints at life-size. Whenever latent prints are uncovered, they are photographed first for a permanent record, or use as evidence in court. Then they are "lifted" by conventional means.

This way we're sure to have a record of the print in case it's altered in lifting. We can also tell on the spot if the print is clear enough to be usable as evidence. With the picture in hand, elimination of suspects can begin at the scene immediately.

In several instances, we've run into prints that couldn't be lifted because of the rough texture of the surface (such as a door frame) on which they're uncovered or because the prints were smudged with grease or

*Continued on next page*



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**Evidence Problems . . . page 31**  
the surface was too rough to permit lifting a clear print. In these cases, all the evidence we had was the instant photographs of the fingerprints.

**PHOTOS SENT TO FBI**

Once we have the picture of the latent fingerprints, and possible suspects, we forward the picture along with the suspects' names to the FBI for comparison with their prints on file for identification.

Another CU-5 application is making color pictures of tool marks found at the scene of a robbery or breaking and entering. If we apprehend a suspect and find him in possession of tools that could have been used, we can compare any paint marks on the tools with those at the scene.

Color film and the CU-5 are also used to photograph body bruises in assault and battery cases, blood stains on clothing, and paint chips in hit and run cases.

To use the CU-5, we merely select the spacing frame for the reproduction ratio we want, snap it on, place the frame over the object or area to be photographed and squeeze the trigger-like shutter release. The exposed print is then withdrawn from the camera, and development takes place outside of the unit, leaving the operator free

to make additional shots in rapid succession.

**ON-THE-SPOT EVIDENCE**

Naturally, the main features that convince us to adopt the CU-5 were the on-the-spot availability and the numerous ways in which we could use the camera.

As I explained earlier, our budget prohibited the installation of complete darkroom facilities that would be required had we decided to rely on conventional photography. The only alternative to setting up a darkroom would have been to send the exposed film to a laboratory for processing.

The film would have to be sent via registered mail (an added expense) in order to preserve the chain of evidence, and we'd still be running the risk of loss or destruction of the film in the mail. Now the chain of evidence requirement is satisfied because the officer who takes the picture develops it at the scene.

Another consideration was whether or not the picture was properly exposed. If we used conventional film, we wouldn't know for several days, long after evidence might either be removed or destroyed. Prime examples of this are tire tracks or footprints in snow or mud found near the scene of a crime.

With both the Color Pack Camera and the CU-5, we have the finished picture on-the-spot and are sure that we have the correct shot before we leave the scene and before the evidence is removed.

Prior to obtaining these two cameras, we formerly used an older polaroid roll film camera. However, this camera limited us because it did not take color pictures and could not be used for extreme close-up shots. In cases where these photos were needed, our only source was the State Police who often were not available in time. Now we can handle any situation, shooting either black and white or color and leave the scene knowing that we have what we need.

And the beauty of the entire program is that it costs us far less than it would to use conventional photography, both in terms of actual dollars spent and manpower and facilities required to do the job.

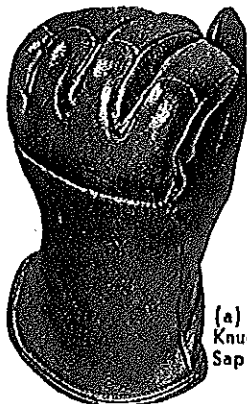
Because we no longer have the delays of waiting for outside photographic help, and for the pictures to be developed, we are able to do a much more efficient and effective job of investigating and solving crimes.



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