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## Tests fail to link Chesimard with gun

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NEW BRUNSWICK — Neutron activation tests performed on JoAnne Chesimard and Clark Squire and the bodies of Trooper Werner Foerster and James Costan Jr. yielded inconclusive results, according to a forensic chemist who testified at her trial yesterday.

Charles R. Midkiff Jr., an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms of the U.S. Treasury Department, said none of the samples submitted by state police investigators "were sufficient to indicate" any of the four had handled or discharged firearms."

Midkiff said multiple factors entered into the success of neutron activation testing, which is designed to turn up traces of antimony or barium. Those elements are used in the composition of primers for ammunition, he explained.

The forensic scientist explained, however, that if a person was fingerprinted and his hands cleaned, no chemical residue would be found. He also said that the presence of blood and dirt would decrease the amount of detectable residue.

A six hour cutoff is usual in neutron activation testing, he said. After that time period, no results can be obtained with any degree of success, he added.

Mrs. Chesimard, a 29-year-old Black militant, is accused of murdering Foerster, attempting to murder Trooper James Harper and the felony-murder of Costan on the N.J. Turnpike in East Brunswick on May 2, 1973. Costan and Mrs. Chesimard were passengers in a car

operated by Squire which was halted by Harper for defective tail lights on the toll road.

Under cross-examination by Attorney Lawrence Stern, Midkiff said that he could not conclude from the swabs submitted by state police that she fired a weapon on the night of the turnpike shootings. Midkiff also agreed with Assistant Prosecutor Nicholas Stoumpos that significant levels of antimony and barium must be present to make a positive finding along with the other variables that could affect the testing.

Det. Sgt. Louis Parisi of the state police testified that he took swabs from Mrs. Chesimard while she was being treated in the x-ray room of Middlesex General Hospital on the night of the shooting. He said her right arm was in a splint and her hands and face were bloody when the testing was done.

Parisi said he then went to the hospital mortuary and took similar swabs from the hands of Costan and the slain trooper.

A day later, he performed the neutron activation test on the hands of Squire, who had been a fugitive for 30 hours after the killings.

Parisi testified he was also present on May 9 when Mrs. Chesimard was fingerprinted, and on June 13 when a blood sample was taken from her.

The painstaking identification of items found at Milepost 83 where Foerster's body was discovered and at Milepost 78 where Costan's body was found and Mrs. Chesimard surrendered was begun by Det. Sgt. Edward Wilke, a state police identi-

fication officer.

As First Assistant Prosecutor Edward J. Barone ticked off the many items found at the scenes, Wilke described how he had photographed and marked the evidence. The state so far has had 79 items marked for identification during the trial which is now in its third week of testimony.

Wilke's testimony is a prelude to the state's experts in ballistics, blood, glass, and other forensic sciences who will testify on the significance of the various items.

Among the items admitted into evidence during the proceedings yesterday were flashlights belonging to both Harper and Foerster, uniform hats worn by those troopers on the night of the shootings, and a registration for the white Pontiac in which Mrs. Chesimard was riding. The registration, saturated with blood, was found under Foerster's body, Wilke said.

He also identified two jammed automatic weapons found at the scene of Foerster's killing — one with 10 live rounds discovered about seven feet from the trooper's body and the others with three rounds found lying between his hand and leg.

Wilke also identified pieces of lead, bullet casings, and an ammunition clip found in the vicinity of the dead trooper.

He is expected to resume his testimony today, detailing items found at the scene of Mrs. Chesimard's surrender. Among those items are a third jammed automatic weapon and Foerster's service revolver, which the state contends was used to execute him.