

## **GUN SHOT RESIDUE (GSR) AND THE TWIN PEAKS SAGA:**

*Upcoming Trial of Cody Ledbetter April 2*

Cody Ledbetter had a single particle of a substance “consistent with” (but not unique to) gunpowder residue on his left (non-dominant) hand. It contains barium and antimony, two of the three elements sought for in gunpowder residue, the third being lead. Because lead was not present in the particle found on Mr. Ledbetter’s hand, it is described as “consistent with,” and not “characteristic of” gunshot residue. Gunshot residue can travel 3-5 feet from a single firearm in still air, and can be deposited on fabric, furniture, door handles, handrails, or any other inanimate object. It can be transferred from person to person or from inanimate object to person. We don’t know the distance that gunshot residue can travel outdoors, when multiple firearms are discharged from multiple directions.

While gunpowder residue particles are believed to remain on hands for 4-6 hours, it is unknown how long they can remain embedded in fabric or other inanimate objects. A person can pick up a single particle from handling clothing days later. This is true even if the particle came from something other than a gun shot.

Barium/Antimony particles are also found in other materials, such as brake pads and airbag detonators. Cody Ledbetter is a mechanic, so he would naturally come into contact with Barium/Antimony particles. Actual gunshot residue is formed into balls (spheroid shapes.) The forensic report does not state what shape the single particle retrieved from Mr. Ledbetter was in. If it was not “spheroid,” it wasn’t truly “consistent with” gunshot residue.” However, particles from airbags are also spheroid in shape, so even being spheroid wouldn’t establish it as having come from a gunshot.

It is unknown how many gunshots were fired on the patio at Twin Peaks, but there must have been large quantities of gunshot residue deposited on just about every exposed surface there – including hands. Even if the particle found on Mr. Ledbetter’s hand DID come from a firearm, the fact that an innocent person could have a single particle on their person is hardly surprising, either from the air, from coming into contact with clothing, another individual, or some other exposed inanimate object. Gunshot residue can be retrieved from bystanders and victims as well as shooters, and not every shooter ends up with gunshot residue on his hand.

Many labs refuse to consider a sample significant without a certain threshold (say, three particles) being reached, because there are so many other ways in which particles “consistent with” gunpowder residue can be obtained. The FBI no longer conducts gunshot residue tests, because the chances for cross-contamination are too great.

In the end, this single particle “consistent with” gunshot residue proves absolutely nothing, because gunshot residue could have ended up on Mr. Ledbetter’s hand innocently, and it is only speculative that this single particle even is gunshot residue.

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