



### F40 Suspect's Finger Wound: Bite Mark or Glass Cut?

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This case will illustrate to the audience the difference between a bite mark and a glass cut.

On the evening of 3-07-02, the 42-year-old victim put his two boys ages 3 and 8 to bed and retired for the evening. His wife was working the swing shift as a nurse at a local hospital. The case was investigated by the San Carlos, CA Police Dept. At approximately 50 minutes past midnight the victim awoke and saw a man standing in his bathroom. The man rushed the dazed, confused, and half-asleep victim while he was still lying in his bed, and beat him about the face and head. The suspect pulled the victim into the living room and tied his hands and ankles. The suspect then began ransacking the house for valuables at which time the victim's wife arrived home from work. The suspect attacked her as she opened the door, punching her in the face and kicking her in the head while trying to pull her inside. The wife fought and yelled out in an attempt to wake the neighbors. During the struggle, her husband partially freed himself and came to her assistance. With both victims fighting and yelling for help, the suspect decided to flee. Responding officers were unable to locate the suspect. The San Mateo County Crime Lab responded to the scene for evidence. Numerous latent fingerprints were found at a point of attempted entry. The fingerprints were of sufficient quality for a "Cal-ID" search and a suspect was identified as 30-year-old Christopher Eugene Dixon, a parolee at-large. The victims were unsure if they could identify their attacker because they didn't see him clearly. The victims were asked to look at a photo lineup containing Dixon's photograph; neither of them could make identification. Dixon was found two days later and interviewed. He denied involvement in the robbery. Although his fingerprints proved that he was outside the residence, it wasn't enough to prove he was the man who beat and robbed the victims. At the time of his arrest, Dixon had an injury to his right pinkie finger. He claimed that he had cut his finger two weeks earlier when he punched the windshield of a car in anger. The injury did not appear to be consistent with the type of injury he was claiming. The investigator, Detective Rich Dickerson, questioned Dixon's girlfriend about the injury and she told him that Dixon had told her that someone bit his finger in a bar fight.

The victims were asked if either of them could have bitten the suspect's hand and initially neither of them thought that they had. However, a day later the female victim called the investigator claiming that she had a "flashback" of the struggle and recalled biting the suspect. The victim said that somehow during the struggle the suspect's finger had entered her mouth and she accurately described which finger and she believed that she "bit the tip off." Photographs of the suspicious injury to Dixon's finger were sent to the presenter who identified it as a bite injury and told the investigator that he had seen similar injuries in the same position that had occurred during struggles, often when a suspect attempted to cover the mouth of his victim to prevent the victim from screaming. The presenter told the investigator that it is common in these types of injuries for a suspect to injure victims in these cases while trying to get victims to release their bites - which were documented with photographs and medical reports. The proper documentation and identification of the bite mark evidence was a critical factor in the successful prosecution of this case. Although neither of the victims were able to identify Dixon, the jury convicted him on the basis that the victim "branded" him with an identifying mark. The victim's description of the position and type of injury she delivered to Dixon was supported by the expert testimony of the presenter. Also critical was the presenter's expert opinion that Dixon's explanation of how he received the injury was highly improbable.

Christopher Dixon was found guilty on all charges and is awaiting sentencing. As a three striker with a violent history, he is facing a minimum of 30 years and a maximum of 57 years to life imprisonment.

**Bite Mark, Glass Cut, Oral Injuries to a Biter**