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which it belongs. For example, the identification of a firearm may note that it is operational and capable of firing a projectile, or that it is a particular make, model and caliber. Latent print ridge patterns will be noted as *identifiable* (having sufficient features capable of being compared with a reference print of known source). A biological substance may be identified as blood, or semen, or of a particular genetic type. Suspected drug evidence may be identified as a particular class or type (cocaine, marijuana, etc.).

These identifications do not, however, connect that evidence to a particular source or origin. Identifications merely tell the investigator that the evidence and known are similar and might have shared a common source. A conclusion of common source is an *individualization*, or unique identification, where evidence is associated with its particular location of origin or source, at the exclusion of all other possibilities. A latent print is found to have originated from a particular person; a bullet or shell casing was fired from a particular weapon; a jimmy mark on a door jam was made by one specific tool, and a biological stain was found to have come from a particular person at the exclusion of all others. DNA testing has greatly enhanced the ability of crime laboratories to individualize Biological evidence. An *exclusion*, on the other hand, means that a particular item of evidence did *not* come from a specific source (bullet A was not fired from weapon B). Given the mass of unrelated physical materials in a crime scene location, attempts to determine the common origin of an item of evidence are often times unsuccessful, and the laboratory examination is *inconclusive*.

Examinations yielded 34 cases with identifications of evidence, most of them (21) involving firearms-related evidence. In terms of individualizations, there were 18 cases with firearms individualities and four other individualities involving Latent Prints. There was a total of 15 searches of the NIBIN database but only one (Indianapolis) resulted in a hit.

Tracking Cases through the Justice System

Figure 1 tracks the movement of assault cases through the justice process, controlling for the presence/absence of collected physical evidence. In the boxes are the percentages of incidents, with and without physical evidence, that reach a given stage of the justice process. The contrasts between rates of arrest with and without physical evidence are substantial and statistically significant ($t=4.91$, $p=.000$). The data also show significant differences for the movement of cases to higher decision levels. About 42% of cases with physical evidence were referred to the DA as compared to 33% of cases without physical evidence ($t=2.75$, $p=.000$). Thirty-nine percent of cases with physical evidence were charged as compared to 27% without physical evidence ($t=3.52$, $p=.000$). Bivariate results also were significant at the conviction stage. Approximately 27% of cases with physical evidence resulted in a conviction compared to 18% for cases without physical evidence ($t=2.91$, $p=.004$). It is important to recognize, however, that only 48% of convictions with crime scene evidence actually had evidence that was examined in crime labs.

