DNA
A perfect match... almost

The Phantom of Heilbronn is an extraordinary mystery which has baffled European detectives for many years! Here are the highlights of the story.

WHAT'S THE MYSTERY?

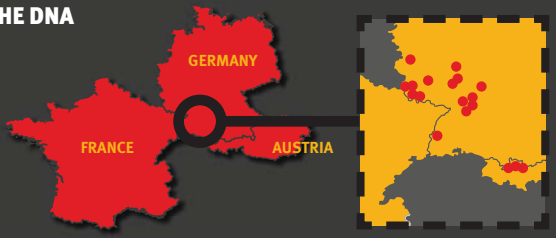
The Phantom of Heilbronn, often alternatively referred to as the "Woman without a Face", was a hypothesized unknown female serial killer whose existence was inferred from DNA evidence.

WHAT HAPPENED?

From 1993 to 2009, **40** crime scenes, ranging from murders to burglaries, were connected together with one DNA PROFILE.

WHERE WAS THE DNA RECOVERED?

DNA was found at numerous crime scenes in:



Traces were found, for instance:

- on a **CUP** after the killing of a 62-year-old woman in Idar-Oberstein, Germany
- on a **KITCHEN DRAWER** after the killing of a 61-year-old man in Freiburg, Germany
- on a **SYRINGE** containing heroin near Gerolstein, Germany

HOW BIG WAS THE INVESTIGATION?

The police spent **8** years,

...an estimated EUR **2** million,

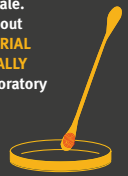
...and over **16 000** hours of overtime searching for the "Phantom".

A reward of USD **400 000** was offered for information leading to her arrest.

The investigation mobilized more than **100** policemen in Germany and Austria.

WHEN DID THE CASE TAKE A TURN?

Investigators discovered the very same DNA sequence on the burned body of a male asylum-seeker in France – an anomaly since the sequence was of a female. They eventually found out that **THE PHANTOM SERIAL KILLER DID NOT ACTUALLY EXIST** and that the laboratory results were **DUE TO CONTAMINATION OF THE COTTON BUDS** used for DNA probing.



WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

ISO 18385:
Minimizing the risk of human DNA contamination in products used to collect, store and analyse biological material for forensic purposes – Requirements, is the world's first International Standard on the manufacture of forensic consumables.

The new standard outlines the requirements for the manufacture of kits and consumables for DNA analysis by the global forensic science community.