



Under the Microscope

Vol. 9 No. 3 Newsletter of IADE Fall 2024

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Nathalie A. Bureau, B.A., B.Ed.
IADE Proficiency Exam Chair

Hello fellow members of IADE. I'm honoured to have been asked to write a little greeting for our newsletter. I'm one of Canadian members and am from London, Ontario. I grew up watching my mother, Diann Vail, do forensic document examination work; my mother learned it from her mother. I now carry on the family business of document examination. I spent focused years between 2012 and 2016 doing an apprenticeship with my mother after which I studied under Kathie

Koppenhaver and Reed Hayes, completing and passing their exams; later I wrote the IADE certification exam as well.

I find fall brings on the eager cases which people have 'sat on' all summer, so I've been busy working away at my caseload. After having read the NIST report on Human Factor's in Document Examination, I have an even greater appreciation for the profession and the different schools of thought around training. If you have not read this report, which was updated in 2022, please make time to read it as I believe all examiners should be well aware of the discussion in this report.

If you were present for my webinar presentation recently, you will remember how I stressed the importance of the NIST report. You may also remember my backdrop of guitars on the wall. I wish I could say that I am an accomplished guitarist but I'm more of an enthusiast who can strum a few chords. My main instrument has always been the piano, but the ukulele has given me great creative inspirations for song-writing/playing. After watching "Some Like it Hot" with Marilyn Monroe, I decided if she can play ukulele and sing, so can I!

Enjoy the newsletter and many thanks to Monique for putting it all together.

Nathalie A. Bureau
B.A., B.Ed.



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Receipt Signatures

By Brett Goldstein

Signatures on receipts have been coined as Receipt Signatures. The term Receipt Signature is defined as, “a group of signatures that are hastily written under adverse writing conditions to acknowledge, for example, the delivery of a parcel” (Kelly & Lindblom, 2006, p.83). “Many consider this task a nuisance, and its execution is a perfunctory operation” (Kelly & Lindblom, 2006, p. 83). The purpose of this article is to investigate Receipt Signatures as very little has been written on the topic of Receipt Signatures.

Most homes have a video doorbell that captures on video people who approach the house. No one needs to prove they received a package when the video camera on the house, or a neighbor's, has recorded it. Delivery receipts have become obsolete and perhaps a perfunctory operation. As such, a symbolic signature may be used to signify that someone needs to sign but that no one would require proof of the identity of the signature.

The back of a credit card, a credit card receipt, a credit card terminal or a delivery receipt most often has a symbolic signature on it. This could be a straight line, a curved line, or a pictorial signature. The person knows the transaction will still go through regardless of what they sign or whether it matches their actual signature. This creates a problem for forensic document examiners who may be comparing formal signatures to symbolic or simplified signatures (Kelly & Lindblom, 2006).

When a forensic document examiner is examining a symbolic signature or a simplified one, textbooks and other books on Forensic document examination suggest that the forensic document examiner obtain exemplars using the same writing style as the questioned document. This includes handwriting to handwriting and print script to print script. (Dines, 1997). Textbooks and other books on Forensic document examination also discuss obtaining the same model as the questioned model. Thus, for example, checks should be compared with checks (from the same bank if possible). (Dines, 1997).

However, no such standards appear in the profession's standard operating procedures. The American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) created the first forensic document examination industry standard. By the 1990s, the FBI laboratory started to sponsor technical and scientific groups. One group, the Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination (SWGDOC), was created and published its own standards. Both groups stopped producing standards, and The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) started to publish its own standards. Neither the ASTM, SWGDOC, nor ANSI standards state the procedure for a symbolic signature. Only 6.5.4 of the ANSI/ASB Standard 070, First Edition 2022, Standard for Examination of Handwritten Items mentions extrinsic or intrinsic variables. "Factors which might affect writing include age; illness or injury; medication, drugs or alcohol (intoxication or withdrawal); awkward writing position; writing instrument(s); substrate(s); cold or heat; fatigue; haste or carelessness; nervousness; nature of the document, use of the unaccustomed hand; attempts to disguise should be considered" (ANSI, 2022, p. 8). ANSI 6.5.4 does mention haste as a variable that can affect handwriting but does not mention what to do if haste is found to be in the known or questioned documents.

Methodology

Data was collected to test the hypothesis that everyone has a Receipt Signature that they use. Signatures were collected using sample documents administered to employers who sponsor a retirement plan, like a 401k. Employers who sponsor a 401k have to file a tax form called Form 5500. This form is due to be filed with the IRS and/or Department of Labor every year. Form 5500 informs the IRS and Department of Labor about how much money is in the retirement plan and how many employees are covered by the retirement plan. Other information is also collected, which gives the IRS and Department of Labor some clues as to whether the retirement plan complies with the Internal Revenue Code. For this article, Form 5500 was compared to a legal agreement and a notice that was either handed to an employee or posted on a bulletin board.

(Continued...)

(Continued from page 2)

RESULTS

The employers selected for this experiment had different educational levels. Those levels ranged from college to those with doctorate degrees. Tenants were predominately right-handed, with only two tenants being left-handed. There were no indications that the tenants had any mental, physical, or medical conditions that would have altered their signature. The study found that seventy percent of the subjects did not alter their handwriting when asked to sign a less important document. These subjects did not have a Receipt Signature, or they did not use their receipt signature as they did not feel rushed. In addition, a Receipt Signature may not have been used as they did not perceive the experiment to be a nuisance. Only thirty percent of the subjects used their Receipt Signature when asked to sign something less important. Subject one has a simplified signature, his normal signature on legal documents. On the notice, a symbolic Receipt Signature with an attempt to write the letter 'G' was used. In the more important legal agreement, the signature was changed to a simplified signature with an attempt to write the first name, and the letter 'G' was written for the last name.

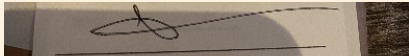


Exhibit 1a



Exhibit 1b

Subject two is an Otolaryngologist who uses a symbolic Receipt Signature for the notice, the Exhibit 2a signature. For the agreement, the Exhibit 2b signature below has a simplified signature with the first name more legible than the last name.

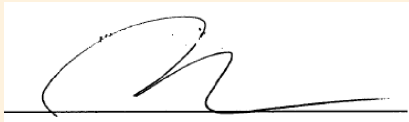


Exhibit 2a

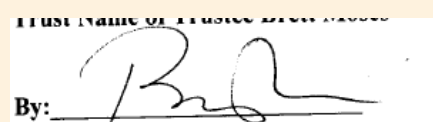


Exhibit 2b

Subject three is a notary and a bookkeeper with a retirement plan. In Exhibit 3a below, the signature on the notice has devolved into a more simplified version of the name. The first name has become an initial, while the last name shows signs of missing letters. Subject 3 was the only subject to go from a legible signature to a simplified one. Most other changes occurred in those who already had a simplified signature.



Exhibit 3a



Exhibit 3b

The findings suggest that some people do have a Receipt Signature that may be used on documents other than receipts. Whether they use their receipt signature depends on how important they feel a document is and whether they are concerned that they may need to prove they signed the document. The more important a document is, the more legible the signature may be. The less important a document is, the more symbolic or simplified it may be.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article examined the concept of Receipt Signatures and whether they are used on other documents, not just receipts. Further research is needed on this topic as a larger sample of subjects would be needed to determine what percentage of the population uses a Receipt Signature, whether they use it on more than just receipts, and whether people have more than one Receipt Signature. Until this topic can be further studied, forensic document examiners should consider the ramifications of the results of this article.

(Continued...)

Currently, the ANSI standard states that the examiner shall evaluate the known writing for the Type of Writing. "If there is more than one type of writing (hand printing, cursive writing, numerals, symbols, or combinations thereof, and signatures) within the known writing, separate the known writing into groups of a single type of writing" (ANSI, 2022, p. 6). The forensic document examiner would then compare each group to the questioned document and opine whether there are similarities or differences between each group and the questioned document.

Based on the result of this paper, the question is whether this is still a viable method for dealing with a symbolic or a simplified signature on a questioned document. By separating the signatures into groups of similar writing styles, forensic document examiners are not taking into consideration the purpose of the writing or the haste, which the ANSI standards discuss taking into consideration. By collecting random contemporaneous known signatures, forensic document examiners do not see the haste, awkwardness, or feeling of a nuisance the known writer has imparted to the document. If the known writer were forced to sell his house due to financial hardship, the known writer would not be happy about the sale. Although the known writer may not have a choice about selling, the known writer may decide to convey how much of an annoyance the sale is by using their Receipt Signature on the real estate forms.

We can only get a full and complete picture of the known writer's natural variation by obtaining the known writer's receipt signature (if one exists). Once the receipt signature has been obtained, it should be labeled RS1, RS2, RS3, and so on. These receipt signatures should then be compared to the known writers symbolic or simplified questioned document to see if the receipt signature shows any similarities or differences from the questioned document.

As people may have a Receipt Signature or multiple Receipt Signatures, it may be prudent to alter the definition of Receipt Signatures to encompass a group of symbolic or simplified signatures that are hastily written, written in adverse writing conditions (such as on a wall or a clipboard), or written when the known writer believes that the act of signing is more of a nuisance than it is beneficial.

If other studies prove that Receipt Signatures are more prevalent and used on more than just receipts, perhaps this would then also lead to the addition of a section in the ANSI/ASB Standard 070, First Edition 2022 Standard for Examination of Handwritten Items for Receipt Signatures. The proposed amended procedures could require that forensic document examiners obtain known Receipt Signatures and then compare the known Receipt Signatures to the document in question. If the known Receipt Signatures did not resemble the symbolic or simplified questioned document, then a forensic document examiner under the proposed amended guidelines could be allowed to use Identified or Eliminated.

However, forensic document examiners should now question whether they should collect Receipt Signatures when dealing with a symbolic or simplified signature. In addition, when examining a symbolic signature or a simplified one, forensic document examiners who do not collect Receipt Signatures should also question whether they should be using the Identified or Eliminated opinions.

Bibliography

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Membership

2024 Information

(Jan 1, 2024 through Dec 31, 2024)

Application Fee \$25.00

Dues \$100.00 Individual
(Annual, Pro-rated)

Lab \$100.00 First Individual
\$50.00 Additional Individuals

FOR ADDITIONAL
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2025 IADE Proficiency Exam

Proficiency Exam Info

This year's Proficiency Exam is created by Nathalie Bureau. All "Answer PDF" return forms are emailed directly to her at:

nathalie@bureaufde.com

You are given access to the three sections of the exam. It is advisable to view the samples online so there is no printer distortion.

1. Please do print the "Answer PDF."
2. Enter your IADE Member ID (no names on the exams please!)
3. Complete the exam (all three sections)
4. Scan your finished exam copy, and
5. Email it back to Nathalie Bureau no later than **January 10th, 2025**.

Proficiency Exam Materials:

Answer Form (PDF):

Exam: Section 1 "Matching"

Answer Form

Please print this out, complete it, then scan it, and return this form to nathalie@bureaufde.com no later than January 10, 2025.

In this section, you have one page image of 39 signatures. Please match 19 pairs, and 1 will be left over.

Exam: Section 2 "Tremor Task"

Exam: Section 3 "Anonymous Case"

In this section, there are three pages of checks (all images) to evaluate. Please evaluate them all. There is at least one genuine signature on each of the three sheets and a total of 6 genuine all together.

In this section, you are given a PDF with the Questioned Document and several pages of Exemplars. Please identify the writer of the anonymous segment. The writer is one of these 5. Please also include some of your observations on which your opinion is based.



Q & A



CONGRATULATIONS,

KATHIE KOPPENHAVER!

Kathie submitted the correct answer to LAST ISSUE'S QUESTION:

What is the D'Nealian Method, and how was the name derived??

A: Donald Neal Thurber created the D'Nealian Alphabet. D'Nealian alphabet system creates printed letters that can be easily changed to cursive letters. He also created a different method of holding the writing instrument between the first two fingers as opposed to being between the thumb and first finger

THIS ISSUE'S QUESTION:

Why are line quality and pressure patterns the most important handwriting characteristics when determining authenticity or spuriousness of writing?

You may submit your answer by emailing monique@amtpolitics.com

Answer will be in the next newsletter



PROFICIENCY EXAM

Instructions for the 2024-2025 Proficiency Exam were emailed from "Val Weil" on September 30th. You should have received an email from valerie@valweil.ccsend.com that looked like the picture on the left.

If you did not, you may email Valerie at valweil@comcast.net so that she can send it to you. Now that we have entered into another dimension known as the Holiday Season, time will fly faster than you can say, "Whoa!", so you don't want to put this off.

Exam must be completed and answers turned in

No Later Than January 10, 2025.

This is required for membership renewal, so **Don't forget!**



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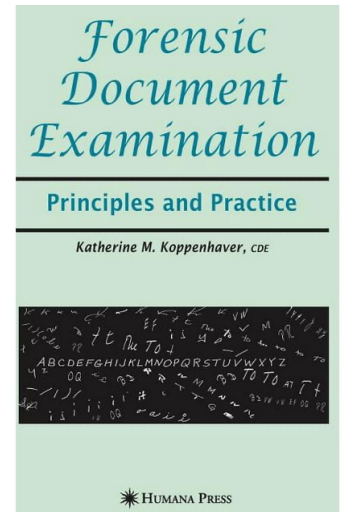
Robert Farr
*Membership Co-Chair,
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The Book Shelf

FORENSIC DOCUMENT EXAMINATION: PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE **By Kathie Koppenhaver, CDE**

This is the first textbook written specifically for the study of questioned document analysis. The text comprehensively reviews document examination, with specific attention to handwriting identification and forgery detection. Fundamental principles and techniques of document examination are presented throughout in a concise, straightforward manner. Specific concepts attended to include the factors that affect handwriting; the characteristics of handwriting; the guidelines for determining the authenticity or spuriousness of handwriting; and the proper methods for examining a case from start to finish. For the first time, criminal justice students and others requiring an introduction to document analysis will have a resource to consult that outlines the proper method for analyzing handwriting and a detailed procedure for preparing a document case. In addition to its utility as a textbook for document analysis, the book is an invaluable resource for professionals in fields where interaction with document examiners is commonplace. Police officers, private investigators, and attorneys will all benefit from a basic understanding of document examination and what is required.



We want to hear from YOU!

I.A.D.E. has over 50 members from around the globe. We need to rub elbows a little more and take advantage of this great opportunity to know others in the field and share our knowledge and experience with each other.

Tell us about your experiences, your cases, your wins, your losses. Let's hear your questions, your ideas, your stories. Everyone's experiences are unique, and what you may think is boring and mundane might be fascinating to someone else.

Cases lost can sometimes be a treasure chest of lessons to be learned. Or they could be a funny story – in hindsight.

So come on, fellow truth seekers. You don't need to be a professor or a spectacular writer. You just need to be a participant in life. And document examination.

Please send your masterpiece to: monique@amtpolitics.com



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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/4960906200608916>

RED HERRINGS AND COURT DRAMA

by Brenda Petty

There is no actual fish species 'red herring'. The term comes from heavily smoked, or brine cured herring that gives the herring a red color. 'Red Herrings' were used to train hunting dogs to stay steadfast on the scent trails when hunting fox or badger, by dragging red herrings perpendicularly across fox and badger trails to mask the fox and badger scent to confuse the hunting dogs during training so they can learn to stay on the trail without being distracted even if a different scent is found. In this generation, 'red herring' in movies and books, represents a clue that is intentionally used to point away from the truth to engage a person's attention in a different direction. However, there is an actual legal definition of 'red herring'. Cornell Law School's website states, "the primary meaning in a legal and rhetorical context, is a legal or factual issue that is irrelevant and used to divert attention away from the main issues of the case."¹

As forensic document examiners, at one time or another, we will usually find ourselves testifying as expert witnesses. As expert witnesses, there are times that each side will have engaged the services of a handwriting expert. There are other times when only one side has engaged a handwriting expert. Court hearings will either agree ahead to allow both experts to testify or agree to a voir dire process in which each witness is questioned on their credentials and then a decision is made if they have the credentials to testify as an expert witness.

The adversarial process of our court system can be challenging, to say the least. In 2024, I have pondered the areas of court that have presented the greatest challenges for me in hopes to develop a plan of action for the future. While pondering regarding all the opposing attorneys that I have faced in 2023 and years previous, I realized that much of what they attempt to do is offer red herrings. When this thought came into the 'pondering process', it offered a new insight. It was as though a light came on in my thoughts and suddenly a broadened understanding and perspective gave me answers I had not realized before. Wow! Answers on how to maneuver the 'mind field'! Being me, I thought, "How do I help someone else in my field"? To share and help requires a vulnerability that can assist those I want to benefit from my battles fought, but I also realized being vulnerable will assist those who want to cancel me. Other document examiners in different associations already keep my Curriculum Vitae/Court List, cases that haven't gone well for me in court, and anything else that can be used as a red herring in a court hearing in their file. I want to state that I do not keep other Curriculum Vitae and court lists in my file for negative endeavors to destroy the reputation of other document examiners. I think the decision of whom to believe should be based on the accuracy of the opinion and the examination. Ultimately, when faced with these situations, I have decided that someone else (judges, attorneys, other document examiners) does not get the right to destroy my livelihood and future. Sometimes the 'gut blows' have been so vicious that it takes me a while to pick myself up, dry my tears, heal the bruises, and decide to keep going. It also requires that I study more, learn more, keep up on the latest sources of information, etc. as well as help other forensic document examiners be encouraged.

From this point further, red herring questions and insinuations will be shared along with answers that I am finding along the journey. If they are not particular to your situation, take what will help and leave the rest.

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/red_herring

Continued ...

Continued from page 7

QUESTION: Ms. Petty, please tell the court how old you are?

The first time this question was asked, my answer was, “Are you allowed to ask that?”

A few additional responses are:

1. I am over 21. Thank you for your compliment in asking.
2. I am over 21. I am so sorry your mother didn’t teach you better manners.
3. I am of legal age.

QUESTION: Ms. Petty, do you mean you just eye-balled the signatures?

My first response was: “Sir, you insult me.”

Now that I have thought about the question:

1. Absolutely! One part of every thorough examination is with the natural eye.
2. The naked or natural eye is one of the most important tools that a forensic document examiner has.
3. (If you want to sound really educated): It is called a macroscopic exam and it is part of every systematic handwriting examination.

QUESTION: Ms. Petty, you don’t have a college degree, do you? You didn’t go to a brick-and-mortar school, did you? Isn’t a bachelor’s degree required to be a forensic document examiner?

Possible answers:

1. I have a diploma from the International School of Forensic Document Examination for two years of training as well as completion certificates from other training in questioned documents and forensic document examination.
2. In this generation, it is no longer necessary to attend brick-and-mortar schools to obtain an education. The authenticity of virtual schooling as well as virtual court appearances is now fully implemented into our society.
3. Expert witnesses testify under Federal Rules of Evidence 702 as well as the Daubert and Frye standards. These regulations do not include the necessity for a person to have a bachelor’s degree.
- 4.

QUESTION: Ms. Petty, in the case of such-n-so, you were not allowed to testify.

Watch for the attorney not actually asking a question. Possible answers:

1. I didn’t hear a question.

If they add a question to the end, such as, Is that correct?

2. Correct. (Do not answer more than is necessary). The attorney on the side that engaged your services should come back and allow the expert witness to give an explanation. In the pre-court conference, ask if anything like this should happen, to give you the chance to explain in the re-cross questioning.

There are no statutes or regulations that an expert witness not allowed to testify in one hearing is blocked from testifying in another hearing. This is a big red herring that is presented to stop the opposing side’s expert from testifying. Judges are the gatekeepers, and they can allow whatever testimony they choose. Judges rule differently in different circumstances and that is their right to do so. It doesn’t mean they are correct or fair or just. It is simply a matter of court drama. Do not be disheartened. Just keep your cool, breathe, and think before answering. The next judge most usually will allow the expert to testify and might even give the examiner an accolade for their testimony presence. Judges that are intent on giving just rulings will want to hear all evidence. I have been diminished by one judge and another judge called me ‘eminent’. As expert witnesses, we do not testify in perfect cases. Therefore, results can be less than perfect, too.

Continued...

Continued from page 8

If you fail to qualify with one judge, look at your methods and your exams and truthfully evaluate yourself. One of the ways to evaluate is to take a proficiency test in which there are and must be correct answers and not just an opinion. To grow stronger, wiser, and become a better examiner and expert witness, one must strengthen their weaknesses. Even Rocky Balboa had to strengthen his weaknesses. You are not a failure because you have a weakness. To be an expert witness in handwriting identification requires wisdom, knowledge, personality, ability to remain non-biased and only an advocate of the document for which you testify. In the training Katherine Koppenhaver provides, she reminds her students that it is *one's ability to do the work that sets them apart*. Growth and strength represent going to the next level. It takes initiative to gain the next level. In looking at one's own self and ability, it also takes facing the decision if the vocation is the right one.

The journey is never perfect. However, the journey is doable and possible. With the last name of Petty, I jokingly state that I try not to live up to my last name. I live with Brenda 24-7. I want her to be someone that I can live with, sleep with, eat with and that I can approve of. It doesn't matter who doesn't approve of me, it matters that I approve of myself. If I do my due diligence with the life I live, the cases I work, and continuing to educate myself in the vocation I have chosen, I will become wiser and stronger. A man named King Solomon is considered one of the wisest men that ever lived. In The Message, his words were translated, *"Observe people who are good at their work - skilled workers are always in demand and admired; they don't take a back seat to anyone."* This is still good teaching and training.

Another mentor of mine told me, "Brenda, this is the most wonderful job. All we must do is tell the truth and get paid for telling it." This mentor has been a great encourager for me because of the many adversities he has endured and yet has never stopped him. In a paper that he wrote and gave to his students titled, "Your Ethics as a QDE Expert", January 24, 2007, the following excerpt was taken,

"Operating in a judicial system that is dependent upon advocacy and a world full of wars and rumors of wars (that's Biblical, huh), how do we reconcile the conflicts which confront us at our every move, every case, every relationship and the ever changing moral and ethical challenges? Especially now that we have taken on a new role as an expert, we are expected, even more, required, to be better. During the course of our expert QDE career, we will, indeed be in conflict with many of these ethical questions. Who defines or demands such requirements of you and your ethics?

You, my fellow experts, are the final judge of your ethics. You are the only person in charge—of you! Freedom is having a choice. You have a choice! So you must study to show thyself approved—and then develop a strong set of personal rules that you can follow without question. A team is a group of people doing the same thing, the same time, the same way to get the results decided upon during the formation of the team."

As encouragement for your journey, remember 'red herrings' are everywhere. Their purpose is to turn your direction from the path you are following to an opposite direction. Don't lose sight of the result. Don't lose sight of the purpose of the hunt. Don't let lies or half-truths turn your focus. If you lose focus, be like a good hunting dog and turn back and find the scent of the trail again. Most of all, remember your purpose and vocation and that what we do as forensic document examiners has great significance.



Congratulations! New Board Members:

Wendy Carlson, Secretary
August Meyers, By-laws Chair
Diana Mears, Certification Chair



CartoonStock.com



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IT'S
GR8 2
PARTICIPATE!

Thank you!

Nathalie Bureau, Brett Goldstein, Kathie Koppenhaver, Brenda Petty,

YOUR WORDS are informative.
YOUR WORDS are meaningful.
YOUR WORDS are helpful.
YOUR WORDS are diligent.
YOUR WORDS are valuable.
YOUR WORDS are appreciated.