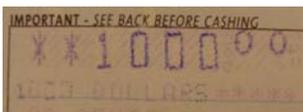

 CRIME LAB DIVISION FALL 2007 NEWSLETTER

QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS

“Dat handwriting is the worstest thing that they have against me!” This was the statement of Bruno Hauptman, the man convicted of kidnapping and the murder of Charles Augustus Lindberg, Jr. in 1932. He referred to ransom correspondence presented as handwriting evidence during the trial, a trial which would eventually result in his execution.

Forensic document examiners at the Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory identify writers by comparing questioned text to known writing of suspects. These examinations include handwriting and printing on anonymous notes (such as the ransom correspondence in the famous Lindbergh case), signatures on forged checks, and alleged forgeries on a variety of other documents.


Altered Money Order


Sharpie Permanent Marker



Ball Point Pen



Calligraphy Pen

Writing Instruments

Questions or Comments?

Email us at: George.johnston@wsp.wa.gov or call us at (206) 262-6005

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3


**Safeco Field, Seattle
Great season,
Mariners!**
TRAINING REMINDER!

Latents Prints Training:

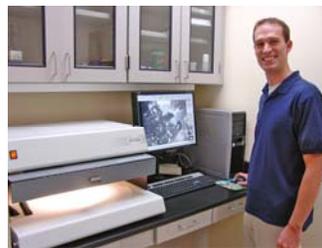
If you are interested in having our latent prints laboratory provide basic training in recovery and processing, please contact the Latent Prints Lab at

(360)-705-5988

While handwriting identification accounts for much of their work, document examiners also provide to our client agencies a variety of other services. Those services include the authentication of counterfeit documents, identification of alterations and additions to documents, and identification of photocopy, typewriter, and printing processes to trace questioned documents to their sources.

The forensic scientists of the Questioned Document Unit examine hundreds of cases per year. Their education and specialized training yield investigative information and expert testimony in a variety of cases in which document evidence plays a role. They also provide consultation and training for fraud and forgery investigators.

Our QD scientists are Jacque Minehart-Herkt and Brett Bishop. The Questioned Documents Unit is based in the Seattle Crime Laboratory, and can be reached at 206.262.6020.

Handwriting
Examination

Video Spectral Comparator

Interesting Case 1:

This case involved a suspect who allegedly broke into the house of his ex-girlfriend. The ex-girlfriend's foster daughter (19 years old) and son (13 years old) and a friend (13 years old) were at the home. The suspect repeatedly bludgeoned the girl with a hammer. When she attempted to defend herself with a kitchen knife he then turned it on her and stabbed her repeatedly. Her foster brother then came to her aid and was also bludgeoned with the hammer. Amazingly, the victims survived and the suspect was apprehended soon after the attack. His shirt and pants had several bloodstains. Blood was identified on each of the garments and tested several different stains in an attempt to match both victims to the blood. Due to the nature of the attack, most of the blood stains originated from the female victim. A few of the stains, however, were mixtures of two DNA profiles and the male victim could be included as a possible contributor. The prosecution and defense agreed to a stipulated trial, in which the young victims would not have to testify. The defendant was found guilty. This was his third strike.



Marihuana Plants



Chemistry FT-IR

Interesting Case 2:

A suspect was arrested with 3.2 grams of a white powder. Results are d,l-methamphetamine with a contaminant that indicates it was likely manufactured via a Leuckart-type reaction using clandestinely prepared P-2-P. The significance of this finding is just that it is an unusual sample compared to what we normally see now, although many years ago this was the typical sample. As the availability of pseudoephedrine as a precursor has dried up, we may expect to see more of this kind of manufacturing take place. In addition, the old clandestine lab operators familiar with this method have now mostly served their sentences and are back on the streets.

Beware of clandestine labs that aren't like those seen routinely. This may be from an old style approach.



Things to know

- Please let us know if there are specific training issues for your agency where we can help. Contact any of the labs and we can try to arrange some training to address your needs. Examples of training could include latent print processing, collection of body fluids, trace evidence recognition and collection—almost anything related to forensic evidence.
- The WSP Crime Lab Division offers classes for Leaf Marihuana Technicians, a program designed to train technicians in police agencies to analyze marihuana. This is a free class offered yearly, usually at the WSP Academy in Shelton. This training enables an agency to handle its own marihuana cases and allows the CLD to focus on the other types of drug evidence that comes into the lab. Last year, over 5,000 cases were completed by technicians across the state.

Physical Evidence Handbook (<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/about/flsbhome.htm>)

- Our Questioned Documents Section uses a Handwriting Exemplar Form to collect writing standards from subjects. The form is 4 pages and gives us a good representative collection of a person's handwriting. This form can be obtained from the Seattle lab at (206) 262-6020.
- From the Physical Evidence Handbook: Do not attempt to fit a suspected tool into a possible tool. Doing so may damage the mark itself, may alter the tool, and trace evidence may be lost or contaminated.
- Please use UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS when handling evidence. Treat all blood and bloodstained objects as sources of bloodborne pathogens and take appropriate actions (wear gloves, eye protection, masks over mouth and nose). This helps to keep the investigator safe and greatly reduces the threat of contamination.



Universal Precautions



Be careful in Handling
Evidence

Thank you for your support and your comments. If you do have a question on lab capabilities or on evidence collection, please do contact us, and we will offer any help that we can.

Please do feel free to contact the CLD Headquarters at (206) 262-6005