

CHAPTER II: HANDWRITING ANALYSIS v. **THE QUESTIONED DOCUMENT EXAMINER**

This chapter is not intended to imply that all document examiners are graphologists, nor is it meant to say that all graphologists are also document examiners. It is important to understand the differences and similarities between the two practices. One must first understand the one over which there is the greatest controversy, which is graphology. Understanding what is taught and believed about graphology helps attorneys and laymen understand the difference this training makes to a document examiner.

Document examination and graphology are two different disciplines. Both, however, deal with the study of characteristics made in manual writing. Just as an attorney studies the elements of law, the document examiner studies the elements of writing. The elements of writing are the basis for both the document examiner and the handwriting analyst. It is my opinion that the document examiner who has also studied handwriting analysis is a better examiner, as it gives him the ability to scrutinize the foundation found in all of writing.

This chapter on handwriting analysis will be of significant value to an attorney, as it will provide a good understanding of the different disciplines, and how one learns their trade.

There are two schools of thought for document examiners. There are government examiners, who typically have not had the opportunity to learn handwriting analysis. The second type of examiner, in private practice, may have acquired his developed a basis of his education from learning handwriting analysis first.

The handwriting analyst certainly has an advantage over the person who has not studied handwriting analysis, in that handwriting is probably the most revealing thing about a person. It is an extension of personality; as much a part of one as any physical

characteristic. Handwriting is a means by which people express themselves, and handwriting expresses personality.

Handwriting analysis, also referred to as graphology, is a scientific pattern of characters. It shows your emotions, abilities, and physical well-being. Handwriting is composed of many different elements: pressure, size, strokes, loops, and how all of these are connected to form words and sentences.

Handwriting cannot reveal the gender, race, or age of the writer. It cannot reveal the past or the future. Handwriting analysis can be used as a psychological tool, in that it provides insight into the personality of the writer. Handwriting analysis is a scientific discipline, and should not be confused with practices such as astrology, numerology, or tarot.

Handwriting, in simple terms, is *brainwriting*, and is revealing no matter what part of the body you use to write. The pen is a tool directed through the movement of your arm by impulses that originate in the cerebral cortex. The messages are sent by minute electrical impulses via the nervous system to your hand, arm, fingers, or even toes. The brain then causes the pen to produce the symbols we call writing.

Just as no two fingerprints are alike, no two handwritings are exactly the same. Your handwriting is unique, as is your personality. Your handwriting does change to reflect your personality and outlook on life, but aspects of your penmanship remain the same over the years, and some stroke patterns will remain identifiable.

While it is helpful you have a background in handwriting analysis, it is not a substitute for specialized training in document examination. You must take care to distinguish between the two disciplines, and to acquire adequate training specific to document examination. An Arkansas appellate court handed down a ruling in one of its cases stating that being a graphoanalyst does not qualify you to be a document examiner. In other words, the court disqualifies any person who has training in handwriting analysis

alone, without specialized training in document examination. Any attorney who does his homework will discover this ruling and use it against a handwriting analyst at trial. (See James D. Carroll et al v. State of Arkansas.)

One of the pitfalls of offering court testimony comes from the opposing attorney requesting you to analyze the handwriting of a subject for him, or trying to establish that handwriting analysis is your basic business and not document examining. The attorney may ask you to give a percentage value of how much of your work is done in document examining, and how much in handwriting analysis. If you are new to the field of document examining, you may spend more of your time doing handwriting analysis. It is recommended that you decline to do any handwriting analysis on the stand; state simply that your skills as a handwriting analyst are not relevant to the case, as you did not do any handwriting analysis in the course of your examination.