Chapter 16 Document Examination

Objectives

1. Define “questioned document.”
2. List some common individual characteristics associated with handwriting.
3. List some important guidelines to be followed for the collection of known writings for comparison to a questioned document.
4. Describe the precautions to be taken to minimize deception when a suspect is requested to write exemplars for comparison to a questioned document.
5. List some of the class and individual characteristics of a typewriter.
6. Describe the proper collection of typewritten exemplars.
7. List some of the techniques utilized by document examiners for uncovering alterations, erasures, obliterations, and variations in pen inks.

Supplementary Questions and Answers

1. Document examiners frequently uncover the original writing of words that have been crossed out with the aid of:
   a. Color photography
   b. Transmitted radiation
   c. Infrared radiation
   d. Side lighting
   e. Thin-layer chromatography

2. When dictating to a person in order to obtain samples of handwriting, one should NOT:
   a. Use paper similar to that of the questioned document
   b. Use a pen similar to that of the questioned document
   c. Dictate the contents of the text at least three times
   d. Allow the suspect to view the questioned document before dictating it
e. Use similar or the same letter and word grouping as used in the questioned document

3. If an investigator is to prepare standards from a suspect typewriter, the following procedure is recommended:
   a. Partial copies of the suspect text are to be typed in light, medium, and heavy touches.
   b. Prepare at least one copy of the text in full word-for-word order.
   c. Each character should be typed without the ribbon.
   d. Examine the type impressions left on the ribbon.
   e. All of the above are recommended procedures.

4. Inks on handwritten documents may be compared for their chemical composition by the technique of:
   a. Thin-layer chromatography
   b. Infrared spectrophotometry
   c. Ultraviolet spectrophotometry
   d. Gas chromatography
   e. None of the above

5. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
   a. An inconclusive finding by a document examiner may be due to an insufficient number of known writings available for comparison.
   b. Any object that contains handwritten or typewritten markings whose source or authenticity is in doubt is a questioned document.
   c. Once adulthood is reached, an individual's handwriting generally will not change with age.
   d. In the case of *Gilbert v. California* the court held that the taking of handwriting exemplars was not prohibited by the Fifth Amendment.
   e. Writings on a charred document may be revealed by reflecting light off the paper's surface at different angles.
6. Illuminating a document with blue-green light and using infrared-sensitive paper to record the light emanating from the document's surface describes the technique of ___________. (infrared luminescence)

Review Questions—16

1. Any object that contains handwriting or typescript and whose source or authenticity is in doubt is referred to as a (n)_____________.

2. Variations in mechanical, physical, and mental functions make it (likely, unlikely) that the writing of two different individuals can be distinguished.

3. In a problem involving the authorship of handwriting, all characteristics of both the ___________ and ___________ documents must be considered and compared.

4. True or False: A single handwriting characteristic can by itself be taken as a basis for a positive comparison. ___________

5. True or False: Normally, known writings need not contain words and combinations of letters present in the questioned document. ___________

6. As the age difference between genuine and unknown specimens becomes greater, the standard tends to become (more, less) representative of the unknown.

7. In the case of ___________, the Supreme Court held handwriting to be nontestimonial evidence not protected by Fifth Amendment privileges.

8. When requested writing is being given by a suspect, care must be taken to minimize a (n) ___________ writing effort.

9. Random wear and damage to a typewriter impart it with ___________ characteristics.

10. Examination of a document under ___________ or ___________ lighting may reveal chemical erasures of words or numbers.
11. Some inks, when exposed to blue-green light, absorb ______________ radiation and emit light.

12. Handwriting containing inks of different chemical compositions may be distinguished by photography with ____________ film.

13. ____________ writings are partially visible impressions appearing on a sheet of paper underneath the one on which the visible writing was done.

14. Many ink dyes can be separated by the technique of ____________ chromatography.