



Under the Microscope

Vol. 5, No. 2

Newsletter of IADE

2019

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DOCUMENT EXAMINATION TRAINING EDITORIAL

Document examiners in private practice are often questioned about their “lack of training in an approved laboratory.” This came about because members of the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners (ABFDE) contend that examiners in private practice do not have the training necessary to become document examiners. They state the position of the Scientific Working Group of Document Examiners (SWGDOC)

that the only way a person can become a competent examiner is by training through an approved laboratory by a person who was an approved teacher. Approved teachers are those who have undergone the same type of training, meaning, spending at least two years under the direction of a qualified examiner.

I have submitted a proposal to provide training on dealing with this issue at the Interactive Seminar of IADE in Jamaica in September. In the meantime, I would like to address this issue as it is both relevant and complex.

At present, there are 102 ABFDE examiners currently listed on the ABFDE website. Forty-seven of ABFDE members offer their services to the public. There are almost 5,000 courts in the United States. Every year, over 1 million lawsuits are filed. Obviously, not all of the cases filed involve questioned documents but there are more cases involving questioned documents than 47 people can handle.

Cross-examining attorneys like to challenge private examiners by pointing out that some of us do not qualify for membership in ABFDE because we do not have a four-year college degree. Since there are no degrees in forensic document examination, a college degree does not prepare one to be a document examiner. Many current examiners have degrees in photography, English, mathematics, and law. There are very few colleges offering courses in forensic science. I was able to take a class in college on forensic science. However, it did not contain any new information regarding handwriting identification. I was also able to audit a post-graduate course in Document Examination, but even that course is not offered on a regular basis.

There is no standard training course in document examination except for Reed Hayes and my course. Government-trained examiners review cases that come into their laboratory. According to testimony by some government-trained document examiners, it takes about two years to cover the various types of cases that their laboratory handles.

Some of the steps that we can take include qualifying questions that emphasize our training and the principles of handwriting identification that we adhere to.

Kathie



HIGH TECH SOLUTIONS

Florescence

By Bill Koppenhaver

Florescence is a property of some materials to emit light in one color when illuminated by light of a different color. The most common example of this is when Hi-lighter type pens are illuminated with ultra-violet light and produce a bright glow. The same reaction occurs in other areas of the light spectrum. The most common example of this in criminal investigation is when a bright blue light is directed at clothing and then viewed through an orange-colored filter. If there are any bodily-fluid stains present they will show up as light-colored stains that would not be visible under normal white light. The same method can be used to help discriminate between ink samples that may appear the same under white light. In the past this kind of investigation could only have been done with expensive equipment like a VSC (Video Spectral Comparator). Due to the recent advances in high-sensitivity, low-cost black & white video cameras, it is possible to utilize these techniques at a lower cost.

There are three elements necessary to utilize this florescence technique. The first is a source of bright colored light of a specific wavelength (color). A VSC uses a very bright Xenon light and then selects the specific color through the use of specialized band-pass filters that allow only one wavelength of light to pass through. An alternate approach is to use LED's (Light Emitting Diodes). LED's are small flashlight light bulb-size devices that produce a specific wavelength light when voltage is applied. Currently, they typically come in red, amber, yellow, green, blue, and white. They typically cost about \$4.00 to \$8.00 each so having a selection of colors is not expensive. Since they emit light in only one color a lamp band-pass filter is not needed.

The second element necessary is a camera filter in approximately the opposite color as the light source. That is, for a blue light an orange filter would be used. For green, a red filter is used in front of the video camera. The idea is to block the source color light while allowing other colors of light to pass through the filter. For this purpose, inexpensive photographic color filters will work fine.

Finally, the third element is a relatively light sensitive black & white camera. Most of these cameras are developed for the security industry so that they are inexpensive and some even connect directly to an ordinary television set. The one I am currently using is in the form of a low power microscope with the appropriate close up lens and is quite compact and light weight. It can even be adapted for use through an ordinary microscope for additional magnification.

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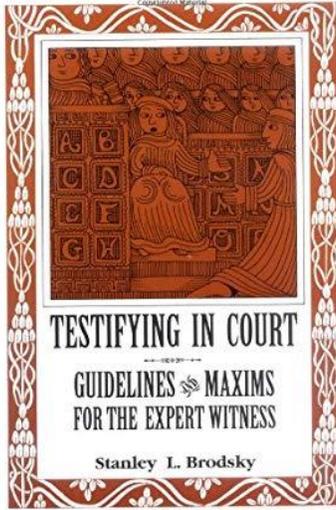
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The Book Shelf

TESTIFYING IN COURT

By Stanley L. Brodsky



There are numerous how-to books on the market for expert witnesses. Succeeding as An Expert Witness by Harold Feder, Daniel A. Bronstein's Law for the Expert Witness, D. W. Reynolds guide for police officers testifying in court entitled The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing But, and Dan Poynter's The Expert Witness Handbook all have something to offer the expert witness. Some are more relevant than others.

One of the best books on the subject is Testifying in Court by Stanley L. Brodsky. Stanley L. Brodsky is a psychologist who teaches at the University of Alabama. His book is geared to mental health experts but much of his advice applies to any expert witness. He subtitled his book, "Guidelines and Maxims for the Expert Witness."

He could have titled it the ABC's of Testifying as he utilizes an alphabetical order for his chapters. For example, he begins with A. Chapter One is Admit-Deny followed by Advocacy. Under B is listed Becoming Current and Burden of Proof and Degree of Certainty. C starts with Challenges to Experience. This technique makes it easy to locate a topic for review.

Each chapter begins with a problem for the expert witness which is followed by an example. Suggested methods of handling the difficulties are presented followed by a maxim. Most of the suggestions can be adapted for document examiners.

The recommendations in Testifying in Court will assist an expert in fine-tuning his performance in court. The information is applicable for beginners as well experienced expert witnesses. This book should be read and referenced frequently. There is much to be assimilated and the reader would do well to study the maxims at the end of each chapter. For example, "Neither fraternize nor discuss the case with opposing counsel, other witnesses, clients, or jurors."

This is one of several books by Stanley L. Brodsky. Others include The Expert Expert Witness and Coping with Cross-Examination and Other Pathways to Effective Testimony." All of his books contain information that is valuable to anyone who testifies as an expert. This book is available and I highly recommend it.



Membership

2019 Information

(March 1, 2019 through February 29, 2020)

Application Fee \$25.00

Dues \$100.00 Individual
(Annual – Prorated)

Lab \$100.00 First Individual
\$50.00 Additional Individuals

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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Deadline for next issue

July 18, 2019



The International Association of Document Examiners (IADE) was incorporated on January 7, 2015 in Maryland. Kathie Koppenhaver is the resident agent and President of the organization. Kathy Carlson is Vice President, Beth Chrisman is Secretary, and William Smith is Treasurer.

Q & A

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWER:

Some of the reasons that will cause a writer to stylize their handwriting are individual taste, degree of manual dexterity, occupation, and environment.
(Osborne p. 168)

What two words in the English language have all five vowels in order?

Answer will be in the next issue.

If you would like to submit an answer, contact the editor. See page 3.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

Dear Members,

We have a real need for articles. If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter, please contact me at ...

DianaJ.Mears@comcast.net

The Deadline is July 18, 2019



Congratulations

Tips and Tactics

Professionalism

1. Document Examiner must demonstrate knowledge of subject and be able to state basic principles.
2. Systematic Examination followed.
3. Know how to use equipment.
4. How to document findings include photography.
5. Know limitations: not overstate abilities.
6. State credentials accurately.
7. Follow chain of custody.
8. Know how to handle and safeguard documents.
9. Know how to write reports.
10. Dress appropriately.
11. Maintain proper records = federal guidelines
12. Know how to take request writing
13. Know how to collect exemplars
14. Basic knowledge of legal terms
15. Basic Knowledge of court procedures
16. Know how to testify
17. Understand Ethics of Profession

Join me in congratulating our newest CQDE . . .

[Beverley East!](#)



CONFERENCE/SEMINAR PAGES



IADE ANNUAL CONFERENCE JAMAICA

SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2019

Hilton Rose Hall Resort

Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa
P.O. Box 999 Montego Bay, Jamaica
+1 (876) 953-2650

[Registration Form](#)

Conference Fees listed below . . .

Early-early Bird \$250 Deadline May 31, 2019

Early Bird \$275 Deadline July 31, 2019

Regular Cost \$300 Begins August 1, 2019

Room Rates - \$268 Single, \$290 Double, Third Person \$99

(Rates include all your meals, snacks, and a multitude of activities)

Also, rates are good for 3 days on either side of the conference dates if you wish to stay longer.

Make out check to IADE and send it with your application for the seminar to:
William Smith, CFDE 10019 Sweetleaf Street Orlando, FL. 32827