

**BATES' I.S.Q.D.
IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR
QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS**

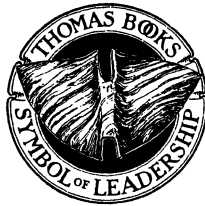
Second Edition

BATES' I.S.Q.D.

Identification System
for Questioned Documents

By

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PREFACE

Questioned Document Examination has two essential parts: discovery and proof.

The purpose of this book is to put at the fingertips of the investigator a scientific method of discovery of the fact and of proving it.

Part I of this book presents a scientific method for comparing questioned writing with genuine writing. Although the handwriting features illustrated in this book are not the only ones possible for consideration, they do provide reliable and valid points for comparison.

Part II of the book deals with the preparation of the facts for presentation and the method of presenting them to those who legally are to decide the matter in court.

And finally, in Part III of this book, a sample demonstration is offered using twelve points of comparison.

In this Second Edition of *BATES' IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS* the original twelve points of comparison are maintained while additional information is introduced to assist the examiner in both conducting the examination and its presentation.

Along with providing reasons and bases for the examiner's opinion, this book adds information on qualified opinions based on writing conditions, disguised writing and lack of quality or number of specimens.

Terminology used by examiners to express their findings, based on degree of certainty, is shown. The meanings of these opinions or gradations of certainty are explained as they relate to questioned and standard written materials and assist the examiner in reaching a better-defined opinion.

Information on digital imaging as it pertains to cameras and other devices is covered along with its use in illustrative presentations. The

value of presenting illustrations to juries and other observers is discussed along with methods for authenticating illustrations during testimony. Advice on marking documents and how to help prevent accidental altering of evidence is also covered.

To add to the impact of presentations by the examiner, individual point illustrations are shown. In this Second Edition, the *BATES' I.S.Q.D.: Identification System for Questioned Documents* continues to assist the investigator or examiner in the discovery of truth and fact.

Garland D. Lewis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For over fifteen years, as a Forensic Document Examiner, I have utilized the I.S.Q.D. methods authored by Billy Prior Bates in 1970. I have found this system to be a sound and logical method in assisting me with identifying and comparing handwriting and its characteristics. This same system also provides the examiner with a method needed to demonstrate the examiner's findings to the observer or trier of fact.

By using Bates' Identification System for Questioned Documents, the examiner is able to inform the observer, and then allow the observer to accompany the examiner through the twelve points of comparison. By this method, the observer should be able to reach the same logical opinion as the examiner. It is my hope that by reintroducing the original work of Billy Prior Bates, it will continue to assist investigators and forensic document examiners.

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**BATES' I.S.Q.D.
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Part I
METHODOLOGY

Section 1

HANDWRITING REDUCED TO STROKES

There is no reason why any questioned written material cannot undergo a scientific method of testing much the same as any other laboratory test.

Questioned document examination is probably best described as involving a combination of art and science. This is based on the fact that whereas scientific methods are used during the comparison process, an interpretive element is also involved in explaining what was discovered during the examination.

The Identification System for Questioned Documents breaks down handwriting into two fundamental strokes—the straight stroke and the curve—and the direction in which they are written. No letters or words, as such, are considered. Only the strokes, wherever they may occur, and in whatever formation they may appear, are weighed in their relationship to other strokes in the writing.

It is through the combination of two or more of these fundamental strokes that writing is constructed. Two curves for example, can be put together in one way to form what is known as a loop, or they can be put together in another way to form what is known as a circle.

Just as important as the number of times a letter stroke or characteristic appears in a writing is the fact that it does appear.

Section 2

TWELVE POINTS OF COMPARISON

The first step in any handwriting comparison is to observe the general appearance of the questioned writing as compared with the genuine standard writing. By this method, conspicuous characteristics are determined. It is in the breakdown of handwritten minutia that the inconspicuous characteristics are detected.

The following method of making a scientific comparison, stroke by stroke, of a questioned writing with a genuine writing, places handwriting identification on the same basis as fingerprint identification. No matter in which laboratory the test is made, or by which trained examiner it is made, the conclusion or opinion will hold true.

POINT 1: UNIFORMITY

Does the questioned writing have a smooth, rhythmic, free-flowing appearance?



Are the strokes connected in a smooth, rhythmic manner?

POINT 2: IRREGULARITIES

Does the questioned writing appear awkward, ill-formed, messy, and slowly drawn, giving the look of a general lack of harmony indicating unnaturalness?

Penrod and Sam

Are the strokes patched, retouched?

Penrod and Sam

Are there small marks near the strokes?

Penrod and Sam

Are the strokes wavering?

Penrod and Sam

Are the strokes broken?

o a g b c o

Are the circle formations made up of separate strokes?

Sam

Are there pen lifts?

Penrod and

Are there vertical strokes mixed with a forward slant? (See Sec. 6.)

Foodie

Look for individualized strokes (not a sign of forgery) for identification.

POINT 3: SIZE AND PROPORTION

Habit impels us to write in the same relative proportion. While a ruler may be used to measure the height of the letter strokes, the