



Statement of Qualifications

M. Patricia Fisher, M.J.¹

BFDE² - Board Certified Forensic Document Examiner

Overview

Over 30 years full time work as a forensic document examiner on cases involving a broad range of document examination problems that use **non-destructive** testing including:

- Handwriting/signature identification
- Fabricated and/or altered documents
- Identification problems involving typewriters, computer printouts, e-mail printouts, watermarks, papers, writing instruments and intersections of lines, among others.

Specializes in questioned documents in probate and financial elder abuse matters, altered and fabricated documents, and complex cases involving multiple document issues.

Qualified to testify in Federal and State Courts in California, New York, and Nevada in over 300 court proceedings since 1979. Additional testimony provided in arbitrations, hearings, and depositions.

Laboratory

Standard testing procedures using state-of-the-art laboratory including the ESDA Lite for indented writing testing, the Video Spectral Comparator (VSC®80i) for testing requiring a range of light and infrared and ultraviolet sources for paper and ink examinations, and an Olympus stereo-zoom trinocular microscope with attached digital camera with 4K resolution.

Professional education and publications

Actively participates on an annual basis in training workshops and continuing education related to the field of forensic document examination field. Extensive background in teaching and writing for presentation of document issues to the layperson and in writing laboratory reports. A frequent presenter at professional meetings. Twenty publications in the field.

Certification and Professional Associations

Diplomate of and certified by the Board of Forensic Document Examiners (BFDE) and the Association of Certified Fraud Specialists (ACFS). Editor of the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination*- 2005-2018. Currently on the Editorial Board. Member of the International Graphonomics Society (IGS), an international organization of academics, researchers, pattern recognition scientists, and document examiner practitioners.

¹ Masters in Journalism, University of California, Berkeley

² The BFDE's certification program has been accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board.

***Academic background**

- 1994** M.J., Master's Degree in Journalism, Graduate School of Journalism, University of California, Berkeley. Professional Project: On the Trail of the Trawniki Card (an independent investigation of an historical document in the State of Israel v. Ivan [John] Demjanjuk).
- 1965** California Secondary Teaching Credential, San Francisco State University. Currently holds California Lifetime Teaching Credential.
- 1963** B.A., Mills College, Oakland, California.

*Note: There is currently no academic degree in the United States for the examination of questioned documents.

Certifications

- 2003 (recertified 2008, 2013, 2018, 2023)** - Board of Forensic Document Examiners (BFDE). The BFDE's certification program is accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board.
- 2000** Certified, Association of Certified Fraud Specialists.
- 1999** Certified by testing, Association of Forensic Document Examiners.

Appointments/positions

- 2005-2018** Editor of the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination*, a peer Reviewed journal with international Editorial and Scientific Advisory Boards.
- 2016 - present** - Vice-President, Board of Forensic Document Examiners.
- 2019 - present** - Editorial Board for the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination*.
- 2021** - Appointed as an Observer for the American Standards Board.

Initial Training

1982-1985

Completed three years on-site training under the mentorship of George E. Posner, a specialist in forensic photography and questioned documents. The training included the use of infrared and ultraviolet examinations of inks and papers, advanced typewriting identification, sequencing of ink lines, the effective use of photographs in court exhibits, evidence handling, as well as training in other technical areas of forensic document examination. Prior to mentoring Ms. Fisher, Mr. Posner had completed a two week seminar on Questioned Documents and Photography at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in the mid 1970's, and he had published a paper titled, "Soaked, Charred or Altered Logs and Maintenance of Preservation and Restoration," in the 1980 Proceedings of the 11th International Seminar of the International Society of Air Safety Investigators. Mr. Posner routinely critiqued Ms. Fisher's work and prepared photographic exhibits for her reports and testimony.

Training and continuing education

1984- 2022

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Over 1000 hours of training workshops and continuing education seminars related to forensic document examination. Sponsors of these seminars include: the Association of Forensic Document Examiners (AFDE); the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS); the International Graphonomics Society (IGS); the Australasian Society of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc.(ASFDE); the National Forensic Science Technology Center; International Association of Forensic Sciences (IFS); National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST); the Rochester Institute of Technology; the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation; and the Institute of Paper Chemistry.

Special workshops and training programs (partial list)

- 2021 - Report writing (ASFDE)
- 2019 Workshop on Write-on 3, Pikaso Software
Deciphering Complex Electrostatic Detection Apparatus Impressions (AAFS)
- 2015 ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and Laboratory Accreditation, American Association
for Laboratory Accreditation; Classification of Typewritten Documents (AAFS).
- 2014 Bias in Forensics and Questioned Document Examination and Enhancement of Evidence
Using Various Filter and Lighting Techniques (AAFS).
- 2013 Signature Examination of Healthy and Impaired Writers (AAFS); Measurement Science
and Standards in Forensic Handwriting Analysis (NIST),
- 2010 Determining common authorship amongst multiple simulated signatures, workshop
conducted by Bryan J. Found, Ph.D.(AFDE).
- 2006 Fundamentals of Microscopy for Forensic Document Examiners, Hooke College of
Applied Sciences, the McCrone Group, Westmont, Illinois.
- 2005 Examinations by Video Spectral Comparator (AAFS); Chinese
Handwriting Examination (IFS); and Disguise in Handwriting (AFDE).
- 2003 Printing Process Identification and Image Analysis for Forensic Document Examiners, a
four day training session, Rochester Institute of Technology, New York, June.
- 1996 Ten hour program titled, *The Forensic Application of Behavioral Artifacts: Handwriting
Examination*, taught by Bryan J. Found, Research Scientist and Forensic Consultant (Seminar
Held in El Paso, Texas). Certificate of participation awarded by LaTrobe University, Melbourne,
Australia.
- 1987 Nine-day training program titled, *Paper Fiber Analysis*, conducted by the Institute of
Paper Chemistry in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Presentations, papers, and training at professional meetings (partial list)

Opening presentations

Signatures of persons with parkinsonism and hepatic encephalopathy as comparison standards, co-authored with Carl E. Anderson, M.D., 9th Biennial Conference for the International Graphonomics Society, Singapore, June 1999. Selected as one of the opening papers for the conference.

PI's and Experts in a Digital World, opening presentation for the California Association of Licensed Investigators' Annual Conference, Indian Wells, California, June 2000.

Special presentation

Co-authored with Leonard P. Chen, Ph.D. ***Latent Images: the First Impression Primary or Secondary?*** Presented at the 15th Triennial Conference of the International Association of Forensic Sciences, UCLA, August 1999 (Dr. Chen, presenter) and the Association of Forensic Document Examiner's Annual Symposium, Scottsdale, Arizona, November 1999 (Ms. Fisher, presenter)

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Invited speaker for presentations on questioned documents in probate, trust, and financial elder abuse cases

Using Technology to Solve Disputed Documents in Probate, Trust, and Financial Elder Abuse Cases, Estate Planning Council Mt. Diablo, Lafayette, California, January, 2022.

Detecting and Resolving Questioned Documents in Probate, Trust, and Financial Elder Abuse cases: a Document Examiner's Perspective, Litigation and Mediation Committee of the East Bay Trust and Probate Lawyers, Oakland, California 2019.

Questioned Documents and Financial Elder Abuse, training session of the Bay Area Chapter of Legal Nurse Consultants, South San Francisco, California, January 2015.

Fraud by Forgery – Protecting the Estate, Professional Fiduciary Association of California's annual conference, Burlingame, California, April 2015.

Are your Clients' Transfer Documents the Result of Financial Elder Abuse? Presented with Lizabeth N. de Vries, Esq. for the Legal Assistance for Seniors annual conference at Hastings Law School, San Francisco, California, May 2015.

Training: The Role of the Investigator in Financial Elder Abuse Cases When Documents are in Dispute, California Association of Private Investigators, East Bay District, Richmond, California, 2014.

Questioned Documents in Complex Probate, Trust and Financial Elder Abuse cases, Solano County Bar Association Trusts and Estates Section, 2011.

Forgery and Financial Elder Abuse – Red Flags, Litigation and Mediation Committee of the Alameda County Bar Association Trust and Estate Sections, Oakland, California, 2009.

Extraordinary Roles and Remedies – Questioned Documents in Financial Elder Abuse Cases, Contra Costa County Bar Association Elder Law Section MCLE, 2009.

Forgery and Financial Elder Abuse, Association of Certified Fraud Specialists, National Conference, San Francisco, California, September 2008.

Questioned Documents in Probate Litigation, Alameda County Bar Association's Litigation Section, Oakland, California, 2006.

Guest trainer on questioned documents in probate matters for the Training Conference of the California Association of Public Administrators, Public Guardians and Public Conservators, 1995.

Questioned Documents in Probate Cases, Attorneys Probate Association of San Francisco, 1994.

Wills in Question, Probate and Trust Section of the San Francisco Bar Association, 1990.

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Additional presentations and training for professionals (partial list)

He Sold Me the Business. Look, I have the documents! Alameda County Bar Association's Business Section, November 2022.

Reflected Light and Scanning Electron Microscopy – Applications to a Writing Sequence Analysis, Joseph G. Barabe & M. Patricia Fisher, Association of Forensic Document Examiners Annual Symposium, Phoenix, Arizona, October 2022.

Write-On 3.0 in Action, Association of Forensic Document Examiners Annual Symposium, Phoenix, Arizona, October 2022.

Assisting Clients when Documents are in Dispute, National Association of Licensed Investigators (NALI), Mid-Winter 2022 Virtual Conference, February.

Laboratory Accreditation: ISO/IEC 17025 Demystified for the Sole Practitioner, Co-presented with Karin Athanas, Program Manager of the American Association of Laboratory Accreditation, Association of Forensic Document Examiners Symposium, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina October 30, 2016.

Document Examination for Defense Investigators, Defense Investigators' Training Academy, Alan Hancock College, Criminal Justice program, Lompoc, California, August 2005 and June 2014.

Case study: Identifying the Signer of a Questioned Electronic Signature, 2011 Association of Forensic Document Examiners Annual Continuing Education Symposium, Louisville, Kentucky.

Writing a Persuasive Report, Association of Forensic Document Examiners Annual Educational Seminar, Tucson, Arizona, September 2007.

Complexity, a Case Study, Association of Forensic Document Examiners Annual Continuing Education Symposium, San Antonio, Texas, October, 2005.

Publications (partial list by subject)

Probate, trust, and financial elder abuse cases

Fisher, M.P. (2014). *Red Flags: questioned documents in financial elder abuse cases*. PI Magazine. 28 (4), 55-58.

Anderson, C.E., Fisher, M.P. (2000). *Signatures of persons with parkinsonism and hepatic encephalopathy as comparison standards*. J. Forensic Document Examination. 13, 1-8.

Fisher, M.P. (1989). *Holographic will – genuine or fabricated?* Independent Association of Questioned Document Examiners Journal. 2(1), 4-13.

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Medical records

Chen, L.P, Fisher, M.P. (2001). *Latent images: the first impression, primary or secondary?* J. Forensic Document Examination. 14, 53-71.

Trial preparation

Fisher, M.P. (1996). *Genuine Draft*. Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journal: Verdicts and Settlements Supplement. May 31, 1, 6.

Documents in a sexual harassment case

Fisher, M.P. (2000). *Statement tips husband's hand*. California Association of Licensed Investigators Journal. 33(3-4), 9-11.

Daubert hearing in U.S. v. Starzecpyzel

Fisher, M.P. (1995). *A guide to the Daubert hearing in U.S. v. Starzecpyzel, Part I*. J. Questioned Document Examination. 4(2), 3-13.

Fisher, M.P. (1996). *A guide to the Daubert hearing in U.S. v. Starzecpyzel, Part II*. J. Questioned Document Examination. 5(1), 20-32. Fisher, M.P. (1996).

Fisher, M.P. (1996). *A guide to the Daubert hearing in U.S. v. Starzecpyzel, Part III*. J. Questioned Document Examination. 5(2), 27-42.

Fabricated documents

Fisher, M.P., Barabe, J.G., Rantanen, W. (2007). *"Rare 1972 Marilyn Monroe Oyama Photo Book" – Genuine or a Fabrication*. J. Forensic Document Examination. 18, 41-62.

Fisher, M.P. (1992). *Case of the upside down watermark*. San Francisco Trial Lawyer. 12(1), 1, 4, 6-7.

Anonymous writings

Fisher, M.P. (1995). *Anonymous writings: at the workplace*. California Association of Licensed Investigators Newsletter. 28(6), 11-12, 45.

Obtaining request standards

Fisher, M.P., Posner, G.E. (1984). *Obtaining handwriting standards*. The Legal Investigator. November XIV (2), 17-20.

Book reviews

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Fisher, M.P. (2012). *Book Review: The Neuroscience of Handwriting: Applications for Forensic Document Examiners*. J. Forensic Document Examination. 22, 65-68.

As Editor of the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination*, supervised the editorial board's commentary (2011). *Commentary: Revisited: The Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents: Second Edition* (2006). J. Forensic Document Examination. 21, 61-81.

Interview with Bryan Found, PhD Neuroscience

Fisher, M. P (2015). *A discussion of issues around human factors and bias in forensic handwriting examinations: the present and future for practitioners*. J. Forensic Document Examination, 25, 5-16.

In the media

2020 - Document examiner interviewed in part four of a four part documentary on FX on Hulu titled, *The Most Dangerous Animal of All*. The title is based on the book of the same name, a **New York Times** best seller. Ms. Fisher critiqued the work of the document examiner who claimed the handwriting he was provided was that of the Zodiac killer.

2018 - Interviewed for an article published 11/17/18 in **Mother Jones** related to signature comparisons on voting ballots.

2004 - Interviewed by NPR's **All Things Considered** on document examiners' reactions to the questioned George W. Bush military letters featured on CBS's program "60 Minutes."

1993 - *Proving False*, an article about M. Patricia Fisher's work as a document examiner, published in the October 1993, issue of **California Lawyer**.