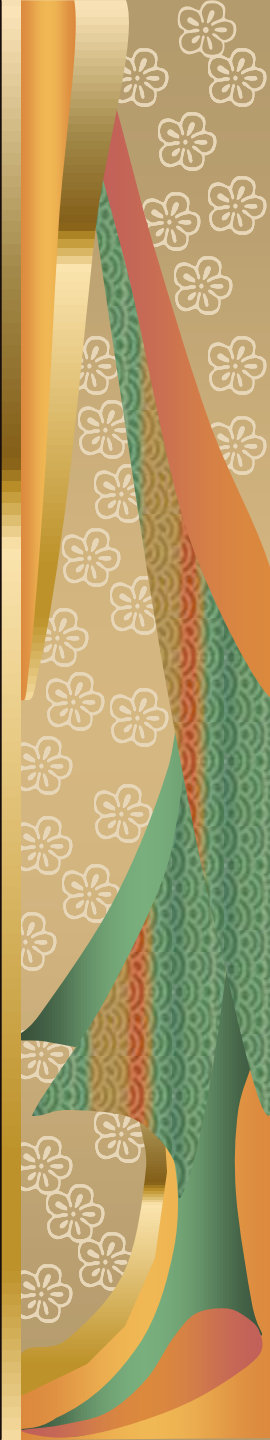


# Anonymous Writing

Kathie Koppenhaver  
Certified Questioned  
Document Examiner










# Anonymous Writing

- Anonymous writing is writing without the writer identifying himself.
- Anonymous writing is generally disguised in an attempt to hide the identify of the writer.
- Osborn calls the anonymous letter writer “an assassin of character.”



# Anonymous Writing

 Anonymous writing occurs on:

-  Poison pen letters,
-  Threatening notes,
-  Ransom notes,
-  Bomb Threats,
-  Blackmail,
-  Graffiti, and
-  Vandalism



# Anonymous Writing

- Osborn says that anyone can be the victim of letters of this kind.
- He also says that anonymous letters may be the victim of a practical joke up to threats of kidnapping, arson and murder.



# Anonymous Writing

- The anonymous letter writer is convinced that he can disguise his writing sufficiently that it cannot be identified.
- He or she is not aware that his habits come through in his writing because he isn't aware of most of his habits.



# Anonymous Writing

- The anonymous letter writer is usually an acquaintance of the recipient.
- The recipient frequently knows who sent the anonymous writing.
- In many cases, the recipient is also the anonymous letter writer.



# Anonymous Writing

- Anonymous letter writers may be looking for attention.
- The writer may be jealous.
- The writer may have a grievance against the recipient.
  - For example, a man who was passed over for promotion, accused a fellow employee of having an affair with her boss because she got the promotion.



# Anonymous Writing

- Anonymous writers expect that his or her disguise will prevent recognition.
- When identified, the anonymous letter writer will deny writing any letters.
- However, once an anonymous letter writer is identified, he will stop sending poison pen letters.





# Anonymous Writing

- Anonymous writing is always disguised.
- Anonymous letter writers will often try to appear illiterate.
- Anonymous letter writers will misspell small words and correctly spell more difficult ones.



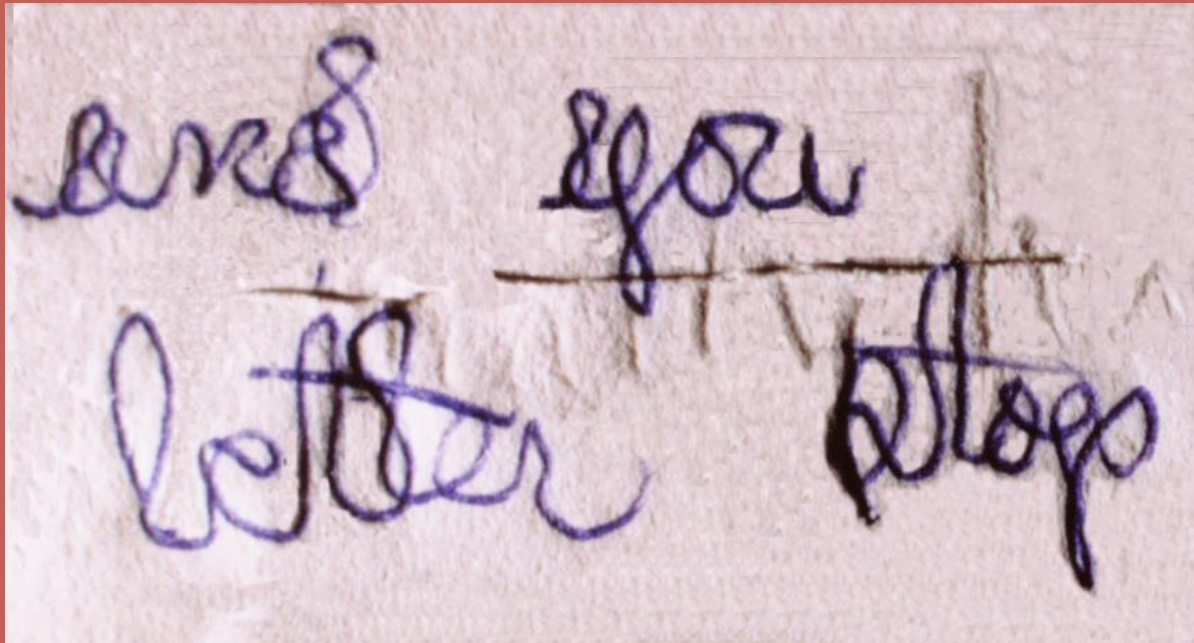
# Anonymous Writing

- ❏ Poison pen letters are common.
  - ❏ Poison pen letters usually make negative statements about the victim.
  - ❏ Poison pen letters sometimes accuse a spouse of having an affair.

NOBODY LIKES YOU.  
YOU R A PIG.  
GO AWAY AND  
LEAVE US ALONE.

# Anonymous Writing

- Threatening notes are warnings that something is going to happen to the recipient.



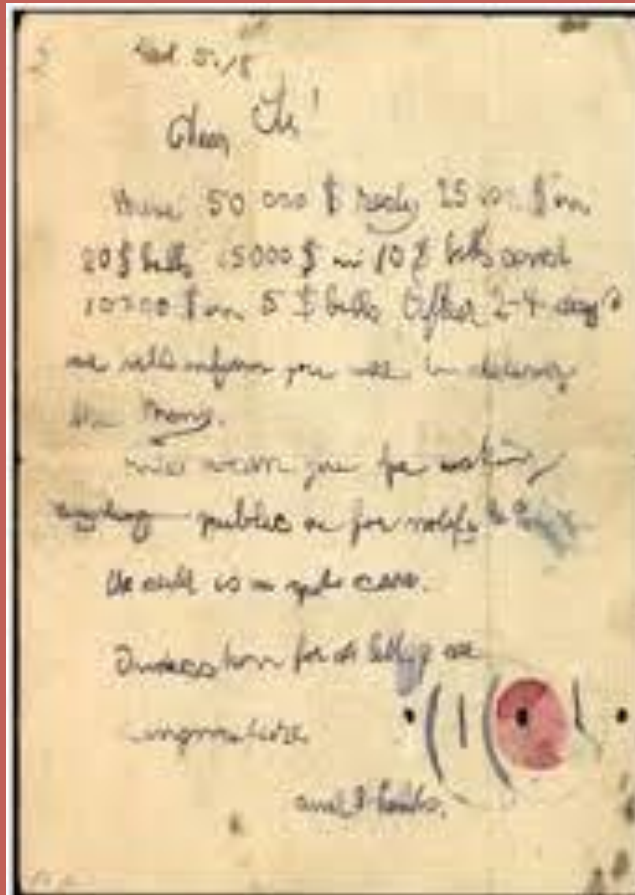
# Anonymous Writing

- ❏ Ransom notes are demands for money in exchange for the release of the kidnap victim.
- ❏ The Lindbergh kidnapping was the most famous case involving ransom notes.
- ❏ The Lindbergh case introduced handwriting examiners to the court system.
- ❏ The most well known ransom note is the Jon-Benet Ramsey Note.



# Anonymous Writing

## Lindbergh Ransom Note



# Anonymous Writing

## Jon-Benet Ramsey Note

Mr. Ramsey,

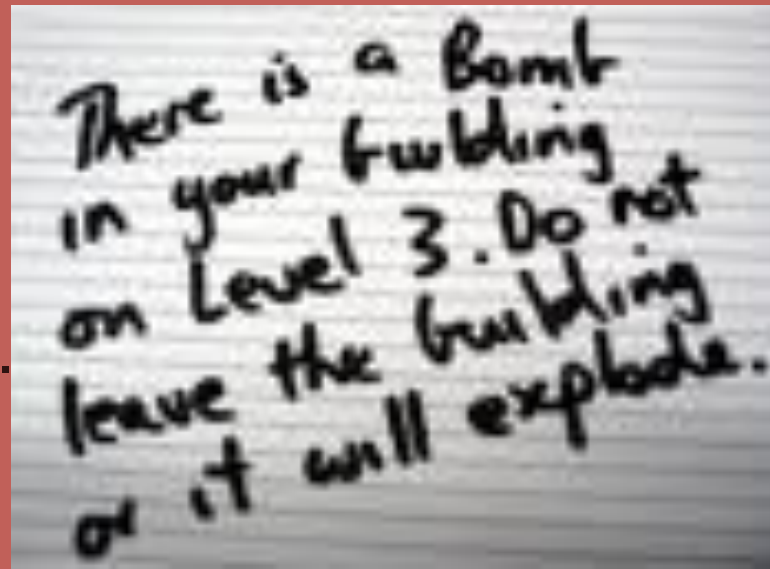
Listen carefully! We are a group of individuals that represent a small foreign faction. We do respect your business but not the country that it serves. At this time we have your daughter in our possession. She is safe and unharmed and if you want her to see 1997, you must follow our instructions to the letter.

You will withdraw \$118,000.00 from your account. \$100,000 will be in \$100 bills and the remaining \$18,000 in \$20 bills. Make sure that you bring an adequate size attaché to the bank. When you get home you will put the money in a brown paper bag. I will call you between 8 and 10 am tomorrow to instruct you on delivery. The delivery will be exhausting so I advise you to be rested. If we monitor you getting the money early, we might call you early to arrange an earlier delivery of the



# Anonymous Writing

- ❧ Bomb Threats  
Bomb threats are frequently made by students.



There is a Bomb  
in your building  
on Level 3. Do not  
leave the building  
or it will explode.

# Anonymous Writing

## ▣ Graffiti

- ▣ Graffiti may mark the territory of a gang.





# Anonymous Writing

- ❏ Vandalism is malicious destruction of property.
- ❏ Vandalism sometimes contains written communication.



# Anonymous Writing

QUESTIONED  
ENVELOPES

KNOWN

Heighe	i	l	Jessica	K-3
Street	e	e	Loewe	K-3
Lyla	a	a	Jessica	
				K-3
Lyla	L	L	Loewe	K-3

# Anonymous Writing

QUESTIONED  
ENVELOPES

KNOWN

21014 2 2 9/27/02 K-19

99 Tale 9 9 9/27/02 K-19

21014 O O LOEWE K-1

Heishe i | Jessica k-3

# Anonymous Writing

- Consider the following with anonymous writers:
  - Education level – feigned illiteracy.
  - Degree of Culture – slang, idioms.
  - Technical Knowledge – terms used.
  - Grammar – errors in punctuation, spelling.
  - Familiarity with recipient.



# Anonymous Writing

- **METHODS OF DISGUISE**
  - **ALTERED LETTER FORMS.**
  - **BLOCK LETTERS.**
  - **OTHER-HAND WRITING.**
  - **UNUSUAL LETTER FORMS.**



LAST

# Anonymous Writing

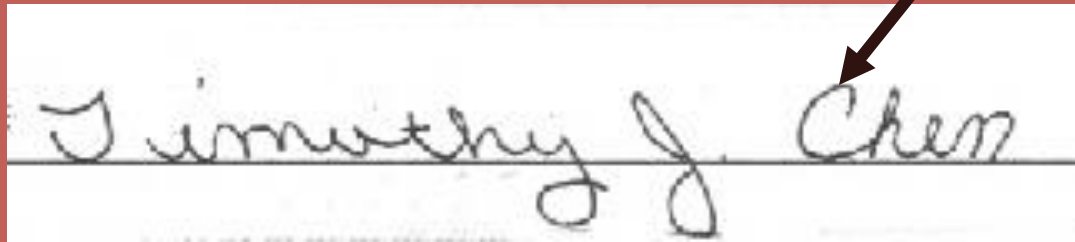
- Some writers will
  - write upside down,
  - change the writing instrument,
  - increase their writing speed,
  - slur their writing,
  - decrease speed and write with slow deliberate effort.





# Anonymous Writing

- The primary sign of disguise is inconsistencies within the writing.
- The writer reverts back to his or her normal writing when attention wanes.











Timothy J. Chen

The image shows a handwritten signature 'Timothy J. Chen' on a white background. The signature is written in cursive. A black arrow points from the top right towards the word 'Chen', highlighting a specific part of the writing. The signature is written on a horizontal line.

# Anonymous Writing

## **SIGNS OF DISGUISE**

-  Poor rhythm
-  Erratic rhythm
-  Change of slant
-  Change of speed
-  Change of skill level
-  Misspelling
-  Poor grammar
-  Lower skill level





# Anonymous Writing

## INTENTIONALLY DISGUISED NUMBERS

7 7 7 7 7 7 7

7 7 7 7 7 7 7

00 00 00 00 00 00 00

10 10 10 10 10 10 10

# Anonymous Writing


I'm gonna kick  
ass. The bitches  
gonna Be afraid of  
me I'm gonna get  
them bitches. too

KATHY TOLD ME  
LAST YEAR. YOU GUYS


Mommy



# Anonymous Writing


 Writing usually reverts to normal writing periodically

QUESTIONED	KNOWN
A	A
M	M
N	N



# Anonymous Writing

QUESTIONED	KNOWN
A	A
M	M



Idiosyncrasies will show up  
in disguised writing



# Anonymous Writing

- Anonymous writers try to change the appearance of their writing while they overlook many of their normal habits.
- Most of a writer's inconspicuous writing habits will be found in disguised writing.



# Anonymous Writing

## IDENTIFYING THE WRITER:

Look for characteristics that the writer fails to change:

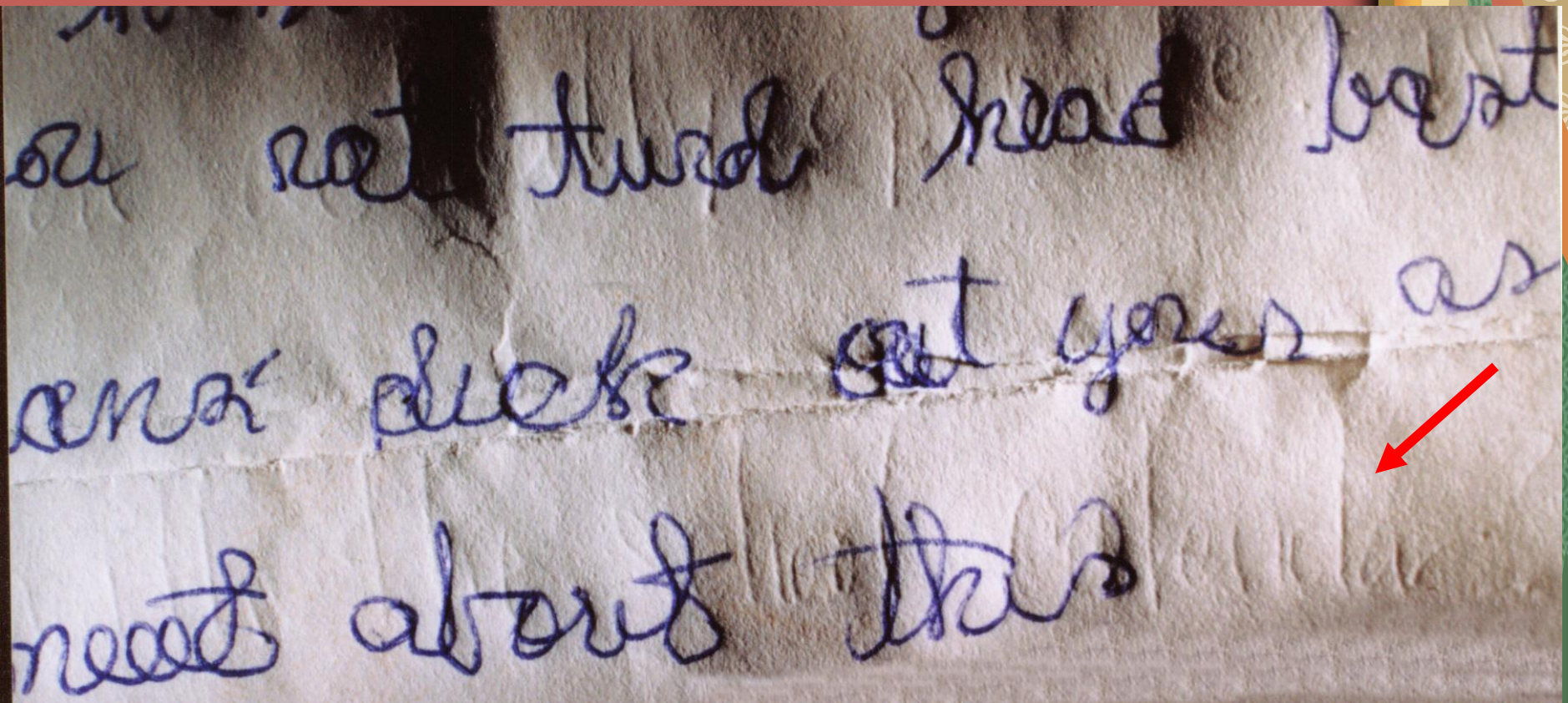
- Proportions
- Spacing
- Baseline alignment
- Margins
- Method of construction
- Patterns





# Anonymous Writing

ou not turn head best  
and die out your as  
need about this

A photograph of a piece of lined paper with handwritten text in blue ink. The text is written in a cursive style and is somewhat difficult to read. A red arrow points to a specific area on the right side of the paper. The text appears to be: "ou not turn head best", "and die out your as", and "need about this".



# Anonymous Writing

- Sometimes writers use paper that contains indentations from previous writing that has not been disguised.



# Anonymous Writing




# Anonymous Writing

- Osborn says that the most significant characteristics are usually not disguised because the average writer does not understand handwriting characteristics and fails to disguise his inconspicuous characteristics.



# Anonymous Writing

 In many cases the anonymous letter writer doesn't disguise the envelope in which the letter is sent.



Bombs in all seven  
schools Detonated  
today



QUESTIONED

Bombs in all seven

---

KNOWN

Bombs in all seven

Bombs in all seven

Bombs in all

Bombs in all seven

Bombs in all



QUESTIONED

Schools Detonated today

KNOWN

Schools detenated today.

schools detenated today.

sch ools detenated today.

Scho ols detenated today.

schools detenated today.

schools detenated today.



Questioned Writing	Known Writing
1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10






# Anonymous Writing

 Questioned

Known

1



d

2



s s

6



d

7



s s

# Anonymous Writing

 Questioned

Known

3

in

8

in

4

y,

9

y,

5

n

10

n



# Anonymous Writing

■ *“It needs to be emphasized that two writings are identified as being by the same writer by an absence of fundamental divergences as well as by a combination of a sufficient number of similarities. The process is always a double operation, positive and negative, and if error is to be avoided neither part of the process should be overlooked. In order to reach the conclusions of identity of two sets of writings there must not be present significant and unexplained divergences. These divergences must, however, be something more than mere trivial variations that can be found in almost any handwriting.” (Osborn, Questioned Documents, p 264*

