

# Questioned Documents

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## Move Information

The WSP Crime Laboratory Division would like to announce the relocation of the Questioned Document section to the Spokane Crime Laboratory. Recent addition Andrew Szymanski now joins Brett Bishop who has been with the QD section since 2005. The section will still

conduct the same examinations, services, and training, but will now be based in Spokane instead of Seattle. The QD section is pleased to offer any assistance, answer questions you may have, and will examine any case you submit.

Lab Mailing Address:  
580 W 7<sup>th</sup> St  
Cheney, WA 99004

Lab Phone Number:  
(509) 625-5401

Brett's Contact Information:  
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Andrew's Contact Information:  
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## Questioned Documents in Review

### Special points of interest:

- QD is now located at the Spokane Crime Lab-page 1.
- Meet our QD Examiners-page 2.
- Tips on QD Evidence Submission-page 3
- New Request for Laboratory Examination form-page 4

A questioned document is one that is under scrutiny due to its authenticity or origin being challenged either in part, or in its entirety. Questioned documents include, but are not limited to:

- Checks
- Wills
- Threatening letters
- Anonymous notes
- Receipts
- Passports
- Social Security cards
- Medical Records

### Types of examinations:

#### Handwriting comparison

#### Ink and paper

#### Printing Processes

- Counterfeit documents
- Original versus copies
- Identification cards

#### Altered or Obliterated Documents

#### Charred or Damaged Documents

### Additional Examinations

- Dating methods
- Indented writing
- Faded or Bleached Writing
- Rubber Stamps



## Brett Bishop



Brett has been a Forensic Scientist in the Questioned Document Section of the Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory Division since 2005. He is a member of the American Society of

Questioned Document Examiners, the Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners, and the American Society of Testing and Materials. He also participates with the

FBI's Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination. Brett has a Bachelors of Science in Chemistry from Eastern Washington University.

## Andrew Szymanski



Andrew Szymanski has been a Forensic Scientist in the Questioned Documents Section of the Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory Division since 2011. He is certified by the American Board of Forensic Document

Examiners, and a member of American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, the American Academy of Forensic Scientists, the Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists and the American Society of Testing

and Materials. He also participates with the FBI's Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination (SWGDOC). Andy has a Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice from Bowling Green State University.

## Interesting Case – Signatures Too Close to Be Real?

The signatures from two court documents were suspected forgeries. A known signature from the victim, Patricia Shinn, was submitted for examination. Brett Bishop noted that the questioned signatures shared identical characteristics. By scanning the questioned signatures

into Photoshop, and overlaying them, Brett was able to determine that the questioned signatures contained significant evidence of "cut-and-paste" manipulation.

Questioned  
Signature 1

*Patricia G. Shinn*  
Signature of Respondent or Lawyer/WSBA No.

Questioned  
Signature 2

*Patricia G. Shinn*  
Signature of Respondent or Lawyer/WSBA No.

Overlay

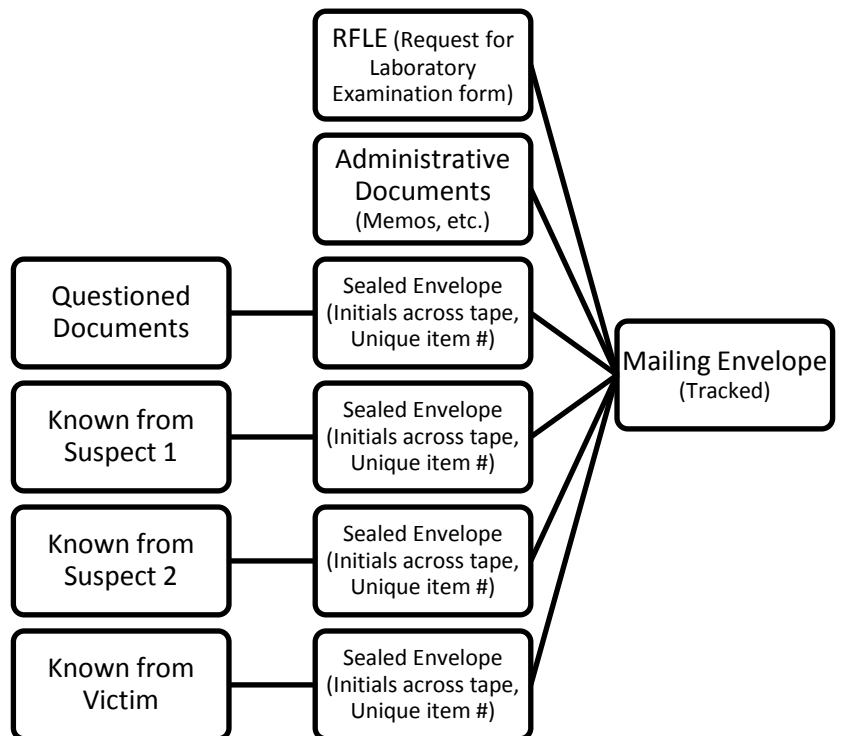
*Patricia G. Shinn*  
Signature of Respondent or Lawyer/WSBA No.

## Evidence Submission

### Evidence Tips

- Try to locate and submit normal course-of-business writing: this type of writing is the most valuable in determining authorship.
- Keep in mind that we need like to like samples for comparison (hand printing to hand printing or signatures to signatures).
- Include the agency case number and contents on the outside of each package.
- Do not write on original documents as impression writing may be recovered.
- For digital pictures, print on photo paper or put them on a CD.
- When collecting known writing, use a WSP handwriting exemplar packet, use similar forms to questioned documents, and duplicate questioned text 15-20 times.

- If latent print evidence is requested, please submit questioned documents to us before the processing of latent prints.



## Training Opportunities

The QD section continues to offer training capabilities regarding evidence submission, collecting exemplars, and the various types of examinations offered. If you are interested in learning more about the QD section and how they may assist you in the future, contact us. They are also responsible for training election staff in the verification of signatures on ballots and petitions.

## FLSB Notes

**WASHINGTON STATE  
PATROL FORENSIC  
LABORATORY SERVICES  
BUREAU**

WSP FLSB  
2203 Airport Way S, Suite 250  
Seattle, WA 98134

Phone: 206-262-6005  
Fax: 206-262-6091  
E-Mail:  
george.johnston@wsp.wa.gov

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[http://www.wsp.wa.gov/  
forensics/flsbhome.htm](http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/flsbhome.htm)

*Washington State Patrol  
Service with Humility*



Courtesy of Robert Dorion

If you would like to request **Crime Scene** assistance or have questions, you can call our Crime Scene Response Team. Someone is available anytime to help.

**CSRT: (253) 255-3064**

The CLD has a new, electronic **Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE)**! The new RFLE is on the CLD Website (<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/crimlabs.htm>). We hope to have the new RFLE in use for all agencies by the end of the year. Right now, we have a pilot project with a few agencies to work out any bugs in the submission process. Instructions will be coming over the next month or so when we send reports and return evidence. There are several changes which make the RFLE easier to use, but you still submit the evidence as you normally do. You can download the RFLE and complete it on your computer, print it out and then bring/mail it to the lab with your evidence. **We still need signatures with each submission.** We will also use the 3-copy forms until we run out, then we will accept only the electronic form. This will help us to move more into electronic forms and be more accurate in our reports. As always, if you have any questions, please contact any of the labs and we should be able to help!

[EvidenceSubmission-SeattleCrimeLab@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:EvidenceSubmission-SeattleCrimeLab@wsp.wa.gov)

[EvidenceSubmission-TacomaCrimeLab@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:EvidenceSubmission-TacomaCrimeLab@wsp.wa.gov)

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### ALERT!

#### From our Forensic Service Guide:

Do **not** submit any hypodermic needles, razor blades, or other sharps. Syringes will not be accepted except with management approval. The crime laboratory will not accept any case that includes a needle alone or a syringe with the needle attached.

WAC 296-823-14010 prohibits breaking or shearing of needles.

Thank you for your help!



Courtesy of Mitch Lant

Please look for the **CLD annual customer survey** which should be available in December. We need your input so that we can make better use of our resources and address any questions you have. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey when it comes out!