

Tommy L. Rutledge
Private Investigator
Examiner of Questioned Documents
Forensic Handwriting Expert

Search for Truth

Professional Biography

I joined the Oklahoma City Police Dept. on May 20, 1967. Upon completion of 21 weeks of Training I was assigned to the Patrol Division.

In 1977 I was promoted to the Detective Division and assigned to the White Collar Crime Unit where I begin my apprenticeship in the field of Forensic Document Examination with Mr. George Englebretson.

During the apprenticeship period I studied with other Forensic Document Examiners at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs.

In June 1978 I attended the United States Secret Service Questioned Document School in Washington D.C.

I continued my apprenticeship with Mr. Englebretson studying Court Cases and Expert witness testimony. Mr. Englebretson submitted cases to me then reviewed my findings. After approx. two and one half years of apprenticeship it became my duties to prepare Court Exhibits and give Expert testimony on all Questioned Document cases submitted by divisions through-out the Oklahoma City Police Dept.

I became Qualified as an Expert Witness in the Federal Court system through work and study with the United States Secret Service, Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms Division

In July 1981, I attended the FBI Academy Advanced Questioned Document School at Quantico, Virginia. In this same time period, I also received graduate credit from the University of Virginia. As a result of my long experience in Police work, and subsequent Document Examination I have been involved in hundreds of cases where Document Examination has been an important piece of evidence. Due to my findings in these cases, I have been called upon to testify and have been accepted and qualified as an Expert Witness in the field of Questioned Document Examination/ and Identification several hundred times.

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Mr. Englebretson retired in December 1980 and I assumed full responsibility as the Forensic Document Examiner for the Oklahoma City Police Department.

My work within the department consisted of any form of Questioned Documents. Example: Robbery notes, Homicide, Suicide letters, Obscene and Threatening letters, Forged and Altered documents (checks etc.) . As well as administrative problems.

In 1982 I worked sixteen hours per week with Jim Puckett and Ernie Smith Forensic Document Examiners at the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. This work afforded me knowledge in different ways of handling and the preservation of evidence as well as the identification and preparation of the evidence for Court room presentation.

In February 1983, I attended the FBI Academy Crime Laboratory Forensic Photography School. I spent 120 hours of extensive study concerning Document Photography, Copy Work, Dark Room instruction, Processing of Evidence, the use of Side Lighting, Transmitted Light, the use of Filters, the Reconstruction and Matching of Torn Edges, instruction and practical work in Infrared Photography and Infrared Luminescence, and Ultraviolet Examination and Photography.

In April 1989, I attended the Central U.S. Police Institute and successfully completed 160 hours of Technical Investigation. To further my knowledge, expertise and my ability to demonstrate my findings through Photography, I was Promoted to Sergeant and spent two years working in the Forensic Photography Laboratory within the Forensic Science Technical Investigation Division at the Oklahoma City Police Department.

I receive and study literature and publications on questioned document examination, including the legal aspects. I take every opportunity afforded to study with other examiners, even through correspondence in other states.

I am a member of the IAI (International Association of Identification) . I have a collection of library books by various authors in the field of Examination and Identification of Questioned Documents. Some of these authors are: Osborne, Harrison, Hilton, Conway and others.

In July 1992 I went to Zurich Switzerland where I studied -examined and successfully identified foreign documentation and subsequently testified in deposition to my findings.

The scope of my expertise covers the Examinations and Identification of Disputed and/or Questioned Documents involving Handwriting, Hand-printing, Typewriting, Check Protectors, Rubber Stamps, the processing of Documents for Alterations, Eradications, and Falsifications: also specialized training in Document Photography, the use of Microscopes, Line and Paper measurement, and varied Light Applications, including Ultraviolet and Infrared.

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While with the Oklahoma City Police Department my Private Practice as a Forensic Questioned Document examiner was limited to Civil work for the past eighteen years.

I retired from the Police Department on August 31st, 1998 after more than 31 years of service.

I am a licensed and bonded Private Investigator and Forensic Examiner of Questioned Documents.

I have conducted numerous examinations involving: Civil Matters, relating to Bank Securities, Promissory Notes, Wills, Deeds, Mineral Rights, Personal Writings, Medical Malpractice, Insurance Fraud, Workers Comp, and Domestic Surveillance.

I have a Scientifically equipped Laboratory which includes, Stereo Microscope, Magnifiers, Ultraviolet light source, Infrared Camera with filters and Monitor which has expanded my ability in the Examination documents that are Obliterated, Disguised, And/Or Altered by means of Eradication.

Other equipment includes. Side and Indirect Lighting, Transmitted Light, Typewriter Grids, Photographic equipment, including a 35mm camera, Lights, Miscellaneous Lens and Filters, MP4 Polaroid copy stand and Camera.

I have a fully equipped darkroom to aid in preparing photographic displays for Courtroom Presentation.

My testimony as an expert witness has been accepted through the judiciary system of the State of Oklahoma, including the District Court of Oklahoma County, both Civil and Criminal. District Courts of surrounding counties, City Courts, The United States Federal Court System. The United States Military Court.

In the years that I have given testimony, I have never failed to qualify to testify in any Court.

Respectfully submitted

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