

Book Review

Witness to Forgery: Memoir of a Forensic Document Examiner

Donald B. Doud, Orchard Knoll: Elm Grove, WI, 2009, 309 pages

Several books have been written by forensic document examiners. However, none have contained the personal thoughts, triumphs, and defeats of the examiner until now. Donald B. Doud chronicles his early life in California and how serious health problems led him to the profession of photography. At the Art Center School in Los Angeles, Doud took a photography course given by Ansel Adams. His photography work prompted an offer to work as an assistant to Clark Sellers, a well-known and highly respected document examiner.

With humor and humility, Doud describes his apprenticeships and work with pioneers in the field of document examination: Clark Sellers in California, Albert D. Osborn in New York, Herbert J. Walter in Chicago, and finally John F. Tyrell in Milwaukee. Doud offers insights into the way these men examined cases. He names some of their most famous cases and adds bits of fascinating information about their demeanor, court room presentations, and even some of their personal habits.

Several of Doud's cases are profiled in this book. These cases include the Alger Hiss typewriter case, the Howard Hughes-Clifford Irving autobiography hoax, the Howard Hughes Mormon Will case, and the testament of King Henry the VIII. When Doud writes about his cases he offers details of how he received the case, his examination process, bases for his findings, and the ultimate courtroom drama. Each case discussed is filled with observations concerning the participants in the case including the "experts" for the other side, the judge, and the attorneys. Doud's own reactions to specific venues he finds himself in are filled with humor and the reader may find themselves laughing out loud.

If there is one criticism of this book, it would be the poor quality reproductions of the examples and exhibits. Putting that aside, Donald B. Doud's *Witness to Forgery: Memoir of a Forensic*

Document Examiner is a wonderful read for anyone but a must read for those in the forensic document community.

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