

## FAQ 16

### 16.1

**Q: On August 29, 2006, I viewed the CBS 48 HOURS program, *Black Dahlia Confidential*, which covered your investigation. The handwriting expert on the show indicated he could not determine if the killer's notes were or were not your father's handwriting. But in the book, your expert said they were the same. Can you explain this contradiction?**

Yes.

I have discussed the handwriting aspects in earlier FAQ's, but will here provide a further example to assist us in coming to an understanding of terms.

But, first let me restate my own position as it relates to handwriting analysis. For me personally, handwriting analysis is more of an art than a science. To my mind, it is just too subjective. Too interpretive. It relies totally on probabilities. Especially when it comes to authorship. I believe this even though my expert has positively identified George Hodel and the Black Dahlia Avenger's handwriting as being the same.

Analysis of physical evidence such as fingerprints, is generally recognized as-conclusive. We get a yes or no answer. Are those the defendant's fingerprints? Yes... (Though considered for decades to be the gold standard on "making a case" even fingerprints are now under attack and scrutiny. This is due to the disparate range of fingerprint "experts" many of whom have questionable credentials.)

DNA physical evidence such as: saliva, blood, semen. Do they belong to the defendant? No, he is excluded. Release him.

Trace evidence such as paint transfers from a car. Did the sample come from the defendant's Toyota? Yes. Here is the proof through spectrographic analysis.

When we are dealing with hard physical evidence, we have come to expect a simple- yes or no.

That's science.

However, in handwriting analysis the Questioned Document Experts frequently provide a finding of, "**inconclusive.**"

Many readers who saw the CBS 48 HOURS program, were under the impression that the handwriting expert, John Osborn, gave an opinion that George Hodel did not write the Black Dahlia Avenger notes. **OSBORN GAVE NO SUCH FINDING.** Here is his verbatim, expert opinion as stated on the program:

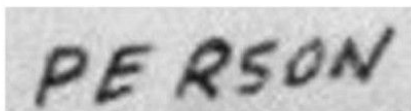
**"There is simply not enough evidence to prove one way or the other whether his father is the writer, or is not the writer."**

When asked by the network to conduct this comparison, QDE Osborn was provided with only a very limited number of known samples of Dr. Hodel's handwriting. (Perhaps as few as two or three) and was likely given a short time span in which to conduct his analysis. Simply put, Osborn's results were- "inconclusive." Due to the lack of comparative samples provided, him for testing, he is simply unable to arrive at a conclusion.

Whereas, my Questioned Document Expert, Ms. Hannah McFarland, was provided several dozen (approx 24) separate samples of Dr. Hodel's handwriting and studied and examined them over a six-month time period, before rendering her expert opinion that four (4) of the Avenger notes were "highly probably" written by George Hodel, as well as the writing on the body in the Jeanne French "Red Lipstick Murder."

In describing a difference in handwriting styles between Dr. Hodel and the Black Dahlia Avenger, QDE Osborn pointed to the Avenger's printed block letter-N. He demonstrated that Dr. Hodel's printed letter- N was, in his words, "more classic in style", whereas, the Avenger printing was much narrower. (See comparison below)

"Avenger letter-N"



Dr. George Hodel letter-N



A

STEVEN  
 APR 1949  
 7-5  
 "CHINESE CHICKEN"  
 (MOUNTAINS, SUN)  
 "BIGGEST CHICKEN IN  
 CHINA - THEY'VE BEEN  
 LOOKING FOR HIM A  
 THOUSAND YEARS)

The United States Office on Elm Street,  
 Backward with its address signature from  
 San Bern. is the unobscured name of the  
 most noted site of the State Colony.

THE PERSON  
 SEND ING THOSE  
 OTHER NOTES  
 OUGHT TO BE  
 ARRESTED FOR  
 FORGERY. H A H A!

POST CARD  
 HEARLD  
 EXPRESS

B.D.A.

B

A- George Hodel known handwriting  
 B-Black Dahlia Avenger handwriting

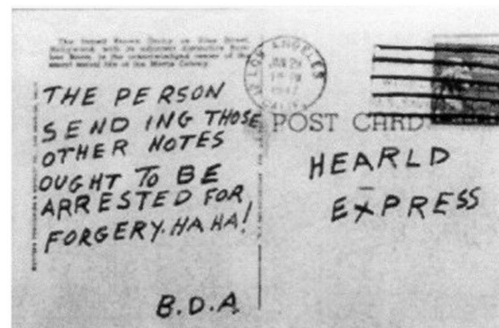
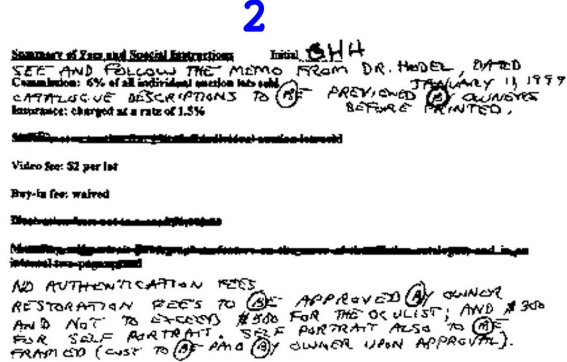
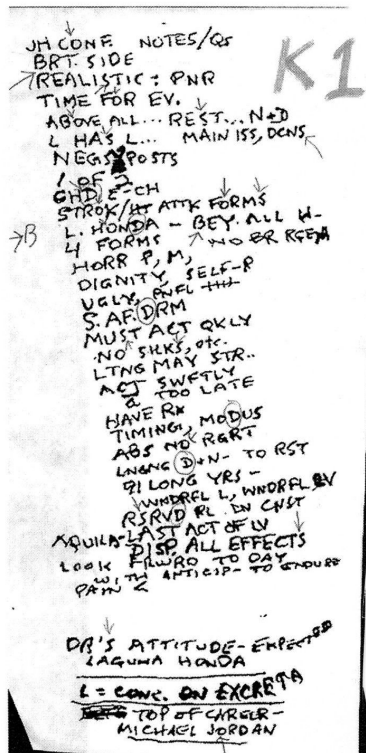
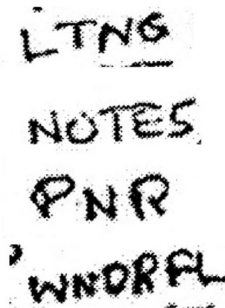
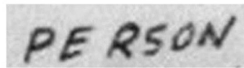
Here are additional samples of George Hodel's known handwriting that were not shown, and apparently not seen or used in Osborn's comparison. (Although these exact same samples were used and printed in my book.) Note how my father writes the letter N, as compared to the Avenger's letter-N. Though known to be written by George Hodel, it is quite dissimilar to his "classic N", as described by Osborn. Would you say that this sample of George Hodel's letter N is close in style to that of the "Black Dahlia Avenger"?

**AVENGER "N"**

**HODEL "N"**

"Avenger letter-N"

Dr. George Hodel letter-N



1 & 2-  
3-

George Hodel known handwriting  
Black Dahlia Avenger handwriting