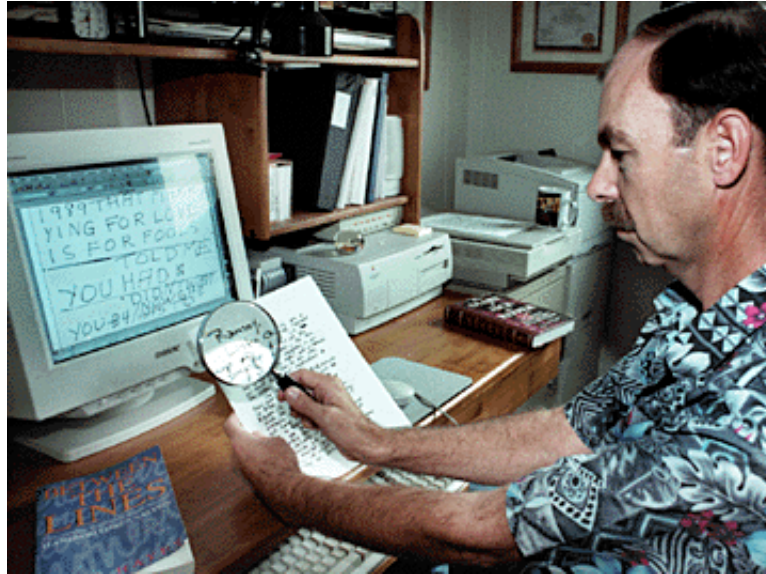


# Between the lines



By Kathryn Bender, Star-Bulletin

*Graphoanalyst Reed Hayes has studied a copy of the ransom letter in the JonBenet Ramsey case, and says the writer was trying hard to disguise his or her handwriting. The effort is obvious, he says, in the forced waviness of the letters.*

## **Graphoanalysts get to the truth of many matters through handwriting**

By Nadine Kam  
*Assistant Features Editor*



Sleuthing often has Reed Hayes looking backward and forward and following loopy leads with magnifying glass in hand. But when he gets down to business, he never strays far from his desk.

As a graphoanalyst, Hayes was one of a half-dozen handwriting experts called to London in 1992 who helped determine the Jack the Ripper diary that surfaced at the time was a hoax.

Ask him who was most likely to have left the ransom note in the JonBenet Ramsey murder case and he says that while the text lies, the handwriting doesn't.

He makes it clear that he is not working on the case in an official capacity, but says the note is a ruse, basing his opinion on copies of the note and handwriting samples sent to him by fellow graphoanalysts. He says Ramsey's mother Patsy was the likely note writer, although no consensus has emerged among his colleagues.

These are the kinds of cases that set any handwriting buff's heart racing. But the real work of a graphoanalyst hits much closer to home, involving family squabbles. For instance, Junior's not really disinherited if he can prove dad's signature was forged on his last will. For this kind of peace of mind, Hayes charges about \$95 per hour.

Hayes also gets called in to help lawyers determine what jurors are thinking, give employers more insight about job candidates and help individuals determine

the senders of anonymous mail, whether it's hate mail, love mail, or a combination of both.

"The most common type is where a woman gets notes telling her the guy she's dating is a big scumbag. Most are written by an ex-girlfriend to a wife-to-be.

"Those are challenging because the writer always makes an effort to disguise the handwriting."

Hayes said that although analysis results are subject to variables such as mood, a subject's physical condition, the expertise of the analyst, and whether the writing was written to be analyzed, he estimates handwriting analysis to be 80 to 90 percent accurate. He got his first sampling of that accuracy about 30 years ago, while he was a high school student.

"A woman asked me if she could analyze my handwriting and I didn't know what to expect. She was a total stranger but she told me things about myself she could not have known. I was floored."

His interest led to correspondence classes offered by the International Graphoanalysis Society and the Andrew Bradley Training Course in Forensic Document Examination.

He is a member of the American Handwriting Analysis Foundation, the American Board of Forensic Examiners, the National Association of Document Examiners and the World Association of Document Examiners.

And he's written or co-written several books on graphology, including "Between the Lines: Understanding Yourself and Others Through Handwriting Analysis" and "Guide to Children's Handwriting."

It has been said that man has three characters: the one he exhibits, the one he actually has, and the one he thinks he has. Some people try to "lie" by altering their writing to stump the analyst. This often has more of a revelatory effect.

"They take special care to make their margins line up. They think nice and neat is positive, and that's not necessarily true," Hayes said.

"Handwriting that looks perfect is not a good thing. If it looks controlled or contrived it shows a person who is not very spontaneous, one that has to plan everything, one who's afraid to take chances, and, who probably has something to hide."

Handwriting that is masked, like the wiggly strokes of the Ramsey ransom note, reveals too much effort, and by the third page, Hayes said, the writer reverts to a more natural hand.

Handwriting analysis won't reveal gender, age or ethnicity, but Hayes said it does reflect maturity level, thinking patterns, achievement potential, people-orientation, emotional responsiveness and insecurities. This is the reason corporations often call in a graphoanalyst for executive hires. In these cases, candidates are asked to provide handwriting samples and the analysis is just one more tool, like tests and interviews, in the hiring process.

Hayes said, "I never say, 'Yes, you should hire this person,' or, 'No, you shouldn't.' I just give an objective view of strengths and weaknesses and leave the decision to the employer.

"A handwriting report helps an employer get a better feel for how the individual will fit in. It will reveal special talents and ability, what sort of thinker the person is, whether they are fast on their feet or need time to think things over slowly."

When Hayes talks talent, he isn't talking about specifics like the ability to play baseball, but he could tell you how likely a person is to excel in any field.

Hayes said the letter "T" is the most telling of the alphabet. The placement of the T-cross hints at the lengths to which an individual will go to establish goals - the higher the more ambitious - and the height of the letter reflects self-esteem. The taller the letter, the greater amount of pride and feelings of accomplishment.

Leaders will have a strong T-cross reflecting willpower, determination and the know-how to accomplish goals.

On the other hand, too much of a "T" thing is not necessarily good, suggesting a degree of inflexibility. So along with the strong T-bar, the analyst looks for people skills, reflected in loops on letters. Socially involved people tend to write with bigger, fuller loops.

Contrast this with the small, tight loops in the handwriting of accused Unabomber Ted Kaczynski.

"On the surface, he seems to be in control. He's strong-willed and knows what he wants," Hayes said. "But his willpower is so strong, it doesn't allow for flexibility, so he gets obsessive about what he wants.

"The way his g's are finished with a tight loop shows he's squeezing people out of his life and isolating himself."

This doesn't mean everyone with little loops will start putting bombs in the mail.

"If you find something negative in your writing, keep in mind that a trait might manifest itself

in a good or bad way.

"In fact, sometimes when I tell people about their traits, they say, 'I know that. Now tell me the bad stuff.' And I say, 'I just did.' "

## **Thank you, John Hancock**

Friday is National Handwriting Day, honoring John Hancock, whose bold signature was the first affixed to the equally bold Declaration of Independence.

Handwriting expert Reed Hayes said he'll probably take the day off. But those interested in finding out more about graphology can contact him at 735-5995.

Meanwhile, graphologist Ruthie Chong will conduct a series of introductory workshops in handwriting analysis.

The workshops will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday and Jan. 31 at Seven Waterfront Plaza, Restaurant Row, Suite 407. Fee is \$40. Pre-register at 739-5155.

Chong says participants will gain new insights into their personalities, discover natural talents and abilities, and understand how to better relate to others.