Handwriting Expert Laurie Hoeltzel Recently Featured on Close Up Radio



PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, September 28, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Ask forensic document examiner Laurie Hoeltzel what gives a forger away, and she will tell you it is rarely the signature itself. Rather, it is the pause before the pen moves, the extra weight of ink pooled in one spot, the tremor that a genuine hand never makes. For nearly 20 years, reading those details has been her job and getting them right in a courtroom has been her business.

Hoeltzel operates a forensic document examination practice with offices in California, Florida, Texas and Arizona, and her casework has carried her to courtrooms and depositions across the United States to the Bahamas and Trinidad/Tobago. Her role is narrow and specific one: Determine whether a person actually wrote a given signature or document, using measurement, comparison and physical examination rather than personality analysis (which she is careful to keep separate from her forensic findings).

Before she examined a single signature, Hoeltzel served 3 tours in Iraq, Balad, Baghdad and then back to Balad. She trained as a medic and was stationed at Travis Air Force Base in California on an oncology and medical surgery unit, then later became a flight medic who deployed to Balad, Iraq, in 2005. The experience left her with post-traumatic stress that made returning to a nursing career impractical, so she looked for a new path that could still put her steady hand and attention to detail to use.

She found it in the 1990s, working alongside longtime document examiner Curt Baggett, first as his assistant, then as a full-time trainee while continuing to serve part time in the Guard. She

completed that training in 2004 and opened her own practice in 2007, building it into a full-time career for nearly two decades.



At the heart of every case is what Hoeltzel calls the ACE method: analyze, compare, evaluate, then verify. Known and questioned signatures are studied independently before being placed side by side, with every similarity, inconsistency and unique marking documented and weighed. Findings are ranked on a scale that runs from elimination to identification, a level of precision she says courts have come to rely on.

Her case files read like a cross section of how signatures shape people's lives. In Trinidad, she helped a client overturn a roughly 50-year-old land dispute after her analysis persuaded the court that the disputed signature did not hold up. In Florida, she cleared a woman falsely accused of writing vulgar messages on a workplace portable toilet and helped narrow the real list of suspects. In a separate mortgage fraud investigation, also in Florida, she uncovered more than 400 documents across different properties bearing an identical signature, a clear red flag given that no person signs their name the exact same way twice.

Technology, Hoeltzel says, has changed her work as fast as it has changed the forgeries she is asked to catch. Photoshop once represented the cutting edge of document manipulation; now specialized equipment, including an infrared and ultraviolet device developed in Italy, can strip ink from a scanned signature to reveal the indentations underneath. Artificial intelligence is the newest frontier, offering forgers new methods even as it hands examiners new tools.

Her advice for anyone who wants to protect their own signature is simple: make it distinct and use it consistently. A plain line, loop or circle is easy to copy and hard to defend in court, while a genuinely unique signature gives an examiner something solid to analyze if it is ever challenged. For those hoping to enter the field themselves, she recommends training under a government-trained examiner, though she is quick to note that confidence and composure on the witness stand cannot always be taught.

Hoeltzel continues to take on casework nationally and internationally for attorneys, businesses and private clients.

About Laurie Hoeltzel

Laurie Hoeltzel is a forensic document examiner with offices serving California, Florida, Texas and Arizona. A U.S. military veteran with 11 years of service as a medic and flight medic, including a deployment to Balad, Iraq, she trained under forensic document examiner Curt Baggett and completed her full-time training in 2004 before opening her independent practice in 2007. She applies the ACE (analyze, compare, evaluate and verify) method to determine the authenticity of signatures and handwritten documents and has testified in courts across the United States and in the Bahamas and Trinidad/Tobago.

Close Up Radio recently featured Laurie Hoeltzel, PhDc, Handwriting expert, in a two-part interview with Doug Llewelyn on Thursday September 24th at 3pm Eastern, and with Jim Masters on Thursday October 1st at 3pm Eastern

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For more information about Laurie Hoeltzel, PhDc, please visit https://ushandwritingexpert.com/

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