

Forensic Report of Kate Strzelczyk BSc, MSc, RFP

Dated: 19th February 2016

Specialist field: Forensic Document Examination

On behalf of the client: [REDACTED]

On the instructions of: [REDACTED]

Subject matter: Questioned handwriting

Name of witness: Kate Strzelczyk

Date of birth of witness: Over 18 years of age

Occupation of witness: Forensic Document Examiner
Expert Witness

Address of witness: Forensic Document Examination Services
PO Box 1268
Billinghay
Lincolnshire
LN4 4ZU

Laboratory Reference: [REDACTED]

Case reference: _____

Client reference: _____

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Brief curriculum vitae

I am Kate Strzelczyk. My specialist field for over sixteen years is that of Forensic Document Examination. I am a registered forensic practitioner, an expert witness, a Master of Science, and I also hold a degree with honours in Science. I am an experienced forensic document examiner and specialise in the analysis of handwriting and signatures, typescripts, typewriters, printed and photocopied documents, suspected counterfeit documentation; and the examination of altered, erased and obliterated documents and indented impressions of writing. During the course of my career, I have examined over a thousand civil and criminal cases involving questioned documents, in both the UK and Ireland, on behalf of either the prosecution or defence and also as a single joint expert. I have given evidence in a number of Crown and Magistrates' courts across the country.

Summary of the case

Item 1 is a copy of a questioned handwritten letter. I have been asked by _____ to examine this questioned handwriting and to compare it to the reference writing of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi on the original and copy documents in items 2 to 12. The purpose of my comparisons was to determine whether or not Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi wrote out the questioned handwritten letter shown by item 1.

Summary of my conclusions

In my opinion, there is a high probability that Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi wrote out the questioned handwriting shown by item 1, and while the possibility of another author cannot completely be excluded, I consider it to be most unlikely. This equates to very strong evidence to support the proposition that she wrote out this questioned letter.

Please refer to appendix 1 for explanations of opinion strength.

The parties involved

The client: _____

Instructed by: _____

The issues to be addressed and a statement of instructions

Was the questioned handwritten letter shown by item 1 written out by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi?

I have examined items 1 to 12 as instructed by M _____. I have been asked to compare the questioned handwritten letter shown by the copy document in item 1 to the reference writing of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi on the original and copy documents in items 2 to 12. The purpose of my comparisons was to determine whether or not Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi wrote out the questioned handwritten letter shown by item 1.

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Case reference:

Client reference:

My investigation of the facts

Questioned document:

- Item 1 A copy of a handwritten letter which begins 'To whomesoever it may concern, I want to state that nobody has any right on my body ...', dated 10/12/98.

Reference documents bearing reference writing of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi:

- Item 2 A copy of the questioned handwritten note in item 1 which bears a typed message and a list of handwritten names and signatures, including a signature by Devi, undated.
- Item 3 A copy of a handwritten note which begins 'with all my love ...' written above the text 'To All the Seekers of the World', undated.
- Item 4 A copy of a handwritten letter which begins 'My dearest children ...', undated.
- Item 5 A copy of an annotated page of text, where the text begins 'It is very evident that the trends ...', undated.
- Item 6 An original page which bears sketches and handwritten notes beginning 'cement 36 ½ ones small pillars ...', undated.
- Item 7 A Life Eternal Trust (UK) UK tour list, dated 21/07/84, which bears a sketch and original handwritten notes beginning 'Desk walnut Front C. P. Room ...', undated.
- Item 8 An original page bearing handwritten notes beginning 'No body should self appoint ...', undated.
- Item 9 An original page bearing handwritten notes beginning 'No body should collect money ...', undated.
- Item 10 An original piece of card which bears sketches and handwritten notes titled 'PLANS DESSINÉS', undated.
- Item 11 A copy of a handwritten list numbered 1 to 22, undated.
- Item 12 A copy of a handwritten letter on headed paper, date unclear.

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Case reference: [redacted]

Client reference:

Background information

I have been informed by [redacted] that the original questioned document shown by item 1, together with the reference documents shown by items 2 to 5, 11 and 12, are not available at present, and so I have therefore carried out the examinations using these copy documents.

[redacted] has stated that he is currently unable to obtain any further reference writing.

Examination

Reference writing

I have examined the reference writing attributed to Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi on the original documents in items 6 to 10 and the copy documents shown by items 2 to 5, 11 and 12, and I have noted that this handwriting has been written out in legible lowercase lettering, with the exception of the unclear images of items 11 and 12 which are not of a clear enough resolution to read. I have therefore not examined these two documents any further. I have only included the signature in Devi's name on item 2. I have found a number of significant similarities between all of the writing present on all of the remaining documents, with the exclusion of the small list headed 'Lintels' on item 7 and the title only on item 10. I can therefore accept that all of this reference writing, with the noted exclusions, has been written out by the same individual. I have taken these writings to be the reference writing of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi.

Questioned handwriting on item 1

I have studied the questioned handwriting on the copy document in item 1, (please refer to the image in appendix 2), microscopically, and noted that all of the handwriting present has been written out neatly, with no evidence of disguise or copying. I have found that this questioned writing, including the name at the base, has been written out in a relatively simple and legible style of lowercase joined cursive lettering.

I have however found that I have been unable to determine the formation of all of the characters with certainty due to the poor copy quality of this document. Hence, I have found the copy quality of this document to be a limiting factor.

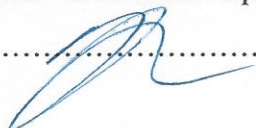
Questioned handwriting on item 1 -v- reference writing

I have compared the questioned handwriting shown by item 1 to the reference writing of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi and found a number of significant similarities between them.

For example, I have noted:

- 1) The presence of lead-in pen strokes to many of the lowercase letters 'm', 'n', 'h' and 'r'.
- 2) The lowercase letter 't' joins into the proceeding letters from either the crossbar or the base.
- 3) The bowl of the lowercase letter 'b' is formed with either a clockwise or an anticlockwise circle.
- 4) The lowercase letter 'r' is present in a cursive style and also with a looped upright.
- 5) The 'cursive capital' form of the capital letter 'I' is present.

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Case reference: [REDACTED]

Client reference:

- 6) The lowercase letter 's' has both curive and script styles.
- 7) The letter 'y' is often present with a simple vertical tail. It is also on occasion found with a looped tail.
- 8) The lowercase letter 'o' is formed by an anticlockwise circle.
- 9) Some of the lowercase letters 'c' have a pronounced hooked start.
- 10) One of the capital letters 'N' has a break between the diagonal stroke and the final upright.

However, I have found that the reference handwriting submitted does not contain any examples of the characters 9, 0 or q which are present in the questioned handwriting. I have also been unable to match a few features in this questioned handwriting to the reference handwriting submitted, which has again restricted the strength of the evidence available.

Nevertheless, given the significant similarities present, in my opinion, there is a high probability that Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi wrote out the questioned handwriting shown by item 1, and while the possibility of another author cannot completely be excluded, I consider it to be most unlikely. This equates to very strong evidence to support the proposition that she wrote out this questioned letter.

My opinion

In my opinion, there is a high probability that Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi wrote out the questioned handwriting shown by item 1, and while the possibility of another author cannot completely be excluded, I consider it to be most unlikely. This equates to very strong evidence to support the proposition that she wrote out this questioned letter.

Please refer to appendix 1 for explanations of opinion strength.

Expert's Declaration

I Kate Marie Strzelczyk declare that:

1. I understand that my duty in providing written reports and giving evidence is to help the Court, and that this duty overrides any obligation to the party by whom I am engaged or the person who has paid or is liable to pay me. I confirm that I have complied and will continue to comply with my duty.
2. I confirm that I have not entered into any arrangement where the amount or payment of my fees is in any way dependent on the outcome of the case.
3. I know of no conflict of interest of any kind, other than any which I have disclosed in my report.
4. I do not consider that any interest which I have disclosed affects my suitability as an expert witness on any issues on which I have given evidence.
5. I will advise the party by whom I am instructed if, between the date of my report and the trial, there is any change in circumstances which affect my answers to points 3 and 4 above.
6. I have shown the sources of all information I have used.
7. I have exercised reasonable care and skill in order to be accurate and complete in preparing this report.

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Case reference: [REDACTED]

Client reference:

8. I have endeavoured to include in my report those matters, of which I have knowledge or of which I have been made aware, that might adversely affect the validity of my opinion. I have clearly stated any qualifications to my opinion.
9. I have not, without forming an independent view, included or excluded anything which has been suggested to me by others, including my instructing lawyers.
10. I will notify those instructing me immediately and confirm in writing if, for any reason, my existing report requires any correction or qualification.
11. I understand that;
 - 11.1. my report will form the evidence to be given under oath or affirmation;
 - 11.2. questions may be put to me in writing for the purposes of clarifying my report and that my answers shall be treated as part of my report and covered by my statement of truth;
 - 11.3. the court may at any stage direct a discussion to take place between experts for the purpose of identifying and discussing the expert issues in the proceedings, where possible reaching an agreed opinion on those issues and identifying what action, if any, may be taken to resolve any of the outstanding issues between the parties;
 - 11.4. the court may direct that following a discussion between the experts that a statement should be prepared showing those issues which are agreed, and those issues which are not agreed, together with a summary of the reasons for disagreeing;
 - 11.5. I may be required to attend court to be cross-examined on my report by a cross-examiner assisted by an expert;
 - 11.6. I am likely to be the subject of public adverse criticism by the judge if the Court concludes that I have not taken reasonable care in trying to meet the standards set out above.
12. I have read Part 35 of the Civil Procedure Rules, the accompanying practice direction and the Guidance for the instruction of experts in civil claims and I have complied with their requirements.
13. I am aware of the practice direction on pre-action conduct. I have acted in accordance with the Code of Practice for Experts.

Statement of Truth

I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this report are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those that are within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.

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Appendix 1

Scale of Expert Opinion Strengths

Expert Opinion levels generally used in forensic handwriting cases are rated in a specific order to give the strength of opinion in a graduated scale.

Therefore level 1 correlates to a definite, confirmed authorship and level 10 corresponds to the individual not being the author.

1. **'written by' / 'common authorship'** – the possibility of another author is so small it can be ignored. (Conclusive).
2. **'most probably / high probability written by'** – the possibility of another author cannot completely be excluded, but it is most unlikely. (Very strong evidence to support).
3. **'probably written by'** – the possibility of another author cannot be excluded, but it is unlikely. (Strong evidence to support).
4. **'distinct possibility / could well have been written by'** – the possibility of another cannot be excluded, but is less likely. (Moderate evidence to support).
5. **'possibly / could have been written by'** – the writing is within the capability of the author, but the possibility of another author can by no means be excluded.
6. **'inconclusive / cannot exclude or identify'**.
7. **'no evidence to suggest written by ... and somewhat more likely someone else'**.
8. **'no evidence to suggest written by ... and unlikely did so'**.
9. **'no evidence to suggest written by ... and most unlikely did so'**.
10. **'did not write'**.

Appendix 2

Copy of item 1

To
whomever it may concern.

I want to state that nobody has any right on my body, without my permission I should not be treated by any doctor vidya or any other person.

Specially my husband and my family members should not at all have any say in my sickness, No one has to admit me in any hospital. Even Sahaji Yogi can not admit me in the hospital or treat me or arrange any doctor's treatment for me.

I want to declare that my family should never never admit ^{me} in the hospital. Specially my husband has no right over my body and any advice from him should not be accepted at all. In short I do not want to be admitted in any hospital by anyone.

Before my death I will write what is to be done with my body.

sq. Mataji Nirmala devi -
10th Dec. 1998. Mrs. Nirmala Srivastava.