



Questioned Documents Section – 2005

J14 Leopold-Loeb Revisited: Document Examiners Help Unravel “The Perfect Crime”

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The goal of this presentation is to acquaint modern examiners with the facts of this historic case, from the forensic document examiner's point of view.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by presenting a summary of the case and what he learned about the experts involved in conjunction with a poster session that displays the documentary evidence.

The year 2004 marked the 80th anniversary of the thrill-killing of Bobby Franks by Nathan F. Leopold, Jr., and Richard A. Loeb, two wealthy teenaged geniuses in Chicago.

Due to the sensational elements of the crime and the presence of Clarence Darrow, opponent of the death penalty, for the defense, it was perhaps the first case to be dubbed “the Crime of the Century” and “the Trial of the Century.” The story has been told and retold in works of fiction as well as nonfiction.

The physical evidence in the case included handwritten, hand printed, and typewritten documents. According to newspaper accounts, as many as nine “experts” in handwriting and typewriting may have been consulted at the behest of various parties, although only two questioned document examiners testified at trial. Who all of these persons were and the role they played has been ignored in virtually all modern published accounts of the case.

Questioned Documents, Handwriting, Typewriting