



J20 The Discrimination of Primary and Secondary Impressions on the Second Page of a Two-Part Carbonless Copy Paper Using VSC40: A Case Study

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will be aware of the importance of performing examinations on an original questioned document instead of its photocopy and the need for the examination of all areas of the document instead of examining only a requested area of the document. A better understanding among the partner departments and agencies will be recognized with the goal of facilitating evidence-based justice.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by serving as a reference for the examination of questioned items beyond the scope of requested examinations.

In Pakistani banks, customers are required to fill out bank-issued, two-part, carbonless copy paper “Bank Deposit Slips” to deposit cash in their bank accounts. The depositor submits filled slips to the bank officer along with the cash deposit. The bank officer then verifies details and mentions the total cash amount received along with the number and denomination of bills. After all verifications, the bank officer cross-signs and dates the “Bank Deposit Slip” and returns the 2nd page (i.e., Depositor’s Copy) to the depositor. In normal practice, each set of “Bank Deposit Slips” is not placed as a separate set but in the form of booklet. This case study involves one such instance in which the depositor used a “Bank Deposit Slip” to deposit a cash amount of PKR 849,500 to the account of a seller for the purchase of some goods. However, he did not realize that it already contained secondary impressions on the 2nd page due to the pen pressure used on the previously filled “Bank Deposit Slip” in the booklet. Later, the seller registered a complaint with the local police station that the depositor has submitted a copy of a deposit slip after altering the amount from PKR 849,500 to PKR 8,049,500 and received goods against the altered amount. The case was submitted to the Questioned Document Department for analysis to examine suspected tampering on the questioned copy of the deposit slip.

To analyze the evidence for tampering, an examination was conducted utilizing the Foster & Freeman Video Spectral Comparator 40 (VSC40) and all fields on the questioned depositor’s copy of the “Bank Deposit Slip,” including the account title, account number, date, total amount in words, amount, total amount, depositor’s signature, and contact number, were examined. Denominations, quantity, and amount were examined by using the spot fluorescence filter in the range of 560nm–680 nm with a long-pass barrier filter 725nm in front of the camera of the VSC40. This report discusses quite unusual findings from this optical examination. Multiple primary and secondary impressions were deciphered. Based on the observations recorded by the use of the above-mentioned settings on VSC40, if only the requested fields were tested, it would have resulted in the false identification of tampering in the fields account title, account number, date, total amount in words, amount, total amount, depositor’s signature, and contact number. Complete examination of the questioned “Bank Deposit Slip” along with the firsthand knowledge of common banking procedures for depositing cash into an account in Pakistan, helped reveal the fact that the questioned “Bank Deposit Slip” did not contain any indications of tampering, but only contained the secondary impressions due to the previously placed two-part carbonless copy paper above it.

Video Spectral Comparator, Carbon-Less Copy, Primary and Secondary Impressions