CBS News Interview with Marcel Matley, September 10, 2004

Rather: Okay – let’s take a deep breath and let’s do this – all right?

[A whisper voice]: Okay, thank you.

Rather: All right, it’s Dan Rather, do you hear me okay?

Matley: Yes I do, sir.

Rather: Thank you and I appreciate you doing this. Thank you very much.

Matley: You’re most welcome.

Audio man: You hear okay?

Matley: Yes, yeah, his voice came through, perfectly.

Producer: [points at camera and says] you just imagine that Dan Rather is in there.

Matley: Just like I am talking to him personally.

Rather: That takes a lot of imagination I know.

Producer: Okay.

Rather: [laughs] Okay, thank you very much.

Matley: You’re most welcome.

Rather: Are we ready to go? Yeah, but don’t go too far with that cause I need some of that stuff. Okay, thank you. Let me put this down here. Okay, let’s take a deep breath and let’s do this, all right?

Matley: Okay, I am ready.

Rather: From your analysis of Colonel Killian’s handwriting, do you believe his signature is on these documents or not?

Matley: Yes, sir.

Rather: You believe Colonel Killian’s signature is on these documents?

Matley: Yes, the documents that I examined that reported to have his signature, my opinion is they do bear his signature.
**Rather:** And how do you go about verifying whether it’s his signature or not?

**Matley:** What we did was we, uh, created the question that, “do these signatures represent more than one writer?” then we compared them to see if there were significant similarities among them and on one signature we did find some differences, so that had to be addressed and that’s standard procedure.

[Audioman]: Breakup on the audio, guys.

**Rather:** Excuse me one second, we had some difficulty with the audio; it’s our fault not yours. I am going to have someone address please these audio problems and ask that question again. I am so sorry about this, but they are going to address the audio problem.

**Matley:** Well that’s better – it gives me a chance to be more relaxed.

**Rather:** [Laughs] thank you.

[silence]

[Audioman]: I only have one mic.

**Rather:** An audio guy only has one mic. – I never heard of such thing.

**Rather:** I see what you mean, I see what you mean, I see. Let’s just try to get it squared way.

[Audioman]: Testing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Audio check. It’s an audio check 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 6, 7. No, I don’t have a second mic. on – I don’t have any second mic.

[Audioman]: Do you want to replace the mic. you got?

[silence]

**Matley:** Keep counting? 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

[Audioman]: Stand by here?

**Rather:** Oh, do we have our audio problem solved?

**Rather:** Back again, I am very sorry about those audio problems. Welcome to chaos, television is always that way. But thank you very much. Take a deep breath and here we go.

**Matley:** Yes sir.
**Rather:** Thank you. From your analysis of Colonel Killian’s handwriting, do you believe that the signatures on these documents are his or not?

**Matley:** All the signatures I examined were by the same person and it was represented to me that some of them at least were definitely his, so therefore, it would be his signatures.

**Rather:** Would you be prepared to testify in court that in your expert opinion that the signatures are his or not?

**Matley:** Yes, I would testify to everything I’ve told you people.

**Rather:** And that includes that the signatures are his?

**Matley:** Yes sir.

**Rather:** How do you go about verifying whether these are Colonel Killian’s signatures or not?

**Matley:** In this case, we made the question to be, “does this group of signatures represent one or more writers?” and then since there were significant similarities and no significant differences among some of them, that was no problem, but one of them had some conspicuous differences, so that had to be addressed.

**Rather:** And did you?

**Matley:** It had a standard procedure.

**Rather:** Standard procedure. Did you address that to your satisfaction?

**Matley:** Yes, yes sir, I did.

**Rather:** Is there any indication that the Colonel’s signature was forged on these documents?

**Matley:** No sir. It’s contrary to the protocol for an imitation signature.

**Rather:** Now, what details of the Colonel’s handwriting told you in the end, “yes, these are his signatures?”

**Matley:** The inconspicuous features the way the first name, middle zone letters particularly are configured relative to each other and the letters, the lower case letters in the last name, the proportions and features of that sort.

**Rather:** Is it or is it not common when you give your expert opinion to have it challenged by other experts in effect, do we generally or always wind up with dueling experts in these cases?
Matley: Oh, no, we do have legitimate disagreements because we’re dealing in probabilities. Handwriting is a behavior – it’s not a mechanical mathematical thing, uh, like your fingerprints or your DNA.

Rather: It is not like your fingerprint or your DNA?

Matley: No, your fingerprints remain the same, but your handwriting can change and you can deliberately alter it.

Rather: I want to come back to the core question. You’ve had time to think about this since you gave us first your opinion, any doubt in your mind that these signatures are his?

Matley: Within the parameters of what we’re working with, that is the available evidence of we have. The preponderance of available evidence is that the same person wrote all of these signatures and since it’s represented that some of them are definitely his, then we conclude, yes, they are his signatures.

Rather: Thank you very much. Will you just hold on one second, if you will – just hold on.

Matley: Yes sir, I will.

Rather: Yvonne?

Matley: Yes.

Rather: Do this today. Are you surprised the questions came about these? We’re not, but I wonder if you were surprised?

Matley: Oh, no, I knew going in. We’re off the air right now, right?

Rather: Right, we’re off the air.

Matley: I knew going in that this was dynamite one way or the other and I knew that potentially it was far more potential damage to me professionally than benefit to me. And I knew that. And uh, but we seek the truth. That’s what we do. You know you’re supposed to put yourself out to seek the truth and take what comes from it.

Rather: If you’d just hold on for one [interrupted]

Matley: That’s what you guys do, that’s what I do.

Rather: Well, uh, that is what we do and I appreciate you doing it once again. Yvonne? [silence]
Rather: We’re just holding here for a minute. Uh, that Ms. Mapes, who you met the other evening is monitoring [Marcel interrupted by saying yes] at another location; I just wanted to make sure she was okay with what we have here.

Matley: Yeah.

Rather: No, uh, my suspicion is that you’re not a stranger to this kind of heat.

Matley: Oh, no, I, uh, oh golly, I am cordially disliked by [laughs] people and because I am very objective and they can’t answer me scientifically or technically so they attack me personally, and I don’t care – you know that’s what life is.

Rather: Indeed it is. I think we’re finished, but if you can give me just a minute or two more, I am not quite sure what’s happening here.

Matley: Well, I am completely at your disposal.

[silence]

Rather: Thank you – Ms. Mapes [interrupted]

Matley: May I just make one remark?

Rather: Yes, please.

Matley: Off this topic, I was very impressed by the courtesy and consideration and kindness you people treated each other equally from the janitor all the way up to yourself. That really impressed me.

Rather: Well, I think we have [interrupted]

Matley: And I have a high regard for you – yeah.

Rather: Well, I really appreciate that and that’s coming right back at you. We were really impressed with you in particular with your patience. I am going to go – what I have here and there’s no desire to lengthen this out, but it’s obviously important that we have you reflect well on your work and so let me ask you and we’ll begin recording again now.

Matley: Okay – oh, if you want to ask about that superscript “th” there is one thing I can say.

Rather: I do, what about that superscript “th?”
Matley: One, you can always have a typewriter modified and in fact, uh, Mr. Tytell Peter Tytell’s dad was famous for completely modifying typewriters in that regard, and you don’t know all of the typewriter made and you have to obtain documents that this man produced contemporaneously to verify and that’s what has to happen. Someone has to be forthcoming with all the contemporaneous material.

Rather: Well, in looking at the overall integrity of the documents, how important is the type font?

Matley: Uh, the problem in this case, the type font is so deteriorated we cannot actually identify it. But it is important to at least eliminate potential machines. But what we need critically are contemporaneous documents produced in the same context. Preferably by the same individual.

Rather: Now, you did not have a look, we did not have a look at the originals. We have a look

Matley: Correct

Rather: Copies of the originals.

Matley: Copies of copies. Correct.

Rather: Now, is it common or uncommon when you have cases such as this that you don’t deal with the originals, you deal with copies?

Matley: Sometimes there are no copies. They are destroyed, lost or made unavailable for some reason and course of law go on, “what is the preponderance of the reliable evidence that’s presented?” and that’s the parameter that I followed in this situation.

Rather: Alright, taking that as the standard.

Matley: Yes sir.

Rather: What is the preponderance? What is the preponderance of the available evidence at hand about number one, whether this is his signature or not? Number two, whether in the best that you can judge that these documents are reliable?

Matley: Correct. With the material that I have, can I give a reasonable probability within the context of these materials?

Rather: That’s what quote handwriting experts and document verifiers do, is it?

Matley: Oh, same as all people – that’s what we do in life. And that’s what we do professionally.
Rather: If we were dealing with a court case, would these copies of the originals be admissible into evidence under what we would call normal circumstances?

Matley: Now, I am not an attorney, but my lay understanding is if they’re the best evidence available then that is what would be admissible.

Rather: And, your analysis of the documents as a whole. You look at the handwriting and I asked you about the handwriting, but you look at the documents at a whole – tell us what your process was – how your analysis went?

Matley: Uh, looking at the documents as a whole, I called you and let you know that if we had to authenticate these documents from scratch, we couldn’t do it. So, we had to assume that we had copies of authentic documents and then addressed the signature and we went on that basis.

Rather: Is there anything you want to say about this and how this story has developed?

Matley: The bottom line is that whoever has control of producing or making available the better evidence and the complete evidence, the onus is on that person, and if that person doesn’t bring it forth, then the presumption is he knows or she knows very good and well that evidence would be against – against that person’s position.

Rather: I know that you had other things to do today and this week, but has anybody brought you any evidence that you would say that’s conclusive indicating to me that my assessment, my analysis was wrong?

Matley: No, but I am open to receiving such documentation or evidence. That’s what we do, we’re available to change our opinion if we see better evidence.

Rather: And, have you seen any better evidence yet?

Matley: No sir, I have not.

Rather: Well, neither have I and we’re also available to receive any better evidence if anybody has anything. I thank you so much for taking the time to do this.

Matley: You’re most welcome.

Rather: Good luck, god speed and we’ll be in touch.

Matley: Okay.