

LETTERS

We're now going to look at the two letters, the long two-page one and the shorter letter.

After Fred left Inge on the morning of the 16th and after they had had some words, Inge wrote Fred a long letter, which she gave to him after his class at the university.

During that night of the 16th (the same day of Inge's death), after Mrs Lotz received the news of her death, she asked Fred about the letter Inge had given him that morning (the 16th). Marius went to Mutualpark the morning of the 17th and fetched a file for Fred that included, among other items, the short letter. Fred showed this short letter to Mrs Lotz.

During the search activities on 15 April 2005, the police found the long letter in Fred's briefcase. Apart from the fact that the letter is dated, the content clearly indicates that this letter was the long two-page letter that Inge wrote to Fred on the morning of 16 March 2005.

When asked during the trial why he gave Mrs Lotz the short letter and not the long letter, the latter clearly having more relevance, Fred said that although Inge gave both letters to him on the morning of the 16th, he showed Mrs Lotz only the short letter because of the "sensitive nature" of the long letter (about Inge's fear of her father's "drinking" over the Easter weekend).

So this is what Fred essentially implied, and it's on record: Inge wrote both the long and short letters between 8:00 and 9:30 on the morning of 16 March 2005 and then gave both these letters to him in one envelope.

Later Fred also argued that he considered these three pages as "one letter".

Let's have a look at everything pertaining to these letters right from the beginning.

We do not want to split hairs by analysing semantics, but let's look at what Fred wrote in his SMS to Inge (13:10 on 16 March 2005): "Over lunch I read your letter. Thank you very much. I will look at it more leisurely again tonight."

Fred is clearly referring to one letter.

Let's see what he said in his sworn statement of 12 April 2005, handwritten by a police officer as dictated by Fred:

"Op 16 Maart 2005 omstreeks 10h00 het Inge vir my 'n briefie gebring." ["On 16 March 2005 at about 10h00 Inge brought me a 'briefie'."] (our emphasis, literally, "briefie" means "short letter", and henceforth we will use the word "briefie" where Fred used the word "briefie")

Then a few lines later: *"Die inhoud van die briefie was van 'n persoonlike positiewe aard tussen ons twee."* ["The contents of the 'briefie' was of a personal positive nature between us."] (our emphasis)

Then later in his own handwriting, seemingly as part of the statement, Fred wrote: *"Inge het buite my klas vir my gewag. Sy het my 'n kovert met brief gegee."* ["Inge waited outside my class for me. She gave me an envelope with letter."] (the "a" between "with" and "letter" omitted by Fred) (our emphasis)

On 7 June 2005, in his own typed notes, probably compiled for his legal team and/or private investigators, Fred wrote:

Under 16 March 2005:

4) "[...] I asked her to write me a letter ..."

9) "We greeted each other and she gave me an envelope with a letter in. That was the letter I asked her that morning to write to me ..."

11) "In the envelope there were two letters. One long letter in which she shared things with me, and a short one." (our emphasis)

Quemic South's notes (dated 23/09/2005): "16/03/05, 10:00, Class finishes, meet Inge outside class. Inge hands over envelope containing two handwritten letters." (our emphasis) (Quemic South is the private firm hired by Fred's father.)

Note that now it became two letters.

In his plea explanation dated 12 February 2007, Fred said the following about the long letter: "After class, at about 10 am, I met the deceased outside the class where she gave me a 'briefie' (3 pages – also described as two 'briefies'/'briewe') ..." (brackets are in the plea explanation)

Also in his plea explanation about the long letter, Fred states: "I contend that the contents of the letter reveals a very clear, positive and loving attitude towards me, and an attitude that stood positive towards the future." (direct translation)

But let's look at the two letters. Remember that Fred left Inge's flat just before 8:00 on the morning of 16 March 2005. We cannot be sure when she would have started writing but let's assume she started sometime around 8:30. At 9:41 she sent Fred an SMS that she was on her way to give him the letter. This gives her about an hour to write both letters, which is of course doable. But why write two separate letters in this time when she really could just have added another page to the long letter? Why would Inge now (she must have been in her flat and within minutes of finishing the long letter) take another (and very different) sheet of paper and scribble something on it that by all accounts is completely out of sync with the long letter she had just written?

We will get to these "sync" differences, but the most notable and significant differences between the two letters are that the long letter was written on lined A4 pages, while the short one was written on an unlined and much smaller format paper. The smaller letter was written on a watermarked themed paper (blueish with pink flowers).

Probably the most damning aspect of the short letter (considered as a letter also given to Fred on the 16th) is that Inge ended the letter with "Strength with your day and week ..." Now remember, Fred said that Inge gave him this short letter together with the longer letter on the Wednesday. Why would she (or anyone for that matter) say to someone else "have a good week" on a Wednesday?

Let's look at two SMSes that Inge wrote to Fred before her death (our emphasis):

At 7:35 on 7 February 2005: *"Morning Dear, did you sleep well? Hope you have a wonderful day and week full of good things. I love you dearly xx"*

At 7:28 on 14 March 2005: *"I just dreamt about you. I hope you will have a stunning day and week too and that all goes well at work"* (our emphasis in both SMSes)

Now note that 7 February and 14 March were both Mondays. Of course it cannot be said that she would say this every Monday, but most certainly it is something that, when she said it, it would most likely be on Mondays and not on other days of the week.

According to Mrs Lotz, she had always felt that she had seen the short letter before, probably one Sunday, on Inge's bed. The letter is typical of wishing someone well for the week ahead. Not something you do on a Wednesday when you, at most, would say, "enjoy the rest of your week." The short letter is simply not in sync with the long letter. It was clearly not written on the same day and under the same circumstances. Any person would be able to deduce this. On the next few pages we will look at why it is clear that the two letters were not written within minutes of each other.

Let's get back to the issue of "one letter".

Antony Albekker writes in his book that it was hard for him to understand the prosecution's argument in this regard: why did they stress the singular versus plural use of the word "letter" if Fred's version was "consistent from the beginning" in that he saw the letter as "one letter". "M'Lord,' he said, 'I saw them as one letter.'"

As we have explained, this is problematic.

Fred showed Mrs Lotz the short letter. One letter. In his 13:10 SMS he spoke of one letter.

Then, in his own notes in June, it became two letters.

In his plea it became "'n briefie", and henceforth in the case he argued the three pages as one letter. So, sorry, Mr Albekker, Fred's version was never "consistent". He tailored it after the long letter was discovered.

Writing "briefie" in this statement clearly tries to sell the short letter. Then, when the long letter was found, it became two letters, and then in his plea, a "briefie". Using the word "briefie" must be seen as an attempt to focus attention on the short letter he gave to Mrs Lotz and to conceal the long letter.

Our problem here is not so much that he lied about the short letter being written on the 16th, but the demonstrable intention to keep everyone in the dark about the long letter. On 12 April 2005, when his first statement was taken, he was not yet a suspect and would only be arrested two months later. This was also two days before the long letter was found. At this stage he really should have had no reason to try and hide something, but he did.

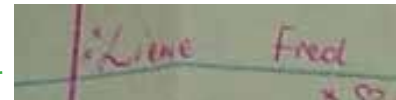
Remember what he stated in his plea: "I contend that the contents of the letter reveals a very clear, positive and loving attitude towards me, and an attitude that stood positive towards the future." If the long letter was such a positive letter, why didn't he give it to the police or simply supply more specific detail about it in the 12 April statement? Instead he referred to it as a "briefie" and he gave no context around the letter (such as that it was the result of a fight that morning).

It is clear that Fred tried to keep the long letter under the radar for as long as possible. He could not destroy it since he did not know who else knew about the letter (as it turns out, Inge told Wimpie and Mrs Lotz about the letter). But when the long letter was found he dragged the short letter along to cover up his deception. We will get back to some of these issues in the Statement Analysis part.

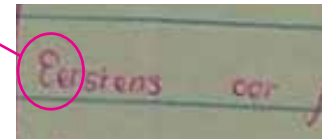
A short comparison between the short and long letter

Hi skat!

Completely different introductions. If the short letter was an add-on, why another intro? And why on a different type of paper?



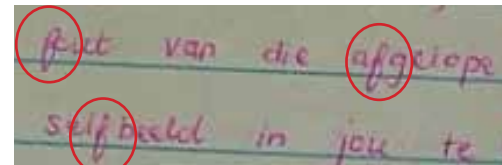
Ek wil ook sommer net sê hoe baie ek jou waardeer en hoe special jy is!



In the long letter Inge wrote the capital letter "E" 7 times like a reversed 3. In the short letter she only wrote it as the blocked "E" twice.

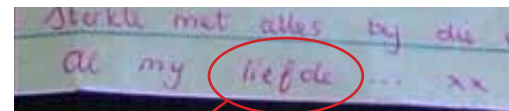
Danke vir jou liefde, ondersteuning en sagte hart en dat jy ALTYD bereid is om te luister na my klein probleemies!

Ek is BAIE, BAIE, BAIE lief vir jou! Sterkte met jou dag en week en weet Jesus is elke oomblik by jou!



In the long letter Inge wrote the letter "f" 26 times as a looped "f". Only once as a short "f". In the short letter she only wrote it as a short "f". See below how the same word "liefde" is written differently.

Liefde en xx
Inge.



Liefde en xx
Inge.

There are many fundamental differences between the writing styles in the two letters. The shorter letter seems to have been written under less pressure than the longer one, which seems to have been written with more speed than the shorter one. One can see this in the flow of the writing style. If Inge wrote the short letter just after the long one, it would have been in the same style and rhythm. Why such differences if they were written within minutes of each other? At most, an add-on would be written as a "PS" note. (On Fred's version, based on the limited time, Inge would have been in more haste when writing the short letter. This "haste" is clearly not evident in the style of the short letter.)

FORENSIC ANALYSIS OF LETTERS & POLICE STATEMENT

What you have read up to now pertaining to the letters is our own work before we obtained expert opinion. We subsequently decided to have the long and short letters, plus some other written material, forensically examined by a recognised expert. For this purpose we provided both the long letter and the short letter to the expert, together with reference copies of a birthday card that Inge wrote to her mother as well as Fred's police statement, and a letter that Fred wrote to Marius.

Our main brief to the expert was simply: **Did Inge write the short letter within the same hour as the long letter?**

This question would address whether she wrote the short letter on that day at all.

The expert also followed an industry-accepted method to analyse Fred's police statement.

The three main processes involved were: Forensic Handwriting Identification, Statement Analysis and Forensic Linguistics.⁶

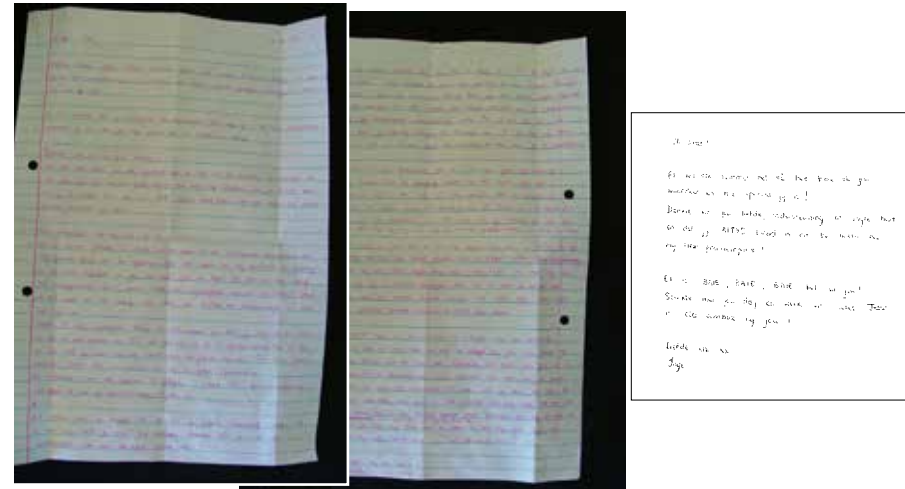
We are going to give a brief explanation of these processes before moving on to some of the findings.

FORENSIC HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

We realise that there is a lot of skepticism about forensic handwriting analysis as a recognised science. However, it must be noted that there is a difference between looking at someone's writing in an attempt to deduce a person's personality and actually comparing one document to another in order to make conclusions based on observable (and even measurable) similarities or differences between the samples.

What we are more interested in here is where you physically compare one document with another and note the similarities or differences. Say, for example, someone claims to have written two letters: if all the "y" instances in one letter have short loops but long loops in the other letter, then there would be reasonable cause for doubt about the person's claim.

6. Since we do not provide the full and technical context of the expert's reports here, and since consultations are ongoing, we refrain from naming the expert here; but we can mention that the expert is also a respected trainer in the mentioned fields. We have in our possession the expert's conclusions, and reserve the right to use them to our discretion when and if necessary.



Above: Left are the two pages of the "long letter" and to the right, the shorter letter. Fred claims that Inge wrote both of them in the same hour and gave both to him in one envelope on the morning of the 16th. (We only have a photocopy of the short letter.)

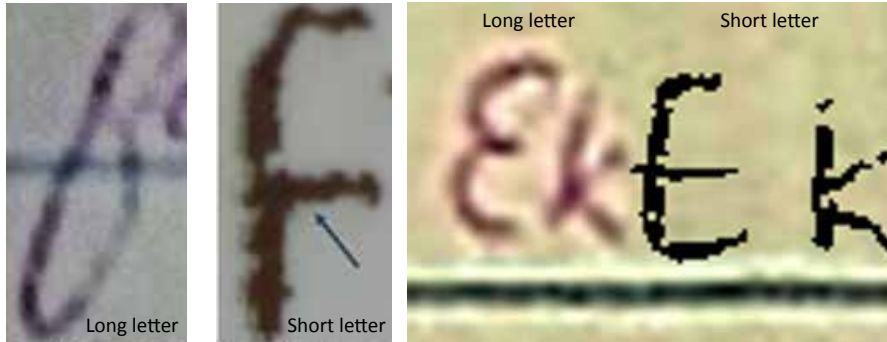


Above: When you compare two letters to determine whether they were written by the same person, the styles employed in them may give an indication of authorship. It is not unreasonable to assume that three random people would all have different ways of writing a "y". Or that when one person wrote two letters that the letters would display a similar style. It is in this branch of forensic handwriting analysis that we are more interested.

We are not so interested to dispute or determine whether the two letters were written by the same person or not. Although there are some alarming differences between the styles, as we will see, we will readily assume that Inge wrote both. However, forensic handwriting analysis can also pick up on the influence of external factors, such as emotions, in writing. It is reasonable to assume that when you are, for example, in a nervous state you will write differently compared to writing in a relaxed state. Or that when in a hurry you will write differently compared to when you have plenty of time. One cannot say that we always write the same, nor can we say that we always write differently. External factors may influence your handwriting at any given time. The issue here is: how much different will the style be in two consecutive letters when written in the same emotional state and pressing timeframe? Fred's version implies that Inge had to write both letters within the same hour.

Let's look at some of the expert's findings. We interchange them with some of our observations.

It is interesting, but not at all surprising, that the expert also picked up the very noticeable difference between the style of the letter "f" in the long letter and the short letter. As we showed earlier by way of a count: in the long letter the looped "f" is used for the most part, while in the short letter only the short "f" is used.



Above: In the long letter the looped "f" is used 26 times. Only once did Inge use the short "f". In the short letter the writer only used the short "f". To the right, look at the word "ek". The fundamental difference is clear. The question is: would one person write so differently in two letters that were written one after the other?



Above: Our observation of the letter "d". Left is how it was written in the short letter, to the right how it was mostly written in the long letter. It is clear that the "d" in the long letter slants to the right and has some "stroke", while the "d" in the short letter is upright and "static". The question, again, is: would one person write so differently in two letters that were written one after the other?



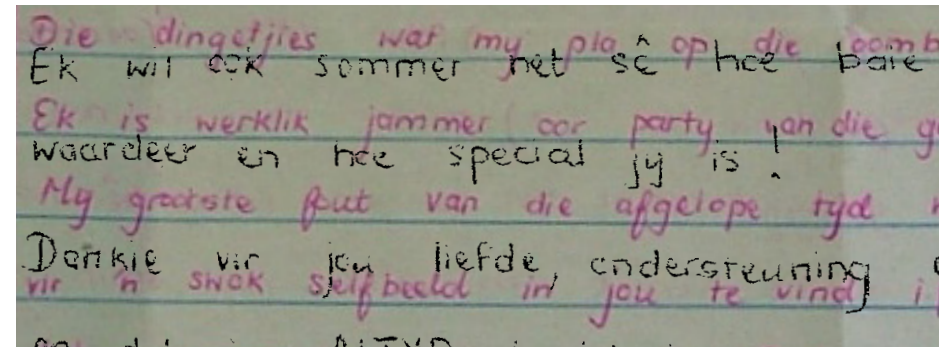
Above: Our observation of the letter "g". Left is how it was written in the short letter, and to the right in the long letter. The same applies to the letter "d" above, but what we want to allude to here is the consistency. There is a general consistency in the lettering in the long letter. We will get to the slant shortly, but what is already clear here is that there seems to be no slant in the short letter.

While we are not interested in what a slant may tell us about personality traits, it may tell us something in terms of consistency. It is interesting to note that in the long letter the slant is mostly forward. In the last part of the second page the slant becomes a bit more inconsistent but it simply varies from forward to backward, although hardly ever upright. This inconsistency may indicate a person who is in a hurry and under pressure to finish a piece of writing. But what is significant is that in the short letter there is no slant at all. The letters are all upright.

There are some other noticeable differences too:

The long letter is written in "joined style", while in the short letter the letters are written in "loose style".

Also, very importantly, the letters of the short letter are notably bigger than those in the long letter. A comparison with the note Inge wrote to her mother suggests she had a small handwriting style and the size between the long letter and this card is consistent. However, both are notably smaller than the writing in the short letter. One can reasonably assume that when you write two letters one after the other, you would maintain the same letter size.



Above: A slightly enlarged 1:1 overlay of the short letter on the long letter (the black lettering is that of the short letter and the red that of the long letter). (It must be noted that the short letter here is from a black-and-white photocopy.)

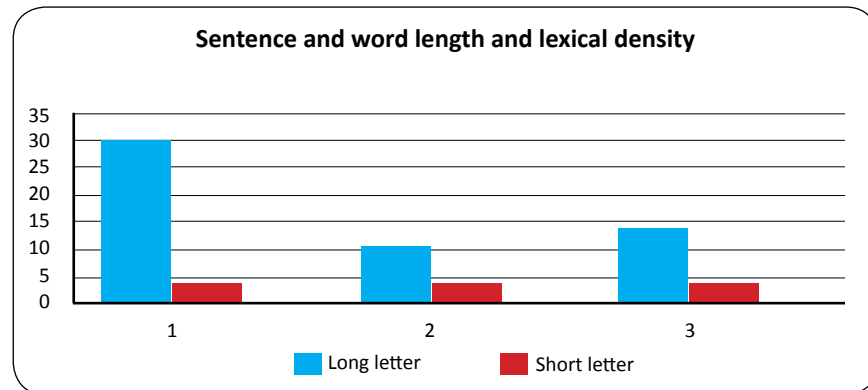
- letters of words in long letter are mostly joined; standing loose in short letter
- forward slant in long letter; upright slant in short letter
- letters of short letter slightly but notably smaller than those of the long letter

When one considers all of this, it is both reasonable and safe to deduce that Inge did not write these two letters in the same hour. In fact, not even on the same day. It is simply not reasonable to think that a person in the same situation and mindset would write so differently in two consecutive letters.

Let's first look at a summary of the differences between the long letter and short letter thus far:

- The short letter is written on a different type and size paper.
- The short letter's lettering is bigger than that of the long letter.
- There are significant differences in the style and stroke of certain letters, some more than others.
- Too many differing introductions and endings.
- The long letter is written in "joined style" and the short one in "loose style".

As part of a forensic linguistic analysis, the expert also performed a Quantitative Analysis by comparing average sentence length, word length and lexical density of the long letter and the short letter and found that there is significant duality between them, as illustrated by the graph below. This would further support the notion that the two letters were written under different circumstances.



We are going to end this part by looking back at an exchange between defence advocate Dup de Bruyn and Judge Deon van Zyl during the criminal trial.

Before we do that, let's quickly look at two of Fred's defences. It seems that the long letter finishes a little "squashed in" – as if Inge ran out of space and finished abruptly. She greets him and one can consider the letter to be finished. However, the short letter, while having a new intro greeting ("Hi Fred") starts off by saying "I also just want to tell you ..." De Bruyn argued this as an indication that the short letter "followed on" from the long letter, that she ran out of space in the long letter and then, shortly thereafter, "finished" the letter by writing further on the smaller sheet of paper. Then there was also the issue of the folds in the letters that, according to them, corresponded – indicating to them that both letters were indeed given to Fred in the same envelope. The following is a very direct translation of this exchange.

DDB: "M'Lord, then I come to the two letters that were written, from the Heads. We looked at it to a great extent in the cross-examination and testimonies. The point that I want to make is that, first, there is no testimony that the letters were not in one envelope. There I say Mrs Lotz' testimony is mere speculation. The short letter is not dated and starts with the words 'I also want to'. I argue that it is likely that it follows on the first long letter, that you should see below on the second page, the words are squashed in. It looks as if it was the end of the page and there were no more pages."

Court: "There are different sizes paper, different pens."

DDB: "It is still a red pen."

Court: "Different types handwriting."

DDB: "Yes."

Court: "The one is written smaller and the other one bigger."

DDB: "Yes."

Court: "The demeanour of the long letter, the one indicating that she is busy to try and fix something that may have gone wrong, is totally different than the demeanour of the other, the smaller letter, which creates a completely different atmosphere. To me personally it creates doubt that both were written at the same time."

DDB: "M'Lord, why can – in the first place, there is no doubt – and you also do not say so – there is no doubt that it is the deceased's handwriting ... The second one is not dated. She normally dates her letters, the short one. It also starts with 'I also want to' ... I just want to add something more ..."

Court: "(Unclear) but why must it follow on the long letter? It could have followed on another letter. We did not see all the letters that she ever wrote. So it could have followed on another letter that we do not have and which she gave to him on a previous occasion. It is just strange to me that the content of the one letter against the content of the other. They are not reconcilable to me."

They then continue to argue about the folds in the letters. We do not have enough information to say anything significant about the folds in the letters, except to state that the folds could have been made, intentionally, any time after the 16th, but based on our own overall interpretation – that of an expert and even based on the judge's view – it is very reasonable and safe to deduce that both letters were not written by Inge the morning of 16 March 2005, as per Fred's version.