



June 15, 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Street
Snoqualmie, WA 98065

Re: Examination of the Kurt Cobain suicide note

On May 8, 2025, the following documents were received, via email, from Michelle Wilkins:

Document in question:

Q-1: Purported suicide note of Mr. Cobain's. Dated approximately 4/5/94.

Known handwriting of Kurt Cobain:

K-KC-1: Handwritten notes beginning, "Cursed Aint the Word - Smells Like Teen Spirit." Dated approximately early 1991.

K-KC-2: Handwritten notes beginning, "I'm Not like them." Not dated.

K-KC-3: Handwritten notes beginning, "NOT FINISHED." Dated approximately 1990.

K-KC-4: Handwritten notes beginning, "Lithium." Dated approximately November 1993.

K-KC-5: Handwritten notes beginning, "Julianna, your song NIRVANA..." Dated approximately early 1990.

Known handwriting [REDACTED]

K-CL-1: Handwriting practice sheet. Not dated.

K-CL-2: Journal page beginning, [REDACTED].

On June 4, 2025, the following additional known writing samples of [REDACTED] were received, via email, from Ms. Wilkins:

K-CL-3: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-4: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]"

K-CL-5: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]"

K-CL-6: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]"

On June 4, 2025, the following additional known writing samples of [REDACTED] were received, via email, from Ms. Wilkins:

K-CL-7: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]"

K-CL-8: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-9: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-10: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-11: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-12: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-13: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-14: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-15: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-16: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-17: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-18: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-19: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-20: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-21: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-22: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-23: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]..." Not dated.

K-CL-24: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]." Not dated.

K-CL-25: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

K-CL-26: Journal page beginning, "[REDACTED]" Not dated.

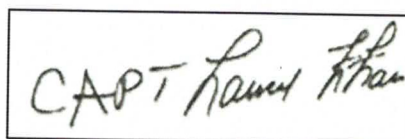
Executive summary:

The examination was inconclusive. The writing features in the four lines of text in question were in common with the known writing samples by Mr. Cobain and the letters on the "practice page" [REDACTED]

Assignment:

The listed documents were submitted to facilitate a comparison of the bottom four lines of hand printing on the listed suicide letter, purportedly written by Mr. Cobain. The purpose of the examination was to determine if the handwriting on the note in question was written by him or [REDACTED]. This report is focused on the comparison of the four lines of hand printing with the writing on the "practice sheet," used by [REDACTED] to practice the handwriting of Mr. Cobain.

An exception to the handwriting section to be compared was a signature by a law enforcement officer, Capt. Laurence F. Farrar. Capt. Farrar apparently signed the document during the collection of evidence at the scene. The image of his signature is shown below:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature reads "CAPT Laurence Farrar".

Methodology:

Comparisons were made consistent with the Academy Standards Board (ASB) Standard 070: "Standard for Examination of Handwritten Items." As stated on the American Academy of Forensic Sciences website, "The Academy Standards Board develops consensus based forensic science standards within an American National Standards Institute accredited framework and provides training to support those standards. Our work enhances the mission of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences to empower the forensic, criminal justice, and legal communities."¹

¹ <https://www.aafs.org/academy-standards-board>, 2/12/25.

The "ACE" process used for this examination is referred to within that Standard and is common among examiners in the field. ACE represents the three steps in an examination: "Analyze, Compare and Evaluate."

The known writing samples were intracompared to determine if they were the product of the same writer. The specimens appeared internally consistent.

Limitations:

All samples submitted were copies rather than original documents. The examination was performed with the recognition of the limitations imposed by non-originals.

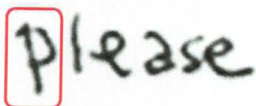
The note in question had poor resolution, likely due to being a multi-generational photocopy. The main structure of the letters was visible, but fine-writing detail was not present for analysis.

Observations made:

1. There was sufficient writing with sufficient individuality in the questioned writing to allow for an opinion of authorship.
2. The four lines of questioned writing at the bottom of the note were handprinted with many letters consistent with those written [REDACTED] on the practice sheet. Images of the letters from the note (Q-1,) and letters on the practice sheet, are provided below with a short discussion.
 - a. The capital "P" in the questioned writing had a squared bowl design which was similar to an example written on the practice page [REDACTED]

Questioned writing:

"Practice letter" [REDACTED]



Q-1



K-CL-1

- b. The "l" in the questioned writing was simplistic in design, written similarly by many writers and consistent with the "l"s on the practice page.

Questioned writing:

"Practice letter" [REDACTED]:



Q-1

Q-1



K-CL-1

- c. The "e"s in the questioned writing had open loops with a design consistent with the "e"s on the practice sheet.

Questioned writing: "Practice letter" [redacted]:

please be e e

Q-1 Q-1 K-CL-1

me Q-1

- d. The "a" in the questioned writing had a tall upper stroke and an oblong bowl. The letter was within the range of variation of the "a"s on the practice sheet.

Questioned writing: "Practice letter" [redacted]:

please Frances a a a a a a

Q-1 Q-1 K-CL-1

- e. The "s" in the questioned writing had a balanced size for the upper and lower sections. The "s"s made on the practice sheet had a wide range of variation. The questioned "s"s were also drawn with a equal size of the upper and lower sections.

Questioned writing: "Practice letter" [redacted]:

please So S S s s s s

Q-1 Q-1 K-CL-1

- f. The "K" in the questioned writing was made with two strokes and had a sharply angled intersection with the staff. The design conformed to "K"s within those written on the practice page.

Questioned writing: "Practice letter" [redacted]:

Keep K K K K

Q-1 K-CL-1

- g. The lower-case “p” in the questioned writing was consistent with the “p”s on the practice sheet. The bowl was angled slightly upward, toward the 1 o’clock position. The practice samples had bowls also projected toward the same direction.

Questioned writing:

Keep

Q-1

“Practice letter” by [REDACTED]:

p p p p p p p p p

K-CL-1

- h. The lower-case “g” in the questioned writing had oblong shaped bowls. The lower extenders were curved. Although the slant of the questioned letters was upright and the known samples were slightly canted, but the structure of the questioned and known samples was similar.

Questioned writing:

going

Q-1

“Practice letter” [REDACTED]:

g g

K-CL-1

- i. The lower-case “i”s in the questioned writing were made in a common design. The staff was upright and the “i-dot”s were positioned directly above the staff. The “i”s on the practice page were slanted toward the right, but had the same design as the questioned “i”s.

Questioned writing:

going life

Q-1

“Practice letter” by [REDACTED]:

i i

K-CL-1

- j. The lower-case "n"s in the questioned writing were made with two styles of humps; one that was angular and the other rounded. Both styles were present on the practice sheet.

Questioned writing:

going Courtney

Q-1

Frances

Q-1

"Practice letter" [REDACTED]:

n n n n n n

K-CL-1

- k. The capital "C" in the questioned writing was angular in contrast to the rounded "C"s on the practice sheet.

Questioned writing:

Courtney

Q-1

"Practice letter" [REDACTED]:

C C C C C

K-CL-1

- l. The "o"s in the questioned writing were written with different shapes although the beginning and ending strokes were at the top of the numeral. The known signature samples had the same features; variations in their shape with the beginning and ending strokes at the top.

Questioned writing:

Courtney going

Q-1

Q-1

for

Q-1

so

Q-1

"Practice letter" [REDACTED]:

O O O O

K-CL-1

- m. The “u”s in the questioned writing were written with a slightly angular trough. The letter was also formed with a leg. The known “u”s also had the subtle angle at the bottom. One of the two known samples had a leg, the other without.

Questioned writing:

Courtney Q-1 much Q-1
 without Q-1

“Practice letter” [redacted]:

u u
 K-CL-1

- n. The “r”s in the questioned note had a short stem showing with the arch extending slightly upward. The known samples were formed similarly.

Questioned writing:

Courtney Q-1 for Q-1
 Frances Q-1 for Q-1

“Practice letter” [redacted]:

r r r r
 K-CL-1

- o. The “t”s in the questioned writing had the crossbar positioned midway on the staff, as two that were drawn on the practice sheet.

Questioned writing:

Courtney Q-1
 without Q-1

“Practice letter” [redacted]:

t t t t
 K-CL-1

- p. The single “y” in the questioned writing section was made with two strokes, forming an angular intersection of the strokes. The “practice sheet” had similar formations of the “y.”

Questioned writing:

Courtney y

Q-1

“Practice letter” ██████████

y y y y y

K-CL-1

- q. The “f”s in the questioned writing had a rounded top, except of the first image shown below. The top to the first “f” was flatter. A similar formation was noted on the practice sheet.

The two other “f”s in the questioned writing had curved tops. The known “f” samples from the practice page did not have exact similarities. The crossbars on the questioned “f”s were consistent with those on the practice page.

Questioned writing:

f f f life

Q-1

Q-1

Q-1

“Practice letter” ██████████:

f f f f

L-CL-1

- r. The “h”s on the questioned note had an angular hump that was also a feature on one of the known samples on the practice sheet. There were variations in the length of the legs in the questioned writing. The four known “h” samples also had variations in the length of their legs, but not to the same extent.

Questioned writing:

her happier
without which

Q-1

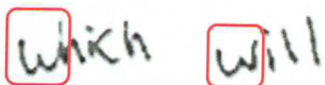
“Practice letter” ██████████:

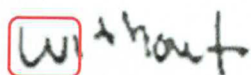
h h h h

K-CL-1


- s. The “w”s written on the note in question were formed with the apex of the middle staff drawn to a lesser height than the outside staffs. The outside staffs of the “w”s were slightly curved. The single “w” written on the practice sheet was similarly made.

Questioned writing:





Q-1

“Practice letter” 



K-CL-1

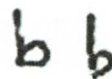
- t. The questioned “b” had a tear-shaped bowl, similar to the “b”s on the practice page.

Questioned writing:



Q-1

“Practice letter” 




K-CL-1

- u. The questioned “m” had slightly angular humps with a similar spacing between the legs. The letter conformed to the two known “m” samples on the practice page.

Questioned writing:



Q-1

“Practice letter” 




K-CL-1

- v. The questioned “I”s had wide crossbars at the top and bottom of the staff. The single capital “I” written on the practice page had wide crossbars as well.

Questioned writing:



Q-1

“Practice letter” 



K-CL-1

- w. The questioned capital "L" was drawn in a simple formation. The same design was used for an "L" on the practice page.

Questioned writing:

L

Q-1

"Practice letter" [redacted]:

L L L L

K-CL-1

- x. The questioned capital "V"s were also drawn in a common design. The "V"s on the practice sheet were similar although slanted toward the right.

Questioned writing:

V V

Q-1

"Practice letter" [redacted]:

V V V

K-CL-1

- y. The capital "E"s on the questioned note were written in a block style with arms of approximately equal length. The two capital "E" samples on the practice page also had full-length arms. The two capital "Y" samples on the practice page also had arms of full length in contrast to writers that habitually make one or two bars shorter than the other(s.)

Questioned writing:

E E

Q-1

"Practice letter" [redacted]:

E E

K-CL-1

- z. The capital "Y"s on the questioned note were drawn with two-strokes, similar to the lower-case "y"s. The "Y"s written on the practice sheet included the angular, two-stroked design.

Questioned writing:

Y Y

Q-1

"Practice letter" [redacted]:

Y Y Y Y

K-CL-1

- aa. The questioned capital "U"s had rounded troughs and a leg. The known samples had similar features as well.

Questioned writing:

The image shows the word "YOU" written in cursive. The two capital "U"s are highlighted with red rectangular boxes. The first "U" has a rounded trough and a leg, while the second "U" is slightly different in shape.

Q-1

"Practice letter" [REDACTED]:

The image shows two capital "U"s written in cursive. The first "U" has a rounded trough and a leg, similar to the questioned writing. The second "U" is slightly different in shape.

K-CL-1

Conclusion:

The examination was inconclusive regarding the comparison of the four lines of questioned handwriting with the "practice page" [REDACTED]. The simulations produced by her fell within the range of variations of Mr. Cobain's writing. In this examiner's opinion, the simulations of [REDACTED] could successfully pass for the writing of Mr. Cobain. The practiced simulations by other writers may do so as well.

Discussion:

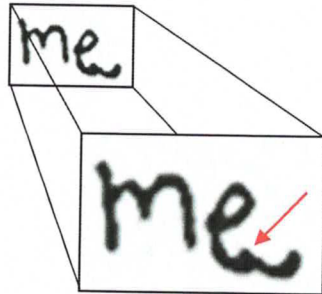
1. The four lines of questioned handwriting were positioned at the bottom of the lengthy suicide note believed to be written by Mr. Cobain. However, the hand printing was larger than the preceding writing on the page.

The different appearance, to this examiner, presented two theories. The first possibility was Mr. Cobain completed and signed the majority of the page at one sitting, then returned later to add the notes with the four additional lines. There was evidence a follow-up entry was added. (There was a sentence written beneath the sentence having Mr. Cobain's name.)

The other possibility is the final four lines of writing were written by another person. To do so successfully would commonly not be an easy task. If a person added the four lines of text in their normal handwriting, differences would be apparent as no two writers share all of the same writing features.

2. Freehand simulations are the most common means of reproducing a signature or other writing of a person. Cut and paste fabrications, and tracings, were not a likely possibility in the present case. However, the practice sheet prepared [REDACTED] required consideration. The images and discussions provided on the preceding pages of this report clearly illustrated [REDACTED] skill in simulating the printing of Mr. Cobain.
3. Although printing can be identifiable, the questioned writing in this case included many letters having class characteristics. As a result, many writers would form some of the letters in a similar manner. However, it would be unlikely for a person to randomly include all identifying features in their natural writing to coincide with the writing patterns of Mr. Cobain.

4. There was the appearance of an added stroke to the “e,” written in “me,” in the questioned writing. The added stroke may have been a correction by Mr. Cobain, although other such corrections were not noted on the note. Another consideration is the added stroke was a correction [REDACTED], to make the “e” more closely match Mr. Cobain’s “e”s.



Q-1

5. The poor resolution quality of the suicide note in question was the greatest limitation in the comparison process. The full clarity of the letters was diminished because of poor imaging or the degradation through the making of multi-generational copies. As a result, fine-line stroke details were not visually available to use for comparisons.
6. The question may be asked if [REDACTED] was identified as the writer of the four lines of text. The answer is no. The letter formations in the questioned text were consistent with Mr. Cobain’s writing and not written in the natural hand of [REDACTED]. Identifying the writer of a simulated signature or other writing is rarely possible unless the writer includes identifying features of their own natural writing. Similarly, Mr. Cobain could not be excluded as the writer because of the conformity of the hand printed letters in question was consistent with his genuine writing.
7. To provide an overall visual perspective of [REDACTED] skill level in simulating the printing of Mr. Cobain’s handwriting, the exhibit on the following page was prepared. At the top of the page, images of the four lines of text in question are provided. The lower portion of the page has the corresponding letters from the practice letter [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] letters from the practice page clearly aligned with those in question. Again, the writing also conformed to the known writing samples of Mr. Cobain.

The strong similarities between the questioned lines of text and the known writing of both [REDACTED] and Mr. Cobain, as well as the absence of significant differences between their writing and the questioned text, compelled the “inconclusive” opinion stated. The realistic possibility of [REDACTED] being the writer of the lines of text in question also raises the possibility the writing was successfully simulated by another writer.

Writing in question:

please keep going Courtney
for Frances
for her life which will be so
much happier
without me. I LOVE YOU,
I LOVE YOU

Questioned writing using the "practice" letters XXXXXXXXXX

please keep going Courtney
for Frances
for her life which will be so
much happier
without me. I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU

*Note: The slant was slightly adjusted in a few letters used from the practice letter.

The conclusion of "inconclusive" is one of nine used in the profession. The terms are defined by the Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination (SWGDOC), a consortium of government and private document examiners. The terms include:

- Identification of the writer
- Highly probable – did write
- Probable – did write
- Indications – did write
- Inconclusive
- Indications – did not write
- Probable – did not write
- Highly probable – did not write
- Elimination of the writer

The range of opinions are necessary due to consideration given to the submission of original documents or copies, the quality of any copies provided, how closely dated the known samples were to the questioned writing, the amount of writing at issue, whether the writing was in cursive, printed or restricted to numerals or initials, the number and quality of the known writing specimens, etc.

The conclusion stated was based upon the documents provided. Additional known writing specimens, and/or an examination of the original note in question, may compel a modification of the current opinion. (I understand the original suicide note is no longer available.)

The documents submitted for the examination will be retained in the case file for testimony and/or any follow-up examination(s) requested.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,


James A. Green