

Abstract:

The latest contributions by amateur birther “experts” Douglas Vogt and Paul Irey have been consolidated into a single “affidavit” submitted under Vogt’s name in the bizarre legal action In Re: Douglas Vogt. In 72 prolix pages, Vogt and Irey have assembled an often incoherent collection of what they call “Points of Forgery” in the effort to discredit the authenticity of a document that neither of them have ever seen; the long form birth certificate of President Barack Obama. This paper looks at each of their “Points of Forgery” in enough detail to assess the evidence and reasoning behind them, and whether or not they actually are evidence of fraud. Crippled primarily by the fact that neither of them is actually competent to undertake the examination they attempt, the “Points of Forgery” turn out in every case to be founded on false or fabricated assumptions and then poorly reasoned to conclusions that are often circular or completely arbitrary. They support their theories with “experiments” that are incompetently designed, lack even the most minimal controls against bias, and were created to push an agenda rather than actually test their ideas. In short, the affidavit ultimately fails to deliver a single result that challenges the authenticity of President Barack Obama’s birth certificate from the State of Hawai’i.

Introduction:

Douglas B. Vogt was a pioneer among the new wave of amateur “experts” that exploded upon the birther¹ blogosphere after the April 27, 2011 release of President Barack Obama’s long form birth certificate. Having spent the three previous decades desperately seeking recognition as a genius in fields for which he was woefully unqualified, birthism finally provided Vogt with the minor celebrity (at least within the rarified atmosphere of the birther blogosphere) that he was never able to achieve with his earlier forays into Dunning-Kruger territory.²

Vogt leapt into the ring less than a month after the long form’s release with his first “affidavit”³ declaring the birth certificate a forgery. Since then, he has cycled through a number of subsequent versions,^{4,5,6} as well as testified in one of Orly Taitz’s failed 2012 ballot challenges.⁷ Several of his original arguments appear to have been abandoned, if for no other reason than that they were false when originally presented and proved indefensible

¹ As used in this review, the terms “birthism” and “birther” refer to an informal movement and its members who promote the theory that Barack Obama is not a natural-born citizen of the United States, and therefore not eligible for the presidency. It fully encompasses any and all of the corollaries relating to place of birth, citizenship of parents or loss of citizenship via naturalization by other nations.

² Defined at the turn of the 21st century in the work of David Dunning and Justin Kruger of Cornell University, the *Dunning-Kruger Effect* is a cognitive bias in which incompetent people tend to overestimate their own level of skill, fail to recognize genuine skill in others, and fail to recognize the extremity of their inadequacy.

³ Affidavit, May 10, 2011, http://www.vectorpub.com/Obama_affidavit_5-10-2011.pdf

⁴ Affidavit, June 24, 2011, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/58721290/Obama-Birth-Certificate-Final-Affidavit-of-Douglas-Vogt-June-24-2011-Total-of-9-items-now-listed>

⁵ Affidavit of Douglas Vogt, October 17, 2013,

Part 1: <http://ia601904.us.archive.org/27/items/gov.uscourts.wawd.196544/gov.uscourts.wawd.196544.2.0.pdf> ,

Part 2: <http://ia801904.us.archive.org/27/items/gov.uscourts.wawd.196544/gov.uscourts.wawd.196544.2.1.pdf>

⁶ Affidavit of Douglas Vogt, November 5, 2013,

http://www.vectorpub.com/pdf/Notice_of_Commission_of_Felony_13cv1880_Affidavit.pdf

⁷ David Farrar et al v. Barack Obama, State of Georgia Administrative Hearing, January 26, 2012, <http://www.osah.ga.gov/documents/Cases/TranscriptFarrar.pdf>

when challenged. That his arguments have been repeatedly forced to change while his conclusions have not budged is the first hint of the profound confirmation bias and sometimes willful delusion that has suffused his work since its inception.

In this most recent affidavit, Vogt has teamed up with another amateur birther “expert” named Paul Irey. While the two began their ultracrepidarian adventures separately, they warmed to each other’s work when they joined “Birther Queen” Orly Taitz in a visit to Hawai’i in August of 2011 as part of another failed effort by Taitz to serve invalid subpoenas to the Department of Health. She subsequently brought them together again to offer testimony in the Georgia administrative courtroom of Judge Michael Malihi. They apparently have been working together ever since.

This paper is a review of the “affidavit” submitted in support of the very peculiar legal action in front of the Washington Western District Court on October 18, 2013.⁸ The consolidated document clocks in at 72 pages.⁹ Since I am not a lawyer and this is not the venue to wrestle with what appears to be a bizarre effort to use the civil system to initiate a criminal prosecution, I will leave the legal discussion to others. This is meant solely to review the “evidence” and the “reasoning” behind Vogt’s claims of forgery. What we find is that in every instance Vogt lacks the evidence necessary to reach the conclusions he so desperately wishes to reach. In reaction to that shortfall he misrepresents the evidence, makes broad assumptions that cannot hold up under examination or labors mightily to bury his failings under vast piles of irrelevant and mind numbing detail. His affidavit is ultimately less an indictment of the legitimacy of the President’s birth certificate than it is an account of an alternate reality that exists only within the MMORP¹⁰ of greater Birthistan.

Vogt begins his “affidavit” with an account of the credentials that he feels qualifies him to comment on the authenticity of the President’s documents. Since this is where he begins, so too must we.

Profile of a Crackpot: The “Credentials” of Douglas B. Vogt

Vogt begins his affidavit by establishing what he understands to be his credentials for performing his “analysis.”

I received my bachelors of Science degree (sic) from California State University at Northridge CA in Business Administration. I was an accountant in Los Angeles and Seattle until I went into business owning a typesetting company (Nova Typesetting) for eleven years, and have extensive knowledge and experience in type, typesetting, form design, book and science journals including math books. I currently own Archive Index Systems, Inc. since 1994, a company that sells document scanners, wide format scanner (sic), document imaging software and multi function printers. I have extensive knowledge of how scanners function, their capabilities and the

⁸In Re: Douglas Vogt, Docket:

<http://ia601904.us.archive.org/27/items/gov.uscourts.wawd.196544/gov.uscourts.wawd.196544.docket.html>

⁹It deserves to be noted that the birther “experts” appear to be engaged in a competition to see who can submit the longest affidavit. Vogt’s contribution here is 72 pages long and consists of 114 numbered paragraphs. Previously, the “lead investigator” of the Maricopa County Cold Case Posse, Michael Zullo, held the page count record with a 57 page monster that managed to slice and dice its content into 205 numbered paragraphs. In both cases, the relevant “information” contained could easily have been presented in documents one half to one quarter their sizes.

¹⁰I refer to Birthistan as an MMORP (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing game) because it behaves in a manner strikingly similar to games such as *World of Warcraft*. In these games, ordinary people from widely different geographies and circumstances can share through the internet a virtual reality in which each gets to take imaginary roles of great importance and jointly accomplish spectacular achievements, hoping to eventually be rewarded with glory, social status and “loot.”

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software than comes with them. My company also developed and sold document imaging software as well as other imaging and scanning programs. I have sold and installed document imaging systems in city and county governments, and thus have knowledge of municipal and county document imaging programs and procedures, including the design and implementation of such programs. Additionally, I have a working knowledge of Adobe Photoshop and Acrobat. These factors will be crucial in understanding what has occurred with Obama's Certificate of Live Birth and other forgeries Paul and I have discovered.

I am also a science writer and a member of the Geological Society of America. I have written three science books, two of which are philosophy of science books.¹¹

These are essentially the same credentials offered to the court by Orly Taitz prior to Vogt's January 2012 "expert testimony" in the Georgia ballot challenge hearing, *Farrar et. al. v. Obama*.¹² Writing in the decision for that case, and speaking specifically of Vogt and Irey, Judge Michael Malihi observed that:

(T)wo of Plaintiffs' witnesses testified that Mr. Obama's birth certificate was forged, but neither witness was properly qualified or tendered as an expert in birth records, forged documents or document manipulation.¹³

Birth records, forged documents, document manipulation; these remain the key areas of expertise necessary to lend authority to Vogt's "analysis." But even the most casual perusal of his offered credentials reveal that the shortfall identified by Judge Malihi is severe. Vogt demonstrates no formal training or even significant on-the-job experience in any of these three relevant fields. In each he is at best an enthusiastic amateur. In none does he go on to display even incipient competence.

Vogt tries instead to build a sense of *gravitas* through his prior ownership of a "typesetting company." But as we will see, typesetting proves to be relevant to almost none of Vogt's claims of forgery. He endeavors to claim the mantle of a software developer by noting that his company has "developed" information systems, but betrays no evidence of ever having personally written a single line of computer code. He asserts "knowledge of municipal and county document imaging programs and procedures," ignoring that his theories have nothing to do with document imaging programs of any sort.¹⁴ He claims a certain ambiguous familiarity with scanners and scanner software if for no other reason than that he sells them, but as we will see this failed to help him identify the scanner hardware and software used to create the PDF of the President's long form.¹⁵ Ultimately, the claims he makes in this affidavit have nothing to do with his "credentials" in any way.

¹¹ *Affidavit of Douglas Vogt*, October 17, 2013, Paragraphs 1-2

¹² Decision, *Farrar et. al. v. Obama*, February 3, 2012, https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B_KEK8-LWmzhNWQ4Mml2ZGUtZDMwYi00ZGU4LTkxZTUtZjNkNjNhOGY2YWQ4/edit?hl=en_US

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 4-5

¹⁴ A "document imaging program" is a software system that stores actual scanned *images* of paper originals in a database for electronic access, distribution, reference or search. They do not include the class of software (Ex: Adobe Photoshop) considered in Vogt's theory of forgery or databases that consist of information extracted from paper originals and stored as data. Hawai'i does not use a document imaging system.

¹⁵ Among the many reasons he apparently failed to identify the Xerox Workcentre series of multipurpose scanner/copiers as the source of the President's PDF is because, according to his company website, Xerox is not a brand he distributes. This further demonstrates the real world distance between "extensive knowledge" and actual expertise.

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More fascinating though is the second, very short paragraph of his proffered CV. While it also has nothing whatsoever to do with the content of this affidavit, Vogt's is compelled to bring attention to his "science writing" and self assumed status as a "philosopher." Vogt sees himself as an extraordinary person of genius and discernment and so is unable to satisfy himself with his otherwise fully respectable accomplishments as a small business owner. For more than three decades, Vogt has desperately sought recognition as a savant in areas for which he never actually bothered to prepare himself. At some point he crossed the line from idiosyncratic dilettante to full blown crank. His "science writing" is rank pseudoscience and unrefined crackpottery. By putting this history front and center, Vogt shows that he is oblivious to how completely it undercuts his credibility as a reliable analyst. Briefly exploring this in a little more detail helps reveal that Vogt's general relationship with reality is purely coincidental at best.

His first book, 1978's *Reality Revealed*, is a garbled and gullible survey of New Age paranormality ranging from Uri Geller's spoon bending, to Kirlian photography, to Pyramid Power, to the magical properties of crystals. His publisher's website announces the book with this description of the author:

Douglas Vogt is a geologist and science philosopher. He has funded and directed three expeditions to the Sinai desert where he was the first person since Baruch (Jeremiah's grandson) to discover the real Mount Sinai. He discovered all the altars that Moses describes in the Torah. In addition he was the first person since Moses to see the real Abraham's altar also located at Mount Sinai and not in Jerusalem. He has discovered the code systems used by Moses when writing the surface story of the Torah, which enabled him to decode the Torah and other earlier books of the Hebrew Scriptures.^{16,17}

Vogt is apparently not a geologist at all. His sole degree is an undergraduate business degree, and what he describes in his book is not geology, but instead (the very different) amateur archeology. So we find that the current affidavit is not an anomaly; Vogt has a 35 year history of claiming expertise he does not actually possess. When he refers to his "membership" in the Geological Society of America, he is further gilding a nonexistent lily. The Society's membership rules establish that the only category of membership for which he qualifies is "Affiliate," and the standard for that category is that the prospective member...

Must be neither professionally trained nor employed in geology or a related field (i.e., any physical and biological sciences or other disciplines such as engineering, geography, or anthropology) related to geoscience, nor currently studying such science at the collegiate level.¹⁸

In other words, to become "a member of the Geological Society of America" one needs no **actual** qualifications whatsoever. The only conceivable reason for including this detail in the affidavit is to imply a level of recognition that he has not actually received, and hope that those reading this abbreviated CV do not bother to check.

His second "science book," 1996's *Gravitational Mystery Spots of The United States*, uses the absurd theories of his first book to explain things that actually do not even exist. There is nothing mysterious about "mystery spots."

¹⁶ http://www.vectorpub.com/Reality_Revealed.html

¹⁷ Vogt's significant investment in Biblical Archeology appears to have made essentially no impression in the field. A comprehensive search of publications in the field has proven unable to find a single reference to his "work" by any subsequent or serious researcher.

¹⁸ <http://www.geosociety.org/members/categories.htm>

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Most of them are depression era tourist traps with completely ordinary explanations in the P.T. Barnum tradition.¹⁹

The publisher's description of his third "science book," 2007's *God's Day of Judgment, The Real Cause of Global Warming* manages to fully capture both the bizarre confusion of his thinking and the classic crank's affliction of grand delusion:

This book contains both scientific and religious topics. You will learn after you read chapters 2 and 3, that you cannot separate the two. Mr. vogt (sic) came to this conclusion after discovering the exact number of years between geomagnetic reversals (polar reversals) was secretly imbedded in all the dimensions values given in the Torah, using a simple multiplication formula (chapter 2). The paramount reason the author was able to discover what nobody before him was able to was because of an information theory of existence that unlocked everything including the correct model that created the original Hebrew Alphabet. He developed this philosophy in 1977 and it will eventually have a profound effect on all the fields of science.²⁰

1977 was more than 35 years ago. Science has advanced remarkably on several fronts since then. Vogt's theories have yet to have had their promised profound effect.

In short, Douglas Vogt is a crackpot in the classic mode of an Immanuel Velikovsky, convinced that he has unlocked a great cosmic truth and is just waiting for the rest of humanity to catch up. There can be little doubt Vogt considers himself a member of that small club of brilliant thinkers who were ignored or reviled in their own time. But as Carl Sagan wrote, "(T)he fact that some geniuses were laughed at does not imply that all who are laughed at are geniuses. They laughed at Columbus, they laughed at Fulton, they laughed at the Wright brothers. But they also laughed at Bozo the Clown."²¹

Understanding the Vogt & Irey "Theory of Forgery"

Among Vogt's gifts, the capacity to deliver unambiguous prose is not high on the list. As a result, it sometimes becomes difficult to understand exactly what his "Points of Forgery" actually are, and more importantly how they ultimately succeed or fail in supporting his forgery claim. Little understanding can be reached without first doing something Vogt never actually does in his affidavit; provide a clear account of the "Theory of Forgery" that Vogt is trying to support and defend. There is a reason Vogt makes no such attempt. It cannot be done.

Trying to distill Vogt's affidavit into something resembling a coherent theory of forgery has proven impossible. There are so many layers of *ad hoc* complexity added by Vogt and Irey to account for inconsistencies in their cited details that any effort to understand it rapidly spins off the rails. When all is said and done, their theory requires at least six different forgeries (in at least nine different versions) assembled via needlessly complex, labor intensive, redundant and ultimately absurd methods over more than three years, involving knowing participation by the President, his lawyers, the Hawaiian Department of Health under two different administrations (one Democratic, one Republican), the National Broadcasting Company and a number of very high profile birther double agents. It is a conspiracy so breathtaking in scope, reach and intricacy that only the most brilliant of nefarious masterminds could have pulled it off. So of course Vogt insists that it was actually pulled off by incompetent boobs.

¹⁹ http://www.sandlotscience.com/MysterySpots/Mystery_Spots_1.htm

²⁰ http://www.vectorpub.com/Gods_Day_of_judgment.html

²¹ Carl Sagan, *Broca's Brain: Reflections on the Romance of Science* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 64

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Central to the entire theory is a Rube Goldbergian forgery process so inane that even in their own efforts to replicate the process they avoided it completely. To create their own version of a forged birth certificate, Vogt and Irely created a blank form on a computer, printed it out onto paper, filled in the form using an actual typewriter, and finally photocopied it onto security paper. Whether or not they also added stamps signatures or seals is never actually mentioned. This is the identical process that had been used by the forger of the Bomford Hoax in the summer of 2009, and almost certainly the process used by Lucas Smith in the forgery of the fake birth certificate he tried to sell on eBay. It is a process so simple, straightforward and obvious that any other forgery method seems stupid in comparison.

So of course Vogt proposes that the forger is stupid. He insists that she (yes, Vogt has identified the forger as a woman) created the entire document by a laborious and insanely inefficient process of cutting and pasting the form, words, even individual letters from multiple authentic document into a digital composite. At one point Vogt asserts that there are at least four different typefaces and thirty-four different fonts used in the President's birth certificate, demanding there be at least that many different source documents.

There are only 26 letters in the English alphabet. Who needs 34 source documents to get 26 letters for purposes of cutting and pasting? There were probably not even 34 different typewriters available for Hawaiian hospitals to fill the certificates in.

This is the level of surreality that colors Vogt's entire affidavit. With that warning, and without further adieu, let us begin.

Vogt's 1st "Point of Forgery": The Short Form Registrar's Stamp.

Vogt begins his descent into suffocating confirmation bias with a side trip to a different document. Instead of the long form birth certificate issued in 2011, Vogt first engages in some distinctly retro criticism of a different document; the short form *Certification of Live Birth* released by the Obama Campaign in June of 2008. This first birth certificate was released in response to a *National Review Online* blog post²² by Jim Geraghty having to do with claims that the President's middle name was actually "Muhammad."²³ The document is a standard Hawaiian computer generated short form, not the document that is otherwise the primary subject of Vogt's affidavit.

Vogt's argument is founded on the assertion that he possesses "examples of legitimate Onaka Registrar stamps... and they are created with a metal embossing stamp that recesses the type."²⁴ But when looking at the President's

²² Geraghty, Jim, "[Obama Could Debunk Some Rumors By Releasing His Birth Certificate.](#)" *National Review Online*, June 9, 2008

²³ In contradiction to the oft repeated birther assertion that the President took a suspiciously long time before releasing his certificate, the short form was released within three days of Geraghty's initial request. In those earliest days of the birther movement, the Obama campaign could not have foreseen that such candor would only fuel the conspiracist flames. Its release provided the focus for the first round of amateur birther "experts" who immediately declared it a forgery, setting the standard pattern for birther responses to every subsequent document or photograph that supports the President's life narrative.

²⁴ *Affidavit of Douglas Vogt*, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 3

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short form Vogt notes (correctly) that “This registrar’s stamp appears to have been applied with a self-inking or rubber stamp and not a metal embossing stamp.”²⁵ This to him is evidence of forgery.

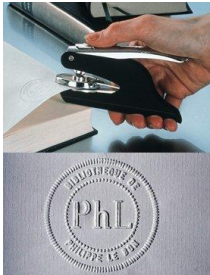


Figure 1: A “metal embossing stamp” and its resulting paper embossment. (Version 1).

Referencing again Vogt’s credentials, there is nothing indicating that he has any significant experience with stamps or stamping technology. And out of the gate his description of a “metal embossing stamp” is problematic. Searching on-line for references to “metal embossing stamps,” one comes upon two sorts. First and most familiarly there are embossers **made of metal** commonly used to impress symbols or seals onto paper or leather, and then there is a class of tools used to emboss symbols **onto metal** objects. Neither of these can imprint an unraised inked facsimile of a registrar’s signature onto a paper document.



Figure 2: Metal objects embossed with a “metal embossing stamp” (Version 2).

Vogt describes what can therefore only be a hypothetical **third** version; one with “recesse(d)” type, and where the “machine that presses the stamp applies even pressure the length of the stamp and the inking is created by a carbon ribbon.” The problem is that any stamp accurately described this way would necessarily result in a “negative” image of the type; inking an image of the stamp block while leaving the text and signature un-inked against a colored background. But to create the image we actually find on Hawaiian documents (to include the three examples that Vogt includes in his “affidavit”) such a stamp would have to have **raised**, not **recessed** type. And while all of us have experience with **rubber** stamps of that sort, **metal** versions are almost impossible to find. In fact, I could find none.

Vogt provides images of three Hawaiian Registrar’s imprints from October and November of 2011, all made with what appears to have been the same stamp. However he never even attempts to support the otherwise bald assertion that they are the products of a “metal embossing stamp.” The only feature of the imprints that might seem congenial to his theory is that each of them shows a superfluous imprint of part of the stamp cushion. But of course, such a detail is seen commonly in the imprints of rubber stamps, and so cannot actually distinguish a rubber stamp from a metal one.

²⁵ Ibid.

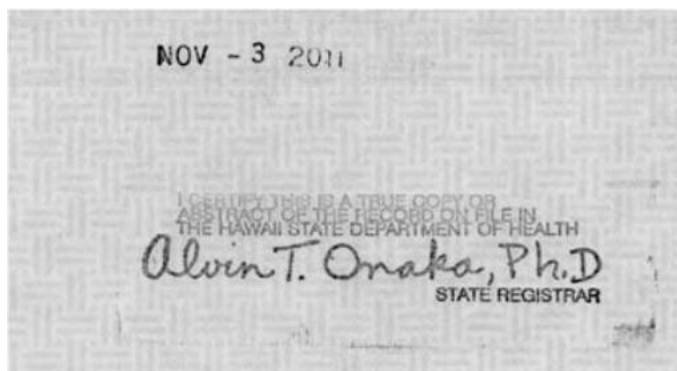


Figure 3: The 3rd Example of a “legitimate Registrar stamp” from Vogt’s affidavit. Note the clear gradient from top (lighter) to bottom (darker) in the imprint of the certification text and signature.²⁷

Worse, his third example directly contradicts at least one of the four arguments he assembles from the premise of a “metal embossing stamp.” He argues that “There is no physical reason Onaka’s registrar stamp (on the short form) should be darker on the right side than the left side.”²⁶ Yet on his third example the registrar stamp is significantly darker on the bottom than on the top. Certainly a process that provides consistent inking from right to left should be expected to do the same from top to bottom. But confirmation bias renders Vogt incapable of seeing that his own example actually contradicts the theory he is trying to defend.

Vogt makes three other arguments based on the same foundational claim of a “metal embossing stamp.” Each of them evaporates when one accepts that the State of Hawai‘i does not use a “metal embossing stamp” in the first place. Vogt has explicitly concluded that the President’s short form released in 2008 *was* imprinted with a rubber stamp, a conclusion with which this author is in violent agreement.²⁸ But having failed to make his case that it should not have been so stamped, his assertion that it is a sign of forgery is not credible.

In this, his first “Point of Forgery,” Vogt demonstrates the pattern that we will see repeated again and again in this affidavit. He first creates a theory out of thin air, and then when the evidence fails to support that theory he declares the evidence wrong instead of the theory... turning the scientific method completely on its head (See Appendix A). In this case, he baldly declared for no good reason that Hawai‘i imprints its certificates using “a metal embossing stamp.” The actual evidence is that he is wrong.

Vogt’s 2nd “Point of Forgery”: The Registration Date.

Vogt’s next area of concern is not particularly well organized in either his mind or his affidavit, and so he manages to stretch it across two “Points of Forgery” that actually prove to be the same, single claim. In its clearest statement the claim boils down to this statement and its converse: Based on the certificate number of the President’s birth certificate, the associated registration date is (in Vogt’s opinion) wrong. But that conclusion requires having first accepted a premise for which Vogt has no evidence, and that he cannot actually justify. That premise is that certificates were numbered on the same day that they were registered, or at least in the same specific order that they were registered.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ While this document is a review of Vogt’s October 2013 affidavit before the court, the image quality of that version is vastly inferior to another dated a week or so later that he posted to one of his websites. Images from Vogt’s affidavit included in this document are actually extracted from the latter document. While I may have missed it, there appears to be otherwise no difference between the two documents other than image quality and date.

²⁸ This is not to also conclude that the stamp was applied by hand. There is a very good reason to believe that Hawai‘i applies date and registrar’s stamps (along with *actually* embossed seals) to certified copies of vital records using a machine. But such a process neither helps nor hinders any arguments contained within the Vogt “affidavit” and so is not considered here in any detail.

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We know from all the actual evidence that this is not true. Ultimately, since all the actual evidence contradicts him we will discover that Vogt believes that all the actual evidence is forged.

Vogt commences with a defensive digression in just that vein, using several paragraphs and almost a thousand words trying to discredit a completely different birth certificate that Vogt believes poses a problem for his pet theory regarding certificate numbering.²⁹ In actuality, until Vogt chose to incorporate it into his grand conspiracy theory, this certificate had nothing significantly in common with the President's other than that it is a Hawaiian birth certificate. But Vogt believes it contradicts him, so in his opinion it must be forged specifically for that purpose. It will not be the last time he makes that sort of claim.

Only after that digression do we get to meat of his argument. As already noted this claim depends upon a premise which has no actual evidence in its favor and much in opposition; that the certificates were numbered on the day (or at least in the order) that they were "accepted" or "filed."

He begins by accepting as legitimate two birth certificates belonging to twins born the day after Obama (the Nordyke twins). Not all birthers share that opinion,³⁰ but there is no actual doubt that they *are* authentic. Vogt then, depending entirely on his false premise, asserts that Obama's birth should have been registered on the same day as the Nordyke twins because his certificate number is so very close to theirs. He does not consider any other possible reasons that might be, such as because "O" (for Obama) is immediately adjacent to "N" (for Nordyke) in the alphabet.

He then offers as further evidence of forgery a detail that to most other people would actually be evidence of authenticity. The "Bates Stamp"³¹ that imprinted the certificate number shows an identical slight misalignment of the first two digits on all three certificates. Were this actually a forgery, that is the sort of detail that would imply a forger of great experience and attention to detail rather than the hopeless amateur that birthers insist created Obama's birth certificate. That the detail is identical on Obama's certificate and two others from August of 1961 actually argues *against* the forgery claim. This never crosses Vogt's mind.

Ultimately however his claim that the number and registration date are in contradiction founders on the rocks of the actual data. As of this writing, there are six publicly available birth certificates from Obama's birth month that are known to us. When sorted in the order that they were registered, several glaring exceptions to a correlation with certificate number present themselves.

| Name of Child | Date of Birth | Registered | Certificate # | Distance from Previous # |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Barack Obama | Aug 4 | Aug 8 | 10641 | - |
| Stig Waidelich | Aug 5 | Aug 8 | 10920 | +279 |
| Virginia Sunahara | Aug 4 | Aug 10 | 11080 | +160 |
| Susan Nordyke | Aug 5 | Aug 11 | 10637 | - 443 |
| Gretchen Nordyke | Aug 5 | Aug 11 | 10638 | +1 |
| Johanna Ah'Nee | Aug 23 | Aug 24 | 09945 | -683 |

²⁹ This is the "DeCosta Certificate." See Appendix B.

³⁰ For example, Dr. Ron Polland (who as "Polarik" became the first prominent proponent of the forgery meme) declared in September of 2011 that they were fake. <http://www.birtherreport.com/2011/09/nordyke-long-form-birth-certificates.html>

³¹ A "Bates Stamp" is a mechanical numeric stamp designed to advance the number it imprints by a specific increment each time it used.

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Other birthers have offered other possible schema, all of which are designed to make the President's certificate number seem out of place. Nellie Ristvedt has long insisted that numbering should have followed birth order. Mike Zullo, in his affidavit before the Alabama Supreme Court proffers three. All of them aggressively refuse to acknowledge the schema that actually best fits the data, and which becomes immediately apparent by sorting the certificates in numerical order to see what else then correlates.

| Name of Child | Date of Birth | Registered | Certificate # | Distance from Previous # |
|--------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Ah'Nee, Johanna | Aug 23 | Aug 24 | 09945 | - |
| Nordyke, Susan | Aug 5 | Aug 11 | 10637 | +692 |
| Nordyke, Gretchen | Aug 5 | Aug 11 | 10638 | +1 |
| Obama, Barack | Aug 4 | Aug 8 | 10641 | +3 |
| Waidelich, Stig | Aug 5 | Aug 8 | 10920 | +279 |
| Sunahara, Virginia | Aug 4 | Aug 10 | 11080 | +160 |

With the single exception of a baby who died almost immediately after birth, all the names fall into alphabetical order by surname. And of course, especially in a precomputerized era, this is how people who needed to find a particular birth record would be likely to proceed; searching by surname. It is no coincidence that vital records departments all over the world and for hundreds of years have created indices for their vital records that are in alphabetical order by surname.

Have I proved that this is the schema by which Hawai'i ordered their birth records for numbering in 1961? No. But not only does this schema better fit the data, it does not require me to declare all but two of the certificates forgeries. Whatever the criteria were for determining the order in which certificates were numbered, registration date is *not* one of them. Vogt will return to this theory of certificate numbering again in the next section of his affidavit, but as we will see it is one that he ultimately proves unable to justify. Without that justification Vogt's assertion that this is a sign of forgery is not credible.

Vogt's 3rd "Point of Forgery": The Registration Date Again.

Apparently understanding that he has to this point failed to justify his "Second Point of Forgery," Vogt now commences a Procrustean campaign to try and fill in the gaping holes. In this part of the affidavit, Vogt attempts to establish that the numbering sequence of birth certificates is explicitly governed by law. He begins by asserting that he has "read all 50 states and the District of Columbia's, statutes and administrative code regarding the filing and acceptance of birth certificates,"³² a claim for which I offer no challenge. But what he goes on to do with the acquired knowledge is *tour de force* of special pleading. Unable to find in any of those statutes or codes the specific detail he needs to make his point, he simply pretends that the detail is there in hope that his readers won't notice that it is not.

For example, after reprinting the statutes and administrative rules for the State of Hawai'i he first misses the fact that they are not the versions that were in effect in 1961, and further simply glosses over the fact that they offer no instruction at all regarding how or when certificates are numbered. He then offers "Table 1 which summarizes all the states and District of Columbia if they mentioning (sic) the state file number was a consecutive number, if

³² Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 11

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the Federal law or regulation is mentioned and if they define the terms File, Filing and Registration in the state laws or regulations.”³³ It is an impressive table.

But, nowhere in the table (and nowhere in any of the laws he cites) does it offer any criteria or direct any process for numbering birth certificates. Now, if you did not bother to actually look at his table or also read the associated laws you would not know this, since Vogt simply slips it in via legerdemain. Vogt writes:

The Model State Vital Statistics Act and Regulations of 1977 and 1992 defines the terms as such:

Section 1. Definitions:

(c) “**File**” means the presentation and acceptance of a vital record or report provided for in this Act for registration by the (Office of Vital Statistics [the state department of health]).

(d) “**Filing**, date of” means the date a vital record is accepted for registration by the (Office of Vital Statistics).

(j) “**Registration**” means the acceptance by the (Office of Vital Statistics) and the incorporation of vital records provided for in this Act into its official records.

That means the act of filing and registration happens at one time the same day by the State Registrar or deputy Registrar. ***They will check the form for completeness and then accept it by dating, signing and numbering the Certificate of Live Birth.*** That process is called filing and registration.³⁴ (emphasis added)

Ignoring that these regulations were respectively instituted 16 and 31 years after Obama was born, no. It does ***not*** mean that. It never comes ***within light years*** of meaning that. In none of those definitions is numbering even mentioned once. Vogt’s central assertion that the process of filing and registration includes affixing the certificate number is simply another thing that he just made up.

We saw in the discussion of his “Second Point” that there is no correlation between registration date and certificate number. And further we know (from the efforts of other birthers no less)³⁵ that, contrary to his imaginary process, numbering actually took place in a batch ***at the end of each month*** for all the births that took place within it, even though registration dates were distributed across the entire month. As a result, certificate numbers could only possibly correlate with registration date if the entire month’s certificates were first deliberately sorted in registration date order before numbering. I cannot come up with any rationale why a health

³³ Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 14

³⁴ Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt, October 17, 2013, Paragraphs 16 - 17

³⁵ Specifically, Mike Zullo of the Maricopa County Cold Case Posse has provided us with the closest thing to first hand testimony of the 1961 process as a result of his alleged interview with Verna K. Lee, the registrar who signed the Obama birth certificate. While we have never been given access to the actual tape of the interview, Zullo has stated in his own “affidavit” that numbering took place at the end of each month in a batch. This also reconciles to the monthly preprocessing necessary for the microfilming and forwarding of all the even numbered certificate to the CDC for demographic reporting purposes. <http://www.obamaconspiracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/In-Re-Douglas-Vogt-2.pdf>

department might need to sort their certificates in registration date order.³⁶ And again as we know from the actual data available to use, they are not so sorted.

In short, there is no evidence that supports Vogt's theory of certificate numbering, and the actual data of known certificates directly contradict his claim. Ergo, his claim that this is indicative of forgery is not credible.

Vogt's 4th "Point of Forgery": The Missing Seal.

Between Vogt's 3rd and 4th "Points of Forgery" he lards his affidavit with several pages and thousands of words recounting all sorts of third party hearsay and irrelevant history regarding the Department of Health and the Obama Administration's release of the long form in April of 2011. Almost none of it has to do with any actual evidence of forgery, but it does allow us to contemplate the ponderous size of the conspiracy he alleges... and this just to get a copy of the long form to a press conference at the Whitehouse.

But eventually, Vogt settles back onto track and offers us "The Involvement of General Electric, National Broadcasting Company and Savannah Guthrie. No evidence of a Hawaiian Department of Seal on the Obama COLB. The forth point of forgery."

Oddly, once we finally get to the actual claim here, the evidence that Vogt offers manages to destroy his own assertion in very short order. Rather than suggesting "no evidence of a Hawaiian Department Seal," Vogt repeatedly provides evidence that **there actually is a seal** on the document after all. He readily admits that after adjusting things like color saturation and contrast, he is able to see the seal on **both** the Whitehouse PDF **and** the photograph taken by Savannah Guthrie at the time she reported having handled the document and felt the raised seal. Let's ponder that for a moment.

On what planet does evidence of a seal become "no evidence of a seal?"

How Vogt attempts to get around this problem is with a ham handed *ad hoc* rationalization followed by an attempt at misdirection. He first baldly asserts that the image of the seal on the PDF and Guthrie photos is just that, an image and **not** a raised seal at all. This is what inspires him to call Guthrie a liar and add her to the legion of active participants in the conspiracy. He then points to a **third** version of the certificate that is more congenial to his bias, the black and white photocopy handed out in the journalist's packet, and points out that **on that one** no seal is visible. But remember... by his own theory of forgery, the copy on the journalist's packet must have come from one of the three "deliverables" he insists that the forger provided, all of which supposedly already have the image of the seal. He makes no effort explain, nor does he even seem to notice this contradiction.

Applying Occam's razor we note that both the Whitehouse PDF and the Guthrie photograph are direct images of the embossed document (one a direct scan and the other a direct photograph), and both are in color. The image of the journalist's package photocopy is neither. It is a **later scan** of a black and white, non embossed photocopy. So Vogt is basing the argument on his inability to see the seal on the **worst** evidence at his disposal, and rejecting out

³⁶ It should not go without noting that the collection of birth certificates for a month prior to batch numbering could assemble a significant number of certificates drifting in from different geographies in no particular pattern. Given the periodic requirement to find a particular birth certificate in the intervening period, the most reasonable schema for sorting them and keeping them sorted would be alphabetically by surname. This does appear to be the actual order for the August 1961 Hawaiian certificates we have seen, with the sole exception of an infant who died soon after birth.

of hand the fact that the seal actually is visible on the **best** evidence at his disposal. At the same time he declares a respected journalist to be a liar for no other reason than that her reporting is inconvenient to him.

One last glaring inconsistency here is worthy of mention. In his previous declaration of the DeCosta certificate as a forgery (See Appendix B), Vogt explicitly conceded that it bore a genuine State of Hawai'i seal, and that the DoH was therefore knee deep in the conspiracy. So why, if they appear perfectly willing to impress other "forgeries" with their official seal would they have failed to also place a genuine seal put on this newest document as well? Certainly they were aware there should be some sort of seal, because even Vogt admits that there is an image of it on the other two examples. And forgers tend to get better at their craft over the years, not worse.

In summary, Vogt contradicts his own assertion regarding evidence of a seal and proves that the evidence is there after all.

Vogt's 5th "Point of Forgery": The Wrong Width.

We are now introduced again to Vogt's companion in conspiracy mongering, Paul Irey. In perfect parallel to Vogt, Irey has a history of donning a mantle of "expertise" based on astoundingly flimsy actual experience. He claims to be an expert on typewriters because he was a clerk typist in the US Air Force many years ago.³⁷ Also like Vogt, Irey has been forced to abandon many of his earliest claims, though unlike Vogt he did not simply pretend he never made them. To his credit he notified several birther celebrities that they should stop using those invalid arguments.³⁸ But claiming to have "known it was forgery" before he ever set eyes on the birth certificate³⁹ he has reliably come up with a whole new set of objections since. Several of those are represented in this affidavit. This is the first of them.

They assert that "The glairing (sic) problem is that the Obama COLB is 6.125-inches wide which represents a 12.5% reduction and that is not a standard reduction from a copying machine and there was no reason to reduce the size of the COLB."

We can ignore completely the pointless assertion that "there was no reason to reduce the size." Neither Vogt nor Irey are in a position to actually know that. But more to the point... to know that something is "the wrong width" first requires knowledge of what "the right width" might be, and neither Vogt nor Irey actually know what this hypothetical width should be. They do not know with any certainty the **original** size, they cannot confidently know the **final** size from computer images that are themselves different sizes than the document they call "wrong," and they are in no position to second guess the reduction settings on the copying machines and scanners used at different points in the workflow between the original and the three versions available on line.

In terms of the **original** size, they have never had access to the documents in the bound volumes at the DoH. So their claim to have "figured out" that the original was 7 inches wide is little more than a guess. I spent about a half

³⁷ "So my claim to understand this process actually comes from my 4 years in the Air Force from 1955 to the end of 1988 [sic]. I was typing at the office headquarters directly under commanding officers of the several Air force groups I was assigned to and in those years produced a lot of typewritten documents." Comment by Paul Irey on the *Raised on Hoecakes Blog*, June 13, 2012, <http://raisedonhoecakes.com/ROH/2011/06/12/dear-birthers-grasping-at-straws-hurts-the-conservative-cause/#comment-1075>

³⁸ *Reality Check Radio Blog*, December 1, 2011, *A Conversation with Paul Irey*, <http://rcradioshow.blogspot.com/2011/12/conversation-with-paul-irey.html>

³⁹ Irey is on record as asserting that he "knew it was forgery" before he had ever studied it. *RC Radio Interview with Paul Irey*, June 23, 2011, <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/rcr/2011/06/24/reality-check-radio>

hour going through my own files to measure a number of different government forms (both State and Federal) in my possession, and they vary in increments of $1/8^{\text{th}}$ of an inch from 7.125 inches to 6.5 inches in width. Without access to the actual bound volumes in the DoH there is no conceivable way they can have “figured out” what they claim to have figured out.

To test the difficulty with figuring out the *final* size of the image from second or third generation scans and photographs, we can look at their work with the one first generation photocopy to which they actually had access. Vogt writes, “I had received a copy of Virginia Sunahara’s death certificate from the Hawaiian DOH and it had a line length of 6.875-inches which represents a 2% reduction, which is normal.”

Actually, no. If they are assuming a 7 inch original for the death certificate as well as the birth certificate, then 6.875 inches would be *less* than 2%... more specifically about 1.8%. (If the reader should object that I am splitting hairs, I am only using the same decimal level of accuracy that they themselves use in the affidavit.) Conversely, if it actually was a 2% reduction from the original, then the original certificate must have been 7.015 inches. Huh? Who makes forms of *that* size? It is certainly not a standard $1/8^{\text{th}}$ inch increment.

Seeing here how difficult it is for Vogt and Irey to get the math to work with a *first* generation photocopy, consider that the Whitehouse PDF and Guthrie photographs are all *third* generation images, and the AP scan is a *fourth* or *fifth* generation image.

Ultimately though, why they believe the document to be the “wrong” width is not even clear. It might be one of two things. It could be because they object (for no obvious reason) to any reduction other than the 1 or 2% that Vogt asserts is required by law. Or it could be that they feel a reduction in increments of less than a full percent (0.5 % is their claim) is not possible.

Based on the discussion we just had, let’s take the second one first. Vogt and Irey have demonstrated that even with a first generation paper photocopy, getting measurements accurate to within tenths of a percent is not within their capability. So any argument based on the claim that they have done so is simply without serious basis.

But if their issue is the first one, we need only point to the fact that almost every good copying machine on the planet allows the user to reduce documents by any percentage they want at any time. Certainly there can be no claim that a 12-13% reduction is impossible, because it’s not. And any complaint that it’s “too much” is simply an opinion with nothing substantial upon which to base it.

In short, the claim that it is “wrong width” founders upon the rocks of their inability to state with any credibility what the “right width” might be, or even whether or not there is a “right width” at all.

Vogt’s 6th “Point of Forgery”: Content Errors.

We have seen in his previous “Points of Forgery” that Vogt regularly attempts to fill the massive gaps in his evidence by fabricating “facts” that cannot be demonstrated to actually be true. Among his favorite tactics is to assert false details and then attribute them to sources that do not actually contain them. In this 6th “Point of Forgery” he takes a somewhat different tack; he misrepresents not just the information contained in his sources, but he misrepresents the sources themselves.

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There are two pieces of information on the President's birth certificate that he claims are content errors. The first is the age of the President's father, Barack Hussein Obama Sr. The second in the entry for Obama Sr.'s race. We will cover them in order.

Let us first dispatch the issue of the father's age by simply accepting the obvious fact that errors on a birth certificate are just not evidence of forgery. Anyone who has done family history is intimately familiar with the sometimes less than complete accuracy of absolutely authentic vital records. In my own files, the birth certificates of just two people, my parents, contain no less than five such errors. No one would suggest that either are forgeries; they are simply wrong. And these include serious mistakes such as misspellings of their surnames, and for my father a completely wrong first name.

In the case of Obama Sr., there are actually multiple different *other* documents on which different ages or dates of birth are recorded and nobody (not even birthers) are claiming that half of them are forgeries. It is simply true that for whatever reason, he sometimes reported his birth as being in 1934 and at others he reported a birth in 1936. This document is merely one of the latter (See Appendix C).

Vogt's decision to declare the earlier date "correct" would be arbitrary if it was not also convenient to his deep desire to declare the birth certificate a fake. It should be noted that the individual with probably the greatest ability to actually settle the issue, Obama Sr.'s biographer Sally Jacobs, came down on the other side of that fence.⁴⁰ If Jacobs is correct, then Vogt's assertion here fails both as an argument for forgery and as a simple fact.

Driven by conspiracist zeal, however, Vogt cannot resist trying to assemble an elaborate, tendentious and ultimately superfluous hypothesis⁴¹ regarding why Obama Sr. might have "lied" about his age. How he imagines this helps his argument that the age on the birth certificate is a sign of forgery rather than just another example of Obama Sr. "lying about his age" is not entirely clear.

The second "content error" is an old favorite of birthers going all the way back to the 2008 release of the President's short form. The President's father's race is recorded as "African," something that seems to inexplicably inflame the sensibilities of birthers who demand that it should have actually been "Negro." Their efforts to defend that assertion are often bizarre, generally anachronistic and always dependent on extreme cultural myopia. Vogt's stab at the issue though is perfunctory, almost a casual toss off. But that doesn't prevent him from getting it completely wrong.

Vogt observes that "The federal and state coding for race did not include that word," and leaves the reader to assume that this somehow places requirements or limitations regarding how race would be reflected in a state or local birth certificate. It takes only a few seconds online (or with any file of birth certificates) to demonstrate that this cannot possibly be true.

⁴⁰ Sally Jacobs, *The Other Barack: The Bold and Reckless Life of President Obama's Father* (2011), p. 261: 27. "Barack Obama's date of birth is unclear. His earliest school records bear no birth date. His University of Hawaii transcript records his birthdate as 18 June 1934. His marriage certificate and résumés indicate he was born in 1936. U.S. immigration records show his year of birth as both 1934 and 1936. Family members say they believe he was born in 1936, so I have used that date."

⁴¹ During a brief correspondence between this author and Vogt regarding this "Point of Forgery" it was eventually revealed that to assemble his theory Vogt had deliberately misrepresented a random third party website concerning high school exchange student programs as being a "quasi-governmental" agency responsible for setting standards regarding who could attend graduate school in the US as "foreign students." It was not a "quasi-governmental" anything, and it set no standards for anybody other than itself and its own programs.



Figure 4: “Non standard” Races on a Hawaiian Birth Certificate

There is no shortage (for example) of Hawaiian birth certificates that bear other races also not found on the 1961 CDC coding manual provided by Vogt. Here is an example with two that do not appear on that manual; Portuguese and Spanish.

My own birth certificate from a different state shows the races of both my parents as “Italian.” Even the references to “Caucasian” on many certificates do not actually meet the standard of the CDC manual which was not “Caucasian” but “White.”

It is clear from both testimony and evidence that the race noted on birth certificates was self declared by the parents. The Federal Coding rules explicitly anticipated that the certificate copies they were being sent from the states would not conform to the official coding choices, and so they consist extensively of instructions on how to account for the differences.

Ultimately, Vogt offers no serious reasoning behind the idea that the 1961 CDC Coding manual he presents has anything whatsoever to do with how people in Hawai‘i were recording their races on their children’s birth certificates, and he ignores the evidence that proves the idea erroneous.

Neither of Vogt’s “content errors” turns out after examination to be “content errors” at all.

The Long Digression: Vogt and Irey Create Their Own Forgery

At this point in the affidavit, Vogt and Irey launch into a lengthy description of their own efforts to create a fake long form birth certificate for President Obama (I will refer to it moving forward as the “mock-up”). Ultimately, it is difficult to not conclude that the entire account is meant less to provide useful information than as performance art. The closest thing either Vogt or Irey actually have to expertise in anything is the largely obsolete field of typesetting. So even though none of their theories of forgery have anything to do with typesetting this is a chance to demonstrate that they at least know something about something and get theatrically technical in the process.

Make no mistake. They explicitly reject the idea that the alleged forger created a fake blank form from scratch and then filled it in with a typewriter. Even though that is the way that any real forger would have most likely proceeded, and even though that is the way they chose themselves to proceed, their theory is that somebody instead cut and pasted individual letters and words from multiple other certificates onto a copy of an authentic blank form.

The account of their own forgery is larded with pointless detail apparently just to show how smart Vogt and Irey are. Essentially none of it proves useful for determining the authenticity of the birth certificate, and most of it is never even mentioned again. It is the technical equivalent of being stoned to death with popcorn.

What they then go on to do with that mock-up is just another exercise in egregious confirmation bias. On one hand, when they are able to recreate a detail of the birth certificate, they conclude that this must be evidence of forgery. But then on the other hand, when they are *not* able to recreate a detail of the birth certificate, they conclude that this *also* must be evidence of forgery. Such systematic inconsistency is entertaining, but ultimately a waste of time and resources. Having rejected out of hand the *actual* work-flow by which the Whitehouse PDF was created and posted to the Web, their own efforts to recreate it are crippled from inception. At each step they

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might have benefited from a liberal application of Occam's Razor... but that is simply not the way they roll. In classic conspiracist style, they never settle for a simple and obvious explanation when a needlessly complex and incoherent alternative is available.

To review the next few "Points of Forgery" requires us to clearly understand the official "theory of history" that Vogt is trying to contradict. Only then can we fairly compare and contrast his mock-up and its derivatives with the document released by the Whitehouse. Here is the process flow as described by the Whitehouse and confirmed (to the point of handover) by the Hawai'i Department of Health. There are three different "end products" that are considered by Vogt in this affidavit at different times, resulting from three different workflows. They are:

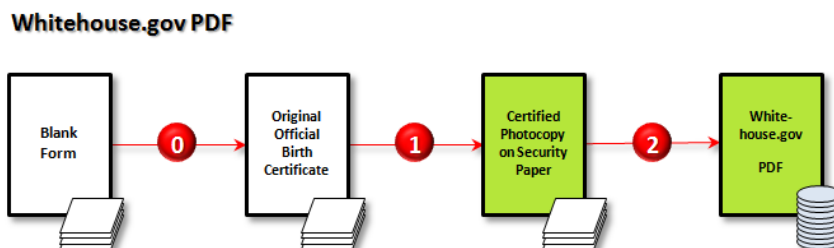


Figure 5: Workflow for the Whitehouse.gov PDF

Step 0 represents the creation of the original and official paper birth certificate held in the Hawai'i Department of Health archives. In this step, a blank form is completed by adding typed text, signatures, handwritten dates, date stamps, and finally a stamped certificate number. The completed certificate is then bound into a volume with other completed birth certificates. This is the "first generation image"; the original form.

Step 1 represents the creation of the two certified copies provided to the Whitehouse on April 26, 2011. The bound original is photocopied onto green basket weave security paper. That photocopy is then stamped with a date, certified with the official Registrar's stamp, and finally embossed with the Hawai'i State Seal. These are both "second generation images." Up to this point, every version of the certificate has been analog paper.

Step 2 represents the creation of the PDF posted on the WWW. One of the two certified copies was "scanned to email" in color on a Xerox Workscentre Scanner/Printer. The resulting PDF file was then opened in MAC OS Preview, rotated 180 degrees and then resaved to PDF. This is the specific and single point at which the analog paper is converted into a digital document. Therefore any "anomalies" unique to the Whitehouse.gov PDF must be explained by this step. That PDF is the one accessible online at Whitehouse.gov.⁴² And it is a "third generation image."

⁴² It is important to stress again that according to the "official" workflow this is the only point at which the analog paper is converted into a digital image. Therefore, all of the digital "anomalies" flogged by birthers must, if the certificate is authentic, be explained by this single step. A simple Xerox Workcentre workflow has been conclusively shown to account for all the alleged digital "anomalies" in the Whitehouse.gov PDF. It was discovered and comprehensively proved in a *tour de force* of amateur forensic research by a team of anti-birther bloggers lead by "nbc" of the *Native and Natural Born Citizenship Explored* blog at <http://nativeborncitizen.wordpress.com/>. Although rejected out of hand by most birthers, no serious challenge to the Xerox workflow has ever been publicly offered by any advocate of the forgery theory.

Savannah Guthrie Photographs

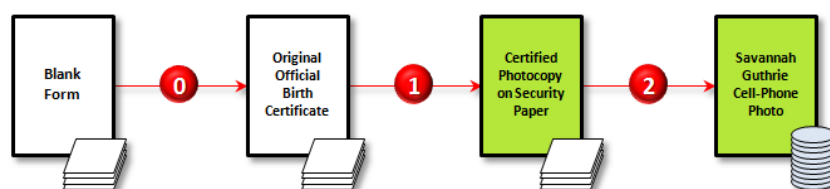


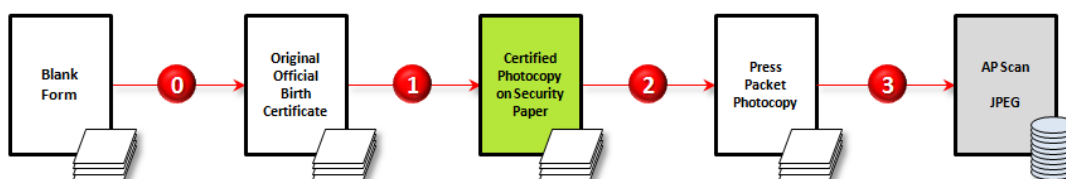
Figure 6: Workflow for the Savannah Guthrie Photographs

Steps 0 and 1 in the Savannah Guthrie workflow are the same as the Whitehouse.com PDF. Only **Step 2** is different.

Working from the same certified photocopy of the President’s birth certificate that was copied to PDF for the Whitehouse.gov website, Guthrie used her personal cell phone to take the color photographs she eventually posted on line. Like the Whitehouse.gov PDF, these photographs are “third generation images.”

Also as in the Whitehouse.com PDF, this is the only step at which the analog paper is converted into a digital image. Therefore any “anomalies” unique to the Guthrie photographs must be explained by this step.

Minimum Workflow: AP JPEG



Most Likely Workflow: AP JPEG

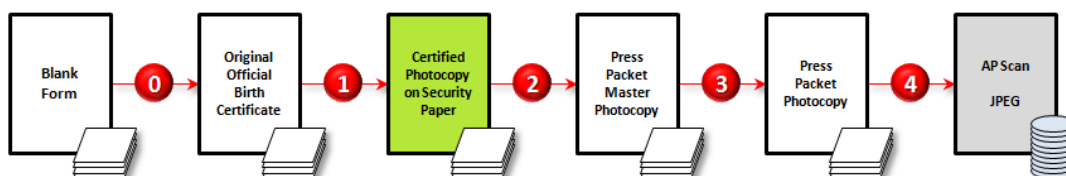


Figure 7: Possible workflow for the AP JPEG

Unlike the Whitehouse PDF and the Guthrie photographs, we have less confidence in the specific workflow that led to the AP JPEG found online in the days following the birth certificate’s release. As in the prior two workflows, the first two steps remain the same. But where the Whitehouse PDF and Guthrie photographs are **third** generation images, the AP JPEG is at best a **fourth** generation and most likely a **fifth** generation image.

For both of these options, **Step 2** represents the creation of an analog paper black and white photocopy from one of the certified copies acquired from the Hawai’i DoH. This, like the Whitehouse.com PDF and the Guthrie photographs is a “third generation image.” Unlike those others though it is still analog paper rather a digital file. But at this point the process becomes less clear. One of two things must have taken place to create the multipage, multi-document packets that were handed out to the attending press corps.

One possibility (represented by the “Minimum Workflow” above) is that an administrative person or persons prepared the packets by making many photocopies directly from the certified document, collated them with all the

other documents into press packets by hand, and then gave to each journalist a **third** generation photocopy. One of those copies was then subsequently scanned to create the AP JPEG; a **fourth** generation image.

But the other, far more likely possibility (represented by the “Most Likely Workflow” above) would have been for an administrative person to make a single photocopy (a “third generation image”) directly from the certified document, use it to assemble a master packet for reproduction, and then use the automated collation capabilities of their copier to create the large number of identical packets that were then handed out. This would be **Step 3** in the “Most Likely Workflow.” In that case each journalist received a **fourth** generation photocopy. One of those copies was then subsequently scanned to create the AP JPEG; a **fifth** generation image.

This final step, the creation of the AP JPEG by scanning, is the only step at which the analog paper is converted into a digital image. Therefore any specifically **digital** “anomalies” unique to the AP JPEG must be explained by this step. There are however other unique *analog* “anomalies” that could have been introduced by the additional photocopying steps unique to the AP JPEG.

It cannot be stressed too intensely that no administrative person who has any experience whatsoever in preparing multiple presentation packets for distribution would choose the first option over the second. To do so would frankly imply inefficiency and incompetence of the sort unlikely to be found in a professional working at that level.

And it also must be pointed out that a fifth generation image is by its nature very far removed in clarity and fidelity to the original. So much noise and distortion has been added to the original signal that much of what Vogt and Irely try to glean from the AP JPEG is ultimately so subjective as to be useless as evidence of forgery.

Vogt’s 7th “Point of Forgery”: The Appearance of the Typed Text.

It can prove to be a bit of a challenge following much of Vogt’s argument at this point, as his prose is not exactly unambiguous. The reader is often left to tease out for themselves what specific details may have been identified by Vogt as problematic since he continues to bury his punch lines under mountains of irrelevant and sometimes incompetent technical hand waving. It also does not help that he occasionally gets his details quite wrong.

For example, when discussing the output of his first photocopying step he excitedly announces that he “immediately realized that the white halo around all the type and lines on Mr. Obama’s COLB, the reporters copy, Savannah Guthrie’s and the PDF copy, could not possibly be caused by the copiers.”⁴³ It is of course an observation so obvious that no one has ever suggested otherwise. But he also has never even seen the President’s birth certificate so cannot know one way or the other if it has halos. And there are certainly no halos at all on the Guthrie photographs.⁴⁴ His comment is simply false for at least two of his four examples.

At the same time Vogt is trying to draw conclusions by comparing images at different points in the workflow between his mock-up and the officially released copies. Vogt is making a comparison here between the first photocopy of his mock-up and a document he has never seen (i.e. the certified copy directly from the Hawai’i DoH). The detail he is discussing can only be shown to exist on images created

⁴³ *Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt*, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 49

⁴⁴ See discussion of Vogt’s 8th “Point of Forgery.”

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later in the workflow *after* the document or its derivatives had been converted to digital format. Whether he is simply confused on the workflow or being deliberately opaque is not important. His tendency to regularly compare apples and pears severely undercuts the validity of his comparisons.

In the case of his seventh “Point of Forgery” he has exactly this problem. He is comparing what he describes as “a scan of a copy of a copy” of his mocked up certificate (i.e. a *fourth* generation image) to the AP JPEG which as we have seen is almost certainly a *fifth* generation image. Vogt even observes that “their image may have one more copying stage,”⁴⁵ but then just as quickly ignores what he had just realized.

Rather than a “Point of Forgery” Vogt has done nothing more than identify an ordinary and well understood feature of photocopying. It is a phenomenon so well understood that it has even served as the premise for Michael Keaton movies and Michael Crichton novels. Understanding it does not require the pseudo-technical hand waving favored by Vogt.⁴⁶ Each time you photocopy a photocopy, the image is degraded in detail, clarity and fidelity to the original.

This phenomenon of “Generation Loss” is a well known result of making multiple generations of copies using systems that are “lossy” (when considering digital systems) or that have a high “noise level” (when considering analog systems). As we will later see, this phenomenon is also responsible for most of the “Typewriter anomalies” identified by Vogt and Irey during the course of their further analysis.

To demonstrate the phenomenon, a control document was found online,⁴⁷ converted from color to gray scale, printed, and then copied sequentially to a third additional generation. Here are direct screen captures of the progression demonstrating the progressive loss of detail and clarity.

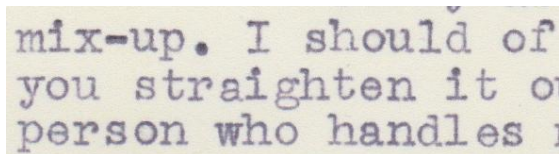


Figure 8: The document printed in full color.

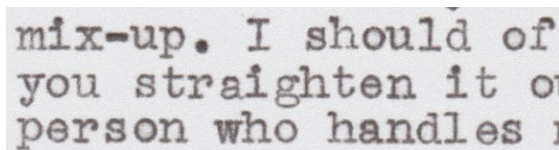


Figure 9: The document printed in gray scale.
This is the first generation image.

⁴⁵ Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 50

⁴⁶ Another example of this would be Vogts misidentification of the technical cause of the “holes and notches” in the typed text of the AP JPEG. He attributes it to a software process called “thresholding” that takes place “when you convert a grayscale image to a binary (black and white) image.” The problem with this explanation is that the AP JPEG shows no trace of ever having existed as a binary (black and white) image. At every step in the process of its creation it has been either gray scale or full color. Of the three available images, only the Whitehouse.gov PDF possesses any binary components; specifically the eight monochrome bitmasks.

⁴⁷ Typed letter from Aaron Copeland, February 21, 1953,
<http://www.schulsonautographs.com/schulson/images/items/2092.jpg>

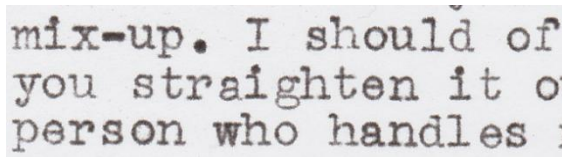


Figure 10: Second generation photocopy.

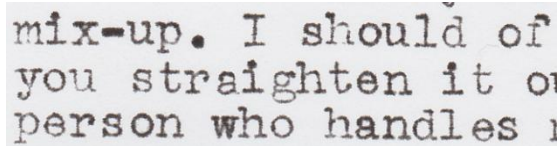


Figure 11: Third generation photocopy.

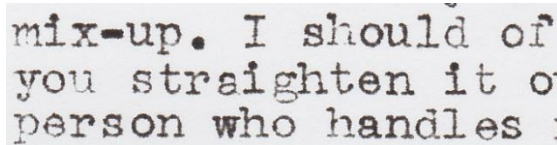


Figure 12: Fourth generation photocopy.

As can be clearly seen, the progressive introduction of “holes and notches” takes place simply by photocopying; none of Vogt’s wild side trips into microfilming or monochrome binary images are required. At what point it can be said that the “holes and notches” become “similar” to those found on the AP JPEG is almost completely arbitrary. But at no point is forgery needed to explain the effect.

The “differences” between Vogt’s mock-up and the AP JPEG are not only vulnerable to subjective interpretation, they are not particularly meaningful given the uncertainty regarding the hardware, software, or process differences between their respective histories. In this instance, Vogt has simply failed to perfectly replicate a detail of the AP JPEG. Under no obvious standard does his failure imply that he has found a “Point of Forgery.”

Vogt’s 8th “Point of Forgery”: The White Halos.

From the moment the long form PDF was posted on Whitehouse.gov, birthers pointed excitedly to the presence of “halos” surrounding the letters, stamps and form lines as signs of digital manipulation. Ignoring the fact that the mere act of scanning a document is digital manipulation, halos have remained central to birther forgery claims and Vogt does not completely disappoint. However his discussion is cursory, inaccurate and ultimately uninformed. This is one of several arguments that Vogt seems to have simply phoned in.

Vogt asserts that halos surrounding the text and form lines of the President’s long form birth certificate are present on **all three** of the images available online; specifically the Whitehouse.com PDF, the AP JPEG, and the Savannah Guthrie photograph. His apparent (though not clearly stated) objective is to prove that they must therefore also be present on the source document for all three images. According to Vogt this would be the original digital composite. According to the “official” workflow, this would be the certified paper copies provided by the Hawai’i DoH.

To this purpose, Vogt includes in his affidavit a highly magnified image of the Guthrie photograph that does appear to show halos. The problem is that the image in Vogt’s affidavit has been digitally manipulated from the original. The figures below show direct screen captures of the Guthrie photograph

as it appear natively online in comparison with Vogt's version found in his affidavit. The differences are immediately obvious.

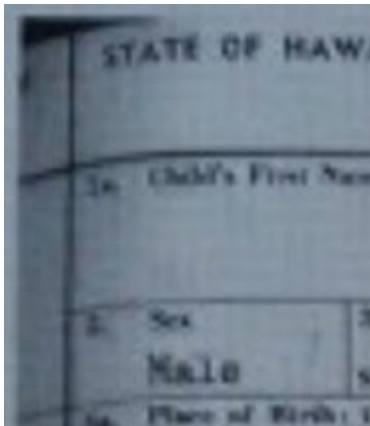


Figure 13: A direct screen capture of the native Guthrie photograph as found online.

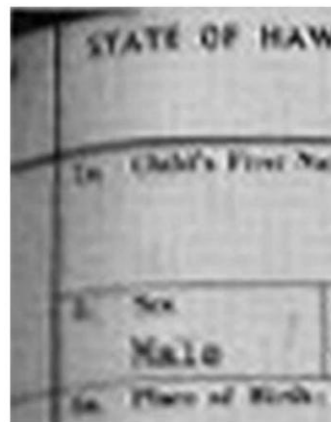


Figure 14: A direct screen capture of the manipulated Vogt version of the Guthrie photograph as found in his affidavit.

One obvious manipulation is readily apparent; the Guthrie photograph is in color while Vogt's version has been converted to gray scale. Vogt's version has also clearly been processed to enhance the visibility of the background security paper, and also displays some significant increase in JPEG artifacts of the sort that normally come from resaving images at some number of generations removed from the original.

It is undeniable that Vogt's claim of halos on the Guthrie photograph is false. Only in his own manipulated version can halos be observed. I leave it to the reader to judge whether or not the manipulation was intentional.

Vogt commits a different set of technical sins in his discussion of halos on the AP JPEG. At least he is on firmer ground this time regarding the actual presence of an "anomaly" worthy of consideration; there does appear to be halos of some sort on the AP JPEG. The first problem is that they are only superficially like the halos on the Whitehouse.gov PDF. On closer examination, they are caused by a completely different digital effect.

The AP JPEG is a color scan of a black and white photocopy. As a result, it demonstrates an effect called "chromatic aberration." The optical explanation for the effect is not important to the observation that it is present as a "color fringe" surrounding all of the text and form features in the AP JPEG. Enlarging the AP JPEG helps to show what is actually occurring. Rather than a white halo surrounding the text, there is a pinkish color fringe towards the outside edges of the document, and a bluish color fringe towards the inside.



Figure 15: Chromatic aberration on the AP JPEG

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Contrasted against the general bluish tint of the AP JPEG, the pink fringe creates the optical illusion of a white halo. But that illusion does not extend to the blue fringe which against the background tint either disappears or looks like a shadow rather than a halo. The illusion of a halo is further enhanced when (as Vogt does in his affidavit) the original colors are reduced to gray scale.

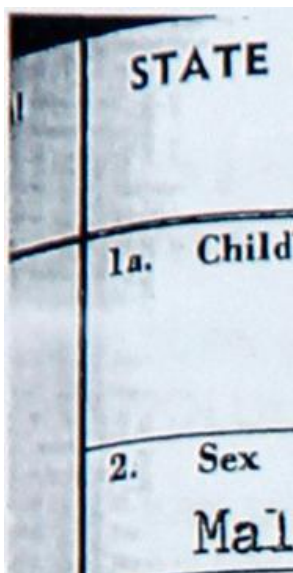


Figure 16: Direct screen capture of the AP JPEG, showing the chromatic aberration caused by scanning a black and white photocopy in full color.

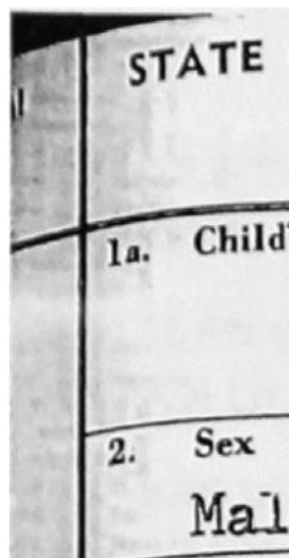


Figure 17: Direct screen capture of Vogt's black and white version, causing the chromatic aberration to look superficially like halos of the sort found on the Whitehouse.com PDF.

These superficially similar digital effects (on both the Whitehouse.com PDF and the AP JPEG) are clearly the result of subsequent digital processing. But they are fundamentally two different phenomena, each with their own prosaic explanation, neither of which implies forgery.

Vogt's attribution of the halos to Adobe Photoshop's "Unsharp Mask" function is odd, since in the first place there is no obvious evidence that any Adobe product has ever touched any of the three images of the President's birth certificate that can be found online. But most important is that an application of "Unsharp Mask" or its equivalent on an image intended for posting online would hardly be a "Point of Forgery" in the first place. The cosmetic enhancement of digital images prior to posting them online for purposes of clarity or aesthetics are simply not acts of forgery. Period.

Vogt's reasoning is again not particularly clear, and rarely distilled before being committed to his affidavit. At this moment in the affidavit he launches into another long winded flight of superfluous fiction concerning somebody in the DoH getting cold feet and refusing to do something that Obama's lawyers wanted done. It is another hopelessly convoluted explanation for a feature that already has a number of far simpler explanations. But worse, he is proposing this complex and evidence free scenario to explain observations that are not even true. He writes

that “Since all three exhibits of the Obama COLB exhibit this white halo that would indicate all of them were produced from the same computer file and proves computer manipulation and origin of the COLB.”⁴⁸

Of course, it is not true that “all three exhibits” possess the white halos. The AP JPEG possesses something very different; chromatic aberration. And the Guthrie photograph possesses no halos at all.

Vogt’s 9th “Point of Forgery”: Color Shift and the 150 DPI of the green security paper.

Vogt’s assertion of a “color shift” between his mock-up and the Whitehouse.gov PDF is one of the muddier of his many muddy assertions. As best I can tell, Vogt’s actual complaint is that his mock-up and the Whitehouse PDF do not appear to be the same color green. Certainly he cannot be the first to notice that the fidelity of digital images to the color of the actual imaged object is often iffy at best.



Figures 18,19 and 20: Vincent Van Gogh’s “Self Portrait with Bandaged Ear,” showing three different ordinary photographs of the same portrait, each with their own particular “color shift.” None are forgeries, and all are of the same authentic painting.

It does not help his argument that in the affidavit versions he has posted online none of the examples he uses to demonstrate this alleged “color shift” are actually in color. It is also worth pointing out that even his own proposed explanations of this shift are not signs of forgery; only of cosmetic changes made as part of scanning or processing. Even more odd is that the potential explanation he posits as most likely implies that the Whitehouse.gov PDF is actually **closer** in color to a genuine paper birth certificate than is his own mock-up. He writes that “The other reason for the color shift could be due to adjusting the color so the output on the color printer matched the same color of the security paper. This is what I believe has happened here.”⁴⁹ There are many other possible and completely prosaic reasons for color differences between the Whitehouse.com PDF and Vogt’s mock-up. But that the President’s looks more authentic than Vogt’s mock-up is hardly a challenge to its authenticity.

Vogt then tosses out another, subjective assertion that “There is also a degraded appearance in the security papers design due to applying sharpening features and reducing the resolution of the green security paper down to 150 dpi.” He then redundantly points out that these (again purely cosmetic) changes are “evidence of computer manipulation.” Yes. We all know that **all** of the three images we have access to online are computer images, and

⁴⁸ *Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt*, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 60

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, Paragraph 61

so, by definition have been manipulated by computers. We also know that they have to be at *some* arbitrary resolution. And we also know that some computer images are stored at resolutions different from others.

None of that suggests forgery.

Vogt's challenge has never been to show evidence of "computer manipulation." After all, he is looking exclusively at digital images. His challenge is to show evidence of *forgery*. We are almost halfway through his "Points of Forgery" and to this point he has failed to meet that challenge.

Irey Takes Over: Typewriters, typewriters and more typewriters.

At this point the affidavit pretty clearly shifts away from the original speculation of Douglas Vogt and plunges into the sort of obviously obsessive analysis that has long characterized the contribution of Paul Irey to birther arguments. Almost all of these subsequent arguments depend upon a characteristic of manual, 1960s-era typewriters that is little more than a figment of their conjoined imaginations and that is nearly the exact opposite of reality on the ground. It is an opinion that can hardly be believed to come from someone who has ever actually used such a machine. Vogt and Irey baldy assert that "typewriter letter spacing will always be the same even if one of the metal type arms is slightly bent, it will always hit in the same exact place every time."⁵⁰ In actuality, the best that can be said about any manual/mechanical typewriters prior to the invention of the IBM Selectric is that they got their letter spacing and vertical location "close enough" at best.

For the next several pages, Vogt and Irey present "examples" from their own experiments to "prove" their claims regarding the supernatural accuracy of manual typewriters. A more objective analyst would instead have looked for third party examples of typed output to serve the purpose of a control, since as advocates for a point of view their own output cannot seriously be trusted. The creation (for example) of a half page of the same carefully repeated lower-case letter is hardly representative of actual work performed by actual typists in the course of doing their actual jobs. So, in preparation of my review of this part of the affidavit, I searched online for a control document by googling "typed documents." The second image returned was from an autograph auction offering a typed and signed letter from the great American composer Aaron Copeland.⁵¹ As it was of much higher resolution than the first return (an obituary typed out by Harlan Ellison) I chose it as my control, and it will be the primary document I will use moving forward to test Irey's and Vogt's assertions regarding the behavior of typewriters.

Over the next several pages of Vogt's affidavit we will be exposed again and again to reality that he and Irey are attacking a straw man; an imaginary perfect typewriter. Real typewriters operated by real human beings almost never were able to achieve the exactness of spacing, leading, alignment and placement fantasized by Vogt and Irey. Each press of a key, each carriage return, each shift from upper to lower case was a variable act with variable outcomes. To observe this variation is only to acknowledge the distance between the actual and the ideal. The ideal is a fiction. The actual is imperfect.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Paragraph 62.

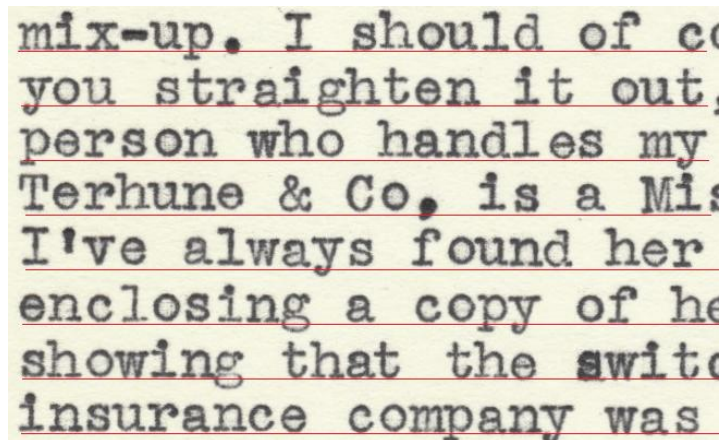
⁵¹ As of this writing, the image remains online at: <http://www.schulsonautographs.com/schulson/images/items/2092.jpg> An image of the letter is included as Appendix D.

Vogt's 10th "Point of Forgery": Typewriter Line Spacing.

Vogt and Irely spend several pages and provide no fewer than five different images to demonstrate that the "leading" (i.e. the spacing between lines of the President's birth certificate) are not perfectly consistent. The claim that this is a "Point of Forgery" rests on such inconsistencies **not** being ordinary and normal. Of course, those of us who have ever used a manual typewriter know that the mechanism that advances the paper on the platen roller is a simple mechanical ratchet actuated by the typist's left hand. Every instance of actuation is potentially different and (within tolerances) capable of a different result. Most users would already know from experience that there can be some variance in the advance of the roller platen from one line to the next. And this ignores the regular temptation to advance the platen manually for aesthetic purposes when filling out forms.

Inexplicably, Vogt and Irely hold a radically different opinion. Instead, they assume (with no apparent effort to test the assumption) that line spacing should be exact. They are testing the President's birth certificate against the straw man of an imaginary perfect typewriter, not a *real* typewriter. So they place a computer generated digital grid over the AP JPEG and then use miniscule inconsistencies to argue that the document cannot be the product of that imaginary perfect machine. Unfortunately, the one test they failed to perform is the only one that can fairly test the assumption; comparing it to a third party control document.

Lacking access to the high end Adobe Photoshop application that Vogt & Irely used to overlay their grid on the AP JPEG, I used the simpler Microsoft Paint program to overlay a much simpler horizontal grid on my control document. Having identified that the first two lines had a leading (within obvious resolution tolerances) of about 50 pixels, a series of one pixel thick horizontal red lines were superimposed on the document at exact 50 pixel intervals for eight lines of the Copeland letter.



The results are disastrous to Vogt's & Irely's claim regarding line spacing.

Figure 21: The Copeland letter with a simple 50 pixel grid.

Lines one and two are both within a single pixel of the 50 pixel baseline.⁵² But lines three and four are clearly above the baseline by three and five pixels respectively. Line five is back to three pixels above baseline, line six is two pixels, and by line seven we are back to a single pixel above baseline. Line eight reverses the trend again, and is back to two. The differences from line to line are respectively 0, +2, +2, -2, -1, -1, and +1 pixels. Rather than a "Point of Forgery," inconsistent line spacing appears to be a completely ordinary and normal characteristic of typed documents.

⁵² Measured at the beginning of the line. Paper documents cannot always be guaranteed to be perfectly aligned when they are scanned or when inserted into a typewriter, so often (as in this document) the lines are slightly tilted in comparison to a perfectly horizontal baseline or the lines on the original blank form. This is among the reasons that Vogt's comparisons laterally across the birth certificate are generally meaningless.

In short, the same characteristics of inconsistent line spacing that Vogt claims is a sign of forgery on the President's birth certificate are found on other typed documents for which there is no suspicion whatsoever of forgery. And again, this is a simple letter with no added incentive to adjust the roller/platen to fill out a form. Yet again, a claimed "Point of Forgery" is shown to be the normal and ordinary characteristic of any document typed on a manual typewriter of that era.

It is probably worthwhile at this point to step back and reflect on how goofy this line of analysis actually is in the first place. Documents such as these were prepared by human typists of variable skill, experience and training with their own habits and preferences. The only thing certain between any two typists is that there will be random differences between the ways they do things. Every time Vogt asserts that "there would be no reason" for the typist to do something (adjust the platen, ignore the tab settings, etc.) he is asserting something that he can have no reasonable possibility of actually knowing. And this ignores that most people regularly do things for which they have no reason at all.

Vogt's 11th "Point of Forgery": Inconsistent use of the Left Margin

As in the point immediately prior, Vogt is here pretending to know what or why the individual typist who filled out the President's was thinking when they filled it out. But since it *was* an individual human being who filled out the form, the motivation for their choices can range anywhere from nonexistent to rational to random. Some typists simply choose to use the default left margin when filling out these forms and others do not.

In what appears to be a less than candid demonstration of other birth certificate examples, Vogt writes that "I had acquired twelve other legitimate COLBs dated 1957 to 1967, which was the period that the Department of Health used this particular form. Figure 41 shows the left-hand margin of six of them. You will notice three of them are from the same Kapiolani hospital that supposedly Obama was born (sic). Notice all these examples show the proper left-hand margin with the words lining up."⁵³

In fact, this account by Vogt is not entirely forthcoming. For starters, we are left to ponder about the other six examples that did not make the cut to become one of his examples. It is reasonable to suspect that at least some if not all of the six other "legitimate COLBs" in his possession do not line up in the way Vogt suggests. But worse, even the examples he shows do not all line up neatly to the left margin. The six examples he shows each has eleven lines that can potentially line up. But in *only one of them* (the example third from the right) are all eleven lines aligned along the left margin. Another has ten lines, one has nine, one has seven and two have six.

⁵³ *Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt*, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 70

Figure 22: Vogt's examples of left margin alignment in "legitimate COLBs." The red dots indicate lines which, even in his best examples, are "misaligned."

First made public in a redacted form by birther mouthpiece *World Net Daily* in 2011,⁵⁴ this certificate possesses an exclusively birther provenance. It was provided to *WND* by self proclaimed “Birther Princess” Miki Booth. It was declared authentic at the time by über-birther Jerome Corsi along with Vogt’s companion in this affidavit, Paul Irey. In fact the entire *WND* article was about Irey’s use of this “known to be authentic” birth certificate for the purpose of challenging Obama’s.

Figure 23: The Ah’Nee Birth Certificate

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The most casual perusal shows that it demonstrates almost all of the same inconsistencies in the use of the left margin as does the President's. In fact the similarities are so striking that it would be reasonable to suspect not only that they were prepared on the same typewriter, but by the same typist.

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1a. Child's First Name | |
| 2. Sex | Female |
| 6a. Place of Birth: | |
| 6c. Name of Hospital | Kapiolani |
| 7a. Usual Residence | |
| 7d. Street Address | |
| 7f. Mother's Mailing | |
| 8. Full Name of Father | JAMES |
| 10. Age of Father | 29 |
| 13. Full Maiden Name | THERESA |
| 15. Age of Mother | 36 |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1a. Child's First Name | |
| 2. Sex | Male |
| 6a. Place of Birth: | |
| 6c. Name of Hospital | Kapiolani |
| 7a. Usual Residence | |
| 7d. Street Address | |
| 7f. Mother's Mailing | |
| 8. Full Name of Father | BARACK |
| 10. Age of Father | 25 |
| 13. Full Maiden Name | STANLEY |
| 15. Age of Mother | 18 |

Figures 24 and 25: A comparison of the August 1961 Birth Certificates of Johanna Ah'Nee and Barack Obama

All of the same alignment idiosyncrasies present themselves line for line across both documents. There are also inconsistencies in line spacing that Vogt considered his 10th "Point of Forgery." This certificate therefore poses a huge problem for Vogt's theories of spacing and alignment. If it is authentic, then his criticisms regarding the line spacing and alignment seen on the President's birth certificate prove invalid.

But as we have shown before, when a birther is confronted with evidence that disproves a favored theory they do not throw out the theory. They throw out the evidence.

It should surprise no one that, without any rationale other than that it contradicts several of the theories he has been promoting in his affidavit, Vogt has declared the Ah'Nee certificate to also be a forgery. Adding injury to insult, he has further (in his sealed companion affidavit to the Washington Court) accused Johanna Ah'Nee herself of being the forger of President Obama's long form birth certificate, and "Birther Princess" Miki Booth of being an accessory to the forgery.

You really can't make this stuff up.

Vogt's 12th "Point of Forgery": Dancing Type.

We have already seen that Vogt and Irey's bizarre belief in an imaginary perfect typewriter fails to stand up to serious scrutiny. The 12th "Point of Forgery" is merely more of the same. This time they performed another self-deceiving "experiment" that would have been entirely unnecessary had they simply bothered to find an independent control document to look at. The conclusion of their experiment was "that lower case letters can only go below the baseline and the capital letters can only go above the baseline."⁵⁵ They are wrong.

⁵⁵ Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 73

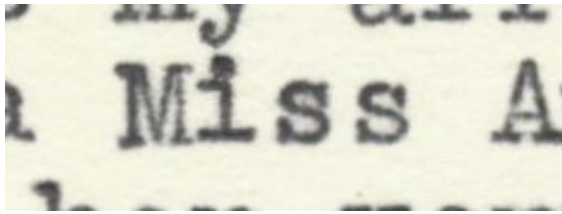


Figure 26: A detail from the Copeland letter.

Turning again to the Copeland letter, it is literally filled with lower case letters “above” the baseline and upper case letters below, directly contradicting Vogt’s and Irely’s conclusion. And again, the very nature of mechanical typewriter demands that letters “dance.” Look for example at the word “Miss.” Depending on where you place the “baseline” either the “i” is above it, or the “M” is below it, or both. Any one of those three circumstances shows Vogt’s and Irely’s claim to be false.

They assert that it “is absolutely impossible for any manual typewriter to do that because the mechanism does not allow it.” And yet... there it is.

There are no fewer than seven other examples of capital/lower case pairs that show the same situation in the Copeland letter. This is the necessary result of the fact that each and every strike of the keyboard on a mechanical typewriter is a percussive act. Each time the shift key is pressed and released the platen/roller is lifted off the typewriter base, and then dropped at free fall back into place. Each time a carriage return is required, the mechanism that returns the carriage and advances the platen/roller is manually thrown to the right until it literally slams against the carriage stop. Mechanisms of the sort and era employed in manual typewriters were deliberately designed with tolerances necessary to bend without breaking, rebound from over extension and ultimately survive a process that can be fairly described as violent.

The expectation that type shouldn’t “dance” is clueless at best. And the examination of control documents such as the Copeland letter prove that Vogt’s 12th “Point of Forgery” is simply, objectively wrong.

Vogt’s 13th “Point of Forgery”: Letter Size & Spacing.

Vogt never actually gets around to calling out his 13th “Point of Forgery” even though from the discussion it’s pretty clear that he thinks he has one. It has to do with the fact that, when he applies another of the grids of which he is so fond, he cannot manage to get all the typed text across the page to align “properly.”

When he uses what he believes to be the correct grid (a belief that is tendentious at best) there is a systematic creep of letters “to the left” as the text is read from left to right. Such a systematic shift is clear evidence that the grid is too large for the letters, so one or the other is simply wrong. Vogt decides that it must be the letters rather than his grid.

Recognizing that this could indicate that his grid is actually too large, rather than adjust the grid he actually adds additional distortion to the certificate image. Seriously. Who deliberately distorts an image when trying to analyze it? But that is what Vogt does. He stretches the image so that letters on both the left and right sides of the form fit his grid. And that is where he gets what he believes to be his evidence of forgery; when the letters on both the right and left line up, the letters in the center of the document *do not*.

This would be (to this point) his most compelling evidence that something is amiss. And something *is* amiss. What is surprising however is that Vogt does not seem to understand *what* is amiss... even though his partner Paul Irely not only knows exactly what is going on, he has retracted previous arguments because of it.

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In the 2011 book *Is Barack Obama's Birth Certificate a Fraud?*, computer professional John Woodman devoted an entire chapter to tackle what were, at that time, Paul Irey's best arguments regarding the President's birth certificate. As part of that effort he identified a problem with the AP JPEG (i.e. the document also being used by Vogt here) that invalidated much of Irey's work.

A close examination of the AP document reveals that Paul Irey has missed something extraordinarily important to his analysis. And it's going to hurt his theory badly.

There are two lines of photocopier-caused distortion running vertically for most of the length of the page.

...

The two vertical ripples continue down the page, warping many of the typewritten and form letters along the left side of the page. And between the two "stretch zones" it *compresses* the letters slightly...⁵⁶ (*emphasis in the original*)

Now, it is perhaps not a shock to discover that Vogt missed the distortion in the AP JPEG, even though it would directly affect exactly the sort of analysis he is attempting here. What *is* a shock is that his partner Paul Irey was fully aware of this distortion and had even retracted his earliest arguments as a result. Yet either Irey never told Vogt or Vogt didn't care, because nowhere in his discussion does he acknowledge the problem or attempt to account for it.

And yet, this is not the only source of lateral distortion in the AP JPEG. Another can be seen by examining the horizontal lines and realizing that the image is also distorted top to bottom. This appears to be caused by the scanner lens that created the AP JPEG, since the distortion is not also present on the Whitehouse.gov PDF. As one moves from the top to the bottom of the form, the "horizontal lines" gain a progressive downward tilt from left to right; a distortion caused almost certainly by the same lens issues that introduced the chromatic aberration that Vogt previously mistook for halos. This general distortion of the image will raise its ugly head again in Vogt's point 18.

But here we are again, forced to consider what remains the most fundamental problem with most of Vogt's and Irey's analysis; when considering the AP JPEG they are analyzing a document that is so far removed from the original that much of their argument turns out to be railing against the noise, not the signal. Every step in the process from the original adds distortion, and there comes a point when the distortion so overwhelms the original that analysis of the sort contained in the affidavit is officially a fool's errand.

Vogt's 14th "Point of Forgery": Punctuation.

In the effort to pad his "Points of Forgery" Vogt has already shown a tendency to repeat the same claim with only the smallest of variations, and this is another example. On a manual mechanical typewriter, punctuation marks are simply typed characters identical in form, function and mechanism to any of the typed letters or numbers. That

⁵⁶ Woodman, John. (2011) *Is Barack Obama's Birth Certificate a Fraud?*, Springfield, MO: New Horizon Press, pp. 148-149

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Vogt accounts for them as a separate “Point of Forgery” when they are merely demonstrating the identical characteristics he has already identified for letters is simply odd.

We will discuss letter spacing in more detail in the next “Point.” Suffice to say here that Vogt and Irey are again appealing to the imaginary perfect typewriter rather than a real one. Looking again at our control document we find the spacing of punctuation to be far less than perfectly consistent.

In just six examples of comma usage, the space between the comma and the immediately preceding letter varies massively. For comparison, the distance in the bottom example between the “s” and the comma is 38 pixels. Two examples higher, the distance between the “n” and the comma is 8 pixels.

That is a variation of 475%.

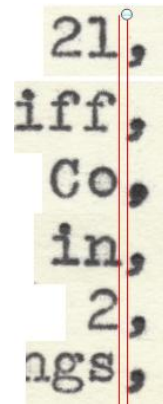


Figure 27: Details from the Copeland letter.

Vogt’s 15th “Point of Forgery”: Kerning.

“Kerning” has been a favorite argument of birthers since the day of the long form’s release. The reason they find it so compelling is its historical association with the fraudulent Killian Letters that ended up costing Dan Rather his job back in 2004. In that case, amateur analysts on the right-wing web forum Free Republic were able to demonstrate a number of features in the text of letters supposedly challenging George W. Bush’s military service that were anachronistic for documents supposedly created in the early 1970s. Subsequent review by actual experts later established that the amateurs were correct.

Birther declarations that the President’s birth certificate displays “kerning” is an attempt to reproduce the Killian success from a decade ago. Kerning is the process of *deliberately* adjusting the spacing between characters in a proportional font, usually for aesthetic purposes. It is an ubiquitous characteristic of modern computer fonts, but was not something of which all manual mechanical typewriters were capable in 1961.⁵⁷

Birthers tend to focus on the one particular feature of kerned typefaces that they insist is impossible with manual typewriters; letters that actual overlap in their vertical space. But once again, all we are really confronted with is the straw man of Vogt’s and Irey’s imaginary perfect typewriter, not the real examples of actual typed documents produced by actual typists in the real world.

Returning to our control document, there is no shortage of adjacent letters that appear to encroach upon each other’s vertical space either touching or overlapping. What Vogt has identified in the President’s birth certificate is completely ordinary.

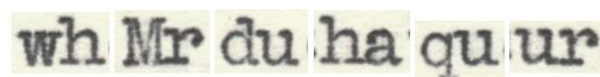


Figure 28: “Kerning” in the Copeland letter

⁵⁷ In actuality, IBM had introduced the first proportional font typewriters as early as 1941 in their Electromatic Model 04 electric typewriter. It became a standard feature of their Executive series typewriters, and we actually do not know what brand or make of typewriter was being used by the Hawai’i DoH twenty years later in 1961.

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Anybody who claims (as Irey claims) to have become a highly efficient typist has encountered the fact that one can type too fast resulting in a jam of the character hammers as each tries to imprint in the same space on the page at the same time. In fact, the QWERTY keyboard was originally designed specifically to slow typists down in the hope of avoiding such jams. Other than simple physics, there is no mechanical feature that prevents two adjacent letters from encroaching on each other differently based on the speed of the typist. This is compounded by the tendency of the carriage to rebound after every key stroke. In short, variable spacing between typed letters is an expectation of typed documents from that era, not an indication of forgery.

Vogt's 16th "Point of Forgery": Letter Spacing.

For those paying attention, this is essentially the fourth time that Vogt has rephrased this same argument to pretend that he has more "Points of Forgery" than he can actually justify. But "letter spacing" is the same exact issue that he identified as "Points of Forgery" in "Point 15" (kerning), "Point 14" (punctuation) and "Point 13" (letter size and spacing). This time, much of his argument is difficult to follow, primarily because (again) he buries his concern underneath a large volume of theatrical posing. Of the six figures he shows, only one of them (his Figure 60) provides anything actually useful with which to understand or evaluate his claim. But of course, in terms of letter spacing it reveals nothing that is not ordinarily found on typed documents.

Here for example is a replication of the "analysis" Vogt performed by comparing the same letter pairs in the President's birth certificate, only applied this time to the Copeland letter control document. Exactly as in the birth certificate, letter spacing between otherwise identical character pairs is highly variable; representing of course the natural variation in typing speed and mechanical tolerances found when an actual typist is doing actual work to create actual documents.

Vogt's assertion that such variability in letter spacing can only be the product of words having been "cut and pasted" together using letters from other documents is directly refuted simply by doing something it apparently never crossed his mind to do; actually looking at other typed documents for which there is no question of forgery, and that were not produced by somebody with an agenda.

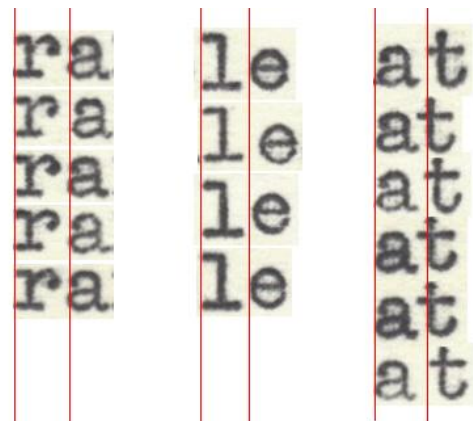


Figure 29: Variable spacing between identical letter pairs in the Copeland letter.

The conclusion is becoming inescapable that Vogt's and Irey's experiments fail to protect against the introduction of their own biases, or to account for the actual behavior of real world typists and real world typewriters. They have done little more than refute their own straw man; the imaginary perfect typewriter that was not used to create the President's original birth certificate.

Vogt's 17th "Point of Forgery": Typefaces.

Vogt admits (as if by admitting it he can then largely ignore it) that during his analysis he was "working from degraded images of the type." Just how badly "degraded" the images were after four or five generations of

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replication deserves some attention. The very nature of typewriters demands that there be some dramatic differences between the otherwise identical characters on a manually typed document.



Figure 30: Comparisons of the letter “f” as found on the Copeland letter.

Here for example is a comparison of the letter “f” extracted from different locations on the control Copeland letter. Remember, these are direct screen captures of a first generation scan, so the fidelity is much, much higher than the fourth or fifth generation image used by Vogt on his analysis. And even here, the differences in between any two instances of the letter can be vast.

The causes of such variation are well understood by most casual typist, though apparently not by Vogt or Irey. The variable pressure of each individual key strike, the speed of the typist at that moment, the amount of rebound being experienced from the previous keystroke, the specific portion and quality of the typewriter ribbon being struck... all of these variable lead to variable impressions of the letter on the printed page. The differences become even more dramatic under the sort of magnification Vogt admits he was using in his analysis. This is even ignoring the additional “noise” introduced by the act of magnification itself. When allowed to cherry pick one’s examples and then magnify them, the differences can become spectacular.

Here are just two examples from the set of letters “f” shown immediately above. They are the letters second from the right in the top row and third from the left in the bottom row. They can scarcely be believed to have come from the same typewriter. And they have not yet even been through the multiple episodes of distortion producing replication experienced by the image that Vogt is attempting to analyze.

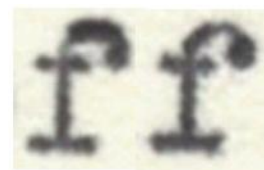


Figure 31: Enlarged comparisons of the letter “f” as found on the Copeland letter.

And just how much distortion did that replication introduce? A lot.



Figure 32: Three representative examples of distorted letters from the AP JPEG.

The best way to understand the magnitude the distortion present in the AP JPEG is to simply look at some of the more bizarre examples. Here for example are the first lower case “e” in “Gynecological,” the second “n” in “Kalaniana’ole” and the “a” in “Africa.” The conclusion is inescapable that these letters are spectacularly distorted by the many instances of replication that took place between the original and the image being analyzed.

In order for Vogt to justify his assertion that there are different typefaces being used in the President’s birth certificate, he has to be able to develop some objective criteria for distinguishing between differences caused by distortion, and differences cases by different original typefaces. Sadly for his argument and his affidavit, he does not prove up to the task.

The intense subjectivity of Vogt’s “evidence” here is most clearly identified by the vast gulf between what he claims and what he can actually show... or even what he can actually describe. He provides images of what he claims are different typefaces and fonts, yet makes no effort to actually point out a single difference that cannot be more prosaically attributed to the already identified distortion of the letters caused by repeated copying.

An even more glaring omission is that Vogt never even attempts to identify the allegedly different typefaces used. Remember, it is in the area of typesetting that both he and Irey claim professional experience. This requires more than a passing formal familiarity with typefaces and fonts, and they even waxed eloquently on that sort of detail when they were describing the fabrication of their own mock-up. But here at the moment it would be most valuable to argument, they are completely silent on the issue. Of course, to commit themselves to the actual identification of different typefaces would make them vulnerable to an objective check of their egregiously subjective assertions. Avoiding that exposure is understandable.

The final nail in the coffin of this specious and completely subjective claim is the fact that Vogt and Irey actually have in their possession a document with which they can repeat their “analysis” and control for all of the variables caused by generation loss and distortion. Remember, while their theory is that the typed text has been cut and pasted from multiple other documents, they asserted out of the gate that the form (and its typeset text) was a unitary copy of an authentic original. It would therefore seem reasonable to check their claims regarding the typed text against the typeset text of the originally blank form. Alas, such an exercise does not go well for them.



Figure 33: Comparison of the typeset word “Date” on the AP JPEG

Here is a comparison of the six examples of the typeset word “Date” that can be found on the AP JPEG of the President’s birth certificate. The differences in letter shape, apparent angles, letter width, even apparent letter style is dramatic from one instance to the next. But all of these words were originally typeset using the identical typeface and font, and all of them derive from what Vogt has already conceded is an authentic original birth certificate form.

Were I in a playful mood, I might choose to assert that there were a dozen different fonts and a couple different typefaces used to print those six words. It would of course be an absurd assertion, but the evidence in its favor is no less compelling than Vogt’s assertion that there are that many fonts and faces at play in the typed text on the same document. And remember that the typeset text of the form began with much less variability than the typed text, providing even less opportunity for generation loss and distortion to result in these differences. Yet... there they are.

It is notable (but not particularly surprising) that Vogt has either failed to perform this obvious check of his own theory or that he has performed it but chosen to withhold the results. Neither reflects particularly well on the quality or the reliability of his analysis.

The bottom line is that in spite of all Vogt and Irey’s efforts to pretend rigor by overlaying grids and measuring points or pixels, they are left holding results that are invalidated by their fundamental inability to show what Vogt so desperately wants to show; that an act of forgery is necessary to explain the characteristic of the President’s birth certificate. Are there differences in letter shape? Absolutely. Are there differences in letter width? No doubt.

Are such differences the result of forgery? There is nothing in Vogt’s analysis that would actually suggest so.

Vogt’s 18th “Point of Forgery”: Misalignment of the baselines.

Vogt’s next “Point of Forgery” is a throwback to his first affidavit and his original argument regarding the birth certificate. The basic claim is based on the fact that when the original certificate was scanned from its position as a

page in a bound volume, part of the page closest to the binding could not be held flat against the scanner platen. This accounts for the shadow and curved lines that are most evident at the upper left corner of the form, and that decreases in severity as one moves toward the bottom. It is a feature that has fascinated Vogt since his first affidavit, but his argument then had to be throttled back once it became clear that it was not based on the image, but on the bias he introduced when he drew artfully inaccurate lines to introduce the impression of a misalignment that was not actually visible to the naked eye.

This next “Point of Forgery” is a resurrection of that basic argument, but with even worse evidence in its support. Vogt fails to note two significant details of the AP JPEG.

The first is that the form was never perfectly aligned in the typewriter in the first place. The expectation of such alignment is tendentious at best, and most experienced typists are fully aware that perfect alignments are the exception rather than the rule.

The second is that (as already noted) the AP JPEG is itself systematically distorted by the scanner lens. As one moves from the top to the bottom of the form, the “horizontal lines” gain a progressive downward tilt from left to right; a distortion caused almost certainly by the same lens issues that introduced the chromatic aberration that Vogt previously mistook for halos. But that has nothing to do with forgery, since that same systematic distortion is missing from the Whitehouse PDF and so can only have been introduced downstream in the process from paper document to AP JPEG.

As a result, rather than demonstrating a “misaligned baseline” in Vogt’s Figure 64, all he is really showing is that the lines are neither horizontal nor parallel. What he identifies as “curvature” is not curvature at all, but the general tilt of a perfectly straight line. And since we already know the form was never perfectly aligned, the failure of the typed text to tilt at the same angle as the form lines is ultimately uninteresting.

And nothing he shows here has anything to do with typed text allegedly not following the same curve as a form line.

Vogt’s 19th “Point of Forgery”: A Return to the Registrar’s Stamp.

Having previously falsely asserted that the short form’s Registrar stamp was the product of a “metal embossing stamp,” Vogt here uses what is essentially the same argument regarding the corresponding stamp on the President’s long form. That this is the core of his argument might seem to have gotten lost beneath his extended digression here into the most bizarre contention of his entire affidavit; his belief that the alleged forger has secretly encoded hints as to her identity by “damaging” specific letters that spell out her last name.

Such a spectacularly absurd scenario is really irrelevant to this paper, designed as it to address Vogt’s evidence and reasoning and not the detailed absurdities of his complex conspiracy theory. So I will stick to the basic fact that all of his contentions crumble beneath the failure of his foundational claim; that the Registrar’s signature is impressed with a “metal embossing stamp” rather than a rubber one. This proved to be false for the President’s short form, and it remains false for the President’s long form.

What he calls “errors” in the Registrar’s stamp are not errors at all. They are the ordinary deterioration of a well used rubber stamp. Of course the claims of a misspelled “THE” as “TXE” and a “smiley face” (Vogt re-imagines it as a cursive “E”) on the first letter of Alvin Onaka’s signature have long held a fascination for birthers convinced that they possess some sort of nefarious significance. But we have no less a birther celebrity than Nellie Ristvedt (Free

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Republic's "Butterdezillion") to thank for proving the stamp to be authentic and in the possession of the Hawai'i DoH.

In August of 2013, Ristvedt assembled a series of essays that summarized her own peculiar and deeply convoluted conspiracy theory regarding the President's birth certificate. In many ways it parallels Vogt's, asserting for example a deep (if rather inconsistent) participation by the State of 'Hawai'i in the conspiracy. She was the first to declare the "Ah'Nee certificate" provided by Miki Booth to be a fake, and like Vogt has been forced to declare almost all other publicly available Hawaiian birth certificates fake out of allegiance to a wrong theory of certificate numbering.

In the first part of her summary,⁵⁸ she describes an authentic certified copy of a birth certificate she had obtained that had been issued on May 4, 2011 just a couple of weeks after the President's long form. Interestingly, the certificate was clearly stamped with the identical Registrar's stamp used on the President's, "TXE anomaly" and all.

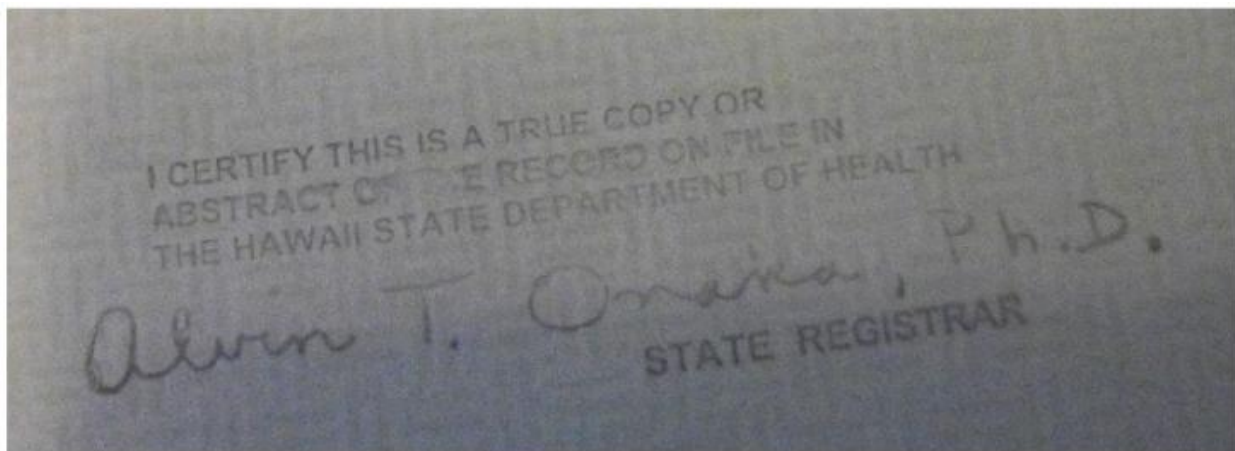


Figure 34: Butterdezillion's "TXE" Registrar's Stamp.

Vogt's claims that the "TXE anomaly" could not be present on a "metal embossing stamp" and that the Hawaii DoH uses such a "metal embossing stamp" cannot be reconciled to the proof that whatever stamps the Department uses, they do include one with the "TXE anomaly."

His further assertions that such "errors" are impossible because they are somehow "unprofessional" are simply silly. An old stamp is not an "error." It's an old stamp. A damaged stamp is not an "error." It's simply a damaged stamp. Vogt's personal offense over a government agency using an older or damaged stamp is not evidence of either forgery or unprofessionalism.

⁵⁸ Ristvedt, Nellie, August 2011, *Back to the Beginning: Red Flags in Hawaii*, <http://butterdezillion.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/hdoh-red-flags.pdf>

Vogt's 20th "Point of Forgery": JBIG compression in the PDF.

Vogt's final "point of Forgery" is one in which he demonstrates again that his claims of expertise with scanners and scanning software are entirely meretricious. But before we get to that, let's note again that what Vogt has identified here is just another cosmetic change made by digitizing a paper document. It is absolutely incontestable that the Whitehouse.gov PDF was JBIG compressed. And of course, countless millions of documents are scanned and compressed using JBIG every single day. It is a compression algorithm, not a forgery algorithm.

As mentioned previously, the Whitehouse.gov PDF was created on a Xerox Workcentre series copier/scanner/printer. Guess what Xerox Workcentre series copier/scanner/printers do when scanning a document to PDF? They use JBIG compression. Even when no forgery is involved.

Vogt's final "Point of Forgery" proves like the previous 19 to not be a sign of forgery after all.

Conclusion:

Not a single one of Douglas Vogt's "20 Points of Forgery" can ultimately withstand critical scrutiny. All of them depend on false assumptions, fabricated premises, a poor understanding of the technical issues or a deep commitment to a desired outcome. Those that have any foundation in reality are ordinary features of ordinary images, not signs of forgery. Most do not have even that going for them. And to create the list, Vogt has to propose a theory of history so complex in its structure, so far reaching in its execution, and so absurd in its details that one reels at the possibility that even its proponents can honestly believe it.

But Vogt is of a type, and birthism has provided an opportunity for several others just like him to gain something they apparently feel is otherwise lacking from their lives; Celebrity. In the MMORP that is Birthistan, used car salesmen can become "police Lieutenants," dentists can become "civil right attorneys," harpists can become "crusading journalists," and scanner salesmen can become "forensic document experts." And all of them can go on blogtalk radio and role play as together they bring down the rule of Sauron and restore order to Middle Earth.

"Farewell, and may the blessing of Elves and Men and all Free Folk go with you.
May the stars shine upon your faces!"

— [J.R.R. Tolkien](#) *The Fellowship of the Ring*

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Frank Arduini

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December 29, 2013

Appendix A: Turning the Scientific Method on Its Head

Conspiracy theorists in general (and birthers in particular) are often criticized for the intensity of the confirmation bias that suffuses their “work.” Every piece of information that supports their pet theories is automatically assumed to be true and given great weight for its evidentiary value regardless of source or sense. In contrast, information that contradicts their beliefs is not only rejected out of hand, but often incorporated into the conspiracy as just another fake or forgery produced by the original conspirators and their minions. The birther movement has produced several stunning examples of how such a confirmation bias can be taken to absurd extremes.

Applied correctly, the scientific method has a very explicit conception of the word “theory.” A theory is not a wild guess or a casual suggestion, but a comprehensive explanation for as broad a set of “facts” as possible. A strong theory is one that explains the most facts, that helps to predict facts as yet undiscovered, and that has no (or very few) facts that contradict it. The scientific method consist primarily of a cycle in which theories are tested against the facts they are meant to explain, refined based on those tests, and then tested again. In every case, the relationship between fact and theory remains the same:

When facts and theories contradict, it is the theory that is adjusted or discarded, not the facts.

The Birther Certificate Numbering Theory:

When candidate Obama’s short form birth certificate was first released in June of 2008, his campaign made the odd choice to redact the certificate number from the image. Apparently done out of an abundance of caution, it immediately piqued the attention of birthers as suspicious. The later publication of the actual number by Factcheck.com a few months later did nothing to reduce the feeling among birthers that the original redaction must have been meant to conceal a significant weakness in what they already had concluded was a forgery. But that inchoate suspicion could not take a more substantive form until they had additional Hawaiian birth certificates to review. That took about a year.

Near the end of July 2009, The Honolulu Advertiser published photographs of the long form birth certificates of twin girls named Nordyke⁵⁹ who had been born within hours of President Obama and at the same Honolulu Hospital. For the first time birthers had certificate numbers that could be compared to that of President Obama’s and their response was immediate and unambiguous. The numbers, they claimed, “proved” the President’s birth certificate “to be a fake.”⁶⁰ Their argument was simple:

The Nordyke twins had been born five minutes apart on August 5, 1961 and their certificate numbers were immediately sequential in the order of their birth. Barack Obama had been born a day **earlier** (and his birth registered three days before the Nordykes) and yet his certificate number was three digits **higher** than theirs. **If** birth certificates were numbered in birth order then Obama’s number should have been lower rather than higher. So of course, the theory of numbering that was immediately adopted by birthers... in spite of the very low number of data points at their disposal... was that Hawaiian birth certificates **were** numbered in that way, and that Obama’s was an obvious fake because it did not conform to that theory.

⁵⁹ <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2009/Jul/28/In/hawaii907280345.html>

⁶⁰ Jul 28, 2009, *Unveiled! Hawaii's 1961 long-form birth certificates*, World Net Daily, <http://www.wnd.com/2009/07/105347/>

Understand that at this point there was no actual reason to suspect the certificates actually were numbered in that way. While it might seem an intuitively obvious way of doing it, such a scheme quickly runs into any number of real world issues. In the 21st century we have vast experience with “real time” information systems connected remotely over the internet, and so such a numbering system might actually be possible to accommodate today. But in 1961 such a process would have been entirely manual, requiring a paper based process distributed in space and time over all of the Hawaiian Islands on which births were taking place. Where and how in that process numbers were eventually assigned to each instance of birth could be obvious to no one after 50 years, and so any theory (based on a total of three data points) would at best be a wild guess. But birthers had found a theory that supported their beliefs regarding Obama’s birth, and from that moment few would ever be swayed from it... even as the evidence began to progressively mount against it.

Over the course of the ensuing months and years, a number of other Hawaiian birth certificates from August of 1961 became public from multiple sources . At least some of those sources were the birthers themselves. With the exception of the Nordyke certificates,⁶¹ **none** of them conformed to the birther theory of certificate numbering. Whatever the numbering process might have been, one conclusion should have been obvious to anyone actually following the scientific method; sequential numbering in the order of birth was **not** the schema actually used by Hawai’i.

When confronted with a theory so overwhelming contradicted by the data, a scientist will eventually be compelled to throw out the theory. But the birthers are not scientists. So instead, **they** threw out the data.

At the point of this writing every single Hawaiian birth certificate from August of 1961 that has been made public has been declared a fake by birther “researchers” at one time or another. This includes (oddly enough) both of the Nordyke certificates which are the only two that actually conform to the birther theory. Vogt extends the proposed orgy of forgery to even include a birth certificate from 1930 (the “DeCosta Certificate”) found on an online genealogy website, simply because it contradicts the birther theory of numbering.

As T.H. Huxley once noted, “Science is organized common sense, where many a beautiful theory was killed by an ugly fact.” In birthism, facts are killed by theories, not the other way around.

⁶¹ And it is worthy of note than when you have only 2 data points you have a 50-50 chance of conforming to **any** theory purely out of random chance.

Appendix B: The DeCosta Birth Certificate

Intended as a preemptive strike against critics whom he imagined might try to use it to challenge his baldly asserted association between registration dates and certificate numbers, Vogt has declared what I believe no other birther has declared; that the 1930 DeCosta short form birth certificate is also a forgery. But preempting that possibility hardly requires that it be forged.

The birth took place in 1930; three decades before Hawai'i became a State or Obama was born. Whatever process was used to process, register and number birth certificates in 1930 is unlikely to closely resemble the process in place in 1961. We don't even know whether the certificate numbers entered on the computer database from which the DeCosta short form was generated actually date back to 1930 or were added later as part of data entry. In short, Vogt is killing a gnat with a sledgehammer by declaring "forged" a birth certificate that no rational person would even consider relevant.

But further, Vogt commences a glaring inconsistency in his argument to which he is himself completely blind. It is fundamental to his grand conspiracy theory that the Hawai'i Department of Health is a full blown, knowing participant in fraud. He is explicit that he believes the source of several "forgeries" is the DoH itself, starting here with the DeCosta certificate. Yet inexplicably he declares as evidence of the forgery the "fact" that they forged things the real DoH would have had no need to forge at all.

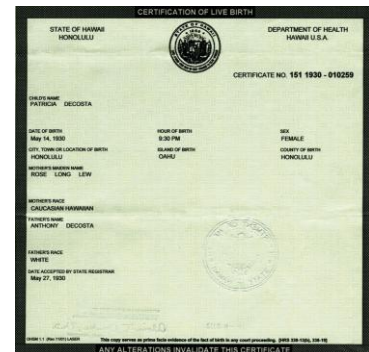


Figure B1: The DeCosta Short Form

He notes that the DeCosta certificate bears an authentic departmental seal and writes that "The Department of Health is the only one that can issue the short form with the seal on it so they must have issued this one..."⁶² And yet in the next breath he declares that they did **not** use a "legitimate Registrar's stamp." Why would any certificate that came from the DoH display one authentic detail and one fake detail? It makes about as much sense as a nursery rhyme.

While a problem in the numbering or dating of a computer generated short form might conceivably result from fraudulent data, problems in the physical form of the certificate cannot. If the Hawai'i Department of Health is the actual source of this forgery, as Vogt contends, then there can be no reasonable explanation for unauthentic physical details of the sort that Vogt alleges.

⁶² Affidavit of Douglas B. Vogt, October 17, 2013, Paragraph 6

Appendix C: The Age of Barack Obama Sr.

It is sometimes difficult for people raised in an Amero-European culture with their emphases on age and birthdays to understand that much of the rest of world takes a more casual attitude towards those biographical details. Many other cultures place no particular significance on birthdays or specific age, and in them people often have no idea what their actual ages are. This is true in many parts of Africa, and Kenya specifically.

As recently as the 1999 Kenyan Census, Enumerators were still being given specific instructions on how to deal with the fact that many older Kenyans did not know their ages. The Enumerator Instructions⁶³ that year noted that:

(c) Many people do not know their ages. If a person's age is not known, you must make the best estimate possible. THE USE OF 'DK' IN THIS COLUMN IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN.

(d) There are various ways in which you can estimate a person's age. Sometimes, people have documents, such as baptismal certificates, which show the year of birth, in which case it is easy to calculate age.

(e) Most people have identity cards showing when they were born. These ID cards may be grossly inaccurate for people aged above 40. Avoid using the IDS as the sole means to estimate such a person's age. However, for persons below 40 years of age the ID cards may generally give a more accurate representation of age.

(f) Generally, it is not so easy to estimate age for members of the household if all of them are ignorant of their ages. Concentrate first on establishing the age(s) of one or two persons in the household. One reliable age may help in working out the ages of others if it is known whether they are older or younger and by how many years.

(g) It is sometimes possible to estimate a person's age by relating his or her birth to some notable historical event. With these instructions is a Historical Calendar of Events (see Appendix 2) which lists the dates of events in the history of each district. If the person can remember how old he/she was at the time of the event, you can work out the person's age.

In 1999 Obama Sr. would have been around 64 years old, placing him well within the age group that the Enumerator's Manual considers likely to not know their own ages. It is not inconceivable that the documented variation found in Obama Sr.'s age reflects a simple fact he himself did not know for sure what year he was born.

Obama Sr.'s biographer appears to have access to number of conflicting documents regarding his age. She eventually concluded that 1936 was most likely.

His earliest school records bear no birth date. His University of Hawaii transcript records his birthdate as 18 June 1934. His marriage certificate and résumés indicate he was born in 1936. U.S. immigration records show his year of birth as both 1934 and 1936. Family members say they believe he was born in 1936, so I have used that date.⁶⁴

⁶³ Republic of Kenya 1999 Census *Enumerators' Instructions Manual*, pp. 20-21
https://international.ipums.org/international/resources/enum_materials_pdf/enum_instruct_ke1999.pdf

⁶⁴ Jacobs, Sally, (2011), *The Other Barack: The Bold and Reckless Life of President Obama's Father* (Boston: Public Affairs), p. 261

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Here is a table of documents or articles available on line where Obama Sr.'s age was reported as either being in 1934 or 1936 either by reporting his age or an actual birth date. At least two others share the same age for Obama's father as on the birth certificate. Nobody has tried to claim that they are also forged.

| Document | Document Date | Cited Age | Cited Birth Date | Calculated Age @ II's birth |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Article: Honolulu Star-Bulletin | 25-Sep-59 | 25 | | 27 |
| Obama II, Birth Certificate | 8-Aug-61 | 25 | | 25 |
| INS Form | 31-Aug-61 | | 18-Jun-34 | 27 |
| Article: Honolulu Advertiser | 22-Jun-62 | 26 | | 25 |
| INS Form | 27-Jun-62 | | 18-Jun-34 | 27 |
| INS Form | 16-Aug-62 | | 18-Jun-36 | 25 |

Appendix D: Control Document – A Letter from Aaron Copeland.

