

*Robert Leonard recently testified in the retrial of Brian Hummert, a Pennsylvania man charged with strangling his wife, Charlene Hummert. Leonard's testimony focussed on a series of letters central to the case. Prior to the murder, the following letter, a reproduction of the typed original, was allegedly sent by a stalker to Hummert and his family.*

Here is the proof that your wife is a slut. Do what you will with it. Sorry it took so long. I only come occasionally back to the area on business. Merry Xmas. I will send you several copies of this so you get the information in case the slut intercepts one.

Before I tell you how I got it, I want to tell you a little about myself. I played in a band back in the late seventies/early eighties. I had a one niter with your wife. She was a fine piece of ass that I enjoyed several times that night. Rumor had it that she occasionally took several guys at once and she sucked cock really well. I would have loved to have found out. A couple of days later she made sure my fiancée found out. She dumped me and then had an abortion. We have since patched things up and gotten married, but she can't have any children. I blame your wife for that. The time is now right for payback. I hope to see your wife miserable the next time I am in the area.

I ran into your wife back in September at Gabriel Brothers. I almost didn't recognize her with her dyed hair. I have been following her around hoping she would mess up. On October 6, I followed your wife over to Capitol City Mall. She was dressed up more the usual for a Saturday of shopping. She went into the Picture People. This was around 10 AM. A couple of weeks later I went in and got copies of the pictures enclosed. On the negative holder she had written that the photo was a gift. There was no indication of which one she had printed up.

I ask you who was it for? Also she does not have her wedding ring on. Why not? A red rose is a symbol of love. For who? I don't think you know about these. Do you? Also she has purchased a lot of sexy bras and panties. Have you seen them or the red nightie? Were they brought for your enjoyment? You may also want to ask her about her Spencer Gift purchases. Do you love lubes with her? So you see once a slut always a slut.

*Following the murder, suspicions initially pointed to Hummert, but then police and the press received a handwritten letter claiming that a serial killer, not Hummert, had committed the murder. This is a transcription of the original.*

I killed Charlene Hummert, not her husband. We had an affair for the past nine months. She wanted to break it off. So I broke her neck! I wrote letters to her husband and to Det. Loper.

I used a white nylon rope to kill her they won't find me I am leaving. I am writing because of Easter. I am sorry I killed her.

They won't find the cell phone she used to call me, it is in the river and not under my name.

I carried her into the kitchen and then dragged her outside to her car. This is the fifth woman I killed. I am getting good at it.

Cops have no idea how easy it is to pin husband when they only look there.

She knew about pictures on PC. She told story to set up husband for the Divorce.  
Ha Ha

ByeBye for now

John

*The police asked Leonard to analyze the letters. Leonard eventually testified that both letters used a similar dialect, that they both exhibited a good ability to write standard English (except for what appeared to be clumsy attempts to seem uneducated), and that they had well-executed time shifts in their narratives. Leonard also identified the use of an uncommon, quite precise literary device that he calls “ironic repetition” (blue). Note the echo of “found out” in the stalker letter, and “break” to “broke” in the serial-killer letter.*

### Stalker letter

“Rumor had it that she occasionally took several guys at once and she sucked cock really well. I would have loved to have **found out**. A couple of days later she made sure my fiancée **found out**. She dumped me and then had an abortion.”

### Serial-killer letter

I killed Charlene Hummert, not her husband. We had an affair for the past nine months. She wanted to **break** it off. So I **broke** her neck! I wrote letters to her husband and to Det. Loper.

*Brian Hummert's known writings were also analyzed. Leonard found no ironic repetition in Hummert's workplace prose, but he did notice a unique pattern in the use of contractions. Two e-mails written by Hummert are transcribed below. Note that the one negative (green) is contracted—"do not" becomes "don't." Positives (yellow), on the other hand, are never contracted—for example, "I am" never becomes "I'm."*

**From:** Hummert, Brian D  
**Sent:** Friday, September 24, 2004 2:54 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Dental Appointment

[REDACTED],  
I have a Dental appointment on Monday morning. I **don't** know if **I will** come in before I go or not. **I will** fill out a leave slip when **I am** in after the appointment.

Brian

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**From:** Hummert, Brian D  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 06, 2004 8:11 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** How goes.

[REDACTED],

How goes it over there?

PFA second phase is in and working well after a few minor glitches. **I am** currently working on the Premium time reporting system. **It is** using SAP extract files to replace CMIC files and half the data is missing or wrong. What fun. I guess **I will** be over here until they clear me. This is an in house vacation. No on call, no CLEAN.

Brian

*Leonard noticed the same treatment of contractions in the stalker letter. Negatives (green) are sporadically contracted—in one case, “did not” becomes “didn’t”; in another, “does not” is left alone. Notably, positives (yellow) are never contracted.*

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*The serial-killer letter exhibits the same treatment. As an expert witness, Leonard testified that he had never seen this tendency anywhere else. Experts from several other forensic disciplines also testified, linking Hummert to the crime. Hummert was ultimately found guilty of first-degree murder, and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.*

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I used a white nylon rope to kill her they **won't** find me **I am** leaving. **I am** writing because of Easter. **I am** sorry I killed her.

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