



## **Real or Fake: Studies in Authentication**

Joe Nickell

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Will the rare autographed baseball your great-uncle gave you put your children through college? Is your grandmother's chest of drawers really a seventeenth-century antique, or merely a reproduction? A leader in forgery detection and forensic investigation, Joe Nickell reveals his secrets to detecting artifacts items in *Real or Fake: Studies in Authentication*.

Detailing how the pros determine whether an Abraham Lincoln signature is forged or if a photograph of Emily Dickinson is genuine, Nickell provides the essential tools necessary to identify counterfeits. In this general introduction to the principles of authentication, Nickell provides readers with step-by-step explanations of the science used to detect falsified documents, photographs, and other objects. Illustrating methods used on hit shows such as *Antiques Roadshow* and *History Detectives*, Nickell recommends that aspiring investigators employ a comprehensive approach to identifying imitations. One should consider the object's provenance (the origin or derivation of an artifact), content (clues in the scene or item depicted), and material composition (what artifacts are made of), as well as the results of scientific analyses, including radiographic, spectroscopic, microscopic, and microchemical tests.

Including fascinating cases drawn from Nickell's illustrious career, *Real or Fake* combines historical and scientific investigations to reveal reproductions and genuine objects. Nickell explains the warning signs of forgery, such as patching and unnatural pen lifts; chronicles the evolution of writing instruments, inks, and papers; shows readers how to date photographs, papers, and other materials; and traces the development of photographic processes since the mid-nineteenth century. Lavishly illustrated with examples of replicas and authentic objects inspected by Nickell, *Real or Fake* includes case studies of alleged artifacts including Jack the Ripper's diary, a draft of the Gettysburg Address, notes by Charles Dickens, Jefferson Davis's musket, and debris from the Titanic.



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