Rule 1002. Requirement of Original

To prove the content of a writing, recording, or photograph, the original writing, recording, or photograph is required, except as otherwise provided in these rules or by Legislative Act.

Committee Comment - 1977

This provision is a straightforward statement of the general rule. Only when a party is attempting to prove the contents of a writing, recording, or photograph, must the original be produced. If a party is attempting to prove a different consequential fact there is no general requirement that he do so with the best available evidence. See generally C. McCormick, Evidence section 233 (2d ed. 1972). The rule does not address the question that arises when a party attempts to prove the contents of a writing inscribed on a chattel, e.g., a ring, a license plate, a billboard, etc. The question of whether the chattel must be produced in these cases is left to the discretion of the trial court. See, e.g., Mattson v. Minnesota & North Wisconsin R. R., 98 Minn. 296, 298, 108 N.W. 517, 518 (1906).