

BOOK REVIEW

*J. F. Williams*¹

A Review of "Scientific Police Investigation"

REFERENCE: Inbau, F. E., Moenssens, A. A., and Vitullo, L. R., *Scientific Police Investigation*, Chilton Book Co., Philadelphia, 1972, 204 pages, \$6.95.

This is a valuable book for the investigator since it updates previous books dealing with the scientific aspects of investigation. The preface points out that "this book is not a text-book for specialists and experts"; however, it serves a definite purpose since there are still many police officers and investigators who assume that science can come up with all the answers.

Eleven chapters treat various scientific fields as they relate to the investigation. The subjects of Fingerprint Identification, Questioned Documents, and Firearms Evidence are by no means new subjects but quite important. The newer techniques of Neutron Activation Analysis and Spectrographic Voice Identification are just coming of age and appear to be potentially very useful.

It is also noted that many individuals today make negative assumptions if it is not shown that scientific methods were employed during the investigation. Thus, it becomes necessary to show to a court or jury that such examinations were employed and did or did not provide conclusive information to the investigators. In this respect, a book such as this provides a broad base of information as to what methods are available.

Most of the eleven chapters could be expanded into a separate volume and still not cover the entire subject. Because of this, the fact that the last seven chapters have no footnotes or references is unfortunate.

The "Outline of the Rules For Handling Physical Evidence" included in the Appendix as well as the "Suggestions for Handling Physical Evidence" are excellent guides and should be carefully studied and kept for reference.

The reader must keep in mind that the entire book as well as the Appendix is not intended to be all inclusive. Used with this in mind, the volume is a valuable addition to the investigator's library.

¹ Criminologist (retired), San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco, Calif.