

BOOK REVIEW

D. A. Crown,¹ D.Crim.

A Review of "Scientific Evidence in Criminal Cases"

REFERENCE: Moenssens, A. A., Moses, R. E., and Inbau, F. E., *Scientific Evidence in Criminal Cases*, Foundation Press, Mineola, N.Y., 1973, 604 pages, \$15.00.

In the considered judgment of this reviewer, this new book by Moenssens, Moses, and Inbau is one of the best books of its type on the market today. In a little over 600 pages, the authors manage to survey the forensic sciences in just enough depth to give the layman sufficient data to discuss a topic intelligently. No attempt has been made to make this a definitive treatise, a training manual for scientists, a compendium of research efforts, or a textbook for practitioners. Each category of evidence is covered as to methodology, significance, and courtroom usage.

It is refreshing to note that the competency and qualifications of experts are stressed. The reader is urged, for example, in the case of questioned document examiners, to seek recommendations from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences or the American Society of Questioned Documents Examiners. This far surpasses a recent book on courtroom preparation which apparently used names of "experts" pulled out of telephone books without regard for competence or reputation.

In addition to coverage on criminalistics, questioned documents, toxicology, and pathology, there are excellent chapters on the use of expert witnesses, pretrial discovery, voiceprint identification, the scientific detection of speeding, polygraphy, narcoanalysis, hypnosis, and forensic odontology.

This survey of the forensic sciences is certainly an excellent buy for the money. The authors have accomplished what they set out to do—provide a guide for the intelligent layman or lawyer preparing for trial, without drowning the reader in excess scientific information.

¹ Director, Questioned Document Staff, External Documents Division, Room 3517, State Department Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20520.