

BOOK REVIEW

Franklin Drucker,¹ M.D.

A Review of "Forensic Psychiatry—A Practical Guide for Lawyers and Psychiatrists"

REFERENCE: Sadoff, Robert L., *Forensic Psychiatry—A Practical Guide for Lawyers and Psychiatrists*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1975, 251 pages, no price listed.

This monograph is intended to be a practical guide for attorneys and psychiatrists working together in areas of mutual concern. Unfortunately, it fails to achieve its goal. Though written by an excellent teacher, Dr. Sadoff's book is unevenly organized and presented. It apparently is a collection of papers, some of which have been re-written, and of other writings compiled into a single volume. It tends to ramble somewhat with the insertion of anecdotal cases rather than development of theses in firm fashion. This manner of presentation is not unlike Dr. Sadoff's lecture technique [1]. Dr. Sadoff seems to shift back and forth between presentations intended for psychiatrists and those intended for attorneys. Further, he shifts in presentation from first person to third person. His attention seems directed more toward criminal matters, with insufficient attention to the psychiatrist's involvement in matters of civil forensic psychiatric practice, such as personal injury litigation, workers' compensation matters, and other torts. Only passing mention is given to the important area of brain syndrome producing disability or impaired responsibility, an issue of important consideration in evaluation of a person who has sustained head injury, been exposed to toxic chemicals, or otherwise possibly brain-damaged.

The 21-page glossary at the end is the usual superficial compendium, consisting mostly of psychiatric terms with almost no legal terms; better service might have been provided by referral to comprehensive medical and legal dictionaries.

I feel this volume to be a rather limited presentation of materials which have been organized elsewhere in a more satisfying and comprehensive fashion. For example, a psychiatrist new to the field would learn more from Davidson's [2] or Robitscher's [3] book. The works of Slovenko [4] and Brooks [5] are much more encompassing than these and would be of even greater value to an attorney. Though this might be an interesting addition to one's library and an opportunity for review in a field with which one is already familiar, it is not a good primary textbook of forensic psychiatry.

References

- [1] Sadoff, R. L., "Law for Psychiatrists," *Audio-Digest Foundation*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 23 Feb. 1976 (tape).
- [2] Davidson, Henry, *Forensic Psychiatry*, The Ronald Press, New York, 1952.

¹ 11611 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90049.

- [3] Robitscher, J. B., *Pursuit of Agreement—Psychiatry and the Law*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1966.
- [4] Slovenko, Ralph, *Psychiatry and Law*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1973.
- [5] Brooks, A. D., *Law, Psychiatry and the Mental Health System*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1974.