

## BOOK REVIEW

J. W. Osterburg, <sup>1</sup> M.P.A.

### A Review of *Investigative Methods*

---

**REFERENCE:** Scott, J. D., *Investigative Methods*, Reston Publishing Co., Reston, Va., 1978, 325 pages, no price listed.

The title of this work is somewhat misleading since it is intended to provide "a general introduction and basic guidance" for those "processing crime scenes without the assistance of highly skilled laboratory or other technical personnel" (p. ix). It is refreshing to read on the same page that "the purpose of evidence is not necessarily to convict the most likely suspect, but to determine the truth so that the innocent may go free and the guilty be as quickly and positively identified." The content of the book is indicated by the titles of the chapters and appendixes:

Chapter 1	Notes and Reports
Chapter 2	Crime Scene Searches and Sketches
Chapter 3	Collection of Evidence
Chapter 4	Photography
Chapter 5	Fingerprints
Chapter 6	Firearms Evidence
Chapter 7	Toolmark Evidence
Chapter 8	Injuries and Death
Chapter 9	Arsons and Bombings
Chapter 10	Questioned Documents
Appendix 1	Vocabulary
Appendix 2	Course Outline—Practical Photography Training
Appendix 3	Developing and Lifting Latent Fingerprints
Appendix 4	Glossary of Sex Crimes

Unfortunately, the treatment of subject matter is very uneven. This is perhaps most apparent when the first and last appendixes are compared. Appendix 1 consists of "a basic vocabulary for any law enforcement officer" and "words that are often misspelled." Why such words as "all," "chief," "eye," "lawyer," "briefs," "radio," "size," "tire," and "wine," to name but a few, are included defies rational explanation. Appendix 4 is a glossary but not necessarily of sex crimes. "Electra complex," "nymphomania," and "satyriasis" are hardly crimes, nor are the more esoteric "triolism" and "coprolalia." Since the author requires but three pages to cover sexual assaults, it is clearly an elementary treatment hardly requiring a glossary for its understanding. Its inclusion, therefore, is questionable; while the motivation may be speculated upon, it is unnecessary in this review.

The chapters on fingerprints and firearms evidence both have short but interesting introductory sections. The discussion of "Methods of Identification Based on Fingerprints"

<sup>1</sup>Professor and department head, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Chicago, Ill. 60680.

is disappointing. Again, lack of balance in treatment is noted in that about three fourths of the discussion (in a page and a half) centers on visible, three-dimensional (plastic), and latent prints while two very brief paragraphs cover the issue of comparison and identity. Unless these concepts are mastered, a crime scene technician will hardly know whether a partial print is worthwhile or not.

The illustrations on pages 200 and 201 are confusing since they seem to have been taken through a comparison microscope but the mode of comparison employed is better suited to separate photographs. Indeed, such photographs are capable of resolution of details so that an uninitiated student can readily view the matching characteristics and understand the basis of the comparison, which is not possible with the text illustration. On the other hand, Figure 8-7 on p. 248 is perhaps the best sketch of smoke and powder discharge and particle distribution that this reviewer has seen.

As an introductory treatment of photography, the coverage in this text is quite good by any standards. A person who is uninformed in this area can, in time, become a proficient photographer if the material in Chapter 4 is carefully read and digested and the ten 3-h practice sessions described in Appendix 2 are performed with industry.

The total lack of references in this book suggests it is intended for use in police academy training. Surely the day has passed for an author to believe a work of such elementary level can serve the need of college students. Any junior college course based on such a text would not likely be given transfer credit by criminal justice departments in the liberal arts colleges of four-year institutions.

For those wishing to have a complete library on criminal investigation, purchase of this text might be justified. For others, careful examination before purchasing is advised.