

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of Applied Police and Fire Photography

REFERENCE: Siljander, R. P., *Applied Police and Fire Photography*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1976, 313 pages, \$18.50.

The author, in his Introduction, makes the valid point that both law enforcement and fire personnel rely heavily on photography as a tool in the compilation of evidence and points out that photographs are more likely to be useful if taken by "someone reasonably knowledgeable in photography." These statements are a good indication of the approach taken by the author in his attempt to pass on some of his extensive knowledge to his readers to help them become better photographers of evidence.

The book contains 21 chapters in about 305 pages. The first six chapters are largely introductory and therefore detail has been squeezed out of the more specialized, later chapters, which are devoted to such topics as surveillance, identification, copying, and photomicrography. As one reads the book it becomes clear that the author knows far more than he has included, so that the review in this case becomes more a matter of deciding what should or should not have been left out.

In the opinion of the reviewer there are several instances in which the coverage has fallen a little too short. These include the sections on establishing a guide number (page 70), the factors to consider in the selection of an electronic flash unit, potential difficulties arising out of the use of automatic ("computer") flash units, and lighting for close-up work. The subject of close-up work gives an excellent example of lack of detail in the coverage devoted to exposure compensation (page 179). The formula and the table strictly apply only to lenses of symmetrical design, yet by far the majority of lenses used on the small- and medium-format cameras of today are asymmetric and therefore require very different compensation as soon as magnification becomes significant. In this kind of subject it is all too easy to be critical; nevertheless, the book is likely to be a very real help to the majority of intended readers. It is set at an overview and general introductory level and is well worth including in the library of any police or fire department, especially if there are younger or newer personnel being trained and trying to improve their skills in the general area of evidence photography.

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