

BOOK REVIEW

D. A. Crown, ¹D. Crim.

A Review of *Organized Crime—The Fifth Estate*

REFERENCE: Bequai, August, *Organized Crime—The Fifth Estate*, Lexington Books, D.C. Heathand Co., Lexington, Mass., 1979, 250 pages, no price stated.

Unless one is involved with the problem, one gains most of one's information and attitudes toward organized crime from newspaper headlines and instant TV analyses of the problem. It comes as a bit of a surprise to some of us that organized crime is not the prerogative of a monolithic fraternity for individuals of Sicilian descent. According to the author, organized crime is, in reality, "a loose confederation of ethnic and regional crime groups, bound by economic and political necessity."

Should forensic scientists need to know or want to know more about the subject of organized crime so that they can discuss the subject intelligently, then Bequai's book is definitely for them. The history of some of the organized groups devoted to criminal activity such as the Arbresheri (Italo-Albanians), the Camorra (Southern Italians), the Union Corse (Franco-Corsicans), and the various Tongs (Chinese), to name just a few, is covered. The author details the history of organized crime in the United States and then provides specific coverage on the types of activities run by the various mobs—labor racketeering, cargo thefts, fencing, gambling, loan sharking, political corruption, dealing in drugs, the smuggling of aliens into the U.S., and the newer areas of white-collar crime and computer crime. For reasons unknown, the author ignored alleged mob activity in running the ladies of the night.

The effect of all this activity is tied together by the closing chapters with some of the author's suggestions on how to cope with the problem. While there is some speculation involved in some of the ideas put forth by the author, he has certainly pulled together a lot of data on the subject from a wide variety of sources.

¹ Director, Questioned Document Laboratory, Office of Technical Services, CIA, Washington, D.C.