

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of Critical Issues in American Psychiatry and the Law

REFERENCE: Rosner, R., Ed., with a foreword by H. E. Thomas, *Critical Issues in American Psychiatry and the Law*, Charles C Thomas Co., 301 E. Lawrence Ave., Springfield, IL 62703, 1982, 353 pages, \$34.75.

The American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law is an organization of forensic psychiatrists active in both civil and criminal law. The Academy has long published a bulletin and newsletter; this is its first venture into book publishing. Annual meetings are held regularly in New York City in addition to semiannual national meetings. This volume is a collection of papers from annual programs from 1977 to 1980.

This book is a "page turner." The papers are uneven in quality. Many were prepared for oral presentation rather than for reading. It provides a good overview of psychiatry in its application to the law, primarily civil law; assessment of dangerousness; family law; disability evaluation; psychiatric practice such as privileged communication, hospitalization, and various forms of therapy; and so forth. The leading article in each section by Dr. Rosner is particularly effective, and those by Mr. Slovenko and Dr. Sadoff deserve special commendation.

This is an excellent textbook on forensic psychiatric problems, especially useful for resident seminars. It is not a detailed compendium of case law and citations; it would probably be of less value to attorneys or to psychiatrists seeking information for specific cases. Future volumes might profitably include topics such as malingering, dealing with threats of violence or suicide, and sentencing considerations. This is a very good volume; it is easily recommended despite its price.

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