

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Gunshot Wounds*

REFERENCE: DiMaio, V. J. M., *Gunshot Wounds*, Elsevier Science Publishing Co., Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, NY 10017, 1985, 331 pp.

The long awaited book on gunshot wounds by Dr. Vincent DiMaio is finally available, and it generally meets the high expectations anticipated from this expert.

The first three chapters are concerned with internal and external ballistics including the construction of handguns, rifles, shotguns, and machine guns; the ammunition for these various weapons; the forensic science aspects of ballistics including characteristics and comparison of bullets or cartridge cases; and the general mechanics of wound ballistics. These are all discussed in a basic but thorough manner. The central section of the volume examines terminal ballistics with primary emphasis on the effects of various missiles striking the human body. This section includes a classification of gunshot wounds in respect to the range of fire, atypical entrance wounds, intermediate targets, and so forth and then addresses specifically wounds from handguns, .22 caliber rim fire weapons, center fire rifles, and finally wounds from shotguns. The last 100 pages of the book are concerned with a number of miscellaneous subjects such as concealed wounds; bullet emboli; lead poisoning from retained bullets; various weapons such as air guns, zip guns, stud guns, and "Saturday night specials"; special ammunitions such as Sabot cartridges, exploding ammunition, glazer rounds, and blank cartridges, as well as chapters on the use of X-rays, detection of gunshot residues, correct handling of deaths from firearms, and suicide by firearms. Finally, there are three appendices relating to hollow point ammunition, the forensic autopsy, and gunshot residue procedures.

The writing throughout this volume is straightforward, concise, and lucid. It has the advantage of any volume written by a single expert in presenting consistent quality with none of the overlap of subjects, internal contradictions, or loss of cohesion frequently noted in multi-authored volumes. Because of Dr. DiMaio's extensive experience and considerable research, all the subjects are covered with genuine authority. The great majority of illustrations are good and show clearly the particular points the author wishes to demonstrate. The index is complete, enabling one to locate any particular subject with ease.

Adverse comments are minimal. There are rather numerous typographical errors which it is hoped a good editorial review will eliminate before the second printing. References, while cogent, are quite limited and might well be expanded in subsequent editions. A few photo-

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graphs, undoubtedly obtained by making black-and-white prints from colored transparencies, are too dark for easy interpretation.

This volume is far and away the best and most complete treatise available in the English language concerning the practical aspects of firearms, ballistics, and forensic science techniques. It belongs in the library of all medicolegal personnel be they coroners, medical examiners, and/or forensic pathologists. This volume will likewise be of tremendous help to law enforcement personnel and to all attorneys who are involved with cases having gunshot wounds.