

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Forensic Science Handbook: Vol. II*

REFERENCE: Saferstein, R., Ed., *Forensic Science Handbook: Vol. II*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, 1988, 457 pp.

The *Forensic Science Handbook* encompasses eight well-organized chapters written by authors who are highly qualified in the respective areas of their expertise. The authors' styles, the quality of the material, and the contents of each of the chapters make the book very interesting to read.

In Chapter 1, "Mountebanks Among Forensic Scientists," author James Starrs addresses a factual affliction of the principle functional area of forensic science (expert testimony), brought about by a few self-promoting individuals (charlatans) who identify themselves as forensic science experts. Also, the author presents intermediary remedial measures for partial control of such quacks. The subject matter is clearly documented and the message very well conveyed.

Dr. David Stafford, author of "Forensic Capillary Gas Chromatography," provides well-documented information on both the basic theory and practical application of gas chromatography in forensic science analysis. The subject matter is expertly presented.

"Forensic Identification of Controlled Substances" by Dr. Jay Siegel realistically and accurately depicts the philosophy and practices utilized by crime laboratories in the forensic science analysis of controlled substances. The chapter contains basic technical and essential scientific information. The material is well organized, making it an easy task for the reader to follow and understand. Numerous references and a voluminous up-to-date bibliography are also included. These allow further detail and specific information to be obtained relating to the various subjects discussed. However, on p. 112, R₃ in methohexital should be CH₃ rather than H.

Considering the complexity and the unlimited scope of trace physical evidence examinations in criminalistics work, author Skip Palenik demonstrates expertise, readiness, and ability by successfully addressing this subject in Chapter 5, "Microscopy and Microchemistry of Physical Evidence." The skillful organization of the material enables him to present current information, cover the basics, and also do justice to an indefinite and difficult topic. On p. 198, last paragraph, second line, "beng" should be "being."

Author Barry Gaudette presents an extensive review of the forensic science aspects of textile fiber examination. The chapter includes basic methods and techniques currently employed and also introduces new ideas on areas that could be researched to provide better

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accuracy, ability to handle smaller samples, and/or to supplement existing methods to effect more detailed identification. Such research when completed should add more weight to the results of fiber examinations, allowing stronger conclusions to be drawn.

The coauthors of the chapter, "Paternity Testing," present an excellent and thorough source of information for those people specializing in this field and related serological areas. The generous number of references also expands the subject and brings an additional wealth of knowledge.

Dr. Baechtel provides excellent current and comprehensive information on the scientific background, identification, and individualization of semen. The material is well organized, thorough, and clearly written.

The chapter "Firearms Identification," written by Dr. Walter Rowe, comprises a well-organized presentation on the current technology of crime laboratory methods used in cases involving firearms. Dr. Rowe also includes a well-embellished history of the development, introduction, and applications of firearms examinations in forensic science situations.

Without exception, each chapter in the book shows ample references, clear tables, illustrations, and figures. Each author gives sufficient credit to the sources of information. Also the eight subjects discussed in the book have academic value to students, laboratory personnel, field workers, and general interest readers.

In conclusion, I feel that the *Forensic Science Handbook, Vol. II* will soon become one of the authoritative references available at the libraries of academic institutions and crime laboratories.