

## BOOK REVIEW

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### A Review of *Commentary on Legal Psychiatry*

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**REFERENCE:** Morse, H. N., *Commentary on Legal Psychiatry*, Charles C Thomas, 2600 South First Street, Springfield, IL 62794-9265, 1989, 290 pp.

Although the dust cover promises "a collection of relevant data on twenty-four psychiatric conditions, a discussion of what a physician sees when such a condition is present, and an examination of how some courts have seen the same problem," nothing of the sort lies within. Instead, we are presented with the author's rambling and often tangential thoughts about a whole host of psychiatric (and some not psychiatric) conditions.

The sections are brief, averaging six pages, and each begins with a short disconnected thought by the author. Following that is an excerpted case which, presumably, the author has chosen to illustrate a point he wishes to make. Most sections close with a short note on the topic.

Unfortunately, this book was outdated before it was ever published. The cases cited are no longer landmark cases, often having been overturned more than a decade ago. The author's choice of *DSM-I* [1] is perplexing, as *DSM-III-R* [2] is currently being used to diagnose and classify mental disorders. Therefore, many of the psychiatric diagnoses described have been renamed, reclassified, or dropped from the psychiatric nomenclature.

Similarly, the references are too short and, again, outdated. Most chapters cite books from the 1920s through 1960s as authorities. Frequently, first editions are cited when second and even third editions exist.

The author took too big a bite with too little research. The publisher lacked a psychiatric consultant, who could have alerted him to the problems. The outcome is not worth reading.

#### References

- [1] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual—I*, American Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC, 1952.
- [2] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual—III-R*, R. Spitzer, Ed., American Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC, 1987.

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