

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: *Undercover, Second Edition*

REFERENCE: Motto CJ, June DL. *Undercover, Second Edition*, CRC Press, Boca Raton Florida, 2000, 191 pp., \$49.95.

Undercover work is like a drama with three main actors: informant, suspect, and undercover agent. The second edition of *Undercover*, by Carmine Motto and Dale June, in a street smart and refreshingly candid manner, focuses close attention on the respective roles of these main characters in the undercover theater. Drawing on their prolific, professional experiences in undercover work, and law enforcement generally, and extensively using actual case examples, the co-authors strip away the husk and unabashedly and palpably reveal the kernel of a sordid world of counterfeiters, forgers, underworld figures, and assorted types of hoodlums involved in some criminal way with contraband.

The heart of the book is the three chapters examining, respectively, the triad of: informant, suspect, and undercover agent. The informant and undercover agent chapters, in particular, are informative and well developed. Motto and June skillfully dissect the anatomy of undercover work, and flesh out its body with numerous case examples, concentrating heavily on counterfeiting, and which are unusually well integrated with the adjoining textual material. The co-authors cover the nuances of the field in a manner exuding a real passion for undercover work. Motto and June, moreover, cast adrift Hollywood cops-and-robbers stereotypes, and explain under-

cover work as it actually is. An important theme pervading the book is that undercover agents must always act squarely within the law. A chapter on "attitudes" comments forthrightly on unacceptable attitudes displayed by some law enforcement officers.

The book is written in a text-like, although not pedantic, style. It is plainly targeted at the undercover clinician, not theorists. The text is certainly timely because the amount of contraband in American society continues to grow ever larger, and undercover agents remain an important weapon in the arsenal against contraband-peddling criminals. Some interesting, and helpful, structural features of the book include: a chapter comprised of succinct, street-smart answers to commonly-asked, undercover-related questions; a "glossary" defining "street" slang; and an appendix presenting brief information germane to undercover agents working in a corporate environment. Although cases involving undercover agents are broad-ranging, and can transpire in both law enforcement and non-law enforcement (e.g., workplace) settings, there is a very heavy emphasis in the book on undercover work in law enforcement settings. This bias reflects the law enforcement, professional backgrounds of the authors.

Undercover work is the law enforcement equivalent of trench warfare. Law enforcement people involved in some capacity in undercover work have a tremendous amount to learn from this engaging book. I believe the book would also be of considerable appeal to private investigators, police, corporate managers, and lay readers who simply have an interest in the specialized art, and inexact science, of undercover work.

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