

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: *Henry Lee's Crime Scene Handbook*

REFERENCE: Lee HC, Palmbach T, Miller MT. Henry Lee's crime scene handbook. Academic Press: London. 2001, 416 pp., \$69.95.

Dr. Henry Lee is an icon in modern forensic science. He has reconstructed and testified in several of the most high profile cases in the United States over the past few decades. He is also an engaging speaker who I have had the privilege of hearing lecture several times over the last decade. Therefore, I had high expectations of his recent publication "Henry Lee's Crime Scene Handbook" written by Dr. Lee, Timothy Palmbach, and Marilyn T. Miller.

The book is composed of over 400 pages divided into ten chapters covering General Crime Scene Considerations, Elements of Crime Scene Management, General Crime Scene Procedures, Crime Scene Documentation, Searching for Physical Evidence, Collection and Preservation of Evidence, Logic Trees, Field Tests and Enhancement Reagents, Special Scene Techniques, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Appendices covering Equipment Needs and Resources, and three case studies. A wide range of crimes scene types are covered, from homicides and shootings to clandestine drug laboratories and computer crimes.

The book stresses the importance of the application of the scientific method to crime scene investigation. Most crime scene investigation texts focus on the documentation of the scene and the collection and preservation of physical evidence. These topics are covered in this text, but the focus is primarily on dynamic methods, such as scene survey, analysis, the development of links between physical evidence and persons, and the reconstruction of the scene. The areas in the book that pertain to these topics, such as the chapter on general crime scene considerations, crime scene management, logic trees and crime scene reconstruction are particularly insightful and address topics not adequately covered in other texts. The inclusion of several case studies at the end of the book demonstrate the application of these methods and contain some sample reports prepared in conjunction with these cases. These case reports may enlighten investigators on how various topics, such as a shooting reconstruction, should be written in their reports.

The areas that cover the recognition, collection and preservation of physical evidence are quite extensive. Many topics covered in the text, such as blood spatter and impression evidence, are covered in some depth; however a thorough review of these topics requires

significantly more material than is contained in this book. This in and of itself is not a problem in a survey type book, if the text provided sufficient references. Unfortunately, the book's references are woefully inadequate. The only references cited in the book are in a four-page bibliography that is not indexed. The bibliography contains several unpublished manuscripts by Dr. Lee, which provide no value to the reader, who would be better served by a set of references at the end of each topic.

The book contains over 250 mostly color photographs, some of which provide excellent insight on the topics covered. Many photos, however, such as Dr. Lee mugging with investigators, seemed to be a waste of valuable print space that could have been used to explore some of the topics in greater depth. The quality of some of the photos is also poor and may provide a false impression on how certain types of evidence should be photographed. For example, a photo of a footwear impression included a curved tape measure as a scale and some of the blood spatter photos with scale were taken at angles. Both pieces of evidence were improperly photographed and would prove troublesome when forensically examined. Because this is a "handbook," more of an effort should have been made to include examination quality photographs, when appropriate.

The book concludes with a case study of the homicides of Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman, in which Dr. Lee was a defense witness on behalf of Ms. Brown's ex-husband, O. J. Simpson. This case study covered reconstruction of the crime and involved, in part, footwear evidence. The issue of bloody parallel line imprints that were left at the scene is covered in extensive detail in prosecution expert William Bodziak's book, *Footwear Impression Evidence, 2nd Edition*, and in limited fashion in this text. Reading both books demonstrates some of the pitfalls of scene reconstruction.

This book would be a good primer for the college student interested in crime scene investigation. It would also serve as an excellent basis for the new crime scene investigator or technician, when supplemented with additional in-depth texts. It is also a worthwhile read for the experienced investigator in the areas of the application of the scientific method to crime scene investigations. As a technical resource, however, the experienced investigator would be better served by utilizing more exhaustive texts on the topic of interest.

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