

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: *Forensic Psychology and Neuropsychology for Criminal and Civil Cases*

REFERENCE: Hall HV, editor. *Forensic psychology and neuropsychology for criminal and civil cases*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2008, 974 pp.

In this massive 974-page tome published by CRC Press, Dr. Hall has assembled a smorgasbord of chapters from a variety of experts in the fields of forensic psychology and neuropsychology. The chapters present a mix of case examples organized around various forensic topics (e.g., criminal responsibility evaluation in a methamphetamine-murder case) with appended professional reports, and review chapters that address forensic-issue-specific literature. More a diverse collection of papers covering a broad range of forensic issues than a systematic or focused treatise, this book offers a survey of specialized issues arising at the interface of psychology and the law.

Over 65 pages are devoted to a probably unnecessary glossary, and the last 230 pages contain 14 appendices, including copies of the 2002 APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, a 2006 draft of the proposed revised Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology, and examples of case reports referenced in some of the chapters.

The book is structured in three main parts. The first, somewhat arbitrarily entitled Foundational Issues, surveys a wide range of topics ranging from a criminal responsibility case study, to the assessment of malingering and deception, capital mitigation, violence risk assessment, and brain-impaired parents. There is no apparent thread connecting these topics as foundational, and most of them might more properly have been placed under the criminal or civil rubrics.

The second section surveys topics in Criminal-Forensic Evaluation, and the choice of subject matter ranges from the expected (a great chapter by Randy Otto and Richart DeMier on competence to stand trial) to topics that are off the beaten path but nonetheless

compelling. For example, there is an excellent chapter and case report on officer-involved shootings, use of force, and “suicide-by-cop” by Kris Mohandie; and another by John Call on psychological consultation in hostage/barricade negotiation.

The third and final section of the book addresses a range of issues in civil forensic evaluations. A variety of content is offered here including chapters on assessing effort in worker’s compensation cases; neuropsychological evaluations of postconcussive syndrome; and malingered pain and memory deficits. David Martindale and Jonathan Gould provide a unique chapter on “evaluating the evaluators” in custodial placement disputes, that examines the practice of opposing expert work product review and consultation.

The overall strengths of this book include: (i) the breadth of its chapters on specialized topics in psychology and the law; and (ii) particularly interesting topics that do not often get coverage, such as the assessment of parents with brain impairments (Lois Oberlander Condie and Don Condie). Its weaknesses however, are significant. Little guidance is provided for the reader with regard to the structure or organization of the book, and its chapters are of varying relevance and quality. The content of some chapters is dated or has glaring omissions. For example, a chapter on malingered memory impairments contains not one mention of the 800-pound gorilla in this area, Tombaugh’s *Test of Memory Malingering*. Finally, the book was not carefully edited. One chapter consistently and repeatedly refers to the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decision on mental retardation and the death penalty in *Atkins v. Virginia* as “Adkins.”

This book will be of interest as a reference work on specialized topics in forensic psychology and neuropsychology, with relevance both to practicing forensic mental health professionals and those in training.

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