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POLICE SCIENCE TECHNICAL ABSTRACTS AND NOTES

M. Edwin O'Neill

The Investigation of Arson

An article entitled "Arson in Times of War," which appeared in the National Fire Protection Association Quarterly of July, 1940, should be of interest to all law enforcement officers. The author, Dr. Richard C. Steinmetz, Chief Special Investigator of the Mill Mutual Fire Prevention Bureau, presents in concise form various aspects of investigation including Motives for Arson, Methods and Materials Used by Arsonists, Control of Malicious

Fires, and "The Watchman Combats the Arsonist and Saboteur." The latter section contains a list of duties of watchmen and custodians in cases of incendiarism, and a list of some of the clues sought by the investigator when investigating a fire of suspicious origin. The article has been recently issued in pamphlet form (15 pages) by the National Fire Protection Association, Boston, Mass., and can be obtained from the Association for fifteen cents.

New High Contrast Copying Films

Ordway Hilton†

Eastman Kodak Company recently announced two high contrast film emulsions—Contrast Process Ortho and Contrast Process Panchromatic (gamma 4.5 when developed in D-8). Both films are designed for copy work with line originals, and there is little difference in the results produced by the two emulsions except due to their color sensitivity. When using Mazda lights as the source of illumination the speed of Contrast Process Ortho is approximately twice that of Eastman Process film, while the Contrast Process Panchromatic gives best results when exposed between one-third and one-fourth the exposure time for Process film.

The writer has made a number of experiments with both emulsions to test their suitability for use in photographing documents. The results of these tests show that the films are best suited for photographing pencil and typewriting, but in both instances there is a definite increase in contrast, even when developing in a moderate contrast developer (DK-76). The high contrast factor seems objectionable in photographing ink writing, as there is a tendency to lose some of the identifying details of the ink strokes.

In making photographic copies in which

it is desired to reproduce only black and white without intermediate tones, these emulsions give excellent results. A very good copy was obtained when photographing a lie-detector record with Contrast Process Panchromatic film. The original record consisted of blue-black ink tracings on a salmon colored chart, and the copy sharply contrasted these tracings against the background—results which are difficult to accomplish with other emulsions without the use of filters. The results obtained with these emulsions in making photographic reversals of line drawings are excellent as the film readily reproduces sharp black lines on a clear background.

The author did not attempt to exhaust all the possible applications of these films, and laboratory technicians undoubtedly can put them to many other uses besides those which are noted. For photographs in which contrast is desired these emulsions are highly recommended, and they have advantages over some other high contrast films, such as Kodalith, in that they can be developed with standard developers and do not necessitate special handling or solutions.

† Examiner of Questioned Documents, Chicago Police Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory.