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Police Science Technical Abstracts and Notes

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POLICE SCIENCE TECHNICAL ABSTRACTS AND NOTES

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The .357 Magnum Cartridge—Officer Charles J. Panush of the Chicago Police Laboratory discovered a .38 Special Colt Official Police Revolver which would chamber the .357 Magnum cartridge. Although the gun was not originally chambered to fire this ammunition, and would not chamber it when new, frequent firing over a period of years so eroded the forward end of the chamber that the Magnum cartridge could be fully inserted.

Ball-Point Pens—The new ball-point pens, according to *Consumer's Research*, have two faults; namely, uneven writing and a very fugitive dye. Tests were conducted by the Bulletin (*Consumer's Research Bulletins*, February, 1946, page 13; June, 1946, page 13; August, 1946, page 20; October, 1946, page 17) of exposing ball-point pen writing to daylight and sunlight. Only faint yellowish traces of lines remained after exposure from 40 to 350 daylight hours with less than half of this time being actual sunlight. (Note submitted by D. J. Purtell.)

Suicide—The investigation of homicides frequently leads to puzzling questions of murder or suicide. The "confessed" suicide of a 70 year old woman is recorded in the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Quarterly* (10:295; April, 1945). Unaided she drove a blunt, 4 inch spike into the back of her head at a downward angle of 30° until the head of the spike was imbedded in the scalp. This accomplished, she lived for three days with the motor gyrus penetrated, the corpus callosum severed, and the left lateral ventricle entered. Small scabs on the scalp showed prior unsuccessful attempts.

Routine Collection and Preservation of Blood Specimens for Blood Grouping Tests—In the "Current Comment" column of the October 19, 1946, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (192:391) there is a note to the effect that in homicide cases (including hit-and-run automobile accident deaths) the medical examiner of New York City takes a sample of the victim's blood for blood grouping tests. This prevents the void which often occurs in homicide investigations when at a later date blood stains on clothing, weapons, or a car are found which might be compared, as to blood grouping, with the victim's blood.

All-Glass Filters—There are many occasions where the process of filtering in a microchemical analysis needs to be accelerated. This may be accomplished by using a centrifugal filter. Milton T. Bush describes several ground-joint filters in the *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* (Analytical Edition) (18:584-5; 1946) which utilize the filtering action of a ground-joint. Standard taper joints are used and various shapes and arrangements are described for performing single or multiple operations. The capacities used may be adjusted to suit the individual worker. The fineness of the abrasive used in grinding the joint governs the retentivity of the filter.

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Identification in Disaster—The experiences of the Connecticut State Police in the handling of difficult identifications may carry some lessons for other departments. Edward J. Hickey gives accounts of several disasters which have occurred in the state of Connecticut in the September-October issue of the *Illinois Policeman and Police Journal* (12:23, 42-46; 1946). (It was found that the use of identification squads working with the rescue squads proved invaluable in eliminating panic and disorder and speeding identifications. The group is divided into four sections: the first, controlling traffic; the second, removing bodies; the third, identifying bodies; and the fourth, maintaining communications. Printed tags bearing serial numbers are used. These are printed in two sections, one to be placed on the body and the other to be removed and retained by the officer. Other means of systematically tabulating the identifying characteristics were devised and found helpful. By such careful procedures the number of unidentified persons was greatly reduced.

Personal Identification—Although many workers have no characteristic marks on their hands, Gilbert Forbes of England found some marks in certain occupations which might prove helpful in the identification of unknown bodies. In an article in *The Police Journal* (England) (19: 266-274; 1946), he divides the study into four sections, non-manual, light, medium and heavy manual work. No attempt is made to make an exhaustive study but the positive results in a few occupations are cited. Scars, thickening of the skin on the palms or fingers, and smoothness of the tips of the fingers are clues as to the repetitive operations undergone in the individual's occupation.

Accident Reports—The Quincy, Illinois, Police Department uses toy automobiles and an intersection diagram to enable the drivers involved to re-enact the accident. A more accurate account of the events leading up to the accident is possible by this method. Officer Bryan Prudy describes this technique in the *Illinois Policeman* (12: 18; 1946).

Alcohol and Vision—According to P. L. Connolly, writing in *The Optometric Weekly* (37:1159-62, 74; 1946), the integrity of the eyes is lost almost immediately (within 10 min.) even with sub-clinical intoxication (less than 0.20 percent). With larger dosage the effect is greater and more prolonged. Simple tasks may be performed as usual, however, the impaired visual acuity makes it difficult for the individual in this state to accommodate rapidly to sudden changes in environmental conditions. This would apply particularly to driving of a high speed vehicle.
