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Police Science Technical Abstracts and Notes

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POLICE SCIENCE TECHNICAL ABSTRACTS AND NOTES

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Ball Point Pens—Accurate evaluation of the various ball point pens is difficult to obtain, but the November 1946 issue of *Consumer Reports*, 11 (11):287-290 (published by Consumers Union, New York, N. Y.) contains a comprehensive survey of practically all pens available at that date. It summarizes tests of the ball point pen as follows: “*At best*, they’ll write easily but without much character (no shading, such as results from the flexibility of an ordinary pen) on practically any surface. They can be used to make carbon copies, the number depending on how much pressure is used. They’ll write for a long time without refilling, the length of time depending on the ink supply and the fluidity of the ink. They write practically dry, so that no blotting is necessary.” “*At worst*—and most of the pens tested embody one or more of the characteristics that show how bad they can be—they balk and refuse to write at all. Or they’ll write only with so much effort that the whole thing seems hardly worth the trouble. Or they’ll write unevenly, with a sort of dotted line effect, sometimes depositing large gobs of ink where they’re not supposed to.” Some are found to leak, some fade badly, and some run dry frequently. The article evaluates by name and manufacturer each pen tested. (Contributed by Ordway Hilton, Examiner of Questioned Documents, New York, N. Y.)

Fountain Pens—Some of the technical details of modern fountain pen construction are related in a survey of pens available today (*Consumer Reports*, 11(11):290-293 (Nov. 1946)). Construction of points in conventional and “streamlined” pens, ink capacity, and evaluation of brands by type of point material (iridium-tipped gold, iridium-tipped alloy, stainless steel, and stylus pens) are discussed from the consumer’s viewpoint. The document examiner, however, will find information of interest because of its application to identification problems. (Contributed by Ordway Hilton, Examiner of Questioned Documents, New York, N. Y.)

Public Protection and Police Science Lectures—The Thomas Foundation of Springfield, Illinois, presented the first of its series of lectures on *Public Protection and Police Science* on April 17, 1947. The program included the following subjects: *The Police Science Laboratory* by Ralph E. Turner, Laboratory Supervisor, Kansas City (Mo.) Police Department; *Interrogation and the Lie Detector* by Capt. Harold Mulbar, Michigan State Police; *The Historical Background of the Crown Jewel Case*, by Dr. LeMoyné Snyder, Medicolegal Director, Michigan State Police; and *Operation of the Stateville-Joliet Prisons* by Hon. Joseph E. Ragen, Warden, Illinois State Penitentiary. This symposium represents a contribution to the advancement of forensic science and offered an opportunity for the discussion of problems of mutual interest. (Contributed by Ralph F. Turner, Laboratory Supervisor, Kansas City (Mo.) Police Dept.)

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Fluorescent Marking of Documents—In the investigation of an embezzlement case it was necessary to mark certain documents with an invisible, fluorescent ink. An unusual set of circumstances required extreme speed in the marking, and inasmuch as the operation was carried out in the field, commercial Murine eye wash was used for the marking. Incidental to the solution of the case, the length of time which the "ink" retained its fluorescent property is of interest. The documents were marked on January 10, 1941. When examined on October 15, 1942, with the ultraviolet light, the fluorescence was quite brilliant. When again examined on April 23, 1947, only a dimming in the fluorescence was noted. (Contributed by Ralph F. Turner, Laboratory Supervisor, Kansas City (Mo.) Police Department.)

Charred Documents—The air blitz over London during the recent war was a contributing cause to several new developments in the decipherment of charred documents. Dr. Julius Grant capably describes all methods which were available prior to the war and those developed in England up to the date of publication. (*Analyst*, 67:42-47 (1941)). In this paper Dr. Grant published his own technique for treating charred papers with a fluorescent oil ("pale mineral oil and petroleum spirits") and examining them under ultraviolet light. The original writing was found to be visible and could be photographed due to differences in the fluorescent qualities of the paper and the ink residues. (Contributed by Ordway Hilton, Examiner of Questioned Documents, New York, N. Y.)
