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## Police Science Book Reviews

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## POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by  
**Ralph F. Turner\***

MECHANIZED POLICE PATROL, THE WORKING MANUAL FOR MOBILE POLICE OFFICERS. By *Captain Athelstan Popkess*, O. B. E., Chief Constable, Nottingham, England. The Police Journal, London, 1947. 12/6 net.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading because of the disproportionate space devoted to subjects of general police interest in contrast to matters more precisely concerned with the use of motor patrols. For example, the first two sections, comprising half the volume, deal with maintenance and inspection of vehicles and safe driving practices; only two of the 41 pages in the fifth and last section relate specifically and exclusively to motor patrols, the remainder being devoted to hit and run investigations and to the use of public address equipment. Some criticism may also be made of the format. The erroneous impression is gained that the title of the first of the several subject matters in each untitled section is actually the title of the section; the error is especially apparent in the last section which opens with "Cooperation of Motor Patrols etc. with Burglar Alarm System" and devotes only one page to this subject. Titles and explanatory descriptions of some of the illustrations merge into the text in a confusing manner. The organization of the material might also be improved. In spite of these deficiencies, however, it is an interesting and worthwhile book.

The seventeen pages comprising the section, "The Mechanized Police Patrol," contain the substance of the precisely relevant subject matter. The author discusses briefly the application by the police of the tactical principles of surprise, mobility, concentration, communication, co-operation, offensive action, and economy of force; he recommends the organization of all police vehicles as a unit to be used for Utility (general police duties), Traffic and Crime Patrol, and suggests including also the communications facilities of the force. The Mechanized Unit would thus be independent of the Foot Divisions. While he states that Motor Patrol Areas should be "set out to the best strategic advantage", he does not discuss factors considered in establishing boundaries. Nothing is said to indicate that the number of patrol areas would change during the 24 hours of the day in accordance with variations in need. In the example used of six Motor Patrol Areas superimposed on 60 Foot Patrol Areas, the author does not state whether each Motor Patrol Area incorporates exactly ten Foot Patrol Areas. He does, however, recommend that Foot Divisional boundaries be ignored in any scheme of mechanized patrolling. He suggests, in addition to the regular patrol of the Motor Patrol Areas by vehicles bearing distinguishing markings, special mission patrols by plain-clothesmen in plain vehicles in districts where crime is currently epidemic. He further recommends that in addition to these patrols, there be located at a convenient garage, fast moving vehicles and also vehicles for transporting a number of men, such as would be necessary to surround a building. He suggests that personnel detailed to this equipment be employed between calls on maintenance, office duties, etc. He

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also recommends the 24 hour service of a duty officer not below the rank of inspector in charge of the Operations Room.

Conference points are established within each Motor Patrol Area at or near which the Patrol must be at hours designated for each area on a series of schedules, a different schedule being assigned to the patrol on each shift. A screen showing six conference points for each patrol area, each point being individually illuminated by a light controlled by a manually operated switch, enables the dispatcher to ascertain the approximate location of the patrol in each area at any hour and thus determine whether it might be more feasible to dispatch a patrol from an adjoining patrol area who at the time is near the boundary than to send the patrol regularly assigned to the patrol area in which the incident occurred when the latter patrol is at the moment a greater distance from the location of the incident.

The author suggests operation broadcast messages which are called "actions" and designated by numbers running from one to nine. The number serves as a code to indicate the nature of the action to be taken. Action One is for a relatively minor incident that can be dealt with by one or more patrol vehicles; Action Two requires a concentration of vehicles as when a crime is being committed; Action Three requires a general sharp lookout for a person or vehicle but no specific action; Action Four requires manning prearranged tactical points to prevent a vehicle from leaving the city; Actions Five to Eight, inclusive, require manning tactical points to intercept a vehicle coming into the city from the West, North, South, and East, respectively. Action Nine establishes a cordon around an area such as a park.

The appendix contains an illustrated description of the construction and use of an Indicator Map (Motor Patrol Area Map), a Conference Point Screen, and a series of suggested exercises to be used by a force in training its personnel in the required actions.

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PERSONALITY IN HANDWRITING. By *Alfred O. Mendel*. Stephen Daye Press, New York, 1947. Pp. 375. \$3.50.

This book purports to tell how to determine the various attributes of human personality and the character of the writer from his handwriting. The author begins in a seemingly frank and somewhat sensible manner in the first dozen pages or so and one is impressed with the possibility that something new and progressive has been added to the books on graphology. This expectation, however, is short lived, and it soon becomes apparent that this book is just another attempt at fortune telling like the unscientific and unreliable claims of the palmists, the numerologists, and other soothsayers.

One looks in vain in this book for a single scientific principle stated in plain, understandable language upon which graphology is based. It is frankly admitted by the author that, "graphology does not yet possess a clearly defined system", and further, that the graphologist must use intuition and insight without recourse to inference or reasoning in order to analyze handwriting. Not much science in this operation.

It should be understood that handwriting does show certain wide extremes in some directions. The handwriting of a school boy can be

distinguished from that of a mature, skillful writer and it is to be expected, but not always true, that neatness and care in handwriting will indicate these same qualities in other acts of the writer. Literacy or illiteracy may be shown by the awkward and undeveloped forms of the letters or by the higher degrees of skill in the execution. Sometimes the occupation of the writer is indicated by his handwriting. The practice of the graphologists, of which this book is an example, are not satisfied with the practical evidences shown by handwriting but carry their deductions to a ridiculous extreme.

In "Personality in Handwriting", the same erroneous bases are used for conclusions as has been done ever since Michon thought he could tell something about the writer's character from his handwriting. The glaring shortcoming in all of the books on graphology is that each writer places a different interpretation on the same things in a handwriting. There seem to be no fixed principles and no logical or scientific rules to follow. It takes very little thought to recognize that handwriting is an acquired act, developed by teaching and use, and not instinctive like speech or walking. The way a man feeds himself by knife, fork, spoon or chopsticks is just as expressive of his character as his handwriting. It is also true that a high percentage of the things relied upon by the graphologist as an indication of character are in the handwriting because the writer was taught that way, or because of outside influences which are unknown, or because of specific external causes not connected with the writer.

Rounded writing with a minimum of angles may, according to this writer, mean everything from mental reservations to criminal tendencies, yet the key telegraph operators never made an angle in their writing unless absolutely necessary. This round telegrapher's handwriting grew out of the necessity for writing rapidly and easily with a high degree of legibility and had nothing whatever to do with the character of the writer. Age and sex are the two things that handwriting should show unmistakably, if it contains all of the finer delineations of character which the graphologists claim they can see in it; but age and sex can be checked too accurately for the graphologist's mistakes, and he therefore avoids any attempt to name these obvious things from handwriting.

The most senseless and unscientific deductions are made from things in the handwriting that are directly caused by the paper, the ink or the pen and entirely outside of the influence of the writer. Some examples of this extravagant nonsense found in this book are as follows:

(a) A break in the upward stroke of small "l" caused by a failure of the ink to flow, indicates a heart defect.

(b) Heavy pressure at the bottom of small "f" indicates eczema of the foot.

(c) Something at the top of capital letters shows that the writer had an ulcer of the nose.

(d) Short extensions of letters below the line points toward deformed or incapacitated feet of the writer.

It would be a waste of money and time to buy and read this book.

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