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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by
Ralph F. Turner*

THE TECHNOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY OF ALKALOIDS. By *Frank E. Hamerslag*,
D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., Publisher, New York, N. Y. 1950 Pp. 319.

The text of this book consists of chapters on each of the following alkaloid groups: Aconite, arecoline, coca, colchicine, curare, ephedra, ergot, hydrastine and berberine, ipecacuanha, lobelia, nicotine, nux vomica, physostigmine, pilocarpus, sparteine, solanaceous alkaloids, veratrine, and yohimbine. Each chapter deals with the chemistry, natural sources, manufacturing methods, pharmacological properties and therapeutic uses, and analytical and toxicological methods.

The chemistry, natural sources, and manufacturing methods including syntheses where these are done, are all covered in excellent detail, but all from the viewpoint of a manufacturer. The pharmacological properties, therapeutic uses, analytical and toxicological methods of identification are all sketchily touched upon, and very little or no detail at all is given.

This book is an excellent reference for those interested in the field as stated in the title "The Technology and Chemistry of Alkaloids." There are very few errors in the structural formulas presented, and these are generally obvious to the reader. For those interested in the pharmacology, toxicology, and identification of alkaloids this book is not particularly useful.

Crime Detection Laboratory
Michigan Department of Health

EDGAR W. KIVELA

EXAMEN DE DOCUMENTOS DUBITADOS. By *Dr. Rafael Fernandez Ruenes*.
Published by Litografia "Isidro," San Jose No. 626, Habana, Cuba, 1951,
Pp. 90.

The book, written in Spanish, treats the subject of questioned documents briefly. It should be of particular interest to the legal profession, judicial bodies, and investigating officers of Hispanic countries where, as Dr. Ruenes indicates, the acceptance of scientific examination in the proof of documents has not kept pace with that of the United States.

The author refers frequently to the practices of international authorities. He considers graphometry as outmoded and avoids dignifying graphology beyond the status of quasi-scientific entertainment. His historic observations on the legal aspects of document examination in the United States and European countries are interesting. He mentions that as early as 1729 Spain enacted a law in the interests of justice designating six penmanship teachers to pass on the genuineness of a signature. Any one else undertaking this function would be subject to both a fine and a sentence. Ruenes makes a forceful appeal for the abolition of the outmoded title of "Penmanship Expert" handed down by the Spaniards, in favor of "Examiner of Questioned Documents," who today relies upon scientific aids.

The examining methods described are sketchy. They follow closely but in far less detail those contained in "Questioned Documents," by the late Albert S. Osborn, under whom Ruenes studied. The principal deficiency of the book

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lies in the author's effort to cover in less than 100 pages what Osborn did in 1000. For instance, on the subject of ink he offers a chart on recognized reagents for black inks only and invites attention to the works of other authorities for further particulars. Although potassium thiocyanate vapor and tannic acid are recognized by the profession as equally if not more effective than ultra-violet in some instances in restoring ink writings, neither chemical is mentioned. He advises that if the technician is not a chemist, he should seek the services of one in restoring eradicated or faded writings. In the U. S. recognized guide lines are utilized effectively by qualified examiners without chemical background in testing and comparing inks and paper. Ball point pens are not discussed.

Dr. Ruenes wisely recommends that every examiner should also be a photographer.

His bibliography includes leading tests, and references to numerous articles published locally. He proposes the maxim "Each case is a particular one which must be treated as such."

Dr. Ruenes is doubtless well qualified to write on a scientific subject. He enjoys the distinction of being one of the members of the American Society of Examiners of Questioned Documents located in a foreign country and holds degrees in civil engineering, chemistry, and architecture.

Questioned Document Analyst
Post Office Department

ALBERT W. SOMERFORD

INSTRUMENTAL DETECTION OF DECEPTION. By *Clarence D. Lee*. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill. 1952. Pp. 249. \$6:50.

This book gets off to a bad start when August Vollmer, former Chief of Police, Berkeley, California, states in the introduction, "His [Lee's] simple and easily understandable instructions for use of the machine [lie-detector] and splendid illustrations, if supplemented by actual experience as suggested by him, should suffice to prepare any interested and intelligent person to qualify as a detection expert in a comparatively short period of time."

This line of reasoning is similar to the layman's misconception that the lie-detector is an instrument which automatically detects lies and that very little background and training is required of its operator. Nor does the author himself seem to be at all concerned with dispelling this false notion; in fact, in several places he adds impetus to this unfounded belief.

According to the author's own statement, *The Instrumental Detection of Deception* was written primarily for the student and beginner in lie detection. However, the author completely fails to indicate to the student that the lie-detector has many limitations. He also ignores the various mental and physical defects in subjects which do materially affect the interpretation of lie-detector records, and which defects are often the causes for erroneous interpretations. He does not even bother to identify the cardiac defect present in one of his illustrations, Figure 33C, which defect is most apparent and could easily affect the interpretation.

No warnings are given to the student concerning the various limitations of the lie-detector technique. The impression is definitely left that anyone with little training can easily become a lie-detector expert. The author also strongly implies that a beginner can gain actual case experience by merely conducting experimental tests on fellow students.

Experimental laboratory tests are a far cry from actual criminal tests, in that the experimental subject has nothing at stake and offers a great deal of

co-operation. On the other hand, the criminal suspect's life or liberty very often depends upon the results of his lie-detector test. Therefore, the guilty subject will try by covert means, either mentally or physically, to destroy the effectiveness of the technique. The competent examiner must have had training with such subjects in order to be able to recognize these antics and distinguish them from true mental and physical defections.

Some strange lie-detector records are in this book! For instance, Fig. 7 consists of two suspects' lie-detector records. The caption states that this is a "hypothetical murder case, in which each had a motive and opportunity for the crime." Suspect A's record shows evenness throughout, which implies innocence, while Suspect B's record shows dramatic blood pressure rises and deception responses in the respiration on all the relevant (crime) questions. The author's interpretation is, "B is the guilty one, of course, as evidenced by the emotion waves following every relevant question, both in blood pressure rises and suppressed breathing." The author leaves unexplained just how B can react guilty to a crime that never occurred except in the author's own imagination!

Although Figure 7 is the only one the author identifies as being hypothetical, other lie-detector records appear to be just as fictitious. (See Figures 32, 33 and 34.) Of the records which are identified as having been obtained in actual cases, very few appear to have been verified as to the correctness of the examiner's interpretation. Here again the reader may well question the author's propriety of telling a beginner that a certain record is that of a lying or a truthful subject, when such a conclusion is based upon hope that the interpretation was correct rather than upon evidence. Of the 37 illustrated criminal-case records, apparently only 12 have been verified by actual evidence as being correct interpretations. These 12 verified case records are the only ones that should appear in this book, especially since the book is alleged to be for student study.

Mr. Lee sets forth many assertions as facts which can, at best, be described as untested theories. Very seldom does he illustrate any of his theories or principles with case records. Several times the theory is stated that the more an innocent person is tested, the lesser his responses will become; and that the more a guilty person is tested, the more responsive he will become, or at least he will maintain the same responsiveness. In the reviewer's experience this theory has proved to be false on many occasions, and its falsity can be shown by verified criminal-case records.

Another often-expressed theory is that a downward trend in the blood pressure recording, as the test progresses, is indicative of innocence. If this theory was accepted as true by other examiners, many guilty subjects, who later confessed, would have been declared innocent.

The author touches upon how to best obtain a confession from a subject following his lie-detector tests. He states, "The recorded reactions as revealed in the test itself may prove helpful as an index to the subject's emotional vulnerability." But Mr. Lee fails to illustrate this point or reveal the way in which such "vulnerability" can be ascertained from a subject's records.

This book contains very little to recommend it to the layman, student, or one actually in the field of lie detection. Moreover, a distorted picture of lie detection will result from its reading by one not already thoroughly acquainted with the subject.

New York City

RICHARD O. ARTHUR

STEREO PHOTOGRAPHY IN PRACTICE. By *E. F. Linssen*. The Fountain Press, London. 1952. Pp. 326. \$7.50.

This book represents the author's efforts to combine within one source the fundamental principles of stereo photography. As indicated in the preface to the work, literature available in the past has consisted largely of scattered articles dealing with restricted phases of the subject, and as such did not provide the beginner with a satisfactory background in this interesting aspect of photography.

Those who might be interested in learning something about the historical background of the subject will find this text an excellent source of material. Those interested in the practical application of stereo photography will find it equally satisfactory. The book is written in an easily understood style, profusely illustrated with line drawings, and provides as complete a coverage of the subject as could be desired in a general text. Techniques and instrumentation, of both practical and historical interest, are well presented. Theoretical treatment of the subject has been kept at a minimum, which fact will undoubtedly be appreciated by the beginner for whose benefit the book appears to have been written.

Topics covered in the book are so numerous that it would be impractical to list them. A review, however, could hardly begin to do the book justice unless it included a few. These include a consideration of such matters as the various factors which give rise to stereo vision; taking and viewing instruments; hyperstereoscopy and hypostereoscopy; stereo photomicrography; projection systems; etc. A section devoted to stereoscopic motion pictures will be of interest to those who have followed the developments along these lines in recent years.

In the field of police science applications of stereo photography have been limited. This is most likely due to the fact that the final viewing body would normally be a jury. There are numerous instances in which a stereo photographic technique would materially aid that body in its understanding of the nature and significance of some of the physical evidence which comes to its attention. Until such time, however, as true 3-D projection is made practical and convenient, it is likely that there will be no serious effort made to provide them with this type of evidence. At the same time, there are instances in which the laboratory worker will find stereo techniques of considerable value in the examination of physical evidence, even though utilized only for laboratory purposes. In such cases *Stereo Photography in Practice* will be found a most valuable reference.

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