

1954

## Police Science Book Reviews

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Police Science Book Reviews, 44 J. Crim. L. Criminology & Police Sci. 832 (1953-1954)

This Criminology is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

## POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

*Edited by*

Ralph F. Turner\*

FINGERPRINT FACTS. By *George W. Wilton*. A. Walker and Sons, Ltd., Gala-shiels, Scotland, 1953. Pd. 20. 2 s 6 p.

This small booklet should be of interest to fingerprint examiners from a historic point of view. It is principally concerned with setting forth the contributions of Henry Faulds and Bertie James Hammond to the progress of fingerprint identification. The author has long felt that in England especially Faulds has not been given the recognition he so justly deserves and that until very recently no one had fully realized what Hammond's work in the Ruxton case, which was recently described in this Journal, has added to methods of identification of the dead by fingerprints. His pamphlet places the blame for both of these oversights on publications by members of Scotland Yard.

New York City.

ORDWAY HILTON

---

CRIME INVESTIGATION—Physical Evidence and the Police Laboratory. By *Paul L. Kirk*, Ph. D., Professor of Biochemistry and Criminalistics, University of California. 1953. 806 pages, 161 illus., 21 tables. Interscience Publishers, Inc., 250 Fifth Avenue, New York. \$10.00.

This is a truly monumental work, attempting to survey within the space of some 800 pages, the entire field of so-called *criminalistics*. The recognition of physical evidence, its proper collection and preservation, its thorough examination in the police laboratory, and the evaluation of the results of such study have been major factors in the development of police science from the early days of Sherlock Holmes to the present era of Sgt. Joe Friday.

The book was "written with the needs of police investigators, general criminalists in the smaller police laboratories, and students of criminalistics and police science in mind." It is not intended as a guide for specialists (page V.). To serve these ends, it is divided into two sections:

Section I "Physical Evidence in General Criminal Investigations" (525 pages) is directed toward the instruction of police investigators who, in order to observe, preserve, and collect adequate physical evidence, must understand *what* to collect, *how* to collect it, and *why* it should be collected.

Section II (238 pages) deals with Laboratory Operations and Techniques and is intended to provide guidance for laboratory technicians of smaller police departments and for students of police science.

Professor Kirk has covered the subject in his typical thoroughgoing style. In fact, one sometimes has the feeling that his treatment is too comprehensive and that the reader may be so bewildered by details that he loses sight of the broader general objective. The trend in police work is toward greater professionalization and the required standards of intelligence and training constantly are becoming more rigid. One fears that the author, nevertheless, overestimates the capacities of the present-day police investigator as evidenced by his professorial manner and the occasional

---

\*Assoc. Prof. of Police Administration, Michigan State College, E. Lansing.

complexity of his presentation. As an example, one suspects that Chapter 3 ("The Relation of Probability to Physical Evidence") would make exceedingly difficult reading for even the most astute police investigator. Nevertheless, it is far better to overestimate the capabilities of the reader rather than to underestimate them.

To the reader who is not familiar with the comprehensive contributions to police science made by Prof. Kirk and his students, there is no way of discovering in which areas of the book he is speaking from firsthand knowledge in which fields he is relying upon the second-hand opinions of others who, perhaps, are less skilled and experienced.

Thus at page 422 one finds the categorical pronouncement that breath tests for intoxication should be used for screening purposes only. Such a statement does not square with the facts. In determining whether a motorist is "under the influence of intoxicating liquor" a law enforcement officer is, in fact, making a clinical diagnosis. And in the space of a week's training and practice, an intelligent conscientious police officer can be trained to perform breath tests which are of sufficient accuracy (accurate to within 1 part in 20, or 5%) for a clinical diagnosis. Greater precision in biochemical analysis is not only unnecessary, but meaningless, a fact which should be readily apparent to any teacher of biochemistry. An author may be pardoned for a few such lapses into professorial dogmatism; they do not materially detract from the usefulness of the book.

He also may be forgiven if, occasionally, he allows his enthusiasm to rise to heights which rival the feats portrayed by Hollywood detectives of radio and television. For example (page 8) the examination of a workman's glove left at the scene of a burglary permitted the following *inferences* to be drawn:

- (a) The culprit was a laborer associated with building construction.
- (b) His main occupation was pushing a wheelbarrow.
- (c) He lived outside the town proper, on a small farm or garden plot.
- (d) He was a southern European.
- (e) He raised chickens, and kept a cow or horse.

Subsequent investigation proved all but (b) to be accurate. Instead of pushing a wheelbarrow, the culprit operated a tractor. Again he cites the case (pages 23-24) of an assault in which the victim could identify her assailant as a colored man. In forcing her to accompany him, he had tripped and struck his forehead on the sidewalk. Dried blood deposited on the concrete was scraped off and examined in the laboratory, where it showed the assailant to be of type AB and to have syphilis. By these observations, the laboratory investigators were able to eliminate 99.4% of colored male suspects. Unfortunately, such perceptive deduction appears to be feasible only in the Golden State. [See previous reports of similar deductive feats by an earlier member of the Berkeley Police School, Albert Schneider, the American Journal of Police Science 2:40 (1931)]. Nowhere does Prof. Kirk tell us just *how* to get the rabbit out of the hat—how one may determine the place of residence and the national origin of a man from an examination of his glove, nor how one may make an accurate diagnosis of syphilis by study of dried blood scraped from a concrete sidewalk.

These minor differences of opinion between author and reviewer are of little significance. The book constitutes an excellent guide for the investigator and will serve as a mine of information for the student. It represents

another forward step in the progress of criminal investigation from an art to a scientific procedure.

Crime Detection Laboratory  
Lansing, Michigan

C. W. MUEHLBERGER

---

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE POLICE. By *G. Douglas Gourley, M.S.* Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill. 1953. Pp. 123., \$5.75.

Often an ugly situation, whether it is "corruption" in a federal administration or in a local police department, carries a blessing in disguise. Either because of pressure by an aroused public opinion or because of a scientist's curiosity, a research may be undertaken to find out the whos, whats, and whys.

Every intelligent newspaper reader of the City of Los Angeles will undoubtedly know why the author of *Public Relations and the Police* has undertaken a study of the relationship between the people and the police and hence will welcome the effort, especially when it was carried out in an atmosphere scientific objectivity. It should not take away from the commendation due the author and his book if the motives for such a study are not solely to be found in a scientist's effort on behalf of science; rather, since indication is evident to paint his department whiter and to quiet the hue and cry that have pursued the scandal-ridden department during recent years.

Mr. Gourley, who is a commander in the Training Division of the Los Angeles Police Department and who is also an instructor in Police Science and Administration at the University of Southern California, has joined the pollsters; he has interviewed thousands of citizens of all races, creeds, and nationalities, as to why policemen are held in low esteem, what policemen have done or have left undone which has produced unfavorable public attitudes, or what policemen can do to win the support and respect of the citizens they serve. At the outset it will appear noteworthy that the author, while of course stressing the fact that basically the average police officer is sincere and capable, started his survey on the assumption that the public feels with respect to their police that something is "rotten in Denmark". The author states that few indictments can be fairly charged to any one police department; but "*unfortunately, at various times and places each has been successfully proved.*" (Italics those of the author!) We ask, why "unfortunately?" We should assume that a police department's members, like those of any human institution, are subject to trial and error; hence there should be nothing "unfortunate" about its faults, unless little or nothing is being done to correct them and to improve obviously bad conditions, as in the case of those officers of the Los Angeles Police Department who were indicted by the Grand Jury and convicted in court for beating up their prisoners during a Christmas orgy. In this case the public would have forgiven the Department if the Department had acted on its own initiative by disciplining the officers concerned instead of waiting until the incident reached the press and the Grand Jury!

Captain Gourley's survey deals with attitudes toward civil service, toward traffic safety, (comparing the attitudes of Germans toward their post-war police); it deals with research methods and sources of data and includes factors both biological and sociological. For example, the Captain found that "apparently, the principles of civil service, based upon a merit system, have not been brought sufficiently before the public." He also discovered