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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by
Richard L. Holcomb*

JAIL ADMINISTRATION. By *Myrl E. Alexander*, Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1957. 326 Pages, \$6.75.

This monograph, by the Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, contains a rich store of technical information regarding the jail and its administration. In a compact, readable form, its pages present a compilation of the ideas, experiences, and recommended policies and practices of the most competent administrators in the field of jail management based upon the author's long working relationship with many wardens, sheriffs, jailers, jail inspectors, and other professional associates throughout the country. As Alexander explains in his preface: "Clearly, this is not a one-man book. It is a report, and the result of the work of hundreds of people."

In the planning of this book, the author sought to accomplish three purposes: (1) to provide a guide and handbook for jail administrators; (2) to furnish operational standards for groups and individuals interested in understanding and evaluating local jails; and (3) to supply a textbook for the training of jail officials and employees. In impressively accomplishing these purposes, the author has given to penologists the comprehensive and professional treatment of jail administration which they have long awaited.

The analytical discussion of many jail problems leads the author to answer such highly detailed questions as: What medications should be kept in the jail to take care of minor medical problems? What kind of mattress covers are recommended? Should jailers be taught judo? How much should jailers be paid? How can escapes be prevented? However, the treatment of these questions is rescued from a dry enumeration of technical points by the skillful use of

illustrations drawn from the author's rich experience in the field of jail administration.

Several features of the book are especially worthy of notice. In the opinion of Alexander, "every well managed jail is built on a foundation of intelligent, alert, and trained personnel." It is understandable, then, why the author places so much emphasis on the careful selection and training of jail officials and employees in his chapter "Men and Management." Two other excellent chapters deal with the handling of unusual prisoners (juvenile offenders, female offenders, narcotic addicts, alcoholics, suicide risks, dangerous prisoners, sex deviates, and inmates with special medical problems) and the planning of the new jail. But perhaps the part of the book which gives the reader his deepest insight into the author's philosophy is the chapter on public relations. Here Alexander concludes his remarks with these meaningful words: "Jails will move forward but little in advance of public support and understanding. A public relations policy which creates wider understanding and support is the key to a more vital and constructive American jail. The creation of the new American jail is the responsibility of every jail administrator and employee who fully believes in and practices the fine art of public relations with all the interest, intelligence, and ingenuity at his command."

Although the book is designed primarily as a report on recommended standards of jail administration—and as such it is very well done—it might have been lifted to a higher level of achievement if the discussion of jail problems had been presented against the background of the history of the jail in England and America and its present operation interpreted with relation to the changing culture in which it now functions. There is some attempt to do this in the introductory and concluding chapters, but these are inadequate for this purpose and

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fall below the analytical qualities which characterize the rest of the book. In addition, a list of selected readings on the jail would have made the book a more valuable tool for guidance and teaching in the field of jail administration.

Throughout his book, Alexander often pulls aside the curtain and reveals the viciousness, corruption, inefficiency, and stupidity which still degrade many American jails, but nevertheless he insists that the existing situation should not leave us without hope for this dark corner of modern penology. In his opinion, "the fact that jails have so long hovered near the bottom of society's institutions is no cause for discouragement or defeatism to the modern jailer. In fact, it is his greatest challenge to work and travel the road ahead toward orderly creative jail management. That road will be traveled in the coming years by those who make their individual contributions to jail improvement in many places and under many circumstances."

It is clear, then, why Alexander wrote this book for he firmly believes that the impetus for the improvement of American jails will come from the enlightened efforts of competent men in the field as they wrestle with their everyday, practical problems of jail management. In expressing this belief, he states: "Though the jail has lagged behind, it is the major premise of this book that the development of a more constructive American jail must and will begin at the level of practical operations. From that point forward, as we move out of the pre-Victorian period, a more rapid evolution of the jail will be underway." Although there is much truth in their point of view, it is certain that there must also be an over-all, constructive leadership exerted by those not directly involved in the handling of jail problems, and who, therefore, can be more objective and far-sighted in their appraisal of the situation. In fact, it is this type of leadership that Alexander himself has provided in the pages of his book, which should powerfully stimulate standardization and progress in the administration of American jails.

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FROM EVIDENCE TO PROOF. By *Marshal Houts*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1956. Pp. 608, Illus. 150, \$7.50

The author of this volume, Marshall Houts, is an attorney, has served as a judge, as an FBI special agent, and with the office of Strategic Services. He is listed as General Counsel to the "Court of Last Resort". Much of the contents remind one of the works of Erle Stanley Gardner to whom the author has dedicated this volume.

The author in the foreword starts out by a rather scathing appraisal of the shortcomings of the legal profession, shoots a barb or two at the police officer and the prosecuting attorney, and lays bare a percentage of expert witnesses.

The author is frank in stating that "This book is not about the law of evidence". It contains little factual material which has not been well known to the majority of seasoned law enforcement officers. It also includes some statements with which this writer cannot agree. Some of these deal with certain scientific or technical evidence. The author's figures on the number of innocent persons per one hundred charged with crime who are actually innocent may be true in some sections of the country, but this writer, after thirty-five years of experience in dealing with all classes of crime in Iowa and surrounding territory firmly believes that the figures are far from true of this State or this section. The comments on page fifty-six regarding "the attitude of a number of judges" likewise fails to come home to roost in our experience. This writer has known and watched literally hundreds of judges in their judicial functions and never in his experience has he ever encountered a judge with the callous attitude against a defendant which the author describes.

Aside from the above however the book is well written in easily understood language. It is a volume of great potential value for the counsel for the defense. It is a good volume for the investigating officer of limited experience and a good volume to serve as a reminder and as a retraining aid for the officer of experience. In fact it may profitably be read by anyone having anything to do with the administration of justice.

The book deals effectively with the falli-

bility of eye-witness testimony and with testimony based on the other senses. It drives home the danger of preconceived theories, advocates the necessity of complete, impartial, and all-inclusive investigations and aptly points out the utter stupidity of taking anything for granted. The book is well illustrated, especially in some of the chapters such as those dealing with scientific evidence and with photography.

In an easy to understand manner, the author effectively deals with the subjects of physical evidence, tape recordings, investigative accounting, fingerprint identification and techniques, questioned document examination, the determination of speed from skid marks, sex offenders, chemical determinations, and others.

If the author's observations on insanity and psychiatry do anything more than retell facts known to every well oriented man in the law enforcement profession, it is to emphasize the *fact* that valid determinations in this field can only be rendered by well-trained experts and by them only after lengthy and exhaustive tests and observations.

The author in his reference to polygraph technique, ably makes a number of observations to which this writer can whole-heartedly subscribe. One of these is his observation that "the controlling factor of polygraph technique is not the machine. It is the ability, training, experience, and integrity of the operator." His conclusions regarding the use and value of such drugs as scopolamine, sodium amytol, pentathol, etc., are well taken as are his conclusions regarding the use of hypnosis.

His remarks about the pseudo expert and about the law of probability leave us without adverse argument and prompt us to say "Amen".

His chapters dealing with blood determinations, semen, skeletal remains, poisons, etc., are packed with helpful reminders and sound suggestions for the homicide investigator. The great need for the assistance and counsel of the trained medico-legal expert in determining cause and time of death in homicide cases is well stated.

"From Evidence to Proof" is not a text book, and it is not about the law of evidence. It does however admirably fulfill the author's stated purpose, being that of stimulating an affirmative, objective approach to fact finding and proof. It is recommended reading.

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PARKER ON POLICE. Edited by O. W. Wilson, Springfield, Illinois, Charles C Thomas, 1957. Pp. 235. \$4.75

This collection of writings, edited by O. W. Wilson, Dean, School of Criminology, University of California, expresses the philosophy of professional police service as exemplified by the administration and operations of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Chief of Police William H. Parker, one of America's best known police administrators, is obviously dedicated to the ideal of a professional police service which is simultaneously competent and edifying. The addresses and articles in this anthology deal with a wide variety of challenging law enforcement problems as relate to the policy and management of police services. The presentations are well written and reflect the breadth and depth of a distinguished Chief of Police with many years of experience as a law enforcement professional.

Most all issues raised are of major import: American citizens are challenged to recognize the growth and inroads of crime and the necessity of attention to youth as the key to the future. The philosophy of professional police activity is presented as service oriented, and it is declared that underpaid or poorly trained police must be expected to work poorly or fail in their assigned tasks. Organized crime is clearly delineated as a major threat to the internal security of the United States. Planning and research are flatly stated to be the *sine qua non* to any scientific approach to law enforcement. The real problem of effective law enforcement consistent with civil liberties is discussed in relation to the California exclusionary rule. Mass transit is pointed up as an inadequately considered solution to the traffic problem.

These, and other allied areas of inquiry, are treated with sensitivity and understanding. Some readers may feel that Chief Parker is too dogmatic and unyielding in some of his positions, and others may conclude that he has exaggerated the *status quo* in making his points, but none would question his sincerity and courage, nor his dedication to the legal foundations of policing and to the moral principles which apply.

Citizens who are seeking a better understanding of local law enforcement should find criteria with which to judge their own police problems; students who contemplate a career within the municipal police service should derive perspective and encouragement; academicians who desire forthright statements of police policy and program should find ample stimulation for their research; and the police practitioners of America should be able to find substantial applications to their own programs.

The editor, O. W. Wilson, has performed a needed service for American law enforcement and for the American public by making these materials available in such well-organized form. The book should be considered "must" reading for all conscientious thinking citizens—whether they are in or out of the public service.

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A GUIDE TO MODERN POLICE THINKING. By Raymond E. Clift, W. H. Anderson Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1956, Pp. 369, Illus. 7, \$7.50

The author apparently intended this book to be used as a textbook for beginning police students and also for an in-service program for more experienced police officers.

It is obvious that he has a great deal of experience as a police officer, but in several cases he has either failed to express himself clearly or else has made statements with which I cannot agree.

He writes an excellent history of police administration; gives a nice review of the training, or lack of training, in the past, and discusses the training presently available to police

officers; discusses the purpose of modern policing; and follows through with some very good comments on police organization and administration. I particularly like his comments on police personnel management and training.

However, in his chapter on traffic education, he says the police today are naturals for safety education work, and the fact that they come in contact with all elements of society makes them better qualified than, and superior to, the average safety teacher. With this I cannot agree. It is very rarely that a police officer has the basic teaching knowledge that is required to teach safety education, and it is my thought that it is better for the police officer to furnish facts and help to the trained teacher and allow him to do the teaching.

I believe he is wrong in his technical description of the effect of alcohol on the human body. Also, he uses some rather general terms in discussing the effects of alcohol on the human body, and how much it will take to make a person intoxicated. You can not use a rule-of-thumb on this.

In this chapter on "Interrogations and Interviews," he mentions using the "triangulation" system of questioning, in which you and your partner keep on different sides of the suspect—or, preferably, one in back of him. I have found in many cases that you can seldom get a suspect to talk when there is more than one person in the room until after he has finally broken down and made his confession, and then it is quite easy to get him to repeat for your partner or other people—perhaps a court reporter or someone else in the room.

I would like to take issue with his wording in the chapter on "Introduction to Criminal Law" in the section on "Justification for Crime," where he says:

"Strictly speaking, there is no 'justification' for crime, yet there are many acts which would be criminal without certain extenuating circumstances attending them. It may be a crime, for example, for one to assault another but, if he is doing so in self-defense, it is not a crime. The original assault upon him is his 'justification' for 'crime'."

This is a very poor choice of words, because

if it is justified, then it is certainly not a crime—so therefore it needs no justification.

The use of the questions at the end of the chapter to be answered is excellent, particularly if this book is to be used as a training manual for beginning policemen. However, a great deal of time was spend on compiling a table of criminal statutes that could more easily be located in another manual, as the statutes are changed so often in the various states that it would seem better to refer an officer to a library in his own locale.

Also, in the "Introduction to Criminal Law," the author goes to great lengths to describe the specific elements of various crimes as under the

laws of the State of Ohio. If this book is intended for broad general use, it would seem that the author should have talked in generalities, rather than in specifics, as this might be misleading to a beginning officer unless he happened to be from the State of Ohio.

As a whole, the author has done a reasonably good job, but I think he would have had a much better look if it had been reviewed by one or two experts in the police field who could have pointed out the obvious errors and smoothed out the rough spots.

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