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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by

Richard L. Holcomb*

STOPPING VEHICLES AND OCCUPANT CONTROL. By *Beryl Langford, Robert Sheehan, Thomas F. Lobkovich, and Paul Watson*. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1960, Pp. 87, Illus. 66, Charts 8. \$5.00.

The responsibility for this book is divided by quite a sizeable group of authors. In addition, the contributions of fifty-four other individuals and organizations are acknowledged. The results of all of this effort are not outstanding, and the price is excessive.

The first fifteen pages explain in far too much detail the study that preceded the development of procedures illustrated later. This is not very interesting and the tables, in which the cities and states remain anonymous, are of no value at all.

Actually, it is not until Section V starts, after over a third of the pages have been used up, before the authors start really telling anything about stopping vehicles and occupant control. These first thirty-four pages could have been reduced to five or fewer with no real loss. Even the section on vehicular patrol driving has been better done and in much lower priced publications.

The remainder of the book does treat on its announced topic, but there are so many minor errors, misleading illustrations, or poor procedures that I would hesitate to give this to a new officer. For example: On page 37 an illustration shows an officer seated in a car checking his pistol. The gun is pointed so that if it should fire accidentally, it might well strike the other officer. On page 38 a sub-machine gun is being checked. The bolt has

been drawn back. The officer has no choice now except to leave the bolt back and put the gun on safety, or withdraw the magazine, and then drop the bolt. There are safer procedures to use in an automobile. On page 44 the statement is made, "The most effective weapon from all standpoints (stopping power, psychological advantage, range and penetration) is the high powered rifle." The relatively few high powered rifles found in police vehicles would discount the acceptance of this statement by others. On page 60 there is a discussion of searching the trunk of a car in the case that an armed man is hiding there. The statement is made, "A man, positioning himself within a trunk, would, generally, lean against the spare tire using it as a back rest." The illustration accompanying shows the man lying down as anyone except a midget two feet tall would need to do in a trunk. Page 77 has two illustrations of sound practices in applying hand-cuffs; placing the hands back to back, and dead-locking the ratchet. However, neither of these practices are explained or noted in the text and might well escape the notice of anyone not already familiar with these procedures.

Most of the practices discussed are sound, and the illustrations are generally quite good, although illustrations covering what a desk man looks like receiving a call or how an officer in a car looks making notes on a clip board are not really needed.

If much of the introductory material was eliminated and the remainder carefully checked over, this would be a useful publication, particularly if the price was not exorbitant.

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RLH