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Police Science Book Reviews

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POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by

Richard L. Holcomb*

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS. By *George J. Dudycha* and nine contributors. Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1955. Pp. 404, 13 figures, 6 tables. \$7.00.

This book is made up of fifteen chapters by ten authors. Each of the authors is a psychologist or a sociologist. Some have had practical experience in phases of law enforcement. Others appear to have relatively little acquaintance with the field. As a result, the book, like most others so compiled, is uneven in quality, running from quite good to mediocre. A review can best be approached by considering the contributions of each author separately.

George J. Dudycha has written chapters entitled "What is Psychology", "Rating and Testing Policemen", "The Psychology of Interviewing", and "Juvenile Delinquency". The first of these "What is Psychology", is written in such a way that anyone in law enforcement would have an understanding of the part psychology can play. The author not only defines the role of psychology, but dispells many of the incorrect notions so common. "Rating and Testing Policemen" seems to be based on reading about the subject, rather than on experience. Tests are cited that have no value at all in police work. For example, the "Policeman Examination General Adaptability Test" by O'Rourke would probably not be used by any examiner who had ever had experience with it. Most certainly, it fails entirely to test adaptability. "The Psychology of Interviewing" is fair, but there are a number of much better contributions by police officers or men who have had a great deal of experience in interviewing as applied to law enforcement.

The chapter on juvenile delinquency is a good brief treatment and does fill a need since there is not much available to law enforcement written from his viewpoint.

The chapter on "The Psychology of Lie Detection" by Donald B. Lindsley is of little or no value. This author has a superficial knowledge of the subject, and like most psychologists who have used some of the same techniques in experimental situations, is over-sold on skin resistance as a measure. He spends much time in discussing this response although its value in lie detection in criminal cases has been disproven time and again, and by psychologists as well as lie detection experts. The author also suggests some possible measures other than those presently used. This is good, but not necessarily in this type of a book where it would be best to confine the text to methods of proven value and keep speculation down to a minimum.

Norman Meier has written chapters on "The Psychology of Human Relations" and "The Psychology of Group Control". This is useful material and makes interesting reading, if you already have had several good basic courses in psychology. If you haven't, or if you are looking for some rather specific ways of applying this material, these chapters will not be easy to read. At best, these areas are still theoretical and the author does little to assist the average law enforcement officer in applying what is known.

"Psychological Factors in Highway Traffic and Traffic Control" by A. R. Lauer suffers because it is far too brief. More psychological research of interest and value to law enforcement has been done in this area than in most of the others, yet this chapter is only 24 pages. As a result, too much of the material is inadequately covered and is not as easy to read, nor as valuable as it could be.

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"Psychology and the Court" by F. K. Berrien cites some of the research on reliability of testimony and similar material and in addition makes a number of statements that seem to be based solely on the author's opinion. He has a number of criticisms of our present system of justice, many of them valid, but he fails to recognize that in spite of some rather spectacular errors from time to time the systems worked out by the lawyers over centuries is probably as reliable and perhaps no less cumbersome than any plan that might be developed by psychologists, who have also made dramatic errors in evaluating behaviour. I feel that judges would show no more variance in interpreting a set of facts than psychologists. This author does a fair job of discussing factors influencing the reliability of witnesses, but most of this sort of material the police have learned long ago from experience.

Don W. Sysinger has written on "Mental Abnormality and Crime". This is good, but brief. Many of the other authors touch on this same subject. If this chapter had been expanded, some of the other chapters could have been a little shorter, and the book would have been better unified. This chapter is the best written from the standpoint of law enforcement. It is exceptionally clear and discusses various mental abnormality from an authoritative and a practical standpoint.

If the chapter on "Mental Abnormality and Crime" had been expanded, the chapter "The Psychology of the Adult Criminal" by Harold Linder could have been left out. As a matter of fact, it could have been left out anyway. The editor states "The presentation in this section is from the point of view of psychoanalysis, which is one of several ways in which the nature and development of personality can be viewed". I hope that the editor intended this by way of apology.

"The Psychology of the Alcoholic" by Peter Jan Hampton is a good treatment of a problem that is very important to the police. Any weakness in this chapter is the result of far too little research on this very important problem. In addition, much of the research is out-dated. This, of course, is not the fault of the writer

who has written one of the better chapters in this book.

Alfred R. Lindesmith has written a chapter entitled "The Psychology of the Drug Addict". This is not a correct title since almost none of the chapter treats on the psychological aspects, but rather is a superficial rehash of some of the mountains of statistics and speculation that are associated with this subject. The author seems to advocate the system of making narcotics available to addicts so that they will not commit crimes to get them. He is greatly impressed by the published European statistics on this method of control. He would do well to read some of the material on this method of control when it was used in the United States many years ago. A chapter with this title would be of value to the book, but this is not what the author gave us.

"The Work of Court and Prison Psychologists" by Harold Lindner is better than his previous chapter since it does fairly well what the title indicates. However, while a psychologist has definite values in diagnosis, when he undertakes treatment on his own, he is in effect practicing medicine without a license. This is the field of the psychiatrist.

The chapter by Wilson L. Newman on "Psychology Applied to Parole" is a brief series of case histories that illustrate some of the methods and possibilities in this area. The style of presentation does not fit in with the rest of the book, but it must have been easy to write. This is an important field, and it deserves better treatment than it got here.

I question the value of this book. It is very difficult for anyone to write about the application of his field to another area. This is particularly true if he has had little or no experience in the other area. I feel that if a police officer has a lot of time to read and has read many other books, he might want to read this, but I could not recommend it in other circumstances. This, of course is a difficult book to write if one man was to undertake the project. When ten men do the job, it is easier, but suffers in many ways. While the police use psychology every day, and while they would benefit from a book that would assist them in the

varied applications, this particular one has missed the boat.

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Book Notes

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND HANDLE ABNORMAL PEOPLE. By *Robert A. Mathews, M.D.* and *Lloyd W. Rowland, Ph.D.* National Association for Mental Health, Inc. 1790 Broadway, New York 19. 1955. Pp. 48. 65¢.

If I were to choose the five best books for police officers, this would certainly be one of them. This book is practical, quite complete and extremely well written. The cost is such that every police officer can have a copy. Prices are 1-10 copies, 65¢, 11-99 copies, 55¢, 100-999 copies, 45¢ and over 1000, 35¢. This is a non-profit publication from an outstanding organization. It covers various types of mental illness and abnormality in such a way that a police officer can recognize these cases and by following the book, handle them properly. I have been hoping that such a book would be written. This publication is better than hoped for and it cannot be recommended too highly.

RLH