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## Police Science Book Reviews

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## POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

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Edited by  
Richard L. Holcomb\*

LEGAL MEDICINE. Edited by R. B. H. Gradwohl, M.D., D. Sc., St. Louis, The C. V. Mosby Co., 1954. Pp. 1093, 222 illust. \$20.00

Published in late 1954, Gradwohl's *Legal Medicine* stands as a major landmark in American forensic science literature. Together with the second edition (1954) of Gonzales, Vance, Helpern, and Umberger's *Legal Medicine, Pathology and Toxicology*, this book comprehensively portrays current American medicolegal practice and reviews the present state of knowledge in most of the significant fields of legal medicine. Together, these two books could well constitute a working library for medicolegal practitioners.

*Legal Medicine* consists of a loosely edited collection of individual monographs in chapter form on various technical and legal aspects of the investigation of sudden, violent, and suspicious deaths and non-fatal violence against the person. With the aid of 29 collaborators, many internationally recognized medicolegal experts and outstanding authors in their own right, Dr. Gradwohl has assembled an authoritative and important work dealing with both the application of the medical disciplines and sciences to legal problems (as in the chapters on "Evaluation of Evidence from the Skeleton" by T. D. Stewart and "Forensic Aspects of Trauma to the Central Nervous System and Its Membranes" by Cyril B. Courville) and of jurisprudence to medical problems (as in the chapters on "The Law of Abortion" by Louis J. Regan and "Paternity Proceedings and Blood Tests" by Sidney B. Schatkin). The 39 chapters cover as many individual subjects falling into six major groups: (1) Forensic pathology, (2) identification, forensic serology, and trace evidence evaluation, (3)

forensic psychiatry and interrogation, (4) toxicology and forensic chemistry, (5) medical jurisprudence, and (6) infant death investigations, infanticide, abortion. Within these categories, the several contributors have produced, with a few notable exceptions, substantial, up-to-date, and sometimes exhaustive discussions of both classical medicolegal subjects (e.g., "Wounds of the Head and Body and Their Interpretation" by Francis E. Camps) and of some less commonly discussed technical topics related to legal medicine (e.g., "Dental Evidence in Identification and Criminology" by David B. Scott, and "Lie Detection" by Herbert P. Lyle). Varying in length from the 3-page chapter on "Rape" by John J. Connor to the 70-page chapter on "Forensic Psychiatry" by Val B. Satterfield, the several chapters also necessarily vary considerably in scope, style, and practical applicability to everyday forensic practice. Consequently, well documented and illustrated chapters like those on "Post-Mortem Changes: Vital Reactions; Fat Embolism; Air Embolism" by George Strassmann and "Medicolegal Aspects of Alcohol Intoxication" by C. W. Muehlberger offer the more marked a contrast to the 3-page discussion of "Rape" by John J. Connor ("Spermatozoa are shaped like tadpoles.")

Because of the general excellence of the contributions, it is difficult to single out individual chapters for special praise. However, the chapters on "Special Aspects and Practical Considerations of the Medicolegal Autopsy" by Frederick D. Newbarr and Richard O. Myers, "Evaluation of Evidence from the Skeleton" by T. D. Stewart, "Identification of Blood Stains" by R. B. H. Gradwohl, and "Toxicology" by Sidney Kaye and Leo R. Goldbaum are intensely practical in their approach to these common medicolegal problems and form

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outstanding discussions of selected topics in these fields. The tremendous combined experience background of the several authors in some of the world's outstanding forensic medical organizations is clearly reflected in their contributions. The recommended technical procedures work well, the interpretations suggested are sound, the information listed—much of it in easily comprehensible tabular form—is highly useful. *Legal Medicine* is unique among recent medicolegal texts in encompassing much useful information of immediate interest and value to the practicing forensic expert formerly available only in the periodical literature, or in many cases recently presented at symposia (such as the annual meetings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences) and not yet published elsewhere. Thus, excellent discussions of newer concepts in "Dental Evidence in Identification and Criminology" by David B. Scott, "Paternity Proceedings and Blood Tests" by Sidney B. Schatkin, and "Toxicology" by Sidney Kaye and Leo R. Goldbaum are replete with previously unpublished original contributions by the respective authors.

The encyclopedic nature of the book is enhanced by an excellent comprehensive index and generous use of tables throughout. Most

of the 222 illustrations are clear and to the point; many of the chapters have excellent bibliographies with references as recent as 1954. The type is easily read and presswork is excellent. In future editions, grouping of related chapters might further aid systematic search and study of the book.

In its present form, Gradwohl's *Legal Medicine* is a most practical desk reference to forensic medical techniques. It is to be hoped that its up-to-date character will be maintained by timely revisions. At that time, some of the duplication in subject matter and information almost inevitable initially could be reduced and the less practical material replaced by other current information such as the techniques being reported annually at the meetings of the AAFS and similar symposia. In this way, *Legal Medicine* could continue to serve well as the standard "methods" manual in the field. It deserves a prominent place in the reference collection of every forensic science laboratory and every practicing forensic scientist. The beginner in this field can use it with confidence; and every expert can find helpful data for his daily problems.

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