

BOOK REVIEW

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Individualization: Principles and Procedures in Criminalistics

REFERENCE: Harold Tuthill, *Individualization: Principles and Procedures in Criminalistics*, Lightning Powder Company, Inc., 1994.

The author's stated purpose in writing this text is to identify and discuss first principles common to all comparisons and individualizations. The material presented grew out of "Forensic Identification" taught at Ontario Police College. The author writes in a style suitable for students, trial attorneys and criminalists. The book is well-referenced (128 footnotes) and contains an index.

The book has two major parts. Part I is dedicated to philosophies, principles and procedures of individualization. Part II covers the "expert witness" and effective presentation in the courtroom.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide an introduction and definitions of terms. Throughout the text the author presents his view in a conversational, easy to read style. Early in the text he corrects the sloppy use of terminology that at times plagues the forensic sciences. "Identify" means to place something in a class or group. This word is often used when the more correct word to use is "individualization."

Notwithstanding the fact that the terminology is incorrect, we will probably continue to *identify* fingerprints. That is something we are stuck with. (Perhaps some of our more courageous examiners will change.) But we can *individualize* footwear impressions, glove marks and all of the other unique impressions that we deal with. We owe it to criminalistics to attempt to use proper terminology. (page 10)

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Chapter 3 covers the principles of comparison and defines individualization.

The individualization of an *impression* is established by finding agreement of corresponding individual characteristics of such number and significance as to preclude the possibility (or probability) of their having occurred by mere coincidence, and establishing that there are no differences that cannot be accounted for.

Chapter 4—Scientific Method—is the major portion of this work. The author provides extensive information on the topics of:

Analysis-Comparison-Evaluation

The author's discussion of degrees of opinion is sure to raise a few eyebrows and possibly cause blood to boil. He criticizes fingerprint examiners for not providing degrees of opinion. He also takes some very well-aimed shots at the hackney phrase, "consistent with."

The final two chapters deal with court testimony. The author's stated purpose in these two chapters is to fix the problem of the forensic scientists who are frequently "witnesses who are experts without being expert witnesses."

My only criticism of this book is that it does not contain a biographical sketch of the author. The text is affordable, well-referenced and written in conversational (and at times humorous) language. This discussion of first principles is particularly relevant during this time of increasing scrutiny of the forensic sciences.

Bravo! Thank you, Mr. Tuthill.