

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of "Crime Investigation"

REFERENCE: Kirk, Paul L., *Crime Investigation*, 2nd ed., John I. Thornton, Ed., John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1974, 508 pages, \$14.95.

Over the past ten years there has been a vast increase in the amount of literature available in the field of forensic science. Much of this work is highly specialized, requiring a certain level of expertise to utilize the material, and still more is overly broad and therefore shallow. Worst of all, some has been written by persons with only a cursory knowledge of their topic. In view of this, the second edition of *Crime Investigation*, by Dr. Paul J. Kirk, is a welcome volume.

Dr. Kirk's book deals with most of the areas within the purview of the criminalistic laboratory and is aimed primarily at the criminal investigator in his role in collecting evidence for the forensic scientist. While many current volumes do this, the uniqueness of *Crime Investigation* is that Dr. Kirk has managed to reach the optimum depth in each topic. Thus, the lay reader comes away with more than the mere knowledge that certain techniques exist and that they have the enumerated capabilities and limitations. Instead he is given an understanding of the principles that make the techniques possible, through a short yet detailed description of the laboratory procedures, and clear and practical guidelines for the measures that the investigator must take to assure the discovery and proper analysis of the evidence. The trained laboratory scientist will probably not learn new material within his own specialty, but nonetheless will find *Crime Investigation* a valuable tool, enabling him to acquire a working knowledge of specialties other than his own and an insight into where his specialty fits in the overall investigation of a crime.

Finally, the author has wisely restricted his work to areas in which he has expertise. Thus, forensic pathology is not covered, nor does Kirk include purely legal topics. The reader may be confident that the material presented is timely and researched, and need not be on guard for the topics on which the author has overstepped the bounds of his training.

In sum, *Crime Investigation* is an excellent volume which will serve different disciplines in different ways. The investigator will be guided in preserving information from the crime scene, the attorney will learn the principles of examining physical evidence, and the forensic scientist will use the volume to relate his specialty to the overall scientific investigation of crime and as a general reference work for the criminalistic laboratory.

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