

## BOOK REVIEW

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### Review of: *Crime Scene Investigation Methods and Procedures*

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**REFERENCE:** Pepper IK. Crime scene investigation methods and procedures. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education; 2005.

If you were limited to fewer than 200 pages to describe all activities surrounding the crime scene, then author Ian K. Pepper managed to meet that goal. This 182-page book has chapters addressing:

- History and contemporary structure of the police, scientific services, and crime scene investigation in the United Kingdom.
  - Approaching the crime scene, packaging the evidence, and the documentation required.
  - The basics of crime scene photography.
  - Trace evidence: fibers, glass, hairs, paint, and soil.
  - Impressions: footwear marks, instrument marks, glove marks, and tires.
  - Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and body fluids.
  - Fingerprints.
- And so on.

He does a nice job defining the various topics and why they are of relevance and importance to the crime scene investigator. To further emphasize this point, Mr. Pepper makes references to specific cases where the evidence/technique was utilized and how the utilization of the technique affected the outcome of the case. Although the book isn't heavy with technical jargon, the inclusion of the case information adds a bit of intrigue and a reprieve from the typical "dry" scientific stuff.

The reader will be acutely aware of Mr. Pepper's primary expertise, fingerprints. The amount of detail provided in this chapter is much greater than any other section in the book. The result is a very good chapter on the specifics of fingerprints, spanning its historical origins, and concepts of individuality to the specifica-

tions of different developers. The information flows from topic to topic and the included graphic depictions further emphasize the points. This kind of detail is missing in other sections and is a weakness of the book; such detail should be included to educate aspiring or newly appointed crime scene investigators. This lack of depth is my main criticism of the book. Still, if this type of detail were to be provided in each section, the book would be massive and would undermine one of its primary attributes, which is its brevity and specificity.

With the chapter "The basis of crime scene photography," I would have expected the beginning section to elaborate more on digital photography. With the increase of digital capture, there is the impetus for law enforcement management to completely switch from wet photography to digital. A statement of the pros and cons of both methodologies at the onset would have focused attention on this current dilemma and the remaining sections of the chapter could have provided the necessary pros and cons.

The use of terms and spellings specific to the United Kingdom is a direct clue for the reader that this book was written for use in that country. Therefore the novice investigator outside the United Kingdom should not take to heart directions for legal proceedings, associations, and specific products.

Apart from the few above-mentioned criticisms, I do like the size of the book, as it is conducive to being stuffed into an evidence collection kit or left inside vehicle spaces for immediate access at crime scenes. The questions at the end of each chapter provide a means for self-testing, a great addition for evaluating the reader's comprehension of the material. The book constitutes a nice reference source for anyone involved with forensic science.

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