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## Review of: *Practical Handbook for Professional Investigators, 2nd ed.*

**REFERENCE:** McMahon RJ. *Practical handbook for professional investigators, 2nd ed.* Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2007, 440 pp.

Rory J. McMahon's *Practical Handbook for Professional Investigators, 2nd ed.* is both what the title implies, and as noted in the preface, a text that can be used in the academic environment by colleges offering classes in investigations. According to CRC Press, this second edition contains more than 20% new material and has been adopted as required material in several new certification programs, including one at Boston University.

The author's more than 33 years of investigative experience in the private and public sectors and his 10 years teaching experience at the undergraduate level, are reflected throughout the text. However, from the preface through the last chapter, the author is careful to note the limitations of the information that is provided. This is not a negative factor. Quite the contrary, he obviously understands that it would take multiple volumes to explain every step of every type of investigation, and that is not the focus of his effort. As noted in the preface, the "Book is designed for individuals studying to become investigators," as well as a reference for "investigators with all levels of experience."

The author also avoids a common trap of projecting his investigative experience into areas of investigation where he does not have experience. He does this, even though information related to these types of investigations, including case studies, might sell more books in the "read for entertainment market." These areas would include Counterintelligence, Counterespionage, and Counterterrorism Investigations.

There are however some aspects of this book that would be of interest to individuals other than academics, students, and investigators. For example, in Chapter 6 there is a lengthy and detailed discussion of telemarketing schemes that would be an interesting and enlightening read for the average consumer/investor. Also, this book should be useful as a reference for individuals and corporations needing to hire a professional investigator or a professional investigative agency for professional investigative services on case by case basis, or to establish a standing contract, for services as needed.

The book is logically organized into 20 chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction that reflects on a favorable job outlook for private and professional investigators as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Additionally, based on 2004 studies (NFI), the author notes a salary spread for Professional Investigators of \$20,000–100,000, with an average range of \$24,080–43,260.

Chapter 2 focuses on the skills necessary to become a successful investigator and is on target. Chapters 3 and 4 offer a broad brush review of the foundations of investigation that includes the types of

matters that a professional investigator might be called upon to investigate and an introduction to the most fundamental and critical skills used by an investigator of any type: Interviews, Interrogations, and the Taking of Statements.

Chapter 5, Legal Investigations, provides the reader with an overview of the U.S. legal system, as well as the investigative and judicial processes, beginning with the Constitution and ending with a case study. Obviously, no one can provide all of the information that needs to be known by a professional investigator in the 31 pages allotted. However, the author does provide the reader with a good idea of the scope of the information in the legal arena that will be needed by a professional investigator, if he or she is to be successful.

Chapters 6–12 address in considerable detail the specific types of matters that a Professional Investigator could be asked to investigate and some specifics of how to do what needs to be done, to include documentation of investigative efforts. Title subjects are Fraud Investigations, Computer Crime, Criminal Investigation, Insurance and Arson Investigation, Domestic Investigations, Due Diligence Investigations (situations in which an employer may be held liable for criminal and negligent behavior of an employee), Background Investigations (Personnel Security Investigations), Locates and Skip Tracing (Missing Persons Investigations). Chapter 12 includes an extensive list of applicable online database resources/search engines.

Chapters 13–15 address some skill sets necessary to support the investigative process: Surveillance, Service of Process, and Testifying in Court. Chapters 16 and 17 address Ethics for the Professional Investigator, and Finding Niche in the Professional Investigator market, by focusing on what one does best. Chapters 18–20 focus on Operating a Professional Investigations Agency, Professional Organizations for Professional Investigators, and Getting Licensed.

Throughout the book there are only a few footnoted references. More extensive use of footnoted references would be helpful in areas that beg for more information, but are outside the scope of the perspective of the effort. For example, critical elements of the investigative process are Interviews and Interrogations, and within that realm is the need to be able to read messages revealed through "Body Language." The author provides just enough examples for the reader to understand the importance of interpreting Body Language. One or two footnoted references would be helpful in this and similar situations.

Throughout the book there are many very useful forms and checklists to facilitate the investigative process and documentation requirements, as well as business administration requirements. Also the author uses case studies very effectively to demonstrate what can happen in real life scenarios, when the process works and when it is flawed. In summary, this book is well written, well organized, and the content is in line with its stated purpose.

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