

Excerpts

IDENTIFICATION OF LIVING PERSONS THROUGH WITNESSES. Mistakes made by confrontations are innumerable. The following factors especially tend to promote mistakes: similarity to others, bad light, witness excited, witness not sufficiently alert, suggestions, and great lapse of time since day of occurrence.

It is customary in confrontations to have the witness brought into a room where several persons are lined up with the suspect. The witness is asked to pick out the culprit. Photographs or descriptions of the suspect should naturally not be supplied the witness.

Some psychologists claim that identification of an individual by witnesses normally gives false or negative results...(page 44)

IDENTIFICATION BY PHOTOGRAPHS. A witness should never be shown a single photograph and asked if he recognizes the person. On the contrary, the photograph should be put among several others and the witness asked to pick out the person in question. Even such a procedure does not eliminate mistakes, as the witness may previously have seen a picture of the suspect in newspapers or elsewhere. The identification by photographs involves another danger: If the witness's mind-picture of the criminal is vague and unclear, he may complete the mental picture erroneously by looking at a photograph of a person having some slight resemblance to the suspect. When this mind-picture becomes fixed, in later confrontations the witness may identify the wrong person or fail to identify the right person because he looks like or does not look like the person in the photograph. (Page 45)

SOUND RECORDING. The detective who secures oral statements from a witness, suspect, or defendant is often placed in a poor position in court by having no record of such statements. In recent years a compact, efficient, and economical device has been developed which assists the investigator in court by making it possible for him to present a recorded transcription of his subject's remarks...(page 53)...paper tapes containing magnetized iron particles (usually ferric oxide) or wire devices. By either of these methods it is possible to record a forty-five minute conversation. (Page 57)

THE IDENTIFICATION OF BULLETS

...Under certain circumstances it might be possible to identify a bullet by examination of an object which it has touched on its way...On a bullet we find the sum total of the peculiarities of the particular barrel. Generally speaking, it is useless to compare the barrel or its parts directly with the bullet as was formerly done. The comparison should be made with comparison bullets.

The bullet to be examined is at first inspected for adhering particles, and these, if necessary, should be analyzed microscopically. Such an analysis may give important information. If the bullet is deformed, an attempt should be made to determine how the deformation came about--eventually by performing practical experiments... (Pages 202-203)

ASSASSINATIONS

The French police have studied about 100 attempted assassinations of sovereigns, heads of states, ministers, and other distinguished persons during the last 80 years. The conclusions to be drawn from the analyses are that the attacks have generally been attempted outside of buildings or at stopping points along the route of the cortege and that the weapon used has in most cases been a revolver, pistol, or submachine gun.

Points at which distinguished personalities have been killed in most cases have been on stairways leading into buildings, on sidewalks while taking leave, at traffic stops, or when entering or leaving cars. The traffic stops were caused either by some flaw in the traffic organization, by an act of the criminal, or by an official act (cortege stopping to receive military honors, etc.). It follows that every stop constitutes a danger point.

Statistics of 104 attacks on important personalities in the last hundred years in the United States, Latin America, and Europe show that the following weapons were used: revolvers and automatic pistols, 68; explosives, 18; stabbing, 12; rifles, 5; poison, 1.

Political assassinations are always planned far in advance, and the criminal will place himself in a convenient position quite a while before the passing of the cortege.

From what has been said above it will be clear that political assassinations as a rule are carried out in the following way: (1) They are planned a long time in advance, (2) the place of attack is generally outside a building when (3) a momentary stop occurs, and (4) the criminal will generally use a small arm. (Pages 499-500)

Fingerprints should always be photographed. Only a photograph gives effective proof that fingerprints have been found on a certain object. This is of great importance in court proceedings. The photograph should always be made in natural size and later enlarged to convenient proportions.

Because of its simplicity of construction and operation, the fixed-focus camera with a built-in light source is now widely used to photograph fingerprints at the crime scene. When a fingerprint is developed it can be photographed within a few seconds by means of this camera. If the investigator is assured that he has obtained a satisfactory photograph, he may then lift the print. A portable object bearing a print of significance should be transported to the identification unit. (Page 135)

USE OF LIFTS OR FOILS. Lifts or foils are used to record prints at the crime scene by transferring them to another surface. Their use is recommended as a supplement to photography...(page 135).

VALUE OF FINGERPRINTS AS EVIDENCE...in judging fingerprints a certain subjectivity must be exercised where the fingerprints are fragmentary. In other words, one must, to a certain degree, rely on the judgment of the fingerprint expert as to the rarity and value of evidence of the ~~fingerprints~~ different details.

Three sets of conditions are possible:

1. If 12 or more characteristic points are the same and the fingerprint is clear, there is absolute proof of identity.
2. If 8 to 12 points are the same, the value of identification as evidence depends on:
 - a. The clearness of the impression
 - b. The rarity of the pattern
 - c. The presence of the core or the delta of the pattern to be examined
 - d. The presence of pores
 - e. The obvious identity between the breadth of the ridges, the direction of the ridges, and the angles of the forks
(Page 141)
3. If only a small number of similar characteristic details are found, the fingerprint has no absolute value as evidence, but identity can be surmised with a degree of probability proportionate to the number and the clearness of the characteristic points. (Page 144)

PALM PRINTS

The identification is made in the same manner as with fingerprints. It is very common to have more than 100 characteristic points in an identification; but, on the other hand, the interpretation of the palmar print is difficult for the untrained, especially if only fragmentary evidence is available. (Page 153)