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# STUDIES IN INTELLIGENCE



A collection of articles on the historical, operational, doctrinal, and theoretical aspects of intelligence.

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## CRITIQUES OF SOME RECENT BOOKS ON INTELLIGENCE

**SUSPECT DOCUMENTS—THEIR SCIENTIFIC EXAMINATION.** By *Dr. Wilson R. Harrison*. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger. 1958. Pp. 583. \$15.)

This is the most comprehensive and technically correct book ever written outside the United States on this subject, and it compares favorably with the best and newest works produced here. The author, Director of the British Government's Home Office Forensic Science Laboratory and an honorary member of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, is one of the comparatively few persons outside this country qualified by applied scientific experience to write with authority on the examination of questioned documents. He has been in this field for more than twenty years, having worked for a number of police organizations in England and in Wales. His scientific background is clearly discernible in the care and great detail of his explanations, which at the same time are couched in simple and direct language completely free from ambiguity.

The establishment of authenticity or the exposure of forgery is a difficult and complicated process, requiring the use of the latest developments in microscopy, photography, and microchemical analysis. Dr. Harrison describes the application of these sciences to document examination in a dozen chapters—on materials, preliminary examination, laboratory equipment, photography, dating problems, typescript, handwriting, disguise, forged signatures, preliminary phases, preservation and cleaning, anonymous letters, and a case at court—each followed by an unusually good bibliography, and the whole topped off with a detailed index and a superior glossary. He elaborates on such subjects as the deciphering of erasures, the chemical analysis of ink, the development and identification of latent fingerprints, the development of invisible writing, the dating of ballpoint-pen documents, the tracing of anonymous letters, and the authorship of typewritten matter. He tries to get the reader to participate, as nearly as possible, in the actual document

### Recent Books

examination; and one of his devices is the generous sprinkling of excellent photographs—more than 150 of them—throughout the book. Printed on high-gloss coated stock, the photographs have lost very little detail in reproduction and vividly illustrate the points discussed in the text.

The reader must be cautioned, however, that Dr. Harrison's book, excellent as it is, will in no way qualify him to attempt work of this nature. Like other applied sciences, these subjects can be learned only by years of on-the-job training and application under the guidance of experienced personnel. But for the person who has cause to collect and submit questioned documents for examination, comparison, or identification, the fine chapter on their handling and preservation provides full instructions, which if followed will make possible a substantial increase in the content of the analyst's report and obviate many of the qualifications which would otherwise attach to his findings.

For the qualified questioned document analyst this book serves well as a reference on the techniques presently employed in police laboratories in England and, by association, other European countries.