

## Book Reviews

Alan R. Rosenberg, Editor

FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY. By Robert L. Sadoff, M.D. Charles C. Thomas. Pp. 272. 1975. \$14.50.

What a small, close-knit group we forensic psychiatrists form. If it were not for the fact that so often we fight each other, I would apply the adjective, "incestuous," because we also lean so much on each other for mutual support. Bob Sadoff's book is a clear example of this. Its foreword is written by Ralph Slovenko, the distinguished recipient of last year's Guttmacher Award. Bob Sadoff provided an extensive review of that outstanding work in these very pages. Now, in his own book, he quotes me in his Chapter on "Dangerousness," and here I am reviewing the book! Forensic psychiatry is, indeed, a small world. However, when the caliber of its contributions to the literature reach the level of Slovenko's and Sadoff's books, and of Alexander Brooks' book (reviewed in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* by Bob Sadoff!), it proves its merits as a remarkably provocative, stimulating and scholarly world.

"Practical" is the word Bob Sadoff always prefers to use in describing himself, and it is no accident that his book is sub-titled, "A Practical Guide for Lawyers and Psychiatrists." As I read it the first time, my impression was that it might be more practical for lawyers than for psychiatrists, because of the amount of content centering about what psychiatrists do and how they go about doing it. As I re-read the book, however, I became much more aware of how much *practical* help it provides psychiatrists who are placed in the unfamiliar position of having to explain in court or elsewhere what they do and how they do it. So often in the heat of testimonial encounters, we take refuge in our peculiar jargon, the kind of language laymen interpret as so much mumbo-jumbo. In reading this book, I am particularly struck by the fact that practically all of it is in English, not psychiatrese. Doctor Sadoff demonstrates clearly that the various processes of psychiatric evaluation and therapy can be described in the vernacular understandable by the farthest jurymen. More important, the use of reasonable English does not demean those processes nor does it compromise their meanings.

If Doctor Sadoff's decision to restrict himself insofar as possible to English is not object lesson enough, then one may turn to the selection of topics he considers basic. Among these are some which may be somewhat controversial and others which at the least are misunderstood—and by many psychiatrists as well as by attorneys and jurists. Here, I am especially struck by his chapter, "Psychiatric Involvement in the Search for Truth." According to a reference in the book, this was originally published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* ten years ago, but the author tells me that it actually appeared in the *American Bar Association Journal*. If so, this represents one of very few editing errors noted in the volume, which generally is quite carefully prepared and produced. The analysts among us may make what they wish of the typographical error which transforms "psychopath" into "psycyopath."

A number of the chapters in this book originally appeared in journals over the past years. The author is prolific and fluent, and his selective judgment is excellent when he decides to reprint certain of his papers in his book, because they had originally been well and clearly written, as well as relevant. Since the days of Isaac Ray, good psychiatrists have been pounding at the gates of the statute-makers with material which is timeless because of its clinical veracity. Thus, chapters which date back a few years are in no way outdated. The ten-year old one referred to above appears to have become increasingly relevant. The issues surrounding narcoanalysis, etc., are perhaps even more provocative than they were when the article was originally written.

The bulk of the material in the book, however, is written specifically for it, and Doctor Sadoff ties all of it together quite well with brief but pointed paragraphs introducing each of the four main sections. These are, "The Psychiatrist and the Law," "The Psychiatrist and Criminal Law" (as expected, much the longest section), "The Psychiatrist and Civil Law," and "The Law and the Psychiatrist." This last is an especially well-written and documented pair of Chapters, "Legal Responsibilities of the Psychiatrist" and "Confidentiality and Privilege." My own experiences with many of my colleagues is such that this section might well be the most valuable in the entire book for teaching previously unlearned material to practicing psychiatrists. It also ought to be read by all attorneys who contact psychiatrists and want them to tell them about their patients, whether in conversation, in formal deposition or in a courtroom.

A twenty-two-page glossary is also included. The definitions are original for the most part, and they are well thought-out. They follow the general pattern of attempting to communicate technical material in the clearest possible manner without speaking down to the recipient. All of the terms are psychiatric. There is no glossary of legal terms to help the novice psychiatrist, a grievous omission which seconds the original impression that the work was actually meant for attorneys. Slovenko also feels that attorneys are the prime beneficiaries. In his Foreword, he states, "It is primarily a guide for lawyers about psychiatry, about psychiatrists and how they work. . . . With clarity and detail, Dr. Sadoff introduces the attorney to the functions of the psychiatrist in his arena, as well as within the judicial system. . . ."

I feel that my initial impression as well as Slovenko's comments do not do justice to the book, even considering the slanted glossary. Psychiatry is becoming increasingly involved with the law and its processes, and as practicing forensic psychiatrists we are only too aware that most of our general psychiatric colleagues have little interest and practically no training in this area. Their lack of interest, however, will not "protect" them against the "ravages" of participation in forensic matters. They need this book, and they ought to read it and digest it fully. Those of us already in the pit need it, too. It is not the exhaustive and encyclopedic outline provided by Slovenko, nor is it the kind of reference text provided by Brooks. It is in its brevity and pithiness a stimulating and provocative work, and I am sure that even the most practiced forensic psychiatrist will find much to learn in its 250 pages. At the very least, he will find that it is possible to communicate legitimate and complex forensic psychiatric ideas clearly and meaningfully, and for that Doctor Sadoff ought to be amply rewarded.

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VIOLENCE AND VICTIMS. Ed Stefan A. Pasternack. Spectrum Publications, Inc. Pp. xiii plus 215. 1975. \$14.95.

*Caveat Emptor!* This book is a rip-off.

According to his preface, Doctor Pasternack has compiled this book as an outgrowth of a two-day symposium on violent persons and their victims. The meeting was sponsored by the Department of Psychiatry of Georgetown University, where Doctor Pasternack is an Assistant Professor and the Director of the Psychiatric In-Patient Service at the University Hospital. He states, "There was great enthusiasm among the participants for a volume of the papers presented. I was thus motivated to organize a publication. . . ." The wish of the participants is understandable; a good symposium on this topic ought to provide a ready source of reference. The book, however, prints only four papers specifically attributed to the symposium. The other ten papers are reprints of articles which had previously been published in such esoteric and hard-to-find sources as the *American Journal of Psychiatry* and the *AMA Archives of Psychiatry*. Doctor Pasternack explains, "It seemed valuable to supplement the Symposium material with other important works relating to evaluation and treatment of various types of dangerous persons. . . ."

To be particularly accurate and, perhaps, a little fairer, it should be pointed out that one of the supplementary papers did come from a more unorthodox source. This is a reprint of an article for lay readers written and published by the Rape Crisis Center in Boston. As far as I know, it had not previously been published elsewhere.