

Michael F. Rieders, Ph.D., Appointed to Commission's Advisory Committee on Wrong Convictions



"Being appointed to this Committee is truly an honor. I am dedicated to the mission of this Committee and I intend to make a valuable contribution especially as a forensic scientist working to improve the criminal justice system."
-Michael F. Rieders, Ph.D.

In February, the Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission appointed Michael F. Rieders, Ph.D., as a member of the Commission's Advisory Committee on Wrong Convictions. Dr. Rieders is a Vidocq Society member, forensic scientist and Licensed Laboratory Director at NMS Labs, Willow Grove, PA. He is also Chairman of the Board of Directors at NMS Labs.

The Wrongful Convictions Committee was established to study the underlying causes of wrongful convictions and to make findings and recommendations to reduce the possibility that innocent persons will not be wrongfully convicted in the future.

Nationally, more than 180 individuals have been exonerated through post-conviction DNA testing, and some of those individuals spent time on death row. At least eight individuals have been exonerated in Pennsylvania through post-conviction DNA testing, three of whom were in prison for murder and one of whom was on death row. Not only is it a great injustice to imprison an innocent person, but by incarcerating them, there is the likelihood that a guilty person remains capable of committing additional crimes.

The Committee will consider potential implementation plans, cost implications and the impact on the criminal justice system for each potential solution. The Committee will report their findings and recommendations to the Senate by November 30, 2008.

Frank Bender's Sculpture Helps Solve the 1987 Murder of Rosella Atkinson



Rosella Atkinson

Sculpture by Frank Bender



"My conscience is eating at me, and I know it's time to get right," he told police. "I see her face all the time."
Brian Hall, Muderer of Rosella Atkinson

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Commissioner's Message

Dear Fellow Vidocqians:

Our new investigative season has started off much better than the Philadelphia Eagles. After the summer hiatus, we have plenty of cases to review, have enjoyed successes in our efforts and, if we are lucky, may have some pleasant surprises.

We have suffered the loss of our beloved treasurer, Fred Feuerborn, whom I miss dearly, and have had the miraculous recovery of Jan Bender, co-founder Frank Bender's wife.

We continue to do our work with pride, integrity and professionalism. It is almost hard to believe to that we have been in existence since 1990. But, then again, it is hard to believe that once I never wore glasses and had a 38 inch waist and was once 6 foot tall (that's a lie). Time and gravity are cruel.

I want to encourage all of you to participate fully in our work by attending meetings, assisting on case-work and continuing to support our social events such as the annual banquet and Bastille Day dinner. Myself and our Board of Directors will continue to work hard to make the Vidocq Society one of the most unique and productive organizations of its kind.

Sincerely,

Bill Fleisher, Commissioner



Effective Interviewing & Interrogation Techniques, Second Edition

By Nathan J. Gordon and William L. Fleisher

Review by Howard Lebofsky, Esq., VSM

This book is the benchmark by which all other books on the art and science of interviewing and interrogation should be measured. It is truly a grand tour in every sense of the term. The text covers the greatest discoveries, techniques and practices in the field, and provides valuable insights by the authors, who are widely acknowledged experts and seasoned practitioners. The historical basis for truth-determining techniques is discussed at some length. However, the book really shines in its coverage of interviewing and interrogation theories and techniques developed over the past eighty years, paralleling the great advancements in law enforcement and psychology. The authors present a concise, insightful and balanced examination of the significant theories and theoreticians in the field, all the while drawing upon their substantial knowledge and expertise when evaluating and assessing the various theories and techniques discussed throughout the book. Their observations on interrogation ethics post 9-11 are thought-provoking.

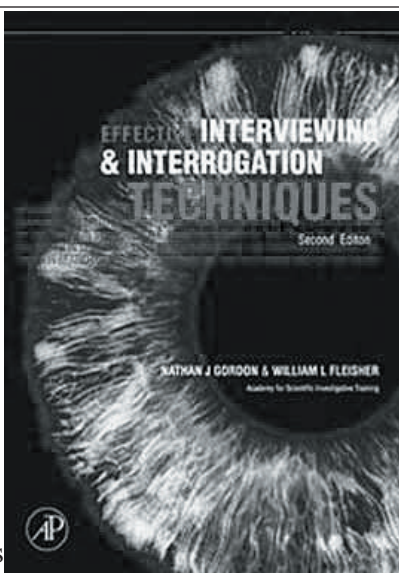
Through words and illustrations the authors bring to life verbal and non-verbal truth/falsity indicators. The two subject areas that I found particularly interesting and useful were the Forensic Assessment Interview Technique ("FAINT") and the Morgan Thematic Apperception Testing Technique ("MITT"). Although these techniques are quite sophisticated, the authors' explanations and discussions are so clear and well-presented that virtually anyone will be able to understand and appreciate them.

Several reviews commented that the book is easy to read. While that is so, the simplicity and clarity of the text belie the considerable range and depth of thought and insight that went into this book. As such, I would advise readers to slowly digest the book, one paragraph at a time, if possible, and really give the text some thought. In doing so you will most likely gain a much better appreciation of the subject matter. As someone with an extensive law enforcement and legal background who thought he knew everything there was to know about interviewing, I can honestly say that this book really expanded my knowledge and appreciation of the subject.

Effective Interview & Interrogation Techniques, Second Edition

A New Book By
Nate Gordon and
Bill Fleisher

Reviewed by Howard
Lebofsky, Esq., VSM
a former Philadelphia
Police Department
Detective and
Compliance Officer for
Philadelphia Gas Works



Bookspan's Bullets

By Dr. Jolie Bookspan, VSM, Science Officer

Welcome to "Bookspan's Bullets" Each issue brings you a column of summarized forensic education. Enjoy.

Carjacker Needs More Time in the Gym

A 19-year-old tried to hijack the car of a 60-year-old woman in Frisco, Texas in February. She turned on him and shot him with his own gun.

- *KXAS-TV, Fort Worth, February 27, 2007*

Seniors Beat Armed Attackers

Three armed muggers accosted a tour bus during a Carnival cruise stopover in Limon, Costa Rica. Three seniors fought back and disarmed the muggers. One of the seniors, a 70-year-old retired Marine, killed one of the thugs, age 20, bare handed.

- *CNN-AP Associated Press, February 22, 2007*

Softer Flashlights for Los Angeles Police

A new lightweight flashlight has been developed for the Los Angeles Police Department. The flashlight produces a blinding light, powerful enough to stun suspects, but, "too lightweight to beat them with." More than 50 incidents involving Los Angeles police using heavy flashlights as weapons have been reported since 2002. LAPD Chief William Bratton proposed a change after June 2004 when fleeing motorist Stanley Miller was struck 11 times by an officer using a metal flashlight. The incident was filmed by a TV news crew and broadcast around the nation.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) executive director Ramona Ripston welcomed the new flashlights, stating, "The LAPD's swift response shows what can happen when police seek innovative solutions to reduce misconduct. The old flashlight sent the wrong message to the community, and the new, smaller version can be a powerful symbol of the department's commitment to reform."

- *Reuters March 31, 2007*

New Flashlight for Homeland Security

The U.S. Homeland Security Department has invested \$1 million to develop a new LED (light-emitting diode) incapacitator. They anticipate arming federal agents with a flashlight-sized "light-saber-type weapon" that emits a temporarily disabling strobe to subdue criminals, terrorists, and others who act unruly.

The device incapacitates by flashes, which temporarily blind, similar to any bright light, plus light pulses which

quickly change color and duration, causing disorientation, vertigo, or nausea, varying with the person. Effects are said to be temporary, fading in minutes. The Homeland Security Department says, "If all goes well, it could be in the hands of thousands of policemen, border agents and National Guardsmen by 2010." According to Program manager Gerald Kirwin, it also would be used by air marshals, border patrol agents, other TSA officers, and customs officers.

The device is being developed by Intelligent Optical Systems, Inc., based in Torrance, CA. It is scheduled for testing on volunteers at Pennsylvania State University's Institute of Non-Lethal Defense Technologies this Fall. The device doesn't use lasers or permanently blind anyone. In 1995, the United States signed a United Nations agreement that banned blinding weapons. Intelligent Optical Systems President, Bob Lieberman says, "We're taking great care to make sure the intensities we're using fall within eye-safe limit. We're doing medically supervised tests."

- *Technologyreview.com*

Test IDs Rapist Without Sperm

Semen may not be left at an assault scene, or amounts left may not contain enough sperm for testing. A new DNA test has been developed at the Birmingham Forensic Science Service (FSS).

FSS scientists have combined a technique called laser microdissection (LMD), which enables any male cells carrying the Y chromosome to be extracted from a slide, with another technique called fluorescence in-situ hybridisation (FISH), which highlights unique DNA sequences. FSS research manager Martin Bill stated, "It will help us to obtain vital DNA profiles in a further 90 sexual assault cases a year that have previously been just too difficult to get a usable DNA profile from."

- *BBC Health News Friday, March 9, 2007*

Footwear Database "Fingers" Culprits

A new crime database called the Footwear Intelligence Technology (FIT) was launched in Britain in February to catalogue thousands of shoes, footprints, sole markings, brand logos, upper-shoe images, and other patterns left at crime scenes. A technique known as "Cinderella analysis" studies the angle of footfall and weight distribution to identify the regular wearer of the shoe. Footprints are more likely to be left and found than fingerprints. Most are not large, muddy marks common in television shows, but less apparent impressions that must be enhanced by UV light. Professor Nigel Allinson, an expert in data engineering stated, "The current trend for wood laminate flooring rather than carpets

helps enormously and criminals tend to wear sneakers and they have sole patterns. You look for something different, a molding perhaps, or a defect or crack. This is sometimes possible, because criminals don't always think to throw away shoes that might incriminate them. They dispose of the T-shirts, the jeans, but they don't always want to get rid of expensive sneakers."

The system can be fooled. Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski used shoes with smaller soles attached to the bottom to make it look like a person with smaller footprints were responsible.

- *The Christian Science Monitor February 16, 2007*

Strangest Ways People Have Died In History

Death by Kicking a Safe - Whiskey distiller Jack Daniel forgot the combination, kicked the safe in dismay, and developed an infection that killed him in 1911.

Death From Too Long of a Beard - Austrian Hans Steininger tripped and died in 1557

Death by Embracing the Reflection of the Moon - Chinese poet Li Po Li Po, well known for drinking, fell from his boat trying to embrace the moon and drowned in the Yangtze River in 706.

Death by Jury Demonstration - Lawyer Clement Vallandigham grabbed a gun for a demonstration, not knowing it was loaded, and accidentally shot himself to death. His client's defense that the shooting was accidental was accepted.

Death by Tongue Biting - Allan Pinkerton, creator of Pinkerton detective agency, bit his tongue when he slipped on a sidewalk and died of an infection in 1884.

Death by Bottle Cap - Playwright Tennessee Williams choked on a bottle cap while drinking in his hotel room in 1983.

Death by Baseball - Cleveland Indians shortstop Ray Chapman was fatally hit in the head by pitch from New York Yankees pitcher Carl Mays on August 6, 1920. In 1951 Ottis Johnson was also killed by a ball. At least four deaths have occurred in the minors from pitches between 1909 & 1920.

Death by Drowning at a Lifeguard Party - 31-year-old guest Jerome Moody was found dead on the bottom of the New Orleans recreation department pool at the celebration of the department's first drowning-free season ever, in 1985. Four lifeguards were on duty and more than half of the 200 partygoers were themselves lifeguards.

Death by Cactus - In 1982, 27-year-old David Grundman and a roommate were shooting at desert cactus with a shotgun. After destroying a small cactus, Grundman then shot a large chunk from a 26-foot-tall, 100-year-old Saguaro cactus, which fell, crushing him to death. The source lists this as "probably the only known instance of revenge killing by a plant."

- *Neatorama.com March 12, 2007*

Sympathetic Criminal

Ms. Pan Alying, a schoolteacher in China's Shandong province, had her purse snatched in January (containing her mobile phone, bank cards and cash) and decided to try pleading with the thief by sending text messages to her stolen phone. According to Xinhua news agency, she patiently sent 21 sympathetic notes to the man, with no answer, but the day after the last one, she found a package at her door containing her purse and all its contents intact, with a note, "I'm sorry. ... I'll correct my ways and be an upright person."

- *Reuters, January 22, 2007*

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Vidocq Society

Annual Black Tie Awards Dinner

Saturday, December 1, 2007

Venue:

Sheraton Society Hill

1 Dock Street

Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

\$125.00 per Plate

Cocktails at 7:00 p.m.

Choice of Filet, Salmon, or Vegetarian

Full Accoutrements

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Music & Dancing

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17 years after the skeletal remains of Rosella Atkinson were found near the Central High school athletic field a man walked into a Philadelphia police station and confessed to her murder. Haunted by the image recreated from her skull by forensic sculptor, Frank Bender, VSM. Brian Hall, 55 testified in court that "I was the cause of her death." Hall in an October 2005 police statement said that he and Atkinson met at a bar and had sex at the athletic field. He said he awoke to find money missing, they scuffled and "I put my hands around her neck."

Atkinson's identity remained a mystery due to the condition of the body. Her aunt, Lois Brown while attending an exhibit at the College of Physicians, identified Atkinson. On display was the bust of an unidentified African-American woman created by Frank Bender. Brown looked at the sculpture several times before noticing the resemblance to her mother and sister and was convinced it was Rosella. Dental records confirmed it was Rosella Atkinson. News of the identification reached the media and the images of Atkinson were broadcast on local television igniting Hall's nightmares of guilt.

On January 25, 2007 a jury convicted Brian Hall of third-degree murder in the death of Rosella Atkinson. He faces a sentence of 10 to 20 years behind bars.

Frank Bender's work as a forensic sculptor has helped in the identification of numerous victims and criminals throughout the country. Bender's sculpture of Gregory May a civil war memorabilia collector who's head was found encased in a bucket of concrete in Missouri, lead to May's identification and the arrest of his killers. Bender was instrumental in the arrest of mass murderer John List. His bust of List as he would look 18 years after the murders of his family lead to List's identification while living under the pseudonym Robert "Bob" Peter Clark in Colorado and Virginia. Bender's insight into the dead has also brought him the opportunity to sculpt the images of Egyptian mummies and a caveman. For a man who works closely with the dead, Bender's voice-mail message reminds everyone to "have a live day."

The Vidocq Society would like to wish a speedy recovery to Janice Bender wife of Frank Bender as she recuperates from cancer surgery

Solve The Mystery

Q: What are the most common types of evidence left at a scene?

Solution to January 2007 "Solve the Mystery"

What practice was carried out to determine the inner workings of the human body and as a torture in WW II?

Answer: Human vivisection

The Vidocq Society

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