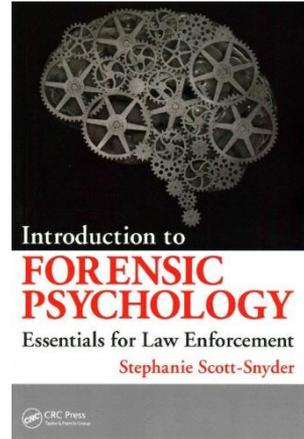


Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Essentials for Law Enforcement

by Stephanie Scott-Snyder
CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL
2017, paperback, 343 pages
ISBN: 9781498755504



Reviewed by Dr Susan Robinson

Forensic psychology is a relatively new branch within psychology, but an even newer field within law enforcement. It is not an easy feat to take a complex subject such as psychology and make it, not only relevant, but also interesting to policing practitioners. Stephanie Scott-Snyder has managed to successfully do this in her new book, *Introduction to Forensic Psychology*.

This book is written with police in mind. It uses case examples to show how forensic psychology can be used by law enforcement agencies to track offenders and to understand the motivations behind their offending. The text is divided into three parts, with the first part providing an easy to understand overview of what forensic psychology is, and how it is applied. Part two looks at crimes and criminals in four areas: psychopathy; understanding homicide; sex crimes; and domestic violence. The author breaks-down the various crimes as well as the profiles of the offenders involved. Part three gives a detailed coverage of forensics, police, and investigative work—including investigative interviewing techniques with particular classes of offenders.

Not being a psychologist, I found the first part of this book somewhat pedestrian and uninteresting, nevertheless for someone who is a psychologist, or who has studied this subject, I would assume this part would be easier to read. Initially the author goes through the history of forensic psychology seemingly to build the case that psychology is important to policing. She then goes on to discuss various psychiatric disorders, and the police response to mental illness. It is at this point that the discussion begins to have some relevance for policing. An entire chapter is devoted to psychopathy, which applies the theory and practice of forensic psychology to cases such as John Wayne Gacy, Gary Tison, and Aileen

Wuornos. There is even a section that deals with how to recognise psychopathic suspects and how best to approach them during an interview, and another part that deals with psychopathy in women and children. These are areas that are not often covered in other books.

The predominant focus of this text is aimed at law enforcement personnel, with the exception of the first part, which is aimed at a psychology qualified readership, the author does this well because she covers most of the topics of interest to practical policing and in an easy to digest way. These areas include domestic violence, school violence, and homicide. The author also discusses crime scene analysis, profiling and police investigations. She does this in a comprehensive and practical way. For example, the book breaks-down behavioural profiling of offenders into the typologies of organised and disorganised, and then goes into a detailed comparison of the two to enable law enforcement to easily distinguish organised from disorganised offenders simply from assessing the crime scene characteristics. The author also includes the offender characteristics of organised versus disorganised offenders to enable law enforcement officers to be better able to profile the offender.

Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Essentials for Law Enforcement by Stephanie Scott-Snyder is a useful book for psychologists and criminologists working in the criminal justice field. It is also useful for students studying this subject, and for those working in law enforcement. It is a book that will be beneficial in training courses. I expect it will be often referred to throughout the career of any person who owns it.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Dr Susan Robinson is a criminologist and lecturer at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security.

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