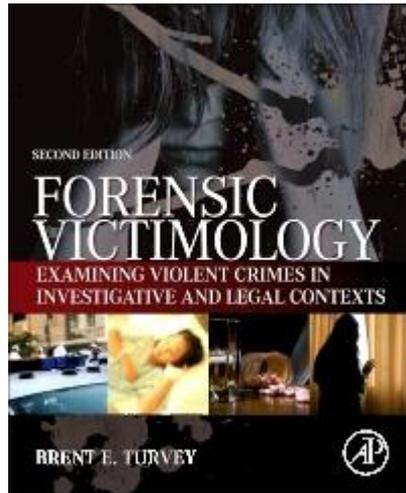


Forensic Victimology: Examining Violent Crime Victims in Investigative and Legal Context (Second Edition)

Edited by Brent E. Turvey
London: Academic Press (Elsevier Inc.)
2013 paperback, 656 pages
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Reviewed by Dr Amber McKinley

The first iteration of this book was originally published in 2009. The text introduced criminal investigators and theorists to the concept of methodically collecting and exploring information pertaining to the victim to better inform investigations. In a traditionally theoretical domain *Forensic Victimology* distinguishes forensic characteristics as applied to a victim. The second edition of *Forensic Victimology* offers up-to-date references and case examples, as well as offering readers further applied investigative techniques. It highlights the advantages of forensic victimology to casework and provides best practice standards to effectively assist the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

This second iteration has three new chapters on Emergency Services, False Confessions, and Human Trafficking. The attractive but potentially contentious aspect of this text is Turvey and his co-author's approach to the study of victimology. It is raw, realistic and highly critical in some instances. For example: few authors in current academia would write about false allegations of sexual assault or a victim's participation in the crime that sees them harmed.

Brent Turvey is a passionate teacher and forensic specialist based in the United States and even with the international collaborators included within this book, its format and style is fundamentally American. Every chapter begins with a shaded text box of key terms, definitions and a chapter contents list, footnotes and questions at the end of each chapter as a stimulus for revision. The text is relatively expensive (RRP: AU\$107)

and quite weighty, however it is filled with current, interesting and relevant case studies that question previous theories and critically analyses material from multiple sources.

Chapters include: false allegations of crime, forensic nursing, school shootings, sexual offenders and their victims, stranger violence, victim lifestyle exposure, victims of stalking, workplace violence and wrongful convictions. Not all this subject matter is entirely relevant to Australia at present (such as: school shootings), however if Australian researchers, students and members of the criminal justice system are encouraged to think globally and more critically, then the value of these topics gain relevance.

This text is easy to read and offers students and investigators alike case examples to further describe the theories and application of this relatively new field to the CJS. The case examples offer interest, reality and the nuances of the human condition, to what could be a dry text. The addition of dramatic stories, photographs, and recent cases examples demonstrate theory and the practical application of law is also presented. As an example of this format choice, at least half of the 20-page preface involves cases. This text would be much shorter without the cases, photos and current formatting however, it would also be harder to read, less accessible to new students and perhaps not as appealing to those new to this field of study.

The text starts by defining victimology and presenting concepts in relation to realistic victimology, it introduces terms such as “victimity” and offers examples and context to these phrases. The bulk of the text aims to guide investigators to get to the truth, no matter what that looks like. The contributors to this text come from policing, military, psychology and forensics backgrounds so sections on ‘Creating a Timeline: The Last 24 Hours’ are actually written by people who use the technique in the workplace and who are also aware of the positive and negative aspects of the work practice. This book should be of interest to students of forensic science programs, legal studies programs, criminology programs, victim studies programs, and those currently employed within the legal community, or working within the criminal justice system.

When one reviews the list of contributors to this cutting-edge text they appear to collectively support recognition of forensics as an independent discipline standing strong beside criminology, sociology and behavioural sciences, due to its intrinsic value to all the domains and more specifically to police investigations. There is a danger that practitioners

within the CJS may steer away from this text due to the argument being constantly interrupted. A suggestion for further iterations of this text would be to publish two different types of books; one for interested, but unqualified people and university students gaining qualifications and another for investigators or practitioners. *Forensic Victimology* will be of interest to law enforcement and students alike due to its easy to read text, fundamental applied nature and its move away from traditional models and stereotypes.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Dr Amber McKinley (BLibSt, MCJ, PhD), is a lecturer with the Charles Sturt University, Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security (Law), and her current research interests are in relation to serial homicide in Australia (1900–2016), theoretical, applied and forensic victimology, factors influencing homicide clearance rates in Australia, and a longitudinal study of the effect of demographic, temporal and geological factors on the solvability of adult homicide in Australia.

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