

SANSONE'S POLICE PHOTOGRAPHY

Third Edition

DATE

SUBJECT

TECHNICAL DATA



Larry L. Miller

SANSONE'S **POLICE PHOTOGRAPHY**

Third Edition

Larry L. Miller

East Tennessee State University



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SANSONE'S POLICE PHOTOGRAPHY
Third Edition

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Kelly Humble *Managing Editor*

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FOREWORD

When Mr. Sansone wrote the first and second editions of *Police Photography*, he was very much aware that scientific and technological improvements in photographic equipment and materials, coupled with the development of new applications and techniques, would always be a mixed blessing to practitioners in the public safety and service sectors. While they enhance the capacity to render more accurate and higher quality service, these advances and changes require that persons who opt to enter careers in these areas have access to educational and training resources that prepare them for entry-level positions, as well as providing opportunities for them to grow and improve their skills throughout their careers. He devoted his energies to the development of a publication that would achieve both goals.

Photography continues to be an integral part of the investigative and reporting activities of law enforcement, fire service, and security organizations. Its role, in fact, continues to grow. Competency in photographic applications is a requisite for being able to adequately perform in these public service areas.

Mr. Sansone's *Police Photography* has been widely circulated and well received because it presents photographic equipment, techniques, and applications in a format that is straightforward and easily understood by the reader. The third edition continues to include coverage of the very basics of photography as well as newer and far more advanced techniques, equipment and materials. Dr. Larry S. Miller of East Tennessee State University is the author of the new edition. He has organized *Sansone's Police Photography* into two main themes: the photographic process and the application of photography to police work. Dr. Miller has revised and updated Mr. Sansone's work and has written new chapters on video and the photographer in court.

Mr. Sansone drew upon his experience as a police practitioner and as a college professor. Dr. Miller draws upon resources that are quite similar. This third edition will be a valuable resource to the pre-service student of the investigative uses and applications of photography, as well as a reference source for the experienced professional. Dr. Miller has dedicated the third edition to the memory of Sam J. Sansone. Mr. Sansone would be both proud and happy that someone whose professional life he touched would carry forward, building from his work while adding new information, insights, and resources. Dr. Miller's work is a tribute to the contribution of Sam J. Sansone and at the same time is a manifestation of his own ability to contribute to the advancement of the field.

Charles E. Fye
Retired Director
Division of Social Science and Public Service Careers
Lorain County Community College
Elyria, Ohio

PREFACE

The year 1971 was the beginning of a new age for the law enforcement profession. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration was operating in full resplendence, providing financial assistance to local law enforcement agencies. Criminal Justice programs were emerging in institutions of higher learning across the country. 1971 was also the year Sam J. Sansone's *Modern Photography for Police and Firemen* was first published. As a young Crime Scene Technician, I remember my excitement in obtaining a copy of Mr. Sansone's book. I would never have imagined that, twenty years later, I would be updating his classic work.

This third edition of *Police Photography* is designed, as was the original, to teach the fundamentals of photography and their application to police work. Toward that end, this book is organized into two main themes: (1) the photographic process; and (2) the application of photography to police work. Mr. Sansone's original material has been updated and new material has been added. New material on cameras, films, equipment and processing techniques have been included, and there are new chapters on videotapes and courtroom photographic exhibits.

I have attempted to maintain Mr. Sansone's proven style of presentation in this edition. I believe I have transformed the book into a current text that Sam would be proud of.

LSM

-To Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York for their cooperation in contributing to this book.

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THE POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER

During a routine patrol of a suburban neighborhood, Officer Black receives a call instructing him to investigate a two-car collision a few blocks away. He drives to the scene and, before leaving his patrol car, he notes that, although one of the vehicles (a late-model automobile of fiberglass construction) has sustained severe damage, no one seems to be injured.

The drivers of the two cars are arguing heatedly (neither driver, Officer Black observes, seems to have been clearly in the wrong) and nearby a passenger is sobbing. Officer Black calms the drivers, soothes the passenger, records each person's description of the accident (there were no witnesses outside the two cars involved), radios for a tow truck to remove the damaged vehicle and, before the tow truck arrives and the autos are moved, he takes a few measurements, sketches the scene, and reaches into his glove compartment. Officer Black takes out a pocket-sized camera, checks to see that it is loaded with film, and snaps four photographs of the accident.

In addition to being a calmer-of-nerves, an investigator, a law enforcer, an impartial witness (though after-the-fact), an artist, and an agent for the immediate conclusion of a minor catastrophe in the lives of three people, Officer Black is a police photographer. That is not his job description, but neither is his role as a street psychologist. He may never step into a darkroom or hold a single-lens-reflex camera in his hands, he may never even change the film in the camera he keeps in the glove compartment of his patrol car. But his function as a police photographer is every bit as important as that of the head of the crime lab in his department who can mix chemicals, change film in the dark with one hand, and who takes photographs in his spare time that could vie with the best of those seen in *National Geographic*.

Both Officer Black and the head of his department's crime lab are police photographers; this book is for both of them.

Police Photography — A Short History

Photography is most obviously useful in police work when photographs serve as evidence that may prove invaluable to investigators, attorneys, judges, witnesses,

juries, and defendants. Often, a good photograph can be the deciding factor in a conviction or acquittal when no other form of real evidence is available.

Photographs were used in court as early as the mid-1800s. In 1859, a photograph was used in the case of *Luco v. United States* (23 Howard 515, 1859) to prove that a document of title for a land grant was, in fact, a forgery. The first recorded use of accident photography was in 1875: "Plaintiff, in a horse and buggy, was injured when, in attempting to go around a mud hole in the center of a road he drove off an unguarded embankment" (Scott, 1969). The photograph was admitted in evidence to assist the jury in understanding the case.

While neither of these early photographs used in evidence was taken by a police photographer, the use of photography in police work is well established in the early annals of photography. In 1841, 18 years before *Luco v. United States*, the French police were making daguerreotypes (an early form of photograph) of known criminals for purposes of identification.

One of the first cases to hold that a relevant photograph of an injured person was admissible in evidence was *Redden v. Gates* in 1879 (52 Iowa 210, 1879). The photograph was a tintype, a photograph made on a thin iron plate by the collodion process. It showed whip marks on the plaintiff's back three days after the assault. In 1907 in Denver, Colorado, all intoxicated persons were photographed at the police station.

Speeding motorists were being detected with photographic speed recorders by 1910. The state of Massachusetts approved the use of such devices and gave a full description of their operation. Radar is a more popular device for this operation today.

The use of fingerprint photographs for identification purposes was approved in 1911 in *People v. Jennings* (96 N.E. 1077, 252 Ill. 534, 1911), although 1882 was the year in which fingerprints were first officially used for identification purposes in the United States. Gilbert Thompson of the United States Geological Survey in New Mexico used his own fingerprint on commissary orders to prevent their forgery. In 1902, New York Civil Service began fingerprinting applicants to discourage the criminal element from entering civil service, and also to prevent applicants from having better qualified persons take the test for them.

The famous Will West case took place at Leavenworth Prison in 1903. When he was received at Leavenworth, Will West denied ever having been imprisoned there before. Clerks at the prison insisted that West had been there and ran the Bertillon instrument (used for identification purposes) over him to verify measurements. When the clerk referred to the formula derived from West's measurements, they were practically identical, and the photograph appeared to be that of Will West. When the clerk turned over the William West record card, he found that it was that of a man already serving a life sentence for murder.



Figure 1.1 — The Will West - William West case demonstrated that photographs and Bertillon measurements of persons were not accurate methods for identification. Will West (left) and William West (right).

Subsequently, the fingerprints of Will West and William West were compared. The patterns bore no resemblance. The fallibility of three systems of personal identification (photographs, Bertillon measurements and names) was demonstrated by this one case. The value of fingerprints as a means of identification was established. There was a great similarity in the photographs of Will West and William West (see Figure 1.1). An officer must be very careful when identifying a person from a photograph. After the Will West - William West case, most police departments began using photographs, Bertillon measurements and fingerprints on their "mug shot" files. Eventually, the Bertillon system was discarded (see Figure 1.2).

One of the early uses of firearms identification is recorded in a 1902 case, *Commonwealth v. Best* (62 N.E. 748, 180 Mass. 492, 1902). Photographs of bullets taken from the body of a murdered man were put into evidence along with a photograph of a test bullet pushed through the defendant's rifle. This method of obtaining a test bullet is not proper, according to modern authorities, but the use made of the comparison photographs was to be followed in many later firearms identification cases.

Prior to the modern electronic flash units of today, photoflash bulbs were used and readily accepted by the public by 1930. Prior to the photoflash bulbs, people used flash powders—dangerous explosives that produced a great deal of objectionable smoke. The photoflash bulb was a revolutionary development that made possible the taking of many evidence pictures that were otherwise unobtainable. Undoubtedly, their use contributed greatly to the development of police photography.

Ultraviolet photography was approved in a decision handed down in the 1934 case of *State v. Thorp* (171 A. 633, 86 N.H. 501, 1934). The picture showed foot-

prints in blood on a linoleum floor, and brought out distinctive marks in the soles of the shoes worn by defendant that corresponded to the marks shown in the ultraviolet photograph.

In 1938, the Eastman Kodak Company introduced the Super-Six-20, which was a camera featuring a fully automatic exposure control by means of a photoelectric cell coupled to the diaphragm of the lens. After 1945, Kodak again introduced cameras that were automatic and in a price range that everyone could afford. Today, such features are used in most cameras and are within a price range that is affordable to most people. You can get an automatic camera that meets almost all of a person's photographic needs. For example, the Nikon N8008S, once a person learns how to use it, makes police photography very simple.

The first appellate court case passing upon the admissibility of color photographs was *Green v. County of Denver* (142 P.2d 277, 111 Colo. 390, 1943). The court upheld the use of color photographs as evidence.

The Eastman Kodak Company introduced a color transparency using sheet film in 1935. Called Kodachrome, it quickly became extremely popular, resulting in the widespread use of color photographs in police photography. Then, in 1941, a color process known as Kodacolor made it possible to make color slides, color prints, or black-and-white prints from a color negative.

In 1963, the Polaroid company introduced Polacolor film, which made it possible to take finished pictures in black-and-white or color in less than one minute. This was one of the most significant developments in the history of photography and has led to the extensive use of color photographs as evidence. Today, Polaroid manufactures many films that are used by police.

In 1965, another important invention was placed on