ANIL AGGRAWAL'S
Internet Journal of
Forensic Medicine and Toxicology
The world's first online journal devoted entirely to forensic medicine and toxicology · Published 1 January and 1 July

VOL. 11, NO. 2
Downloaded from www.anilaggrawal.com · ISSN 0972-8074 (Online) · https://www.anilaggrawal.com/ij/vol_011_no_002/reviews/tb/page013.html

Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

...A VERY USEFUL BOOK FOR ALL FORENSIC SCIENTISTS ...I have kept the copy that came for review in my crime scene bag, and since then I am taking this book along whenever and wherever I go for crime scene examination. If you would like to become a better crime scene photographer and want to win more cases, this book is for you. A good feature is that the book is illustrated with several nice photographs (as a book on such a subject should be). Duncan must be congratulated for writing on a subject, few have attempted earlier...

Advanced Crime Scene Photography, 1st Edition, by Christopher D Duncan. Hard Bound, 9.4" x 6.3" x 0.9".
CRC Press LLC, 6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300, Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742. , . Publication Date February 22, 2010. 339 pages, ISBN-10: 1420087894; ISBN-13: 978-1420087895 (alk. paper). Price: $89.95.

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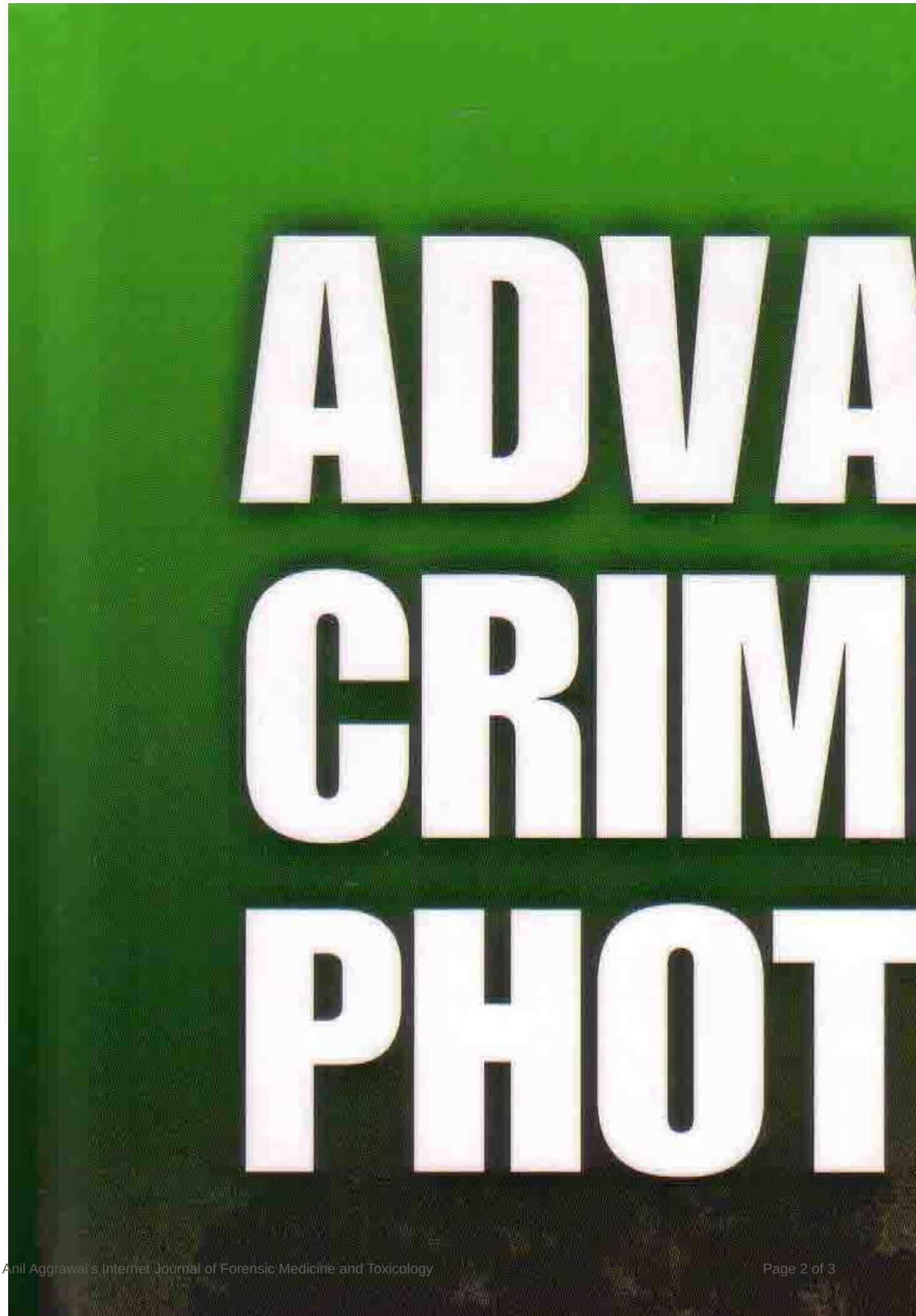
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Crime scene photography is an important part of crime investigation. Not only would it help the investigator to recollect the scene later, it would be very effective, if shown to judges and jury. Pictures taken with “point and shoot” cameras may not capture all the relevant details. Much more skill is required to take effective crime scene photographs.

Till recently no good book was available specifically on this subject, but thankfully now we have a very good book. Written by an expert, Cristopher Duncan brings together years of his experience with crime scene photography in this book. The book starts with basic concepts like ISO values, shutter speeds, apertures, lighting conditions etc, and goes on to complicated concepts like infrared and UV photography. As we move along the book, we see chapters dedicated to subjects such as nighttime and low light photography, flash photography, bloodstain photography and photography of shooting incidents.

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Practical tips advised in such books must be tried (to know if they are really useful), and I did not refrain from trying many of these in my own practice. I was surprised to find the immediate improvement in the quality of my pictures. Take for example the practical tip Duncan gives us on pages 224-5. Here we are told to keep the apertures at a smallest possible value in order to increase the depth of field (so more objects come in sharper focus). The aperture he advises is f/32 or smaller. Previously I never bothered about aperture sizes, and if I remember correct, I used to take with larger apertures (f/8 or f/11). Foolishly I used to think that larger apertures are better because more light would come through them. But most of my photographs were blurred. With f/32, I realized that photographs were pleasingly sharper.

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Editor's recommendation. This book is recommended by the editor.