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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

W H I T E   B L A C K  
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# **BOOK REVIEW - CRIMINAL POISONING: INVESTIGATIONAL GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, TOXICOLOGISTS, FORENSIC SCIENTISTS, AND ATTORNEYS BY JOHN HARRIS TRESTRAIL III**

AUTHORED BY - SARAVANAN. G

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

John Harris Trestrail III is a toxicologist with a long career in various fields related to poisons and their effects. He did his pharmacy degree from Ferris State University, graduate studies in natural product chemistry at Ohio State University. He taught chemistry in the Philippines with the Peace Corps. He is a practicing toxicologist and instructor at the FBI National Academy. He managed a certified regional poison centre for over 30 years and founded the Centre for the Study of Criminal Poisoning and the Toxicological History Society. He is a consultant on criminal poisoning cases for law enforcement and attorneys. He also have presented seminars on poisons and poisoning throughout the world.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Trestrail's book, "Criminal Poisoning: Investigational Guide for Law Enforcement, Toxicologists, Forensic Scientists, and Attorneys," offers a comprehensive resource for understanding and investigating cases of criminal poisoning. The second edition covers various aspects of forensic toxicology and poisoning, providing valuable insights for professionals in the field. The book includes bibliographical references and an index for easy reference. Trestrail dedicates his work to his parents and family, acknowledging their support and encouragement throughout his career. Through his dedication to the subject of toxicology, Trestrail continues to shed light on the darker aspects of human nature and the use of poisons for nefarious purposes.

## **INSIGHTS**

**Chapter 1** discusses the historical use of poisons throughout various cultures and societies. It highlights cases of famous poisoners from ancient times to the modern era. The chapter delves into the motivations and methods of these poisoners, showcasing their cunning and deceptive ways.

Examples include the use of poison by figures like the Borgias in ancient Rome, and more recent cases like the Tylenol tampering incident in 1982 and the Angel of Death, Donald Harvey, who targeted hospital patients. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the unpredictability and danger of poisoners, showcasing the devious lengths they will go to in order to achieve their goals.

**Chapter 2** of the book discusses the nuances of poison as a weapon, starting with the definition of poison and the difficulties in legally defining it. Various definitions of poison are provided from medical dictionaries and famous alchemists. The chapter explains how dose determines whether a substance is a poison or a medicine, highlighting the importance of dosage in toxicology.

**Chapter 3** examines the different types of poisoners based on victim specificity and degree of planning involved. The classification includes those who target a specific victim and those who choose a victim at random, with subgroups based on the speed of planning. It also debunks common myths about poisoners, such as the misconception that most poisoners are female. The chapter delves into the poisoner schematic, detailing the thought process and psychological profile of poisoners. It explores the public perception of poisoners, toxicomaniacs, medical murderers, and juvenile tamperers as poisoners.

**Chapter 4** of Criminal Poisoning discusses the victims of poisoning and the various motives behind intentional poisoning. Poisoning can be a slow form of murder, with lethality depending on the concentration and duration of exposure to the poison. There are different types of poisoning murders, such as suicidal motivated parents, unintentional homicidal poisoning, and cases of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, where a mentally ill parent poisons their child for attention.

**Chapter 5** of the book discusses crime scene investigation in cases of poisoning. The chapter emphasizes the importance of victimology in finding clues to determine the motive and potential suspects. It highlights the significance of gathering physical evidence at various locations where the poisoning may have occurred, such as where the poison was administered or disposed of. The chapter also delves into the importance of maintaining the chain of custody to ensure the integrity of the evidence.

**Chapter 6** talks about the scientific post-mortem examination and the significance of distinguishing clues that demonstrate harming as the cause of passing. It highlights the centrality of analyzing after death redistribution, too known as "necro-kinetics," which alludes to the development of substances in the body after passing. The chapter emphasizes the challenges in deciphering toxicological comes



about, particularly in terms of after death levels in deadly intoxications. It too stresses the require for expository rules to guarantee exact and solid toxicological examination, counting the significance of site-dependent after death concentrations, maintaining a strategic distance from cross-contamination of examples, and keeping up the chain of care for all tests. By taking after these rules, legal researchers can viably decide the nearness of poisons in the body and distinguish cases of criminal poisoning.

**Chapter 7** talks about the significance of demonstrating harming in a kill case. It emphasizes the require for appropriate utilization of an expository toxicology research facility and gives key components to be demonstrated in arrange to build up that somebody has been harmed. These components incorporate revelation, rationale, expectation get to to the harm and casualty, passing caused by harm, and passing being desperate. The chapter moreover presents factual examinations of poisonings in the Joined together States based on information from the Uniform Wrongdoing Reports, highlighting sexual orientation, racial, age, geographic, and other connections in harming cases.

**Chapter 8** of the book examines harming trials in court, centring on the interesting challenges and techniques included in demonstrating purposefulness harming. The chapter highlights the significance of keeping up chain of care, analyzing the nearness of harm, and demonstrating that the harm was ingested systemically in the body. Diverse defence contentions, such as claiming the harm did not cause passing or was not destructive, are explored.

**Chapter 9** investigates the utilize of harms in anecdotal works, both composed and visual, and the potential affect on real-life wrongdoings. It examines different harms utilized in writing and movies, with cyanide being more predominant in fiction than arsenic. The chapter incorporates tables posting the harms utilized in scholarly works and motion pictures, giving bits of knowledge into the sorts of harms portrayed in these inventive mediums. The content too notices the significance of considering anecdotal writing and visual media in criminal harming examinations.

**Chapter 10** concludes with a update of the significance of considering harming in each murder examination. The chapter emphasizes the require to treat each passing as a manslaughter until demonstrated something else and presents the thought that passing with no unmistakable signs of injury ought to be considered potential poisonings. It traces key investigative questions with respect to the casualty, the harm, the wrongdoing scene, the timeline of harming, the rationale, and the strategy of organization.

## CRITICAL REVIEW ON THE AUTHOR'S WORK

The author John Harris Trestrail III is a renowned expert in the field of criminal poisoning, particularly in cases of murder by poison. His book, "Criminal Poisoning: Investigational Guide for Law Enforcement," serves as a comprehensive resource for law enforcement officials, toxicologists, forensic scientists, and attorneys. Trestrail's expertise in this area is internationally recognized, and he has dedicated over three decades to studying and investigating cases of criminal poisoning. In his book, Trestrail covers a range of topics related to criminal poisoning, including the history of poisoners, different types of poisons, and investigative techniques for law enforcement. His work provides valuable insights into the methods and motivations behind poisoning crimes, offering guidance for professionals involved in the investigation and prosecution of such cases. Trestrail's contributions to the field of forensic toxicology have been widely praised, with colleagues and peers acknowledging his expertise and dedication to the study of criminal poisoning. His book continues to be a valuable resource for those seeking to understand the complexities of poison-related crimes and the challenges they present to law enforcement and legal professionals. Overall, John Harris Trestrail III's work on criminal poisoning serves as a foundational text in the field, offering a wealth of information and insights for those involved in investigating and prosecuting cases of poisoning-related crimes.

## INTENDED AUDIENCE

1. **Law Enforcement Officials:** This includes police investigators, detectives, and law enforcement agencies involved in investigating poisoning crimes. The book provides them with valuable insights into the methods, motives, and investigative techniques relevant to poisoning cases.
2. **Toxicologists and Forensic Scientists:** Professionals in the fields of toxicology and forensic sciences, including medical examiners, forensic pathologists, and laboratory analysts, can benefit from Trestrail's expertise in analyzing poisons, interpreting toxicology results, and conducting forensic autopsies related to poisoning deaths.
3. **Attorneys and Legal Professionals:** The book serves as a guide for attorneys and legal professionals involved in prosecuting or defending cases of intentional poisoning. It covers aspects such as proving poisoning in court, addressing defense arguments, and understanding the legal challenges specific to poisoning trials.
4. **Medical Professionals:** Healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists, can gain insights into recognizing and responding to potential poisoning cases,

understanding symptoms and effects of various poisons, and collaborating with law enforcement and forensic experts in investigating suspicious deaths.

5. **Academic and Research Community:** Researchers, scholars, and students in the fields of toxicology, forensic sciences, criminology, and criminal justice can use Trestrail's work as a reference for studying the history, methods, and impacts of criminal poisoning. It can also serve as a resource for academic courses and research projects related to poisoning crimes.
6. **Public Health Officials:** Professionals working in public health and safety, including poison control centres, environmental health agencies, and regulatory authorities, can benefit from understanding the risks associated with toxic substances, prevention strategies, and the importance of proper disposal and handling of hazardous materials.
7. **General Public:** While primarily targeted at professionals in specific fields, Trestrail's work also raises awareness among the general public about the dangers of poisons, the history of poisoners, and the importance of vigilance in preventing poisoning incidents in homes and communities.



### MY EVALUATION

This book is a comprehensive coverage for the expertise and authority. It serves as a practical guidance to weed out the poisoners and spread the knowledge about poisons to the public. This book has the educational value and the clarity and accessibility to the forensic students and ones who are interested in poisons and toxic substance might find this book's relevance and timeliness.

Our Indian society is not new to usage of toxins right from medicine to homicide, we have been used to toxins to an extent that local people use it for curing diseases or few use it for the purpose of hallucinations via drug usage. This book stands high of its standards on knowing how a chemical substance might be both useful and a toxin at the same time.

### END NOTES

**BOOK** - Criminal Poisoning: Investigational Guide for Law Enforcement, Toxicologists, Forensic Scientists, and Attorneys by John Harris Trestrail III.

**SOURCE:**

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321617436> Criminal Poisoning Investigational  
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