



SECURITY GUIDE FOR POLICE AND PUBLIC. By V.N. Dewan,  
1977. Newman Group of Publications, 4C, Ansari Road, New Delhi.  
Pp. 211. Rs. 60.

THE AUTHOR, a retired deputy superintendent of police, though wrongly described as retired officer of the Indian Police Service in the inside back cover of the book, has only succeeded partly in his objective of educating the members of the public about the various *modus operandi* adopted by the criminals so as to enable the former to thwart the criminal designs of the latter and thus to ensure their own protection and protection of the society.

Undoubtedly, this was a laudable objective from the angle of social defence, and the author would have succeeded in a bigger way had he taken a little more care in describing the techniques of the criminals in greater detail and illustrated them by means of concrete cases. For, things learnt through the media of actual cases not only carry conviction but stick to one's memory. With his rich experience covering a span of over three decades and a half it would not have been at all difficult for him to illustrate his propositions with actual cases had he really wanted to do so. Even if this endeavour would have increased the bulk of the book, that would have been commensurate with the results achieved. But there was really no need to even increase the bulk of the book for the sake of adopting such a 'case-method' had he been more rational in pruning non-essential materials, especially the senseless reproductions of the bare sections of the penal and procedural codes. Obviously, the book cannot serve, in its present form, the purpose of a legal commentary despite a sprinkling of a few cases here and there. As a law book it is inadequate and sketchy both for the lawyers and the police. As for the general public, barring the sections which confer some rights and impose some duties and obligations on them, the other sections of the law reproduced *ad nauseam* are absolutely redundant and puzzling. If these redundant materials had not been included, there would not have been any dearth of space and quite a few interesting cases could have been included in the body of the book to make it all the more illustrative and convincing.

Part I of the book under review containing a description of the various methods of operation of the criminals and the author's suggestions to counter them, constitutes the most useful chapter of the book. Part II contains a mere reproduction of several sections and provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Constitution of India, the Indian Penal Code, the Police Rules and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1932. This exercise has eaten up 109 pages in a book of 211 pages in the total. One feels that barring sections 37, 39, 43, 50, 56, 57, 129, 154, 160, 161, 173, 175, 438 of the



Criminal Procedure Code ; sections 82, 83, 84, 95-106, 154, 174, 182, 186 and 211 of the Indian Penal Code and article 22 of the Constitution of India which bestow some rights and impose some duties and obligations on the members of the public, all other sections could have been safely omitted. Part III of the book is really a miscellany containing three distinct chapters on as widely divergent subjects as automobile thefts, community role in prevention of crime and litigation and safeguards against false and baseless criminal complaints instituted in courts. Of these, the chapters on automobile thefts, and community role in crime prevention contain some useful suggestions which merit consideration by all concerned persons but this cannot be said of the chapter on safeguards against baseless criminal complaints in the court. It is a matter of surprise that writing about frivolous and baseless criminal cases the author forgets to even mention section 250 of the Criminal Procedure Code and sections 182 and 211 of the Indian Penal Code which are extremely germane to the point at issue. He also conveniently forgets the role of the community in organising free legal aid in such cases though he himself recommends in the very previous chapter the setting up of legal sub-committees by *mohalla* citizens' associations for effecting compromises and arbitration of cases.

The author's suggestion for giving a notice as well as an opportunity to the accused of being heard right at the stage of filing the complaint and during the preliminary enquiry, would only cause undue delay in the disposal of a groundless complaint which in good many cases can be dismissed straightaway in terms of the Supreme Court's decisions in *R.P. Kapur v. State of Punjab*<sup>1</sup> and *Debendra Nath v. State of West Bengal*<sup>2</sup>. Thus, if the court finds that no offence is really made out from the complaint even if the facts stated therein are accepted on their face value, or the case turns out to be one of a civil nature, there is no impediment in dismissing or quashing the complaint forthwith. But if the author's somewhat fantastic suggestions are accepted, then even in such a baseless case a notice will have to be first served on the other side and the court will have to wait for his appearance and then give him a further opportunity of being heard after the appearance is made. It is only after going through all these dilatory processes that the court will be justified in dismissing a groundless complaint. Certainly, this cannot be called speedy justice.

The author shows little regard for the conventions of legal writing. For example, more often than not he fails to mention the years of the concerned Acts and the Police Rules that he refers to in his book. This causes difficulty as the old Criminal Procedure Code is not altogether obsolete [(vide section 483(2)(a) of the Criminal Procedure Code of 1973)] and as there are quite a few Police Acts on the statute books of both the states

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1. A.I.R. 1960 S.C. 866.
2. A.I.R. 1972 S.C. 1607.



and the centre. He also does not say which Police Rules he is using as his main plank. One has to assume that since the author was an instructor at the Phillaur Police Training College, the rules quoted in the book must be from the Punjab Police Rules which may or may not be correct.

There are quite a few printing mistakes which could have been easily avoided by a little more careful proof-reading. All in all, in spite of these inherent limitations the book appears to be an honest attempt on the part of the author to throw some light on a subject of considerable importance to the police and the members of the public.

The price of the book is unduly prohibitive even in these days of high cost of printing and paper. If part III of the book was pruned, as suggested earlier, probably this book of barely 200 pages instead of being priced at Rs. 60.00 could perhaps be sold at a much cheaper price to the members of the public for whose benefit, as the author himself says in the preface, he primarily wrote the book.

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