

The laboratory is based in the Law and Medical Centers of Georgetown University and is involved with much of the remainder of the university complex.

The laboratory has undertaken three missions. These are concerned with (1) identifying that research product in the hard sciences and in technology which has application to the unsolved problems of the forensic sciences, (2) dissemination of this knowledge as well as of the best current procedures through training and education as well as publication, and (3) providing of service in cases which relate to research interest and in which injustice may otherwise be likely to occur.

The identification and application of new knowledge in medical, biochemical, toxicological, nuclear, and space science research which has not or has inadequately found its way into the crime laboratory appear to be the aspects of the laboratory's work which is of principal interest to this subcommittee in its present investigation. I shall, therefore, concentrate on these.

Many such scientific advances do exist, advances which are not being used by crime laboratory experts. Advances frequently are not used by police laboratories for a number of reasons:

1. The people doing the research have not been trying to solve police problems, hence extension of scientific investigation oriented to the solving of problems of identification as to source is not undertaken.

2. The police are not aware of new knowledge in the sciences which may be of help to them and are not trained to use it.

3. Researchers in the hard sciences are not aware of the needs of the crime laboratory or lack familiarity with the current state of the art in the forensic sciences; for example, an intimate acquaintance with the procedures of handwriting identification may help a computer software specialist introduce a new element of precision to this field. Lacking this familiarity, there may be a tendency toward overly complex solutions to this and comparable problems.

4. The community as a whole has not devoted much conscious attention to the needs of the crime laboratory disciplines.

On this last-mentioned point, it would not surprise me to find that no one of the directors of the federally run research and development operations really knows of the needs of the forensic sciences.

To illustrate, the National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel does not identify forensic scientists as such. A list of over 50 currently active scientific specialists in the forensic sciences was searched against the National Register. Of the more than 50 names, including many outstanding men in this field, only seven were found to appear in the Register under any category.

Obviously, there is little awareness that the field exists at all on the part of that segment of the scientific community which maintains rapport with the Federal Government's efforts in the sciences. The same is true among the private foundations, where there is no tradition of support for the forensic sciences.

It would appear that in exploring the research and development potential for the forensic sciences of existing Federal laboratories,