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RECENT BOOKS

CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY: A SURVEY OF RECENT BOOKS

JULIET CASPER SMITH*

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

MARK COSTANZO, *JUST REVENGE* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997)
206 pp.

Arguing that the death penalty should be abandoned, this author provides a critical analysis of the costs, benefits, and consequences associated with the death penalty. He finds that the death penalty wastes taxpayer money and court time. His suggested sentencing alternative is life without parole plus restitution to the victim(s).

JAMES J. MEGIVERN, *THE DEATH PENALTY: AN HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SURVEY* (NY: Paulist Press, 1997) 641 pp.

This book has been described as "a comprehensive collection of views on punishment by death in western civilization as seen through the eyes of Christian thinkers across two thousand years." The author, a professor of philosophy and religion at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, addresses the question of how Christianity can tolerate and defend the death penalty. He shows that this tolerance is rooted in a long struggle against heresy. In recent years he finds a remarkable change in the attitudes of Catholic Church leaders, and he hopes that approval of state-sponsored executions by Christians is finally coming to an end.

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CRIME—POLITICAL ASPECTS—UNITED STATES

KATHERINE BECKETT, MAKING CRIME PAY: LAW AND ORDER IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POLITICS (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997) 158 pp.

This book focuses on the role of politicians in defining social problems, and argues that the current "get tough" response to crime is a result of politics, not a result of public concern about crime and personal safety. Crime, the author posits, is caused by social forces, such as unemployment, low wages, and a breakdown in family structure. Yet politicians do not address these social forces when seeking remedies for rising crime rates. Instead, they use the media to disseminate scary images of crime and drug problems, which then illustrate a need for greater control and lengthier punishment—the "get tough" response.

GANG RAPE—NEW JERSEY—GLEN RIDGE

BERNARD LEFKOWITZ, OUR GUYS: THE GLEN RIDGE RAPE AND THE SECRET LIFE OF THE PERFECT SUBURB (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 443 pp.

This book chronicles the shocking gang rape of a mentally disabled high school girl by several high school athletes while fellow teammates watched. The author, a professor of journalism at Columbia University, spent six years researching the lives of all the parties involved. He interviewed more than 150 people who lived or worked in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, not including the hundred interviews with law enforcement officials, lawyers, social workers, and psychiatrists directly involved with the case. His engaging narrative uncovers a history of sexism and racism in Glen Ridge, a suburb he argues that is not unlike many in the United States.

GANGS—INDIANA—FORT WAYNE—CASE STUDIES

DEBORAH BURRIS-KITCHEN, FEMALE GANG PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL DRUG ECONOMY AND GANG ACTIVITIES (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997) 205 pp.

The result of a dissertation research project, this book studies young African-American women in a middle-class midwestern city. The author is particularly interested in the role these women play in the city's gang culture. Using a feminist standpoint ethnography methodology, she conducted a series of conversational interviews with 10 women between the ages of 21 and 33. Not surprising, the author finds that money is the biggest motivating factor for women to join a gang.

JURY—UNITED STATES

THE JURY SYSTEM (Mary E. Williams, ed.) (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1997) 80 pp.

The eleven essays in this book present contrasting views of various issues dealing with the jury system: jury or judge, majority verdict or unanimous verdict, abolish or retain peremptory challenges, and jury nullification. These short essays are written by journalists, professors, judges, and lawyers.

KENNEDY, ROBERT F., 1925-1968—ASSASSINATION

WILLIAM KLABER & PHILIP H. MELANSON, SHADOW PLAY: THE MURDER OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, THE TRIAL OF SIRHAN SIRHAN, AND THE FAILURE OF AMERICAN JUSTICE (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997) 355 pp.

Klaber, an investigative journalist, and Melanson, a political scientist, examine the previously secret files of the Los Angeles Police Department and the FBI regarding the murder of Senator (and presidential candidate) Robert F. Kennedy. These files were kept secret for over twenty years and reveal active concealment and destruction of evidence by law enforcement officials. This book recreates the murder, beginning with Kennedy's speech at the Ambassador Hotel just before the shooting.

LAW AND LITERATURE—UNITED STATES—HISTORY—20TH
CENTURY

DAVID GUEST, *SENTENCED TO DEATH: THE AMERICAN NOVEL AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1997) 179 pp.

Guest believes that "novels participate in the creation of myths that play a powerful but generally unacknowledged role in the correctional system and especially in sentencing capital offenders." He sees a strong relationship between public discourse and correctional power, with novels constituting a significant part of that discourse. His book critically examines five American novels dealing with execution: Frank Norris's *McTeague*; Theodore Preiser's *An American Tragedy*; Richard Wright's *Native Son*; Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*; and Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song*.

PRISON SENTENCES—UNITED STATES

SENTENCING REFORM IN OVERCROWDED TIMES: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE (Michael Tonry & Kathleen Hatlestad, eds.) (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997) 299 pp.

All of the articles in this book first appeared in the bi-monthly journal, *Overcrowded Times*. The editors seek to make these articles, written for the nonspecialist, more accessible to policymakers and practitioners. Sentencing reform measures in the United States, England, Australia, Canada, Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands are discussed, as are the sentencing guidelines in various states in America.

REFORMATORIES FOR WOMEN—CONNECTICUT

ANDI RIERDEN, *THE FARM: LIFE INSIDE A WOMEN'S PRISON* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997) 193 pp.

This book focuses on the Niantic Correctional Institution in Niantic, Connecticut. After providing a brief history of this reformatory, the author tells the stories of the women who live and work there. The stories reveal the effect the war on drugs and mandatory sentencing regimes have had on the institution.

SERIAL MURDERS—CASE STUDIES

ROBERT K. RESSLER & TOM SHACHTMAN, *I HAVE LIVED IN THE MONSTER* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997) 223 pp.

The author of this book, former FBI agent Robert Ressler, is one of the world's leading profilers of criminals. His book *Whoever Fights Monsters* described his work as a FBI agent. This book describes his insights and experiences with high profile criminals since he went into private practice in 1990. He includes excerpts from face to face interviews with serial killers John Wayne Gacy and Jeffrey Dahmer.

STATUS OFFENDERS—UNITED STATES

CHERYL L. MAXSON & MALCOLM W. KLEIN, *RESPONDING TO TROUBLED YOUTH* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997) 207 pp.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded a project to assess the treatment of status offenders in various cities. This research project, undertaken by the authors, was designed to have a major social and political impact on the juvenile justice system, but the Office viewed the project's results as incompatible with federal policy intentions. Those results are presented in this book, and they reveal that "neither treatment nor deterrence has yielded much beneficial effect" with regard to status offenders.

TRIALS (CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE)—CALIFORNIA

MOIRA JOHNSTON, *SPECTRAL EVIDENCE: THE RAMONA CASE: INCEST, MEMORY, AND TRUTH ON TRIAL IN NAPA VALLEY* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997) 440 pp.

In 1994, Gary Ramona, an executive with Robert Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley, sued his daughter's therapists for planting false memories of child abuse and molestation in the mind of his daughter. This book vividly tells the story of the Ramona family and its struggle with the concept of recovered memory. While the father was ultimately vindicated in court, he lost his wife, family, home, job, reputation, friends, and life savings in the process. His case triggered reform within the therapy profession.