

So, You WANT To BE A CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSOR?

by **Stephen S. Owen &
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Don't Let This Happen to You

Imagine the following dialogue, between a beleaguered search committee and a misguided job candidate:

Search Committee: What courses can you teach in our curriculum?

Candidate: None. I don't really like any of your current courses. I'd rather just teach a graduate seminar on my dissertation topic.

Search Committee: But we don't have a graduate program.

Candidate: I heard that State Research University has a strong criminal justice graduate program.

Search Committee: They do, but we're not State Research University... This is Regional Teaching College.

Candidate: Oh, that's right... my State Research University interview is NEXT week... but does this mean that I don't get the job?

Perhaps the above exchange is a bit far-fetched. However, based on our experiences on search committees, it seems safe to say that many candidates for faculty positions are woefully ill-prepared for the job search process. In this article, we will share our insights and experiences with the job search process, as well as a few stories gleaned from colleagues and friends. While we do not have all of the answers, and others may disagree with our opinions, it is our hope that this commentary will be useful to academic job-seekers in the field of criminal justice – be they novice ABD's or experienced faculty seeking greener pastures or new challenges.

The Perfect Fit

When one of the authors of this article accepted an assistant professor position, his department chair greeted him, "Congratulations – and I want you to know, of the 100 applications we reviewed, you came in second." "Second?" he said, "that's not bad." The chair quickly retorted, "Well, the other 99 tied for first." After the laughter subsided, the new faculty member and the department chair realized they had a perfect fit.

There are two approaches to criminal justice academic job searches: shotgun and targeted. A shotgun approach is used when a candidate applies for all possible jobs – seeing no difference between a research-oriented position focusing on correctional rehabilitation and a teaching-oriented generalist position. This candidate is apt to answer "sure, I can teach/research that" when asked any substantive question. A targeted approach is more discerning, looking for those job postings that overlap with the candidate's interests. We recommend a targeted approach to the job search, in the interest of maintaining the sanity of both the candidate and the hiring department. Sure, a research-oriented policing scholar can get a job teaching four different courses each semester at a liberal arts college. However, liberal arts administrators may not be favorably impressed when a faculty member waves away students in order to meet the deadline on his or her latest book, and a research-oriented faculty member may find four course preparations to be a frustrating expectation. In the long run, such

continued on page 4

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in this issue . . .

***So, You Want To Be A Criminal Justice Professor?* (1); *President's Message* (2); *Book Review Submission Guidelines for ACJS Today* (3); *ACJS Deadlines* (3); *ACA Seeks Articles* (3); *ACJS Today Editorial Staff* (3); *ACJS Website* (8); *Book Reviews* (9); *Upcoming ACJS Annual Meetings* (12); *ACJS Publications Order Form* (15); *ACJS 2003-2004 Executive Board* (16).**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It seems impossible to believe that the time for my last President's Message has already arrived. Unfortunately, my impression based upon a recent discussion by a subgroup of the ACJS Executive Board, is that the preceding observation will probably mean little or nothing to most of our membership. This is so because, I am sorry to say, apparently very few of our members have been able and willing to access the electronic version of *ACJS Today* that has been posted on our website for at least the past year – and I am the first to admit that gaining access to *ACJS Today* has certainly not been made easy. All that means that most members have not read any of my three earlier messages, nor are they likely to see this one!

Recognizing therefore the considerable risk of whistling in the wind here, but nevertheless being compelled by the duties of office to write something, let me briefly address the obscure state into which our newsletter seems to have fallen. On a positive note, I will then make some closing observations about the upcoming ACJS annual meeting.

When the decision was taken several years back to move *ACJS Today* to a strictly electronic format, that seemed perfectly reasonable in light of where the information age was (and still is) going. The idea of a new and dramatically upgraded website, with “members only” features, seemed perfectly suited for going electronic. That, combined with the considerable cost savings to be achieved by doing away with the printing and mailing of a hard copy version, made this an even more compelling argument. Regrettably, the realities and the gremlins of web development took over, and we have been confronted with an ACJS version of “Murphy's Law.” The old reliable paper version was dropped, but that is basically all that has so far been achieved. The members' only access to the new website has been subject to interminable delays. In the interim, *ACJS Today* has been hidden away under several layers in the Subscriptions Section while awaiting its permanent home. That said, two developments are in the offing that will, we hope, correct this problem. First, the members only section will finally become fully operational and *ACJS Today* will indeed become openly available to the membership. And second, the ACJS Board will revisit the issue of there being only an electronic version of the newsletter available. The latter does not guarantee that we will decide to do both, but it does open up the possibility.

Turning to what I hope is a more pleasant topic, the upcoming annual meeting, there will be several new wrinkles that we hope will both entice folks to come to Chicago and will reward them once they are there. First, we have a series of important professional development workshops that will pave the way for the certification process that ACJS has undertaken to mount. These will deal with how to do a self-study in preparation for a certification site visit; how to do a program review for certification; and, how to do the assessment component of a program's self-study. I encourage everyone to take advantage of these offerings. Second, we will offer stand-alone (nothing else scheduled) plenary sessions each day featuring major presentations; and third, we will present the kind of poster sessions that have become enormously popular at other professional association meetings.

Chicago is a great city, and I hope everyone will come to the meeting and make it a smashing success. In closing, let me say that it has been a tremendous honor and privilege for me to serve as your president for this past year. ACJS is a wonderful organization with a rich past and a bright future. As with all organizations that attempt to do things and to necessarily take risks, sometimes everything does not go as we would prefer – as witness my opening comments. We should, however, all regard this as an opportunity and a challenge, and if we do, the future of ACJS will be even richer than its past. Thank you all very much.

Jim Finckenauer
President
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

BOOK REVIEW SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR *ACJS Today*

- Provide a review that will help the readership determine how useful the book will be for teaching of particular courses.
- Identify how the book is applicable to criminal justice, criminology, sociology, and other related curriculums.
- Identify the courses for which the book will be useful and why.
- Identify the level of students most likely to find the book useful.
- Identify the teaching style most consistent with the book's approach.
- **Send reviews to Alex del Carmen, the *ACJS Today* Editor, at adelcarmen@uta.edu.**
- Book review should be limited to no more than three (3) single-spaced pages with references in APA style.
- Reviews sent as e-mail attachments in Word are acceptable.
- Submission of a review to *ACJS Today* implies that the review has not been published elsewhere nor is it currently under submission to another publication.

ACJS DEADLINES

The deadline for submissions to be included in the **May/June *ACJS Today*** is **April 20, 2005**. Submissions, in **Microsoft Word** format should be e-mailed or sent to:

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ACA SEEKS ARTICLES

Corrections Compendium, the research journal of the American Correctional Association, is seeking submissions for upcoming issues. Its international readership includes individuals involved in various sectors of the corrections and criminal justice fields. A leading peer-reviewed publication in the corrections field, *Compendium* welcomes you to submit your research-based papers for possible publication. A typical article is approximately 3,000 to 6,000 words, excluding references, endnotes, tables, charts, etc. All submissions are reviewed by members of our editorial advisory board. Articles must not have been published elsewhere or be under consideration by another publication. Send your unformatted article on an IBM-compatible disk in WordPerfect or Microsoft Word, double-spaced, with any tables or charts at the end of the copy, and accompanied by a hard copy to: **Susan Clayton, Managing Editor**; American Correctional Association; 4380 Forbes Boulevard; Lanham, MD 20706-4322; or e-mail it to: susanc@aca.org.

Please remember to include your name, title, affiliation, address, daytime telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.

Academy of Criminal Justice

acjsToday

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continued from page 1

a match would not be good. Here are some things to consider when targeting a job search, in hopes of finding the perfect fit:

- *Type of institution.* Some institutions are research-oriented; they generally carry a low teaching load (2-3 courses per semester – some even less) and fairly high research expectations (in the form of scholarly journal articles, external grants and books). Other institutions are teaching-oriented; they generally carry a higher teaching load (4 courses per semester) and a reduced expectation for research activity. Religious institutions may be either teaching- or research-oriented, and some require statements of faith from prospective candidates. They may also require curriculum to follow certain religious precepts. Community colleges generally focus on teaching to the exclusion of research (some require 5 courses per semester and generally *require* some summer teaching), and focus on criminal justice application, as opposed to theory.
- *Program orientation.* One of the great debates in criminal justice is striking a balance between theory and practice. Some institutions lean towards the “cop shop” mentality, focusing heavily on practical applications of criminal justice. Often, these institutions require/request previous field experience. Other institutions are more theoretical in nature, exploring philosophies that underlie criminal justice (liberal arts colleges often fit this mold). Still other institutions have internally divided departments, some favoring practice and others favoring theory. To minimize potential conflict at these institutions, we recommend that you use the hybrid approach: “I believe it is important that the student understand both the theory and the practical implications.”
- *Department moniker.* Pay particular attention to the name of the department you wish to apply. Are you applying to the Department of Criminal Justice? Department of Sociology, Political Science and Criminal Justice? This may speak volumes as to personal expectations, as well as department politics.
- *Generalist vs. specialist.* “...seeking a criminal justice generalist...” This ubiquitous phrase can have multiple meanings. It may mean that you’ll be expected to teach many different courses – policing, corrections, law, internship, and whatever else needs to be covered. This is more likely to be the case at a smaller institution, or one where you would become the sole criminal justice faculty member. Such a proposition is simultaneously exciting (think of the opportunity to build a program!) and exhausting (can you imagine four different courses each semester, some of which you haven’t had since undergraduate school?). A generalist orientation may also mean that you have your pick of the curriculum – or the leftovers discarded by senior faculty – in a larger department. Either way, you won’t go in labeled as “the new restorative justice guy”. It is perhaps more difficult to apply as a specialist. If a job advertisement specifies a particular area of interest, it will be your burden to “sell” the search committee on your ability to research and/or teach in that area.
- *Type of position.* Do you meet the substantive requirements of the position, in terms of area of interest, teaching and research specialization, and so on? Equally important, does the position meet your needs? Most advertisements are for assistant professors – fine for a new Ph.D., but perhaps not for a 20-year veteran. Consider your goals: Are you hoping to develop a strong research agenda in a subfield of policing? Do you want to contribute to a thriving undergraduate program? Do you want to focus more on your teaching and less on research? Your goals will determine the type of institution that is best for you.
- *Location.* Do you love Florida? Great – apply for jobs there. The bad news is that lots of other people love Florida, meaning a larger applicant pool and more competition (the same goes for southern California). Don’t let anyone fool you - location matters. Choose a place where you can be happy. The following statement is a major red flag for a search committee at a rural school: “I really prefer cities so I can support my urban crime research agenda...but this town seems nice. By the way, how far *are* we from New York?”
- *Personal considerations.* We mention this only briefly, but the importance is great. If you are in a relationship or have family obligations, it is better to consult the necessary parties (spouse, children, etc.) early in the process, before applying to an institution that will provoke complaint later. If you are an academic couple, good luck! Finding dual positions at one institution is difficult, indeed. If you plan to ask for a partner accommodation, or to apply for two positions in the same department as a “both or neither” situation, our experience has been that it is better to raise the issue early in the process (although others disagree, feeling that it can instantly eliminate a candidate from consideration).
- *Degree requirements.* The proverbial union card for academic employment is a Ph.D. Read the ad closely. Some require a Ph.D. by the time of appointment; others permit applications from ABD’s. If you are ABD, think carefully about your status and whether you will have your degree completed in the required timeframe. Also be aware that accepting a job will add time to your projected dissertation completion date – even if you have the best intentions of finishing quickly. Also note restrictions on academic discipline. Some institutions require a degree in criminal justice or criminology, or a minimum number of graduate credits (usually 18 hours) in the subject. This is often for accreditation purposes, in which case the requirement may not be waived. Other institutions will permit degrees “in a closely related field,” opening the way for political scientists, sociologists, and others to apply for criminal justice positions. Finally, if an ad specifies a Ph.D. or ABD as the required credential, a J.D. is generally

unacceptable. In many searches, applicants with only a J.D. are immediately removed from the pool.

Where Do I Find These Jobs?

Here are some of the best sources for criminal justice faculty positions – check them *regularly* during the search process, as they change often:

- *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. In both print and online editions, the *Chronicle* posts many job ads every week, in all academic disciplines. While not specific to criminal justice, it is a good starting point.
- *HigherEdJobs.com*. A web-based service, this serves as a clearinghouse for academic positions in many disciplines. Like the *Chronicle*, it is a good starting point. They have a specific link for criminal justice positions.
- *Academy of Criminal Justice Employment Bulletin*. The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) posts an employment bulletin, updated monthly, on its website. Only criminal justice jobs are posted.
- *American Society of Criminology Job Postings*. The American Society of Criminology (ASC) posts jobs on its website, updated on a rolling basis. Some postings are also listed in print form in *The Criminologist*. Only criminal justice jobs are posted; some ASC postings lean towards sociology, criminology, or law and society.
- *Conventions*. We strongly encourage job-seekers to attend the two national criminal justice conferences – ASC in the fall and ACJS in the spring. Both sponsor employment exchanges, where one set of binders contain job advertisements and another set contain candidate vitas. The organizations' websites provide further details as to how you may include your vita in the listings. Also, interviews are conducted at the conferences (see below), which is a great way to bring yourself to the attention of search committees.

- *Networking*. Word of mouth can guide you to job openings, and provide you with useful information not contained in the job advertisements. Let's face it – academia is political. Who you know can make a difference, and you can use inside information about a department (and its personalities) to your advantage in the application process. Conferences are a great place to develop and renew professional relationships that can lead to promising job information.
- *Local paper*. Some criminal justice departments will advertise in local papers. If this is done to the exclusion of all other ads, beware! This may be a means to (1) hold a position until future funding is available (and they really do not have a position open) or (2) the ad is meant for a specific person already selected (this can also be noted if you read a job ad that is so specific, only one person could possibly meet the requirements). Again, networking may actually make you *that* person.

Research, Research, Research

Once you have identified one or more promising advertisements, the real work begins. One of the greatest and most common failings of applicants is their lack of knowledge about the school and department to which they are applying. Do not assume that all criminal justice departments are similar to the one where you are currently working or studying! There is, in fact, a great deal of variation. You're seeking a criminal justice position – so play detective. Learn as much as you can about the school and the department, and make notes. Bring the notes to your interviews, in case you wish to refer to them. Your preparation will help you anticipate questions (and desired answers) and will also help you determine if a particular job is really for you. Here are some sources to consider:

- *Institution's Webpage*. Many questions can be answered on the institutional webpage, such as: How would you categorize the school and its priorities? What kinds of resources and facilities are available to faculty?

Is the library's criminal justice collection well-developed? What is the profile of the student body? What is the student-teacher ratio? (This may be misleading as some institutions may include a professor who has only 2 students in an independent study as part of the ratio calculations).

- *Department's Webpage*. Much information is available on the departmental webpage. Of particular note is any information about the faculty (particularly those members of the search committee) and their research and teaching interests, as well as information about program curricula.
- *Faculty Handbook*. Often available online, the institution's Faculty Handbook generally contains information about evaluations, tenure and promotion.
- *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Perhaps the most interesting pieces of information available from the *Chronicle* webpage are faculty salary data and research funding by institution.
- *Friends and Colleagues*. Ask around to learn about the school, its location, the department, its reputation, and its faculty. As noted above, any "inside" information can prove valuable. We often use colleagues at other institutions to give us the "dirt" on specific criminal justice departments (sometimes it is just fun to know).
- *Personal Contact*. Don't hesitate to make personal contact with someone at the school. You may have a legitimate question about the advertisement or the program, and making contact can show interest. It is not a bad idea to make contact *after* sending the necessary information to the institution. This can be done by phone or e-mail even to simply ask if your material has arrived. If nothing else, your name will be noted.

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

- *Visitation.* If convenient, you may even wish to visit the school. Continuing with the criminal justice theme - be an undercover detective. Walk campus, not as a prospective faculty member, but as a visitor. Ask questions to current students, such as "how do you like your classes?" or "how is the social life?" Questions should also be asked to staff members. Staff members often have a great "feel" of the campus environment and can offer much information. Examine the facilities first hand (library, classrooms, gym, etc.). Ride around the town. If you have an opportunity, check out housing in the area. Is it affordable? Is this a place you would feel comfortable?

Your Application Package

The contents of your application package provide your first chance to make an impression on the search committee. Prepare them wisely. Take care to include the material requested in the advertisement - and be careful to note that different positions will require different sets of materials. Some may require letters of references, while others require a list. Some may require writing samples, while others will not. Some may request a statement of teaching philosophy. Provide the materials that are requested. You may also supply one "extra" item, such as teaching evaluations (if not already requested) for a teaching institution, or a well-written paper (if not already requested) for a research institution. Don't go overboard, though, and supply a large dossier of material that was not requested. Doing so may be seen as grandstanding, and the committee may choose to disregard unsolicited material - and you as well.

Two items will always be requested: the cover letter and vita. As a general guideline, you should tailor both the cover letter and vita to the job for which you are applying. Doing so takes more time, but also shows the search committee that you care enough to address the specifics of a given position. This also can help your application rise to the top of the pile, by demonstrating how well you fit a particular position description. Here are some tips for cover letter and vita preparation:

- *Proofread.* Spelling and grammatical errors can result in the automatic rejection of an application; if you don't

care enough to proofread these materials, why should anyone believe you'll take care in preparing your research and courses? The cover letter and vita are a measure of your fit, and also of your communication skills and intellectual ability. Also, if you are using templates and/or boilerplate language in your letter, be sure the name and address of the school are correct. We had a friend who was applying to multiple universities, only to later discover that his cover letter listed the first college he had applied to; he failed to change the institution name for each cover letter. Needless to say, he did not receive a call!

- *Do not be too fancy.* The cover letter and vita should be printed on white paper, using a clear and easy-to-read font. The formatting should be attractive, but not cluttered.
- Your cover letter should open with a statement of why you want the job. What has attracted you to apply for this unique position, with this unique department? Next, address how you match the job description. What experiences have prepared you for this particular position? Tailor this to the institution. If it is a teaching institution, discuss teaching first. If it is a research institution, discuss research first. After reading the cover letter, the search committee should understand why you would be a good fit and how you will contribute to the criminal justice program, in the manner that the position announcement describes.
- Your vita should begin with your educational credentials. For a research institution, your research accomplishments should come first, after education. For a teaching institution, your teaching accomplishments should come first, after education. It is of paramount importance that your vita is well-organized! The reader should be able to glance through, noting specific headings and the items listed beneath them. While it is not ethical to pad your vita with fictitious or overstated accomplishments, it is acceptable to list

all of your accomplishments (i.e., all university committees, all conference papers, etc.). Unlike a resume, there is no page limitation for a vita.

- *Fill in the gaps.* If you have any time gaps, explain them. A friend at another college told the story of a criminal justice candidate who had a four year gap in his vita, only to discover that the candidate had been in prison during those years. The search committee was less concerned about his prison time than his failure to report the gap in his cover letter.
- *Contact your references before applying for a position.* If a letter is required, give plenty of advance notice. If no letter is required, it is still common courtesy to let them know that you have given their names as references. It is also useful to let your references know what positions you are applying for, and why. In other words, if you are leaving an institution for advancement, then make sure your reference knows that. You do not want the search committee to hear conflicting stories as to why you are seeking employment.

Preliminary Interviews

You may have the opportunity to participate in preliminary interviews. There are two forms of preliminary interviews, which serve different purposes.

- *The Conference Interview.* Some employers conduct interviews at ACJS and ASC conferences. The conference interview can be stressful for interviewer and interviewee, alike. The interviewers may speak to many potential candidates in a very short time. Likewise, candidates may elect to speak to many potential employers in a very short time. These interviews are usually brief (15-30 minutes), and the basic purpose is to gather enough information to report back to the full department or search committee. In many ways, this is a weeding-out process, in which attention will focus on a select few candidates. If you're lucky, a department will contact you and ask to meet you at the conference.

That means the department is interested in you, and that you may have made a short list of finalists for the position. Or, you can instigate the process. In the conference exhibit hall, there is usually a bulletin board with job listings and interview sign-ups. You simply sign up for the jobs you find interesting (some will have a copy of their ad attached to the sign-up sheet) and then meet at the appointed time and place to chat with a representative from the institution. It is important that you treat this as a professional interview! Dress appropriately, and if possible, do research on the institution (bringing a laptop can facilitate this process). Bring copies of a generic cover letter and vita (if you bring a laptop, you can always tailor the cover letter prior to the meeting). Prior to the conference, consult the ACJS and/or ASC web page(s) to learn how to have your vita included in the binders, so interviewers can learn about you and possibly seek you out.

- *The Telephone Interview.* Congratulations! If you've earned a telephone interview, you are on the short list – usually of four to six finalists. When approached for a telephone interview, schedule a time that is convenient for both you and the interviewer(s). Do not feel that you have to drop everything and do the interview “right now” – the expectation is that you will schedule a mutually agreeable time (give yourself time to thoroughly research the institution). Also, arrange to take the call at a place where you can talk freely. Barking dogs, crying babies, and whispers to avoid being overheard by your current chair, are all negatives. Sometimes, telephone interviews may seem impersonal. Often, the interviewers are reading questions from a script prepared by their Human Resource Department, which precludes chit-chat conversation. Do not take this as a negative – just do your best to answer the questions as clearly and directly as possible. Keep notes on the questions and your answers. If you are called back for an on-campus interview, you

will likely hear the same questions, and it is important that you give consistent answers (plus, the answers you gave earlier were apparently “right” enough to get you a campus interview, so you want to remember them!). After the interview, send the faculty members that you spoke to a personal (not mass) thank-you e-mail.

What Will They Ask?

Interview questions will, obviously, vary by school. However, here are a few favorites:

- Why are you interested in a faculty position here?
- If ABD: When will you complete your dissertation? What is it about?
- How could you contribute to this school's criminal justice program?
- Describe your teaching philosophy.
- What courses in our curriculum could you teach?
- Describe your research agenda. Describe what research you've done lately.
- Describe your professional background.
- How could you contribute to university service?
- Do you have any questions of us? You should *always* be prepared to ask questions. No doubt, the interview itself will provoke some. Here are some questions that search committees often anticipate; all are fair game:
 - o What is the tenure and promotion process?
 - o What are the expectations for teaching, research, and/or service?
 - o What is the pay range or benefits package? (Be careful here. It is not

wise to discuss money during the primary interview with the search committee. This discussion is probably best left to a private discussion with the criminal justice chairperson or the dean of the college – see Negotiations below).

- o What kinds of facilities and equipment are available to support your research and/or teaching?
- o Is the department collegial? (The answer is always “yes”. If you ask this question during the campus interview – see below - nonverbal cues between faculty members can be quite telling. Sometimes what is *not* being said is important!).
- o What is the town or surrounding area like?

Based on your research about the institution, you may have discovered buzzwords or issues likely to emerge during the interviews – for instance, you may find a department with a strong focus on student engagement, grant writing, or collaborative research. Use these to your advantage during the campus interview.

The Campus Interview

If you have been invited for a campus interview, then you are likely one of two or three final contenders for the position. Often, at this point all candidates meet the basic qualifications for the job. The final decision may be determined by that nebulous concept of which candidate best fits the needs or mission of the department. As with the entire process, the key is preparation.

Before you depart for the interview, be sure that you have discussed and thoroughly understand all arrangements. You should have a copy of the itinerary, flight information or driving directions, and contact information for someone in the department. Also, discuss the financial arrangements. Will you be expected to pay and be reimbursed? If so, what items, and what amount, may qualify for reimbursement? If you are currently working in another job, be sure you are prepared to take time off; arrange to have classes covered, and so on.

continued from page 7

Prepare yourself for an exhausting process. You will be “on,” making impressions that may be judged and subject to scrutiny, from airport to airport. Your first impression matters, so be sure that you arrive in business-causal attire, not shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. Know who you will be meeting, and what will be first on your itinerary. Bring notes about the department and the job with you; it is fair game to refer to them during the interview process (so long as you aren’t constantly checking or reading from them!). If you have to make any presentations, have those prepared well ahead of time. Even if your schedule budgets time for preparation or relaxation, do not assume that it will be sufficient! Your “free” time may be consumed by conversation, or you may need a break from the stress without worrying about an unfinished presentation.

You will meet the faculty of the department, either in a group and/or individually. You may also meet with a dean or vice-president of academic affairs. You may hear the same questions repeatedly. If so, answer them patiently and consistently. If someone asks you a question, it is new to them, even if you feel it’s a subject you’ve exhausted. Think carefully about questions that are posed – answer them clearly and without rambling. You will be judged not only on what you say, but also on how you say it. To borrow from sports, fans don’t remember the touchdowns – only the interceptions that lose the game. The same goes with faculty interviews. You could posit the definitive criminological theory with full empirical support, and then say something else that costs you the game.

You will probably make at least one presentation. Pay careful attention to the requested presentation; and realize that they are not all the same. A research institution may ask for a research presentation. These generally take the form of an extended conference presentation, made before the department’s faculty. You should anticipate critical questions and discussion. It is important that your subject shows innovation and the potential to contribute to both the discipline and to the department’s research mission. On the other hand, a teaching institution may ask for a teaching presentation. In this case, you should expect to essentially teach a class. You may select the topic, or it may be assigned (to keep with the course schedule). Either way, work to

engage your students, even if they are non-responsive. This will most likely be the rule, rather than the exception. Some students may treat you as if you were a middle school “substitute” teacher. One criminal justice candidate actually stood on a desk in an attempt to engage the students as Robin Williams did in the movie *Dead Poets Society*. The students reacted as if they were in the movie *Dawn of the Dead*. Showcase your best teaching presentation. For either type of presentation, be creative, don’t read from notes or PowerPoint slides, and show your enthusiasm. New faculty are often expected to bring innovation to a department – make sure your presentation shows that you can. If you will be evaluated by the students/faculty, ask to see the evaluation form prior to your presentation so you have a better understanding of expectations.

Throughout the process, convey confidence. This may be difficult for those fresh out of doctoral school, but remember that you are interviewing to become a *colleague*. If you have done your research, and are prepared for your interview, you should convey a familiarity with the program that makes you appear as a “natural” fit – or as if you’re already there. However, be careful not to convey cockiness. If you are applying as an already accomplished scholar, you certainly will have laurels to stand on, but this may be seen as threatening or be misinterpreted by some faculty. This is especially true of applicants for junior faculty positions. Departments often see it as their role to groom a junior faculty member, and this cannot happen if the candidate carries himself or herself arrogantly (or is perceived as such).

Finally, as you proceed through the interview process, view it as a two-way street. Not only is the criminal justice department interviewing you, but you are also interviewing them. After going through the process, you may conclude that you really don’t want to work there. And that’s fine – you’ve learned from the experience, and are the better for that. Also, watch for subtle hints of politics that may exist within the department. A friend applying for a position was asked by a senior faculty member, “Why do you actually want to work at this place?” He correctly took that as a sign that there were problems – indeed, he later learned that the department had a deep internal divide, and he was relieved not to have taken the job.

Negotiations

The machinations of search committees are sometimes difficult to understand. Candidates may be hired on the basis of collegiality or fit, which are difficult to quantify. If you do successfully clear the hurdles and get the job offer, negotiation is the next step. When you are offered the position, you may wish to negotiate – for a slightly higher salary, for special computer programs, for first-semester release time, for credit towards tenure, moving expenses (good luck on that one) and so on. Negotiation is often possible on some issues, but be prepared for a “no” answer. Don’t be afraid to make requests, so long as they are not unreasonable. Your previous research about the institution should give you enough baseline information to understand the types of negotiation that may be possible for you. Be smart and place things in perspective! Ask yourself if it is really worth turning down a great job offer for a few thousand dollars (when you figure it, by the time you divide the money over a 12 month period and take out taxes, you are only looking at a few dollars per pay check). On the other hand, if the dean is unwilling to negotiate, this may reflect a bigger campus financial (and morale) issue.

Conclusion

It should be clear that finding the right institution involves a lot of professional and personal reflection, as well as research. We recognize that the stakes are high. Therefore, it is important to begin your search based upon personal and professional fit. While relocation and establishing a new career path is difficult, the good news is that the criminal justice market is currently prime (thanks to celebrated criminal cases and popular television programming). Our purpose was to provide some helpful tips for those seeking a criminal justice faculty position and to that end we hope we have been successful. ■



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BOOK REVIEWS

Whitman, James Q. (2003). *Harsh Justice: Criminal Punishment and the Widening Divide between America and Europe.* *Oxford University Press.

REVIEWER: WILLARD M. OLIVER

Sam Houston State University

In the wake of the attacks in America on September 11, 2001, it became quite popular among Europeans to voice the sentiment that “we are all Americans today.” The quote has been attributed to Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski, but was echoed across Europe by all of the nation’s leaders, including French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and even France’s *Le Monde* Newspaper, a paper usually quite acerbic toward America. It would have appeared to any outsider that both Europe and the United States were joined together, friends united for fighting a common cause. Fast forward to the present day and it is no longer a picture of unison, but rather, one of opposite extremes. The “war on terrorism,” the “war in the gulf,” and the “war of union” (the European *Union* versus the *United States*), all serve to highlight the vast differences between the United States and our European brethren. If one were to look at this slice in time, 9-11 to present day, one would think that we rapidly moved from a strong unified relationship to a great divide in less than two years. According to a new book by Yale University Professor James Q. Whitman titled *Harsh Justice: Criminal Punishment and the Widening Divide between America and Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2003) this divide has actually been increasing for nearly half-a-century, at least in the area of criminal punishment. Explaining this divide is the purpose of Whitman’s provocative book.

Whitman, a comparative legal scholar with a Historian’s background, establishes the position that the American criminal justice system has become harsher since 1975, in terms of its punishment. While this is not a new thesis, nor a surprise to most scholars in the area of criminology and criminal justice, it is his thesis for explaining this rise in punitiveness that presents a unique perspective, but one that is difficult to articulate and support. Whitman argues that

America is short on mercy. He contends that America typically degrades its criminal offenders in the process of punishment by such acts as forcing those imprisoned to wear uniforms and denying felonious offenders the right to vote. He explains that America is harsh in criminalizing conduct, primarily in the area of commerce and sex, and in subjecting certain classes of people to potential criminal liability, mostly the “dangerous classes” and the poor. Moreover, America also has proven to be harsher in its punishment because it has become more inflexible as it moved toward determinate sentencing (e.g., Federal Sentencing Guidelines, “three-strikes” legislation, etc.). In sum, America is harsh in its laws, the enforcement of its laws, and its methods of punishment. And, because it does not show a high level of respect for its prisoners, is tentative in issuing pardons, and fails to protect prisoners’ privacy; it lacks mercy.

As Whitman’s method of study is a comparative history, the two countries he compares to America are France and Germany. The time period he reviews ranges from the eighteenth century, primarily beginning with the writings of Cesare Beccaria, to roughly the year 1975, his designated starting point for the widening divide. Whitman explains that both France and Germany, at least in the post World War II era, have become far more mild in their laws, more mild in the enforcement of their laws, and more mild in the application of these laws. In addition, related to the issue of mercy, Whitman attempts to show that these two countries provide more respectful treatment to its prisoners by securing their privacy and treating them with dignity. He highlights that in France all prisoners are referred to as “Monsieur” and in Germany “Herr” by the guards and prison administration. While he doesn’t specifically compare how American guards and administration refer to their prisoners, one’s imagination will probably have to suffice and having experienced a number of prisons and jails, one’s imagination would probably not be too far off the mark. In addition, France and Germany

are also noted for the high rate of pardons issued to their prisoners, all contributing to what Whitman deems the “respect for persons.”

The historical side of the comparison traces European views toward punishment from the eighteenth century as compared with America’s during the same time period. The main thrust of his short, albeit beneficial, historical review is that Europe, specifically France and Germany, have moved from a division of “high status” and “low status” punishments, where prisoners were treated differently depending upon their social status, to treating all prisoners as “high status” offenders. Whitman is enamored with the French handling of Voltaire when he was sentenced to prison and served time in the Bastille in the eighteenth century. Voltaire, being of the “higher class,” served time in a room of adequate proportion, equipped with a writing table and supplies, and surrounded by books. The “lower classes” were sentenced to dank dark cells, provided inadequate prison space, and were treated very poorly. Over time, France and Germany, especially in the post World War II era, have moved toward treating all offenders with “high status” punishment. America, on the other hand, moved toward a more egalitarian society, where, regardless of class, all prisoners are treated equally and generally with “low status” punishment.

This widening divide in punishment between America and France/Germany has come about for several reasons. Whitman’s thesis, again, highlights that Americans are low on mercy, while Europeans are high on mercy. Americans are harsher in their laws, enforcement, and punishment because they lack mercy, whereas Europeans are far less harsh, because they are more merciful.

Whitman also offers a second thesis in his book, one that calls for some reflection, but is not well developed. The second thesis postulates that both French and German politics insulates the state from populist demands by giving the bureaucracy independent power to establish the policies for its system of punishment. Hence, European states have more power and have managed to move the punishment of all offenders to

continued on page 10

continued from page 9

“high status” treatment, regardless of popular will. America’s political system, on the other hand, responds to the populist will and hence when the citizenry demands harsher punishments, the politicians respond with harsher laws, tougher enforcement, and stricter and more degrading punishments. Hence, the difference in the conception of equality and state power contributes to the differences in these countries.

There are a number of criticisms regarding this book that should be noted. The minor complaints include the fact that the book is highly repetitive throughout and was in need of better editing than it received. This may have been due to the desire to get the book published as the divisions between the United States and France and Germany was beginning to escalate over the war with Iraq. Another minor complaint was Whitman’s annoying habit of referring to Europe as “the continent.” While this reference to Europe appears to be creeping into journalistic jargon, its use within a historical comparative analysis is simply annoying to the reader, but also suggests a non-neutral bias. This bias does become quite evident throughout the book. Whitman does little to hide his admiration for all things Europe which begins to negate some of the neutrality he asserts when establishing his study. And finally, the last of the most annoying habits Whitman has, which most of the time serves to highlight his pro-European position, is his nasty habit of inserting numerous parenthetical asides which are generally his idea of witty criticisms of the American system. In fact, Whitman can barely write a page or two without inserting some aside all of which serves to downgrade the legitimacy of his argument.

Moving beyond the minor irritants, perhaps the first true criticism is his explanation that his research is comparative in nature. Whitman states that he intends to compare the United States with the two European countries of France and Germany and then proceeds to compare them. He does this, without any justification for why he selected these two countries, nor does he provide any comparative data between the countries. He fails to explain any differences between the countries political, social and economic systems. He fails to provide any discussion of their demographics or respective histories. And, even worse, despite claims that his is a “comparative legal history,” he fails to adequately address the *legal* history, but remains close to the history of punishment, all of which is well-

trodden ground. Good research should explain why the specific countries are being compared and provide data regarding the differences and similarities between these countries. Whitman ignores this and makes some broad assumptions that the reader will buy into his comparisons. This reader did not, for France and Germany are vastly different from the United States and are perhaps more comparable to New York and California, rather than the entire United States—Case in point. He highlights America’s increased harshness in the law and he cites “one example is renewed efforts to crackdown on prostitution” (p. 63). He fails to explain where these crackdowns are, but the endnotes indicate New York and Chicago. Having just returned from Las Vegas recently, I can attest that while prostitution in that city may be illegal, they certainly appear to be quite relaxed for it appears to be legal for people, even children around 10 or 11, to pass out solicitations for prostitution. So, while New York and Chicago may be “cracking down,” Las Vegas appeared to this visitor to be quite, in Whitman’s words, “mild” about the enforcement of that crime. Comparing America with France and Germany seems somewhat disingenuous. Comparing America with the European Union would be more legitimate, but then again, that would most likely change the nature of Whitman’s study.

One of the most glaring problems with Whitman’s book is not what he includes in the analysis of his thesis, but rather what he leaves out either by choice or neglect. While his thesis discusses the degradation of prisoners, that is “to reduce another person in status, to treat another person as *inferior*” (p. 8), he chooses to put aside the issue of race and slavery for his discussion. Yet, he cannot but help coming back to the issue of American slavery and German Nazism repeatedly throughout the book. For instance, after telling the reader on page 6 that “leaving race, Christianity and violence to one side, this book will focus on two quite different aspects of American culture: on American patterns of *egalitarian social status* and on American patterns of *resistance to state power*,” he then tells the reader on page 11 that much of America’s emphasis on low-status punishment “is bound up with the history of American slavery in ways that have to be carefully traced and carefully weighed,”

neither of which he does. Rather than evade these issues, Whitman would have been better served attacking them head-on, for if American slavery and German Nazism do not represent the worst degradation of human beings, then this author is not sure what would.

Another area of avoidance by Whitman is in the area of religion. He bases his thesis on the issue of mercy. Mercy is inherently a religious concept and one that is rooted in the Judeo-Christian religions. Once again, Whitman fails to incorporate the historical and legal roots that the Judeo-Christian religions have had on all three countries. Rather, he presents a very secular representation of the history of punishment and chooses to leave Christianity aside for the analysis in his book. Which then becomes very inexplicable in the face of the last paragraph of his book’s conclusion which states that “if mildness comes to America, it seems more likely to come from a different quarter entirely: from our Christian tradition” (p. 207). If this is Whitman’s conclusion, how did he get there when his analysis intentionally excluded Christianity in his opening pages?

Further exclusion from the pages of Whitman’s book has to do with the political, economic, and social aspects of the three countries in his analysis. Here a discussion of the demographics and political systems of each country, compared and contrasted, would have served the reader to understand the differences and similarities between these countries. Recognizing the vast political differences would have served to at least place some of the differences in Whitman’s second thesis, regarding the power of the state, in context. But, he fails to provide any context in his comparative analysis, thus raising questions about his methodology. In addition, economic differences play a key role in this relationship between the public, the state, and their respective criminal justice system, but he fails to address this concern. Finally, while Whitman does discuss culture as an influence and clearly focuses on the social issue of class, he fails to provide a full analysis of other social and cultural factors that explain the differences between America, France and Germany.

Finally, one additional oversight on the part of Whitman that is part and parcel to his thesis and that is his point of separation between America and the two European countries. Whitman claims that the coun-

tries began drifting apart in 1975. His explanation for this starting point lies in the post-1975 activities in America. It is at this point that the prison boom commences and America begins to imprison a higher number of Americans with each succeeding year, culminating in more than two million imprisoned by the turn of the century/millennium. The post-1975 time period is also marked by a growing movement toward tougher punishment and the “just deserts” model of criminal justice. While this is assuredly correct, Whitman fails to respond to why this was occurring and completely overlooks the pre-1975 period. In fact, his entire post World War II history is severely lacking. Had he paid attention to this time frame he would have had to deal with a number of issues, the simplest being that crime began to rise dramatically throughout the 1960s and peaked in the 1970s. In addition, America was undergoing an enormous amount of political, social, and economic change during this time period. Whitman explains that what we should look at is “historical sociology” in order to help understand his analysis, yet he ignores some very important “historical sociology” readily available to any reader. I would suggest, at a minimum, Whitman should have read Gary LaFree’s *Losing Legitimacy: Street Crime and the Decline of Social Institutions in America* (Westview, 1998).

Turning to the more specific theses that Whitman lays out tends to generate more concern. He repeatedly, with great excess, claims how dignified German and French prisons are and how respectful prison management is to the inmates. He even highlights his visits to both French and German prisons, although with no mention of having visited any American prisons. Yet, after explaining how dignified these places are he then tells the reader that “these ambitions do not make French prisons humane places . . . life in French prisons is very rough” (p. 86). This type of contradiction is rife throughout Whitman’s book causing his thesis to lose further legitimacy. But pressing on, Whitman talks about how such things as allowing prisoners to wear their own clothes, rather than prison garb and the respectful addressing of prisoners by guards provide a much more dignified environment for prisoners than what is found in America. At the point of total frustration with his focus on these minor matters he inserts the statement “Yet if my American readers find these dignitary issues to be

minor matters, that only shows that they are American readers. If American readers find these issues to be minor ones, that fact only effectively poses the question of this book all the more sharply: Why are American perceptions different, and with what consequences?”(p.87)? As an American reader, I will have to admit he managed to catch my attention on that statement. However, after further reflection it is a tautological defense for his thesis and not necessarily one that provides any substantive defense to his argument.

Whitman then focuses heavily on the egalitarian notions of Americans which becomes one aspect of his explanation for why American perceptions are different. He asserts that Americans try to treat everyone equally without regard to status or ability and thus treat all criminals equal by playing to the lowest common denominator. As a result we become far more punitive in nature. Americans try to punish everyone with “low status” punishments, while Europeans try to punish everyone with “high status” punishments. His criticism of egalitarianism reaches a point of absurdity for America’s egalitarianism comes to be blamed for all of the harshness found in America without any consideration for the various factors, previously described, that shape these beliefs. In fact, his criticism of egalitarianism and the public will shaping American politics, and hence criminal laws, appears to be more of a criticism of American democracy than a criticism of America’s sentiment for an egalitarian society. Because Europeans have insulated their bureaucratic structures from the popular will, he suggests that America would be best served by copying their example. The problem here is that removing the public from the debate and relying solely on the American bureaucracy may not necessarily alleviate the harshness in America as it did in Europe, but may rather serve to exacerbate the harshness of the system. In either event, there is little justification for any policy position in Whitman’s book.

Despite the shortcomings of Whitman’s book, his strong points are when he puts on the historian’s hat and removes his “legal” and “comparative” hats. His history of punishment in both countries is solid, moving the reader from the eighteenth century to World War II in all three countries. His post World War II history, however, as previously mentioned, is greatly lacking.

However, one should not pick up Whitman’s book merely for the history as there are numerous other volumes that would serve the reader more directly. The primary reason for picking up Whitman’s book is found in his ability to introduce to the reader a new perspective on America’s increasing punitiveness and getting the reader to contemplate his perspective. Whether one agrees with Whitman or not his book does promote a healthy debate, is at times controversial, and is most certainly provocative. While I would not recommend this book for undergraduates, I do believe that graduate students would be well served in reading this book for it manages to do the one thing a good book should do and that is to get one to think and contemplate about our American system of criminal justice.

**The author would like to thank his mother-in-law, Ilaria Fellers, for the gift of Whitman’s book. While I didn’t always agree with it, I did enjoy reading it.* ■

Pattillo, Mary, Weiman, David, & Western, Bruce (eds.). (2004). *The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

REVIEWER: VIVIAN PACHECO
Rutgers University

This book of essays examines the impact that incarceration has on families and communities, concentrating especially on the critical issue of former inmates’ reentry into the community after release. Topics range from the rupture of bonds between incarcerated parents and their families, to their relationships specifically with their children, to the disenfranchisement of felons and their employment prospects. The issue of “reentry” has received recent attention due to the huge number of inmates currently scheduled to be released from prison (Camp and Camp, 1998). The successful placement of former inmates in the community has always been one of the goals of parole and probation, but this goal has not always been a priority. This book highlights the need for greater collaboration between correctional agencies and community agencies, such as family services, educational, job training and mental health programs (p.17).

The book considers incarceration in a larger context than the usual punitive aspect. Essays personalize the problems that pris-

continued from page 11

oners and former prisoners must endure during their period of imprisonment and reentry. Each of the studies recognizes different features of prisoners: they are fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, spouses, neighbors, workers, employees, and citizens (p.11). These features are categorized into two parts of the book, Part I "Families" and Part II "Communities."

One of the very effective aspects of these essays is that they are reports of studies that used a variety of both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the consequences of mass incarceration. Part I covers the relationship between incarcerated parents and their children. An introduction discusses the rapid increase of single-parent families and the growth of the male population in prison (p.22). In chapter 2, Western, Lopoo and McLanahan used statistical data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to investigate if incarceration weakens parental bonds, while Edin, Nelson and Paranal (chapter 3) use in-depth interviews to explain the reason that "fatherhood combined with fear of being locked up acts as a deterrent to future criminal activity" (p.48). Ann Nurse (chapter 4) complements Edin, Nelson and Paranal's research by investigating the relationship between incarcerated juvenile fathers and their children. Nurse's data were comprised of surveys administered to paroled juvenile fathers and in-depth interviews and observations from parenting classes offered to the juvenile parolees. These three sources of data allowed for an in-depth look at what affected the involvement of paroled fathers with their children. The last chapter of the family section used the 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities. Johnson and Waldfogel identified risk factors faced by children with incarcerated parents. They also set out to see whether these risk factors predict where the child would live while the parent is imprisoned.

The second section of the book focuses on the overall social and economic effects of incarceration, and the strength of using different types of data sources is evident here, too. All the subsequent chapters test the consequences of incarceration on the communities, public safety and on the former prisoners themselves. In chapter six, Lynch and Sabol set out to investigate empirically the association between incarceration and informal social control in specific neighborhoods. Uggen and Manza use survey data and interviews to shed light on the political

disenfranchisement of felons. Their interviews with felons and former inmates also allowed Uggen and Manza to draw a profile on ex-inmates' political tastes, preferences and political participation, finding that except for the participation barred by their felony convictions, inmates' preferences do not vary much from the political attitudes of the general public. Holzer, Raphael and Stoll explore one of the most important factors associated with a successful reentry to a community: employment (Seiter and Kadela, 2003). They used a survey collected through the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, which collected telephone surveys and information from more than three thousand employers. The main questions on the survey were used to identify the willingness of employers to hire ex-convicts and whether employers use background checks. Finally, Jeremy Travis ends the book by using the "reentry perspective" to call for more accountability from a variety of agencies in the community to help former inmates have a successful return to society.

What emerges from "Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration," is a humanistic view of the problems that are faced by an incarcerated population. Former inmates are often treated as third class citizens. This collection of studies found demographic statistics that concur with recent trends, an overrepresentation of poor, minority men in the prison population. It looks at prisoners in another light than as the nasty, soulless criminals often conveyed by other literature. Fatherhood, for instance, is examined in chapters two, three and four, using the life course perspective to investigate whether becoming a parent serves as a turning point that will keep these young men away from a criminal life. The anecdotal data from these studies powerfully conveys the experience of new fathers: "She changed my life a lot. I was headed down the wrong path...but ever since she's been born, I've slowed down a lot" (p.55). This was described by Edin, Nelson and Paranal as the salvation theme or motif. Nevertheless, not all fathers were "saved by their children."

One of the excellent aspects of the book is that it includes a study on disenfranchisement of prisoners and former prisoners. In discussions about reentry, this topic is often omitted. Most reintegration efforts are geared towards basic human needs such as housing, employment, physical and psychological help, etc. The book takes into ac-

count the political impact that may be lost when parolees are not allowed to vote. The inclusion of disenfranchisement among prisoners and former inmates adds another problem that should be dealt with during the reentry efforts. Uggen and Manza shed light on an issue that is often overshadowed by other factors more widely known to contribute to re-offending, but which deserves attention because of its debilitating impact on the community to which the ex-offenders must turn for social support.

Finally, Jeremy Travis ties together all the chapters by calling for more policies that will allow for efficient reintegration of former inmates. Each study in the book conveyed the need for a more resourceful governmental policy between the collaboration of correctional facilities and community agencies. This book can serve as a method to influence those in power to change policies, but it is also useful for the regular citizen who is interested to know more about issues that relate to inmates coming back into their communities. The title of this book fits its content perfectly, and it raises important questions so that more people can become aware of the fact that integrating the great numbers of released ex-offenders back into their communities is an urgent task that must be tackled head-on immediately!

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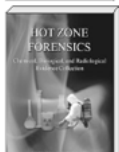
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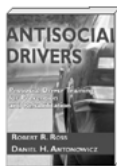
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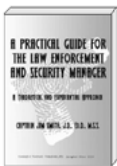
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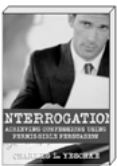
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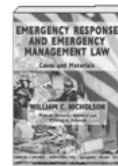
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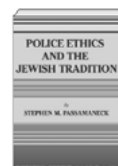
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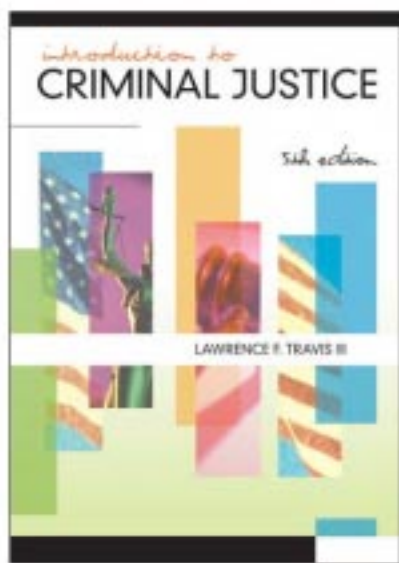
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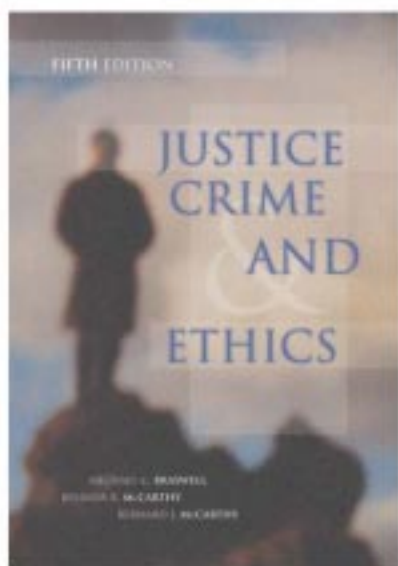
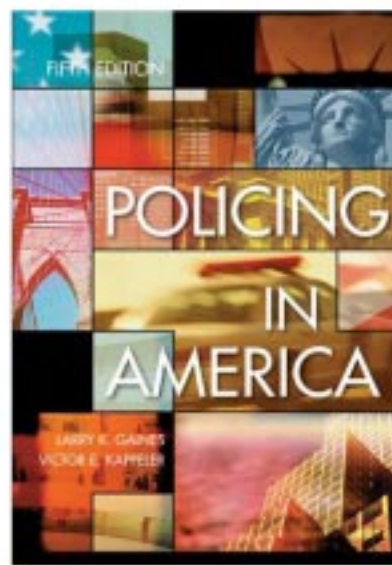
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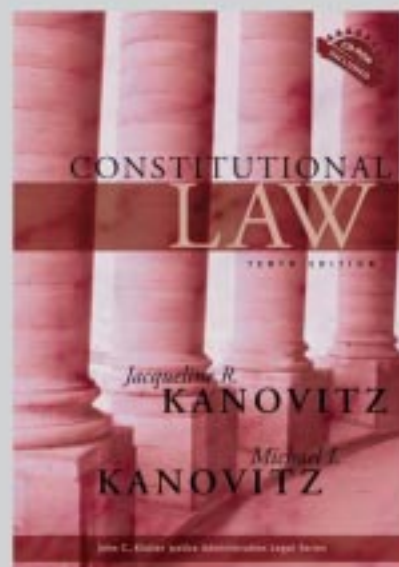
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