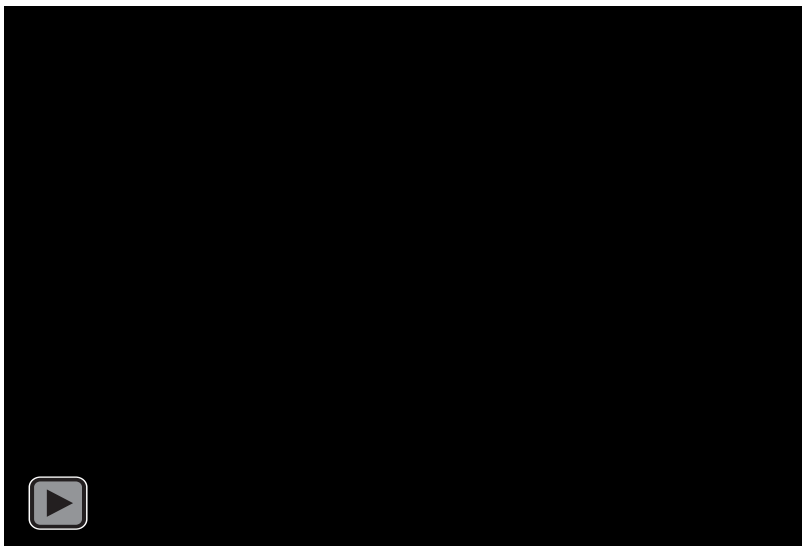


# ACJS *today*

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Newsletter



## Updates from 2022–2023 ACJS President Denise Paquette Boots, PhD



The video above can also be viewed [here](#).

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## The Lived Experience of Women in Romantic Relationships with Incarcerated Individuals: A Brief Report

*By Eman Tadros, PhD, Sarah Presley, and Eunice Gomez*

Incarceration impacts romantic relationships in a multitude of areas and maintaining a relationship can be extremely difficult. Incarceration limits intimacy, specifically sexual intimacy (Harman et al., 2007). It is difficult to arrange visits or have consistent contact through phone calls due to the financial cost of these activities (Harman et al., 2007). Individuals often experience negative emotions such as loneliness and isolation (DeClaire et al., 2020). Additionally, for those incarcerated who also experience mental illness, the impact of their mental illness on the relationship can be detrimental (Mulvey et al., 2019). The likelihood of divorce also increases significantly when a husband is arrested for a crime and ultimately incarcerated (Skipper et al., 2020). Further, navigating a romantic relationship may add a layer of stress to the reentry process as individuals are trying to balance finding employment and housing and returning to a relationship with a different dynamic (Wallace et al., 2020). Particularly for men, the need to support a romantic partner, along with the challenges of managing a job, frequently leads to recidivism (Wyse et al., 2014). Through the behaviors a partner engages in, romantic relationships may provide a gateway to crime (Wyse et al., 2014). The purpose of this study

is to understand the lived experiences of those who are romantically involved with an incarcerated individual through an online support group on Facebook as well as understand the needs of those who are in a romantic relationship.

Although incarceration can be stressful to navigate and provides many hardships, for others it can be beneficial for their romantic relationship. Five themes emerged during this study: stigma, mental health services, suggestions, impact of incarceration, and limitations. Stigma, the first theme, follows an individual and their family both during and after incarceration because news spreads within their communities and people are more inclined to dismiss incarcerated people as unworthy of their respect. Further, stigma may put a strain on personal relationships, frequently putting people affected in uncomfortable situations that need cautious navigating around sensitive subjects (Park & Tietjen, 2021). This shame may lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, as relationships are often negatively impacted by the stigma surrounding incarceration. Additionally, incarceration may make it challenging for people to find jobs after their release, a challenge that will become harder as the number of incarcerations increases (Fahmy et al., 2021).

In the second theme, mental health services, participants expressed a desire for stronger support services to preserve and strengthen the family bond. Prior literature has shown that attending therapy is helpful in improving familial relationships (Tadros et al., 2020). For incarcerated individuals, being engaged in a romantic relationship has many benefits both during and after incarceration. The likelihood of recidivism is reduced, and overall well-being of the incar-



cerated individual is increased during incarceration (DeClaire et al., 2020). Receiving emotional support can assist incarcerated individuals in managing their stress and committing to avoiding disciplinary punishment while incarcerated (Wyse et al., 2014).

Suggestions, the third theme, encompasses the input given by those involved with an incarcerated individual on how to improve their experience navigating incarceration. Participants wished to have more communication as well as more physical time together. Literature shows that the focus on communication to maintain closeness with an incarcerated partner results in stronger emotional bonds and overall better relationship quality (Nickels, 2020). Additionally, the incarcerated individual receives more frequent visits, has fewer symptoms of depression, and engages in less rule-breaking behavior. The incarcerated individuals who receive support from close relational others are protected by the belief that they are cared for, and they are therefore able to cope with the various problems connected with incarceration (Nickels, 2020). Our findings showed that the impact of incarceration, the fourth theme, can be positive as a few individuals had a positive outlook on their experience regarding the incarceration of their romantic partner. This included bonding experience, giving kids their full attention, getting to know their partner on a deeper level, and making them closer. Incarceration can also be beneficial when it disrupts poor lifestyle aspects such as substance abuse (Edin et al., 2004). Additionally, it can be an opportunity to restore a healthy relationship with the mother of their child (Edin et al., 2004). However, there are not very many benefits to incarceration, and the overall litera-

ture demonstrates that incarceration of a male increases the likelihood that his female partner will separate from him and even date another person (Turney & Wildeman, 2012). Some participants felt lonely because they started to feel disconnected from others. The repercussions of incarceration carry over into family life, affecting not just currently and formerly imprisoned men, but also their female partners' employment.

Finally, the fifth theme, limitations, discussed participants' concerns about physical barriers, limited time, financial barriers, and restrictions. Many family members find it hard to contact and visit their partners due to prison restrictions on interactions and expensive visitation and telephone costs (Harman et al., 2007). A limited but growing body of studies has looked into the advantages for children of having contact with a jailed parent. Contact may provide an opportunity for children to express their negative feelings about an ambiguous loss (Shlafer et al., 2020). Further, COVID-19 has dramatically impacted incarceration; for example, visitation hours in various prisons have been reduced or canceled (Iturri et al., 2020). Other restrictions participants mentioned were emails being delayed and the prisons not allowing family visits. Maintaining relationships is crucial during incarceration because increased family connectivity is predicted by greater contact with family (Folk et al., 2019). Participants also expressed that emails can take a while to be approved, which prevents these messages from being read in real time.

### **Clinical Implications and Future Directions**

The majority of family-focused interventions for incarcerated individuals are case management



and psychoeducational programs provided in the community after release. Some do not require the direct involvement of family members (Fontaine et al., 2014). It has also been advocated that gender-responsive feminist family therapy be provided to strengthen family relationships when a man is incarcerated (Umamaheswar & Tadros, 2021). Therapists, specifically systemic therapists, can help families transition in and out of jail by reducing interpersonal conflict, increasing trust, and negotiating family expectations and responsibilities (Tadros et al., 2019). A proper treatment plan cannot be developed without first joining and learning about a family's unique interactional patterns and structure (Tadros et al., 2020). With correctional facilities expanding access to video visits for incarcerated people and their families, these video services might be utilized for relationship therapy (Tadros, Aguirre, et al., 2021).

In order to deepen relationships and enhance family dynamics, future studies should concentrate on strategies to enhance the experience of individuals in a romantic relationship while the partner is incarcerated as well as the effects on family systems. Social support is crucial to enhancing positive outcomes for those returning from incarceration, and future research should focus on the various forms of social support (family, friends, programs, reentry services) to evaluate and discuss the gaps in these services. One of the most important factors affecting children's well-being both during and after incarceration is relationships. Other important factors include coparenting, financial hardship, and substance misuse. Programs should strive to include fathers because incarceration of fathers is frequently linked to poor outcomes for children. They should

also take into consideration the challenges associated with a parent's reentry and go through a review process (Turney & Goodsell, 2018). In terms of obstacles, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the nonincarcerated partner along with their families by resulting in policy changes concerning the contact that imprisoned people may have with their families (Dallaire et al., 2021; Tadros, Aguirre, et al., 2021). Duwe and McNeeley (2021) demonstrate the notion that video visits can be just as effective as in-person visits in reducing recidivism. Additional studies could expand on the use of video visits as means of social support for those incarcerated. Given that the findings of this study and other research indicate that both forms of visitation are linked with lower recidivism, correctional organizations should try to maximize the utilization of both in-person and video visits. ■

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**Eman Tadros, PhD** is an assistant professor and the Marriage and Family Counseling Track Leader at Governors State University in the Division of Psychology and Counseling. She is a licensed marriage and family

therapist, MBTI certified, and an AAMFT Approved Supervisor. She is the Illinois Family TEAM leader advocating for MFTs and individuals receiving systemic mental health services. Her research focuses on incarcerated couples and families.



**Sarah Presley** is a second-year master’s in social work student at The Ohio State University, focusing on mental health and substance abuse. Her research interests focus on the intersection of the criminal justice system and

mental health, specifically the impacts of incarceration

on mental health and the services provided during incarceration.



**Eunice Gomez** received her bachelor degree in psychology with a minor in addictions. She is a graduate student at Northeastern Illinois University. She majors in educational leadership and administration with a focus on higher education and Latinx student success. Her research interests include bilingual education, incarcerated populations, and social justice in education.

and social justice in education.



## Nicole E. Rader's *Teaching Fear: How We Learn to Fear Crime and Why It Matters*

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY PRESS

ISBN-13: 978-1-4399-2102-9

Review by Beth Gaines

In *Teaching Fear*, author Nicole Rader has us consider how the discourse surrounding crime myths, such as “stranger danger,” has taught us to fear victimization in our everyday lives. Rader offers a well-researched and thoughtful exploration into how it is we come to fear the threat of victimization. In six well-organized chapters, she highlights how crime myths are taught and perpetuated through the media, parenting, schools, and the criminal justice system. Through interviews, Rader explores why people fear victimization and how they deal with perceived threats. She invites us, particularly those of us who are Gen Xers, to take a walk down memory lane to think about what lessons we were taught as children about crime. Beginning with the images of missing children on milk cartons, to school lessons about “stranger danger,” we have been taught to fear dangerous possibilities outside the safety of our own home. However, Rader reminds us that statistics tell us that crimes are more likely to occur at the hands of someone we know, rather than a stranger. Therefore, the focus on the stranger as a threat has led many of us to fear people we don't know. Crime myths, therefore, have the potential to cause more fear in us rather than to actually prevent victimization.

Rader begins by explaining how crime myths are created and maintained through the concept

of “stranger danger” (Chapter 1), the idea that unfamiliar individuals may pose a threat to us. We are taught, from a very young age, to fear those we do not know, for fear of kidnapping, or worse. What is important to point out, and Rader does such a great job of doing so, is how fear of crime is a gendered phenomenon, considered a “woman's issue.” It is women, not men, who are taught to be aware of their surroundings, particularly after dark. As children, girls are taught to fear while boys are taught to take risks. This leads to women becoming vulnerable while men become aggressive. Additionally, crime myths are racialized. As Rader explains, the images of victims of crime are often those of white women. Rarely does the media focus on the stories of victimized women of color. For example, shows such as *Dateline* and *20/20* more often than not tell the stories of missing white women. Rader argues that it is through this false discourse that crime myths are perpetuated to represent one type of victim, that of the white woman. Crime myths, therefore, have led to victim-centered crime prevention myths that make the woman responsible for victimization rather than looking at the crime itself as the problem.

Rader's focus on how crime myths are taught is quite thorough as she looks at parenting, what is being taught in schools about crime, as well as how the media projects fear (Chapter 2). She explains how fear of crime is passed on to children from parents not only in the gendered fashion of teaching girls to be cautious and boys to be adventurous but also in the gendered roles of parents. Rader argues that mothers *tell* their children what to fear while fathers *show* their

children what to fear. An example of this is how mothers may tell their daughters to be careful and stay away from strangers and fathers show how to manage fear by being seen as the protector of the family. The role that schools play in teaching children about crime is through crime prevention campaigns of “stranger danger” and the growing focus on school shooting drills. While school shootings are rare, the threat is always there, and therefore schools must take precautions for such events. However, Rader argues that such drills may actually be creating more fear in children rather than alleviating it through preparedness. Lastly, it is the media’s often non-contextual, oversimplified telling of crimes that lead to false ideas of what and who we need to fear. Rader then walks us through how many of us implement preventative measures in our daily lives, such as carrying guns or mace, taking self-defense courses, or installing home security systems. Many individuals, mostly women, also avoid going out alone after dark, or when they do, use the “buddy system” of going places with a companion or calling/texting upon arrival at their destination. This overabundance of precaution also leads to many individuals avoiding certain places altogether. Rader offers a critical analysis of how these preventative measures perpetuate notions of victim blame and the social control of women.

Perhaps what I found most intriguing about this book is Rader’s look at how Gen Xers are now raising their Gen Z children with the safety precautions learned decades ago. Because the fear

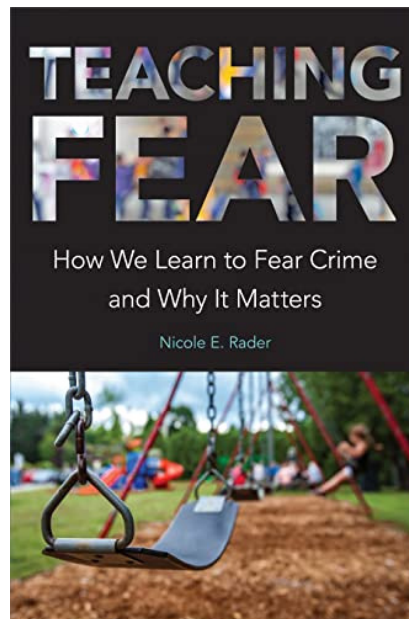
of “stranger danger” was so heavily taught in the 70s and 80s, many Gen Xers have become paranoid and are now acting as “bubble wrap” or “helicopter” parents (Chapter 4). By focusing on the outcome of crime rather than the source of the risk, parents continue to use safety lessons from the past. By being overprotective of their children, parents are weakening the decision-making process required of children to navigate difficult situations. Additionally, Gen Z children are facing new sources of crime through the Internet and

social media that Gen Xers did not have to deal with as children. This learning curve for parents is creating new opportunities to instill crime myths surrounding the “new bogeyman,” the unknown individual that children may meet online.

Rader then focuses her attention on the children, exploring what they are learning and fearing about crime (Chapter 5). She found that many children are relying on adults (parents, teachers, law enforcement) to decide who or what is dangerous to them.

“Stranger danger” is still recognized by many children as a threat that needs to be prevented or avoided. Children are experiencing higher levels of security at schools than ever before, which can lead to more fear or even indifference to threats like school shootings or bullying.

Finally, Rader leaves us with suggestions on how we all can learn to teach fear better (Chapter 6). She encourages us to teach that we are all worthy victims of crime, regardless of our gender or race, and therefore need to stop suggesting that





white women are the only ones at risk. Parents can begin teaching gender-neutral safety values that offer tools for all children to navigate difficult situations. Rader encourages all of us to have accurate conversations about crime with children and to be open to understanding how kids are different than we were some decades ago.

Overall, I found this book to be thought provoking as it provided a lens into how fear is created and maintained through those who are entrusted with our safety. I particularly appreciate how Rader has given us a book that is written in accessible language that can be understood by all, including parents, teachers, and law enforcement. By doing so, she offers an invaluable tool for us to learn from and use as we begin to dispel crime myths and the fears they create as we encounter an ever-changing social world. ■



**Beth Gaines** is a recent graduate of the University of South Florida where she received her Master's Degree in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies.

Her thesis, titled "Going Flat: Challenging Gender, Stigma and Cure Through the Lesbian Breast Cancer Experience" looks at how gender and sexuality impact the surgical decisions of breast cancer patients. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. that will allow her to expand her research to include the experiences of other sexual and gender minority individuals as they navigate their health and healthcare in a society rooted in heteronormative ideals of femininity. Beth is also an Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at USF where she teaches "The Politics of Women's Health."





Please make sure you [register](#) in advance for the **ACJS 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, March 14 – 18, 2023, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, MD. The discounted rate ends February 6**, so if you haven't already done so, hurry to save on your registration fee!

As a registered attendee, sponsor, and/or exhibitor of the Annual Meeting, you will be able to enjoy the beauty of this wonderful resort hotel, tons of nearby shops, a variety of restaurants, and exciting nightlife. Also, this elite meeting will showcase a wide range of session topics, social events, and provide you time to interact with educators and practitioners from around the country.

To view/download a list of sessions, workshops, and special events, visit the ACJS website at <https://www.acjs.org/page/2023AMDraftProgram>. **If you are a presenter, remember the deadline to submit any corrections or changes to the program co-chairs ([2023acjsprogram@gmail.com](mailto:2023acjsprogram@gmail.com)) is January 16. \*This is a hard deadline.**

#### **NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF ACJS**

The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences **General Business Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16, 2023, from 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, 201 Waterfront Street, National Harbor, MD, in ballroom National Harbor 9.** Please join us to hear from Executive Board Officers regarding current and future plans, fiscal outlook, and more.

***Interested in Exhibiting during the 60th ACJS Annual Meeting?*** Find out how you can become an Exhibitor and invest with your target audience by visiting the Exhibits page - <https://www.acjs.org/page/ExhibitsACJSAnnual2023>.

Sponsorship Opportunities - <https://www.acjs.org/page/AnnualSponsor2023>

Advertising Opportunities - <https://www.acjs.org/page/AnnualAdvertising2023>



# MEET THE ACJS STAFF

- Tell us what your role is in ACJS and how long have you worked with ACJS.
- What is background before you joined ACJS?
- What is the favorite part of your job?
- When you aren't working with ACJS, what are your hobbies?
- Share something that our members would be surprised to know about you.

## JOHN WORRALL

"I have worked part-time as Executive Director since 2017. Prior to that, I held elected positions in both WACJ and ACJS. I joined ACJS in the mid-1990s, when I was working on my Political Science PhD at Washington State University. I have been part of ACJS for my entire academic career. I enjoy working behind the scenes to implement Board directives and promote the long-term financial health of the Academy. And the travel is a nice perk! Skiing is my #1 passion, but I also enjoy playing my guitars, golfing, mountain



biking, fishing, and exploring new places. I also have a bad case of DIY Syndrome, but the savings help support my hobbies!"

## LETISCIA PERRIN



"I am the Association Manager. I started with ACJS September 2018. I grew up in the Washington Metropolitan area. I am a graduate of the University

of Maryland College Park. I began my professional career in 1995 and have worked in the non-profit association market since 2001. My responsibilities have centered around conference planning, marketing, membership recruitment/retention, and governance for associations ranging in size from 1,200 to 40,000. My favorite part of the job is meeting so many nice people. I also enjoy knowing all the months of hard work, usually wearing multiple hats, has made an impact that others can see and find meaningful. In my spare time, I like to spend time with my family. I enjoy any activity that keeps us laughing and making fond memories. I also love the ocean and being in the water; I can't really swim, so it's a little risky, LOL!"

## CHARANJIT (JEET) SINGH



"I am the assistant to the President and to the First Vice-President of ACJS. I have worked in this role since April 2020. I am currently a

graduate student in the criminal justice program at the University of Baltimore. Prior to joining ACJS, I was a graduate assistant to Dr. Heather Pfeifer, the Immediate Past President, who brought me with her to assist in her role. Our current President, Dr. Denise Boots, hired me to continue to serve as her assistant. I plan to further my studies in a doctoral program next year while continuing to work with ACJS. I am a people person and enjoy hearing other's different perspectives. One of my responsibilities is to directly communicate with our members and volunteers which has become my favorite part of this job. When I am not working, I love to travel. I also enjoy cooking Indian food at home. Additionally, when I lived in India, I worked as an actor and television host. I am a current member of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG)."

## ALEXA JACKSON



"I am the ACJS Coordinator and I have been with the association for 3 months. I have been in the hospitality industry for 10 years. At the early start of my

career, I owned a small wedding planning business and then transitioned into corporate and association meeting planning. My favorite part of the job is making all the components of the annual meeting come together. When I am not working, I love to read and cook. Fun fact: when I was a child, I wanted to be a forensic scientist!"

MEET THE

ACJS

STAFF



**JUSTICE QUARTERLY**

**Recidivism among People Convicted of Gun Offenses: A Call to Better Leverage Reentry Resources to Decrease Gun Violence**

Michael Ostermann & Sadaf Hashimi  
Published online: November 07, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2022.2142649>

**Place-Based Improvements for Public Safety: Private Investment, Public Code Enforcement, and Changes in Crime at Microplaces across Six U.S. Cities**

Marie Skubak Tillyer, Arthur Acolin & Rebecca J.  
Published online: November 01, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2022.2127843>

**Racial Threat and Punitive Police Attitudes**

Christopher J. Marier & Lorie A. Fridell  
Published online: October 26, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2022.2127842>

**JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION**  
**Techno-Bureaucratic Race-Making: Latino (Mis) Representation in Criminology and Criminal Justice Knowledge Claims**

Kenneth Sebastian León & Andrea Gómez Cervantes  
Published online: December 15, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2155204>

**“Fucked up”: Examining Skin Tone and Student Perceptions of the U.S. Criminal Justice System**

TaLisa J. Carter & Jazmine Talley  
Published online: November 13, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2142625>

**Abolishing Carceral Distractions: Refusing the Discursive Punishment of Latinxs**

Susila Gurusami, Rocío R. García & Diya Bose  
Published online: November 11, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2139850>

**Researcher Safety: Studying Social Deviance or Criminal Behavior**

Patricia L. Brougham, Clarissa M. Uttley & Tammy M. Haley  
Published online: October 17, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2137540>

**Ready Player One: Gamification of a Criminal Justice Course**

Krista S. Gehring & Ethan Marshall  
Published online: October 27, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2130383>

**United We Stand: Navigating Research as a Black Latina Early Career Scholar**

Serita Whiting  
Published online October 22, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2137541>

**“The Subject Matter Should Be an Adequate Trigger Warning”: How and Why Criminology and Criminal Justice Faculty Use (and Don’t Use) Trigger Warnings**

Alison C. Cares, Lisa Growette Bostaph, Bonnie S. Fisher, Arelys Madero Hernandez & Shameika Daye  
Published online: October 14, 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2022.2133154>



Recent Publications: October 16–December 15, 2022





**JUSTICE EVALUATION JOURNAL**

**Examining Ignition-Interlock Post-Arrest Treatments**

Victoria Terranova & Mark Stafford

Published online: December 1, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2022.2147447>

**Assessing the Impact and Outcomes of the National Jail Leadership Command Academy on Its Graduates and Their Agencies**

Matthew A. Bills & Erin A. Orrick

Published online: November 11, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2022.2144414>

**The Effects of a Truancy Reduction Program on Anti-social Behavior: Age, Race, and Sex Differences**

Stephanie Michelle Cardwell, Lorraine Mazerolle, Kelsy Luengen & Sarah Bennett

Published online: October 26, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2022.2135453>



Recent Publications: October 16–December 15, 2022





## Comparative Criminal Justice and the Authoritarian Impulse

By N. Prabha Unnithan, PhD

It is traditional for the individual being presented with the Mueller Award to speak to the members of the International Section during the ceremony. I was secretly hoping that this year things would run late, and we would dispense with that formality. But no such luck! So, in response to your invitation to speak, here are some of my unvarnished thoughts on comparative criminal justice and what we have been witnessing in many of the political systems of the countries we analyze and compare.

During my year (2019–2020) as president of the Academy, the theme of our annual conference in San Antonio was going to be “Envisioning Justice: From Local to Global.” The idea was to connect how—especially in a globalized world—seemingly disparate local decisions, events, and practices often ran in parallel and resulted in *glocal* (Robertson, 1994) patterns of crime and justice.<sup>1</sup> Alas, due to the COVID pandemic, the 2020 annual gathering was cancelled. We watched helplessly as all of us masked ourselves in the few public spaces we ventured into and communicated with each other only over the ether. That summer we witnessed the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis by the city’s police, followed by a spasm of anti-Asian hate crime brought on by rumors about the source of the pandemic. In response, there were massive

<sup>1</sup> See the special issue (Volume 31, Issue 2, June 2021) of the *International Criminal Justice Review* inspired by the conference theme.

<sup>2</sup> I have deliberately chosen not to mention the names of specific countries here. You can fill in the blanks with countries that you study or are familiar with.

street protests and the spread of the Black Lives Matter movement nationally and globally. The authoritarian impulses that led to suppressing the mostly peaceful protests (see Weaver & Prowse, 2020) that year had been foreshadowed by and are echoed in the local struggles of oppressed people in distant parts of the world, almost all of which involve police and the criminal justice system (Unnithan, 2022).<sup>2</sup>

In an inspiring recent commentary, Susan Bigelow Reynolds (2022) speaks of the need for academics to engage in public scholarship that “strives to make good on the highest ideals and the most compelling promises of the scholarly vocation itself: to place our work at the service of justice, to make research accessible to those far from the seats of power, to promote informed and democratic engagement in the public sphere.” I suggest that as comparative criminal justice scholars, it falls upon us to show through our work and public scholarship the dangers that the tendency to authoritarianism (Frantz, 2018) poses as we seek to pursue a criminal justice that is genuinely democratic (see Kleinfeld et al., 2016). I venture into this area given my belief that what has previously been observable in local areas and individual nation-states has coalesced into major patterns affecting ever-widening swathes of humanity.

First, we realize that unlike what was assumed in the heady days after the Cold War ended (best exemplified in Francis Fukuyama’s 1992 book, *The End*





*of History and the Last Man*), there is nothing inevitable or certain about the sociopolitical triumph of liberal democracy and, by extension, the democratic criminal justice that would result. As Jeff Jacoby (2022) points out, “The authoritarian impulse exists in every society. There are always those who would rather resort to autocratic means to accomplish desired ends.” We are familiar with this in the loud and constant calls from politicians across the world to “get tough” with crime suspects and convicts, to suspend concerns having to do with human rights and due process when confronted with rises in crime or some extreme offenses, and to deal with offenders as harshly as possible. These calls often begin by targeting those branded as dangerous or depraved (Wang, 2020) but soon expand to groups that are despised or those who merely dissent (Tansey, 2016).

Many of these tendencies are present not just in outright autocracies but also in countries that Fareed Zakaria (2007) has termed “illiberal democracies.” These are places characterized by “democratically elected regimes often re-elected or reinforced by referendums that ignore the constitutional limits of their power and deprive their citizens of basic rights and liberties” (p. 17). As we have seen recently in many nation-states, there is often little that prevents even systems with purportedly long-established democratic traditions from backsliding (Bermeo, 2018) into authoritarian forms of governance.

Second, whether it is in autocracies or backsliding democracies, a fundamental question that comparative criminal justice scholars must deal with is why many (most?) of the systems we study are in-

herently oppressive and violative of downtrodden groups. We are witness to this woeful situation in many countries (see Human Rights Watch, 2022). Specific oppressed groups may vary by race, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, class, caste, and costume, but they have all experienced the heavy handed and arbitrary tactics that represent the responses of national and local regimes by way of their criminal justice personnel. This, when we live in a world filled simultaneously with powerful unapologetic autocrats and shameless kleptocrats who thrive in what David Miliband (2020) has called an “age of impunity.”

I believe that comparative criminal justice scholars are equipped to respond to the challenge posed by autocratic regimes or those who are merely “authoritarian curious.” This is based on our knowledge of the many roots of, and variations in, the practice of oppression by regimes. We also observe how forms of subjugation can be funneled through criminal justice systems, whoever they may be aimed against (the poor; racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual minorities; refugees; displaced persons; etc.). If we pride ourselves on being the “gold standard” of criminal justice scholarship (Karstedt, 2021), will we also rise to the task of contesting repressive regimes and their oppressive criminal justice policies that target the powerless and the subjugated? ■

### **Acknowledgments**

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ing them the “Gang of Six plus One”) who nominated me for the award. I am indebted to the Department of Sociology at Colorado State University, my institutional home for the past 35 years, and to my mentors, Dr. M. Z. Khan (in India) and Dr. Hugh Whitt (in the U.S.), who have contributed enormously to my development as a comparative criminologist. Shashi Unnithan, my spouse of 40 years, and both our families have been unending sources of love and support throughout my academic career. To all of them, thank you!

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**N. Prabha Unnithan, PhD**, is a professor of sociology at Colorado State University (CSU)

where he has

been a faculty member since 1987. In 2019, he was named by the College of Liberal Arts at CSU as a John N. Stern Distinguished Professor. He is also an adjunct professor at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman in Malaysia.

Dr. Unnithan co-authored an award-winning book, *The Currents of Lethal Violence* (SUNY Press, 1995), along with *Guns, Violence and Criminal Behavior* (Lynne Rienner, 2009) and *Policing & Society: A Global Approach* (Cengage, 2011). He compiled and edited *Crime and Justice in India* (SAGE, 2013) and co-edited *Violence against Women in India* (Routledge, 2018). He has served previously as editor of the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* and the *Social Science Journal*, later co-editing the *Sociological Quarterly*.

Dr. Unnithan was president of the Western Social Science Association (2014–2015) and president of ACJS (2019–2020).



### Edward J. Latessa, PhD

Edward “Ed” J. Latessa, PhD, age 67, passed away peacefully at home on January 11, 2022 of pancreatic cancer. He was a survivor of 14 years. Ed was born in Youngstown, OH to Edward and Amelia (née Stephens) Latessa on July 13, 1954. He met Sally Wakefield at The Ohio State University and they married in 1979. They settled in Cincinnati, OH where Ed served on the faculty of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati since 1980, leading that program for almost 40 years, including the development of one of the best doctoral programs in the country.

He directed the Corrections Institute and published nearly 200 scholarly works, including the leading textbook on criminal corrections. He led 200+ funded research projects and served as an advisor or consultant to correctional agencies and academic programs at all levels of government and internationally in North America, Europe and Asia. He received numerous awards and commendations from professional associations. He was an accomplished teacher and directed dozens of doctoral dissertations. Ed made an indelible mark on academic and professional criminal justice scholars and practitioners.

He is survived by his four children Amy, Jennifer (partner Andy), Michael (partner Kaitlyn), Allison “Tunie”, son-in-law Andrea Brachini, sister Denise Latessa Dimoff. He is preceded in death by his parents and brother-in-law Greg Dimoff. A memorial took place at the University of Cincinnati in March 2022. Memorial donations can be directed to the [Edward J. Latessa Scholarship Fund for Doctoral Student Support](#) or to [Pancreatic Cancer Research](#).



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