

ACJS *today*

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Newsletter



ACJS 60th Annual Meeting Presidential Address

by Denise Paquette Boots, PhD

Thank you so much for your very thoughtful introduction, John. After almost 30 years together, first as mentor-student and over the years maturing into that of friends/colleagues, your impact on my life really cannot be overstated. As a first-generation college student, I remember feeling in awe of you as I sat in your classroom after just having transferred to the University of South Florida. We were brought together by the tragedy of a quadruple homicide which rocked my world at the age of 21. This was my introduction to the criminal justice system, and it was a painful experience. It was surreal to take your death penalty class as an undergraduate student who was living through an actual death penalty case. I remember the day that I first shared the details of what

continues on page 13

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 02** EXECUTIVE BOARD'S STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM
- 04** ARTICLE
Reducing the Stigma of Incarcerated Couple and Family Therapy
by Eman Tadros, Ph.D., IMFT
- 10** RECENT PUBLICATIONS
JQ, JCJE, and JEJ
- 22** BOOK REVIEW
Suicide and Its Impact on the Criminal Justice System
by Michael Klausner, PhD
- 25** INTERVIEW
Ron Huff's Contributions to Criminology
by Brian Forst, PhD, MBA and Robert Worley, PhD
- 29** EXECUTIVE BOARD

LETTER TO ACJS MEMBERSHIP ON THE ACJS EXECUTIVE BOARD'S STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

To the membership of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences,

In the wake of the social justice movements experienced across the nation, a coordinated legislative campaign has been initiated to limit how topics related to race, racism, and gender can be discussed, taught, and researched on many college campuses. Since 2021, 31 states have introduced more than 96 laws that specifically target colleges and universities. To date, eight states have successfully passed a law that explicitly limits academic freedom within their public colleges and universities, and twenty-four additional bills are currently under consideration.

While the primary target of these laws is directed at those who teach the history of the United States, given the exceptionally vague language included in the proposals, other disciplines, like criminal justice and criminology, have been negatively affected as well. Many of the classes that are taught in our programs address the role of race and/or gender in the social construction of crime and victimization, how those factors affect decision-making throughout criminal justice processes, as well as the disparate impact of justice outcomes among racial/ethnic minorities. As academics, we have the freedom to choose what topics we want to investigate and how we want to disseminate those results. These rights are enumerated in the principles of academic freedom. The concept of academic freedom was first introduced by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1940, and specifies "it is the freedom of a teacher or researcher in higher education to investigate and discuss the issues in his or her academic field, and to teach or publish findings without interference from political figures, boards of trustees, donors, or other entities".

Academic freedom is fundamental to higher education. It allows faculty to teach the subjects in which they have expertise, which in turn, provides students the opportunity to learn about those topics and be exposed to varied and numerous perspectives while forming their own opinions and beliefs, even when they disagree with what is being shared. Failure to learn and engage in critical thinking across differences and disagreements undermines students' personal intellectual growth and causes them to be ill-prepared to enter the marketplace where they will be expected to know how to navigate different perspectives. Moreover, academic freedom allows faculty to conduct research on the topics they have expertise, which in turn aids in the development of sound policy which is central to the stability and well-being of our nation. Thus, these legislative efforts to substitute political mandates for the considered judgment of professional educators are not only unreasoned, but are also short-sighted.

Given the ramifications these laws pose to our livelihood, individually and collectively, it is imperative we, as the Executive Board of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, vociferously voice our opposition to any legislative efforts that will jeopardize the educational standards in our discipline, as well as undermine our ability to conduct research that can help inform policy and practice. More importantly, we publicly condemn such efforts to demonstrate our broader commitment to the preservation and defense of academic freedom writ-large.

This statement of support was ratified by the ACJS Executive Board on March 14, 2023 and is approved by Past, Immediate, Current and Upcoming Presidents of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.

Heather Pfeifer
President of ACJS 2021–2022

Denise Paquette Boots
Immediate Past President of ACJS 2023–2024

Anthony Peguero
President of ACJS 2023–2024

Bitna Kim
1st Vice President of ACJS 2023–2024

[1] PEN America. (2023). *Index of educational gag orders*.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Tj5WQVBmB6SQg-zP_M8uZsQQGH09TxmBY73v23zpyr0/edit#gid=1951079116

[2] American Association of University Professors. (n.d.). *FAQs on academic freedom*.
<https://www.aaup.org/programs/academic-freedom/faqs-academic-freedom>

NEW EDITOR SOUGHT FOR RACE AND JUSTICE: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

The American Society of Criminology's Division on People of Color and Crime (DPCC) invites applications for the position of editor of *Race and Justice: An International Journal*, the Division's official journal.

The journal is published by SAGE Publications and uses an on-line, electronic submission process. The new editor will be responsible for administering this process and publishing four issues a year. The editor will serve a three-year term, with the possibility of renewal for a second three-year term, to be negotiated with the DPCC Executive Board. The editor should be a member of the DPCC upon appointment, and for the duration of the term as editor.

It is anticipated that the incoming editor will have sole responsibility for production of the January 2024 issue. The current editor, Dr. Jacinta Gau, will support the new editor in a transition period as needed. The editor is responsible for the timely output of the journal, including the solicitation of manuscripts, supervision of a rigorous peer review process, and the final selection of articles for publication. In addition, the editor may solicit and publish reviews of books about race, ethnicity, and justice. Duties also include implementing the journal's editorial policies, maintaining high professional standards for published content, and ensuring the integrity of the journal. The editor must also work with the Division Chair to maintain an up-to-date list of DPCC membership to ensure that members receive access to the journal.

The editor's supporting institution might provide office space, file storage, equipment, at least one graduate assistant to serve as managing editor, and release time for the editor. The DPCC provides an annual stipend of \$4,000 for the editor, and \$1,000 for the managing editor.

Interested applicants may contact the current editor, Dr. Jacinta Gau, jacinta.gau@ucf.edu for additional information regarding the logistics or operational details of editing and producing the journal. Applicants should submit a statement of editorial philosophy, a CV, and assurances of institutional support to the Race and Justice Journal Editor Search Committee Chair, Dr. Shaun Gabbidon, slg13@psu.edu. Interested applicants may contact Dr. Gabbidon prior to submitting the application.

Please submit applications no later than June 16th, 2023. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by early August 2023.





Reducing the Stigma of Incarcerated Couple and Family Therapy

By Eman Tadros, Ph.D., IMFT

There is strong evidence to suggest that a parent's incarceration can lead to various consequences, with a strong emphasis on negative stigmas that can affect all members of a familial unit. It is explained that 52% to 62% of people incarcerated in state and federal facilities are parents or guardians of minor children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). The importance of recognizing the weight of stigma and its distribution to various facets of an incarcerated individual's experiences after release is discussed below. This article will also discuss the role and importance of Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) as a potential tool to reduce the likelihood of regression in a recently incarcerated individual. This will help by supporting familial and community relationships and assisting in reformatting negative perceptions that may contribute to a recently incarcerated individual regressing post-release.

Stigma in Relation to Family

Turney (2015) explained that a reduction in communication and time spent together can have negative impacts on family quality. This information suggests that incarceration and the stigmas surrounding it affect every member of a familial unit. In terms of the general family unit, intra-familial stigma is stressed. Condry's (2007) explanation of the web of shame explains that relatives of the incarcerated experience feelings of shame and guilt (Kotova, 2020). The nature and weight of the shame can vary based on the strength and proximity of the relationship with the incarcerated individual.

Within the familial structure, the integrity between partners may still be impacted by these stigmas. Research suggests that partners may have their own experiences with shame in their relationships with recently incarcerated individuals. Dutcher and

Barnes-Ceeney (2021) elaborate on the concept of courtesy stigma, defined as public disfavor of maintaining ties with a stigmatized person. Furthermore, Dutcher and Barnes-Ceeney state that partners affected by courtesy stigma have experienced negative responses and reactions in both professional and personal settings as well as the questioning of their decision to remain with an incarcerated partner.

Further down the line of stigmas affecting familial structures, stigmas surrounding recently incarcerated individuals can further impact the children within the family setting. The children in families affected by incarceration are significantly more likely to experience housing instability, food insecurity, and lower rates of educational achievement (Cox & Wallace, 2013; Haskins, 2014; Sexton 2016; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). Furthermore, these children are



at greater risk for experiencing psychological and behavioral difficulties, adolescent risk behaviors, and symptoms related to trauma (Arditti & Johnson, 2020). Luther (2016) executed a study that expressed that some children with an incarcerated parent have experienced bullying and further isolation from like-minded peers. This study further elaborated that the same population felt that their parent's incarceration initially displayed them in a negative light (Luther, 2016). A potential outcome of this is self-stigmatization. Self-stigmatization, as explained by Moore et al. (2018), is a maladaptive behavior in which individuals begin to identify and belong to dominant stigmas of a grouping they have been connected to. Self-stigmatization can further lead to self-defeating behaviors, which may negatively impact the other potential risk factors related to being a youth impacted by an incarcerated family member.

Stigma in Relation to Financial Well-being

Studies suggest that recently

incarcerated individuals face many obstacles once released. Couloute (2018) states that individuals who were formerly incarcerated are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless compared to individuals who have not faced incarceration. Strong influences for this outcome include financial sustainability and secure housing. Negative stigma of recent incarceration can discourage landlords from renting spaces to recently released individuals. In addition to the barriers to affordable housing, formerly incarcerated individuals are presented with limited job opportunities. Studies suggest that these limitations, in addition to a standard minimum wage, create a circumstance in which consistent payments of average rent are unattainable. Couloute (2018) explained that limited job opportunities and high costs of living create conditions in which previously incarcerated individuals seek out financial security through any means, despite legality. Should individuals impacted by these conditions seek out funds through illegal means, then a cycle continues.

In addition to difficulties obtaining financial security for oneself, studies explain that stigma can further isolate a recently released individual from financial support from their own family. Stigma related to knowing or having an imprisoned family member can intercept support for women involved with incarcerated individuals, especially if they choose to maintain a relationship with an incarcerated man. Studies elaborate that these stigmas may prohibit women from asking for financial support if there is a possibility of rejection (Bruns, 2020).

Clinical Implications

To reduce the weight that stigma has on incarcerated individuals, an introduction to therapy is beneficial. To best support families affected by incarceration, a suggestion is made for use of CFT. This form of therapy utilizes various practices to best support couples and families as they overcome any negative practices. While the possible solution of therapy for incarcerated individuals seems easily apparent, there is not much progress being made to provide therapy, let



alone CFT, to this population. A study conducted by Greenwood (2016) displayed a relationship between FFT (Functional Family Therapy) and adult offenders; additionally, Greenwood found the same population that received FFT, alongside probation, greatly reduced the likelihood of re-offending. FFT was also found to help those individuals reframe harmful patterns preventing others from playing a role in their rehabilitation process. Though there is research to suggest FFT, or other therapies, as support for incarcerated individuals, Georgiou and Townsend (2019) suggest that mental health resources are limited for incarcerated individuals. They further explain that should prisons provide mental health support, there may still be gaps between these institutions, and that coverage of care is not extended to post-release. This can create gaps and lapses in best support for recently incarcerated individuals.

Though these findings may not seem progressive, there are still ways to better support the incarcerated population. This support

comes from language reevaluation and education of mental health professionals as they work with incarcerated individuals. It is important for mental helpers and other advocates to positively reframe conversations and language involving incarceration. Cox (2020) stresses that the reduction of stigmatizing language can be best supported by using first-person or person-centered language when addressing this population. Doing this removes any stigmatizing labels or language, thus humanizing the conversations about and surrounding an incarcerated individual.

In terms of psychoeducation, Tadros et al. (2021) explain that increasing awareness of stigma supports the reduction of negative perceptions around incarcerated individuals. This stigma can include other facets of life, such as within multiculturalism and intersectionality. It is important for mental helpers and advocates to feel comfortable discussing traditionally sensitive topics such as race and racism. Lewis et al. (2007) explain that advocacy is an integral part

of the relationship between clients and their helpers. They stress the importance of proper incorporation of social justice and multiculturalism in a mental helper's practice to better support potential clients. There is an overwhelming call to action for practitioners to challenge their views and potential biases while questioning for an acknowledgment of the same topics and how they affect client relationships. This call for reeducation is one of the most integral ways to remove the stigma from incarcerated individuals while humanizing them.

Potential Solutions

A large contribution to stigma in incarcerated individuals is related to mental health. To best address the lack of mental health services within prison systems, four suggestions can be made: Proper execution of psychological evaluation upon entry, providing extensive mental health treatment options, thorough staff training, and expanding facilities. Psychological evaluation is essential. Individuals within these systems need these evaluations to best determine the proper treatment. These



evaluations can provide a better understanding of an individual's relationship with their mental health and may even provide insight on the best pathways to rehabilitation into society. The importance of various treatment options is stressed through the concept that mental health treatment is a journey to be experienced by the individual impacted. Simply put, one size does not fit all in terms of treatment for anybody. It would be unreasonable to expect that a person within the prison system should receive limited options or support to improve their mental health. Thorough staff training is important to equip staff with tools to ensure the safety of all parties within a prison system. One who is staffed within a prison system should know and understand high-risk signs for harm to oneself and to others to reduce the number of incidents. The suggestion of expanded facilities is to ensure that there are extensive options should the options local to the prison system be exhausted.

Other solutions to remedy stigma outside of the system

could include public awareness. It is important that the public be informed about the harmful nature of stigma and how it can affect the involved parties. Suggestions could start with families and partners of incarcerated individuals. This may include a definition of stigma and what this could look like for them. As referenced earlier, another strong stigma-reducing tactic is to make sure that mental health practitioners have proper education and language surrounding incarcerated individuals and their mental health. This can improve practitioner-client relationships, which can lead to a better outlook on mental health services and a positive sense of self for incarcerated individuals. ■

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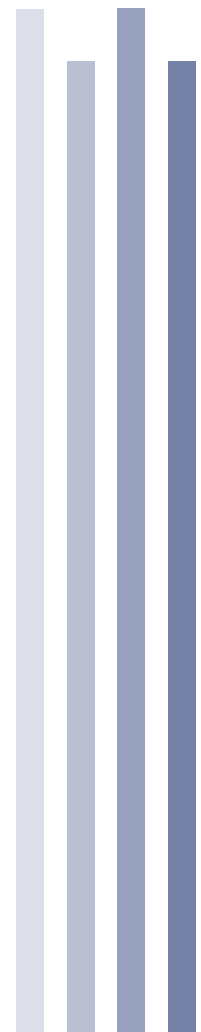
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Eman Tadros, PhD, IMFT, is a current assistant professor at Governors State University in the Division of Psychology and Counseling. She is an incoming Assistant Professor at Syracuse University for Fall 2024. She is a licensed marriage and family 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.



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Christopher H. Seto & Laura Upenieks

Published online: April 05, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2197482>

Campus Carry Attitude, Intention, Behavior, and Impact: A Multilevel Meta-Analysis

Bitna Kim

Published online: April 05, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2197611>

Estimating Effects of Short-Term Imprisonment on Crime Using Random Judge Assignments

Hilde T. Wermink, A. A. J. Blokland, J. Been, P. M. Schuyt, N. Tollenaar & R. Apel

Published online: April 03, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2193618>

The Pretrial Detention Penalty: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Pretrial Detention and Case Outcomes

Stacie St. Louis

Published online: March 27, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2193624>

Identifying and Explaining the Harmful Effects of Stalking Victimization: An Analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey

Bradford W. Reyns, Ryan Randa & Patrick Brady

Published online: March 16, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2188066>

Peculiar Institution? The Legacy of Slavery and Prison Expansion in the United States, 1970–2015

Scott W. Duxbury

Published online: March 15, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2188073>

Examining Differences in the Individual and Contextual Risk Factors for Police Officer, Correctional Officer, and Non-Protective Service Suicides

Gregory M. Zimmerman, Emma E. Fridel & Natasha A. Frost

Published online: March 15, 2023

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Solidarity or Solitude? Correlates of Incarceration and the Peer Networks of Imprisoned Women

Julia Dillavou

Published online: March 08, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2183237>

Stressed Out in Lock Down: The Impacts of Work in Extended Restrictive Housing on Prison Personnel

Vivian Aranda-Hughes & Daniel P. Mears

Published online: March 07, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2184415>

The Downstream Effects of Body-Worn Cameras: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Kevin Petersen & Yi-Fang Lu

Published online: February 27, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2181855>

JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

The Role of Service and Community in Academia: Reflections of a Latina Criminologist

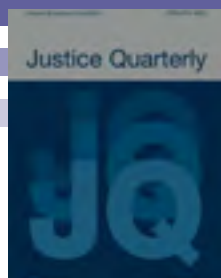
Nancy Rodriguez

Published online: April 18, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2200481>



Recent Publications: February 16, 2023–April 15, 2023





Where Do I Fit? Reflections of a Latino Criminologist in the Academy

Jorge M Chavez

Published online: March 12, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2186453>

Advancing Latinx Diversity in Academia and Why It Matters

Janice Iwama

Published online: March 09, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2186452>

Exploring Feelings of Belonging and Membership of CUNY Noncitizen Students

Shirley Leyro

Published online: March 09, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2183228>

Instruction Modality and Writing Intensive Undergraduate Research Success: A Case Study

Frances P. Bernat, April Kraft-Duley, Christopher Dollar & David A. Makin

Published online: March 08, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2182899>

Oral History in Academic Criminal Justice: Reflections from ACJS "Triple Crown" Luminaries

McKenzie L. Jossie & Ben Stickle

Published online: February 28, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2182900>

Learning with the Others: Perspective-Taking and the Future of Criminal Justice in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

Cassandra Philippon, Kevin A. Wright, Cody W. Telep & Olivia P. Shaw

Published online: February 28, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2182898>

Status of Law Enforcement Drone Education at Two-Year Community College

Joseph M. Burgett

Published online: February 18, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2183227>

An Examination of Article Productivity and Influence among Criminology and Criminal Justice Doctoral Faculty, 2015–2021

Alexandra C. Lebron, Nerissa James, Stephen F. Pires & Ellen G. Cohn

Published online: February 21, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2181979>

Citizen Social Science in the Classroom: Criminology Students' Perceptions of Prisoner Records

Victoria Nagy, Alana Piper & Nancy Cushing

Published online: February 18, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2179089>

In the Spirit of Struggle: A Barrio Pedagogy Compass of Love, Care, and Compassion

Katherine L. Maldonado-Fabela

Published online: February 18, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2023.2171080>

JUSTICE EVALUATION JOURNAL

Gender and Race Influence Youths' Responses to a Training on the Law and Safe Police Interactions

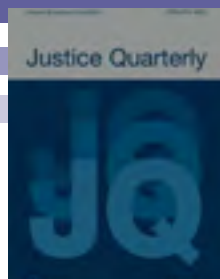
Rebecca L. Fix, Adam D. Fine & Pamela A. Matson

Published online: February 21, 2023

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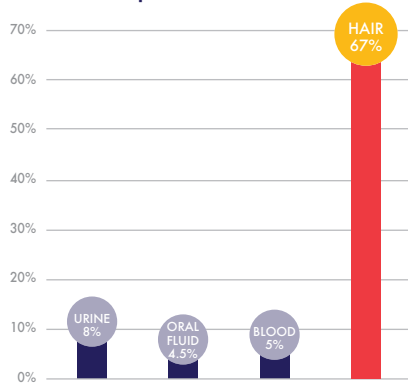
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Detection of undisclosed prescription drugs and illicit compounds in hair: Utility when on-boarding new patients (2015). Presented at the International Conference on Opioids, Boston, MA.

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I was going through, and your compassion and empathy. You taught me, by example, the power of a mentor, the power of one person to make a positive difference for someone when they need that support the most. As I have reflected on my journey to this moment where I stand before you all as the president of [ACJS](#), I have considered what it meant to me at one of the most vulnerable times of my life to be validated, seen, and heard by the person I held in greatest regard in my academic life. It is a lesson I have never forgotten, and one that I have sought to emulate as a practitioner, an academic, a mentor, and a leader. John, your belief in me made me believe I could do whatever I aspired to—whether that was federal law enforcement training, graduate school, a pre-doctoral fellowship, or my first academic job at UT Dallas. You believed in me before I believed in myself. I cherish our friendship, the work we have done together, and your wise words of advice throughout my career. As I have always said, I learned more sitting in the chair across your desk than from most classes I ever took. And we all know you don't come to conferences anymore, so your being here today is extra special. If I had known that this was what it took to get you to come to a conference, I would have run for this office a long time ago. So, thank you.

While the details of that homicide event are probably a surprise to many of my friends and colleagues here tonight who have known me for many years, my students actually all know this story. When I began teaching many years ago, I had to decide what I would say when I

was asked that most fascinating question: "Why are you a criminologist?" I decided it was important to be honest about my journey because, you see, criminology picked me. And I am not alone. Many of you here today are survivors of trauma, just as many of our students are as well. My life experiences and my survivorship first put me on an involuntary personal journey with criminal justice, but as I took more classes within the field, I soon discovered my love of research, of practice, of public policy, of teaching, and of studying the law. With the help of mentors such as John Cochran, Kathleen Heide, Chris Sellers, Richard Dembo, and Eldra Solomon—all of whom are here tonight—as well as the late Rolf Loeber, my love of criminology only grew deeper and deeper. As I healed, I retook the power over my future, which in turn gave me hope to believe I could overcome it, and which then gave me a drive to give voice to others who had been touched by violence. I found my desire to serve something bigger than myself and what I had gone through. This spirit of servant leadership is one that I seek to emulate in all I do.

So, when I began teaching, I decided to be honest. Criminology picked me, and my students hear about my survivorship and my journey, within the boundaries of what is healthy for me to share. I have never regretted that decision to be honest as an educator or a mentor, and I do so for three very important reasons.

First, I share my story to remind my students that crime statistics are about real people, not just numbers. With regard to violent crime, survivors

are irreparably changed by their losses and their experiences. It becomes part of the fabric of who we are. I ask my students to remember that when we talk about crime, this is not entertainment. As a society, we have become so desensitized to violence—the media brings the most heinous cases into our living rooms and onto our mobile phones day after day. But we must remind our students, and each other, that violent crime is, at its core, about human beings and the impact of loss, of pain, and of suffering.

Second, I want to inspire students who have experienced trauma, loss, and violence to have hope that they can not only overcome it, but they can have an exceptional, fulfilling, and happy life despite it. I absolutely believe this, and I have been trusted with hundreds and hundreds of trauma histories over the years as both a practitioner and an educator. I am forever changed by hearing those stories—and humbled to be trusted with that knowledge.

Third, I want to remind my students that there are no labels that say what we have survived. My privilege is never questioned as a professor. Our students have experienced all forms of violence imaginable—they are sexual assault and child abuse survivors, they are refugees who have witnessed genocide, they have lost family and friends to community violence and mass incarceration, they have escaped intimate partnerships that were violent, they have overcome poverty, health disparities, and the deaths of family and friends throughout [COVID](#). I am in

awe of my students and what they have survived and how strong and resilient they are despite these obstacles. Hearing their stories has helped me put my own journey into perspective and has changed me in powerful ways. I am grateful for my journey because although my survivorship may have been the event that put me on a path with criminal justice, it was also the igniting ember of the passion that I feel every day in the work that I do as a professor, a servant leader, an administrator, and an activist scholar. Each and every one of us has had something that has driven us to this work and study of criminal justice. This story is just mine.

Survivor criminology is now an emerging field where the voices of those who may have previously been silenced have space to voice their truth.¹ There is much to learn from their voices. When we create these safe spaces, we can learn so much. In more than 20 years now of teaching and mentoring, I have seen how these learning moments resonate more powerfully than any reading of a textbook or a journal article. Every student who has shared their journey with me has taught me something. While their faces may fade individually within my memory over the years, collectively they are the voices and stories I replay in my head when I think about what trauma does to us. Their testimonials are teaching moments for others who have not lived that truth. And, at our core, as criminologists and criminal justice professionals we are most effective at influencing public policy when

¹ Cook, K. J., Williams, J. M., Lamphere, R. D., Mallicoat, S. L., & Ackerman, A. R. (2022). *Survivor criminology: A radical act of hope*. Rowman & Littlefield.



we become masterful at the art of [storytelling](#). Indeed, Terry Tempest Williams said that “storytelling is the oldest form of [education](#).” So, while quantitative and rigorous research methods are absolutely invaluable in explaining and disentangling the variables that are associated with and that cause complex social problems, there is incredible value in hearing qualitative accounts that bring these concepts to life. Having expertise or an inclination toward one of these methodologies does not mean that you cannot develop an appreciation of the value of the other.

My field work, education, and research as a criminologist and my experience with students have all challenged my preconceived notions and brought self-awareness to my own inherent biases. These moments have disrupted and then helped remold my worldview. They have pushed me out of my comfort zone as a scholar, as a mentor, as a white woman of privilege, and as a mother, and a citizen. And so....I am now and forever an ally to those who have not had voice. Not just in words, but in my deeds, and in my research and service I do within the community, and the safe spaces I create for my students in my classroom and office. It is only by having open hearts and minds that we can come to understand realities that are very [different from our own](#). That requires us to be uncomfortable at times because we must talk less, listen more, and believe.

We face unprecedented and complicated times as a society and as a discipline. But criminal jus-

tice and criminology is at the center of many of these issues, and we have the power to influence policy when we bring our knowledge and research to the field and connect with practitioners and [policymakers](#). By no means an exhaustive list, these challenges include:

- Tenure and diversity initiatives within higher education that find our campuses under attack across varying states and [systems](#). Three states currently have legislation seeking to abolish faculty oversight of tenure, including my home state of [Texas](#). This will be devastating to public universities in particular and threatens to eliminate vital protections for academic freedom in the research we do in criminal justice, public policy, and the law. In addition, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in higher ed are being targeted by multiple legislatures.
- Increased poverty, job, and health disparities within marginalized communities that were disproportionately and negatively impacted by the [COVID pandemic](#). America’s Health Rankings [report](#) for 2022 finds a 5% increase in poverty between 2019–2021, with almost 13% of Americans living in poverty and 1 in 10 households having food insecurities. Roughly 1 in 3 Black adults and Hispanics have lost a family member to COVID and also have lost a friend to COVID. Fifty percent of Hispanic adults and 56% of Pacific Islanders reported job challenges and worries about their financial well-being that have significantly negatively impacted their

mental health.

- There are significant and alarming increases in serious mental health disorders and mortality, in particular with the young and the elderly. Almost 15% of adults reported frequent mental distress, and 1 in 3 reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in the Well Being Trust 2021 [report](#). More Americans are in crisis, with more than 2.1 million contacts to the National Suicide Prevention and Crisis Hotline received since it launched in July of [2022](#). The CDC reports that almost 46,000 people died by suicide in 2020 within the US—which equates to [a death every 11 minutes](#). Another 12.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide and 1.2 million made an attempt. Firearms are the method for more than 50% of all suicides. It is the second leading cause of death of college-age students and those 10–34 years old; and
- There are reports of increased sexual victimization of girls at home, online, and at school, with nearly 20% of teenage girls reporting they had suffered sexual victimization, according to a 2023 [report](#) by the CDC. In addition, there is increasing research, media attention, and public awareness regarding the sophisticated human trafficking rings that exploit millions of victims worldwide into forced slavery, forced marriages, and sex work.

When I had the honor of being elected to the

² Beetham, D., Carvalho, E., Landman, T., & Weir, S. (2008). *Assessing the quality of democracy: A practical guide*. Stockholm: International IDEA.

³ Sørensen, G. (1993). *Democracy and democratization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Executive Board of ACJS, one of the most important decisions to make was the selection of the theme for this conference. This is the 60th annual meeting of ACJS. It is our diamond celebration of scholarship, practice, and professional development. Our conference theme is “60 Years of ACJS: Critical Connections Between Civil Rights, Crime & Social Justice.” You will feel this theme across all the spaces of our conference and in the visionary work expressed in our [keynote address](#) by Chad Houser tomorrow.

[Civil rights](#) are an essential component of social justice. Civil rights are the legal and constitutional guarantees that protect our individual liberties and freedoms and that ensure that every citizen is treated justly and fairly. They are the bedrock of what makes democracy strong and ensures that everyone, regardless of gender, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation, has the right to life and liberty guaranteed under our Constitution.^{2,3}

Social justice is about ensuring that all members of society have equal access to resources, opportunities, and basic human rights. It is about creating a society in which everyone can live a fulfilling and dignified life, free from discrimination, exploitation, and oppression. Social justice is not just a moral obligation, but a necessity if we are to build a healthy, just, and sustainable [society](#). *And the criminal justice system is the arena where social justice and civil rights intersect.*

Unfortunately, the reality is that civil rights are not always respected or upheld.

On Wednesday of this last week, the US Department of Justice released a blistering 90-page investigative report on the Louisville Metropolitan Police Department after the death of 26-year-old Breonna Taylor in her own home when MPD executed a no-knock search warrant in March of [2020](#). The DOJ [concluded](#) that “Louisville Metro and LMPD are engaged in a pattern or practice of conduct that deprives people of their rights under the Constitution and federal law” (p. 14). These abuses of power include using aggressive policing and excessive use of force; the use of neck restraints against people who pose no threat; conducting searches based on invalid warrants; unlawfully executing search warrants without knocking and announcing; unlawful stops, searches, details, and arrests of people during street enforcement operations; discriminating against Black people; violating the rights of those who speak critically of policing; and discriminating against people with behavioral and mental health disabilities when responding to them in crisis.

On March 28, 2023, almost a dozen former or current officers in East Cleveland, Ohio were charged with felonious assault, evidence tampering, obstruction of justice, and civil rights violations in 31 different cases—ratcheting the total number up to 16 officers indicted there on charges of [unlawful conduct](#) in the last 6 months. The new police chief has committed to reforms within the department to change this culture,

professional retraining of officers, and fair treatment of all citizens.

Two months ago, we all watched in horror, which turned to outrage, at the beating death of 29-year-old Tyre Nichols at the hands of Memphis police’s SCORPION Unit, which was launched in 2021 to address the rise of violent crime in the city. To date, 7 police officers have been fired and several others have voluntarily quit or been suspended in relation to Tyre’s death; additional EMT, fire, and sheriff’s personnel have also been [fired or suspended](#). EMTs who arrived on the scene after the beating waited 19 minutes before rendering any aid to Nichols. Tyre died three days later in the hospital. He was beaten only yards from the steps of his parent’s [home](#). The US Department of Justice has announced they are launching an investigation into the policies and procedures of the Memphis Police Department as well as specialized policing units such as the [SCORPION Unit](#).

In two months, we will observe the third anniversary of the murder of George Floyd. Now disgraced and convicted for this unlawful death, Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd’s neck for 9 excruciating [minutes](#).

Yet the killings of Breonna Taylor, Tyre Nichols, and George Floyd are not isolated incidents. They are part of a larger pattern of systemic violence and discrimination against Black people in the United States that has played out in our streets and, with the advent of smart phones, on our televisions. These killings have sparked a na-

tionwide and global movement for racial justice and [police reform](#). This social justice movement has brought to light the deep-seated racism and prejudice that continues to exist in our criminal justice system and [society](#). It has also spotlighted the disproportionate impact of policing on Black communities and the urgent need for critical oversight into sentencing practices that discriminate against the poor, Blacks, Hispanics, and indigenous [populations](#). This includes addressing wrongful convictions and releasing the innocent. We must identify, acknowledge, and dismantle these systemic barriers and biases that contribute to such violence and arbitrary sentencing. It is not enough to simply mourn the loss of innocent Black lives; we must also take concrete steps to address the root causes of these [injustices](#).

This starts with police reform, holding officers and agencies accountable who deny or violate [civil rights](#), and utilizing restorative justice efforts within our communities that have been devastated by abuses of trust and authority. We must demand accountability and transparency from our police departments and work toward reforms that will prevent these tragedies from happening in the future. This means investing in [training](#), developing community oversight boards, [adopting procedural justice practices](#), and directing resources that will help our law enforcement officers serve and protect all members of our communities, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, or [socioeconomic background](#). It is up to us to ensure that Tyre Nichols and all the other innocent Black lives taken too soon are remembered not just for their untimely

deaths, but for the impact they had on the world and the legacy they left behind. As Frederic Bastiat once said, “justice is achieved only when injustice is absent.”

In another tragic case of a racially motivated hate crime, 25-year-old Black jogger Ahmaud Arbery was on a run in a local neighborhood in Glynn county, Georgia on February 23, 2020 when he was relentlessly chased by three white men who pursued him in their pickup truck before [fatally](#) shooting him with a shotgun. All three defendants were convicted and sentenced to life without parole for the murder, but the case similarly set off a fire storm with calls for social justice and accountability. While the FBI recorded a decline in hate crimes in 2021, with just over 7,000 crimes motivated by race, religion, or gender, with the transition to NIBRS, a more sophisticated crime reporting system, more than 3,200 policing agencies did not contribute [data](#). That included [cities](#) like New York, LA, and San Francisco. And critics argue that people who are victims of hate crimes often do not report to the [police](#) or do not even know they are a victim of such an act. Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey that upwards of half of all hate crimes go unreported to police and a much higher number—200,000–300,000 hate crimes—occur [annually](#). And, as is common in data reporting, there are disparities across definitions of what constitutes a hate crime. The dark figure of crime continues to cast shadows on our understanding of the true scope of hate crimes, but experts and civil rights organizations reported a surge of hate crimes in [2022](#)

against Asians, Jews, LGBTQ+, Muslims, and racial groups across the [United States](#). This past Thursday, the Anti-Defamation League released a report regarding 6,750 incidents of white supremacist propaganda in 2022, a 38% increase over 2021. This represents an all-time high of racist, antisemitic, or anti-LGBTQ materials that were distributed or displayed, with one extremist group in Texas responsible for 80% of these incidents, attempting to fan racial tensions and foster climates of fear of those [targeted](#). While these materials are frequently protected by the First Amendment, they are not harmless words. They are words of hate. Science matters, and such data are critical to addressing these issues in our society and with law and policymakers.

It is up to us, those who work within the criminal justice system, who research issues related to crime and justice, and who educate the next generation of CJ professionals, to promote systems, procedures, and policies in which all people, regardless of race, are treated with dignity, respect, and equality. It is up to us to stand up—and speak up—when someone is abusing their power and privilege or promoting hate. It is time for difficult and uncomfortable conversations about the power of privilege, the abuse of authority, and whether justice is being served. As someone who has been a part of the law enforcement community and who has many friends who work with integrity within law enforcement, I believe we can simultaneously demand accountability and criminal justice reform while still supporting those police who serve with honor on their oath to serve and protect. These two

things are not mutually exclusive.

Additionally, we must continue to forge relationships with community partners and practitioners and to do ethical and rigorous research that addresses the underlying social and economic conditions that lead to poverty, marginalization, and violence in communities of [color](#). This includes addressing [problems](#) such as voting disenfranchisement, red lining, discriminatory banking practices, education funding, health-care inequities, and employment discrimination, which inflate and propel violence and crime.

Academics bring to the table the knowledge, research, and theories that form the foundation of our understanding of criminal justice. They help to untangle complex social problems and help us understand what works, what doesn't—and why. Practitioners, on the other hand, bring their hands-on experience, practical knowledge, and vast experiences to the table. Your work is invaluable and you are doing the hard work in the real world, making a difference every single day. Together, academics and practitioners form a powerful team, working in partnership to advance the field of criminal justice and to create a better world for all. Yet being a leader in criminal justice is not easy. It requires courage, determination, and a commitment to excellence. It requires a deep understanding of the complex issues facing our justice system and the ability to make tough decisions that will shape the future of our communities. It demands ethics, integrity, and commitment to listen to each other, to work together, and to understand each other. As a

champion of criminal justice education, [ACJS](#) is well-positioned to bridge together academics and practitioners to provide solutions to critical issues facing our country.

Change is hard. Creating changemakers is even harder. John Maxwell once wisely stated that people change in four different seasons:

- When they hurt enough that they have to,
- When they see enough that they're inspired to,
- When they learn enough that they want to, and
- When they receive enough that they're able to.

When it comes to social justice and criminal justice reform, these are important principles that move the needle and facilitate a call to action. Becoming a changemaker of public policy requires taking an active role in the policymaking process and a commitment to create [positive change](#). We live in a world that is constantly evolving, and it is the role of criminal justice leaders to adapt to these changes. Benjamin Franklin once said that “justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.”

To our students here tonight, I encourage you to become a changemaker. Hope and education are the great equalizers of the world. Yet one has much less power without the other. Educate yourself. Learn about the issues that you are passionate about and the current research, policies,

and laws that relate to those issues. Read about the history of the policies, their impact, and the arguments for and against them. Become knowledgeable about how to do research and how to do it with rigor and ethics. Have hope that you can make a difference. And when you get to a position of power and privilege, shake the tree. Fight for what is right, fight for what you believe in, fight for the ideals of equality and justice. You are the future of our field and you will shape what our criminal justice system—and society—can be.

To our ACJS academic, policy, government, and practitioner members, thank you for your commitment to our discipline, the research you do that pushes our knowledge and understanding, for your vision and commitment to praxis, and for the dedicated work of our practitioner partners in the field every day. I hope that this conference will be a time for us to come together to learn, to talk and listen, and to become reenergized. To celebrate what we are doing well and what we have learned. Criminal justice education must be rigorous and grounded in the latest research and best practices, but it must also be dynamic and forward-looking. It must be able to adapt to the changing needs of society and to the advances in technology and our understanding of crime and justice. Let us use our positions of privilege to promote students' learning and to develop into critical thinkers.

I conclude with the spirit of inspiration of the [Starfish Story](#).

Tom walked every day on a beach. One day he

noticed a man who was leaning down to pick up something and then throwing it back into the water. As he got closer, he saw this person was picking up starfish that had washed up on the beach, picking them up one at a time to return them to the sea. Tom was confused and approached the man and said, “Good evening, I was wondering what you are doing?” The man smiled and replied, “I am throwing back starfish that are washed upon shore because if I don’t, they will die up here from a lack of oxygen.”

Tom replied that he understood...but after a moment he said, “But there must be thousands of starfish on this beach and you can’t possibly save all of them. And this is happening on hundreds and hundreds of other beaches across the world. So how does throwing some of these starfish back in the ocean make a difference?”

The man smiled as he bent down to pick up yet another starfish, throwing it back to the waters at his feet. He then replied, “It made a difference for this one.”

Never doubt the power of ONE—the power you each have to make a positive and lasting impact on this world.

And as I close, allow me to share some personal words of gratitude. First, thanks to my friends and colleagues on our ACJS Executive Board, as well as Letiscia Perrin, Jeet Singh, John Worrall, Stephanie Mizrahi, and our ACJS staff for their support of me and their hard work to make this annual meeting possible. Thank you, First Vice-President Anthony Peguero, Second

Vice-President Bitna Kim, and Immediate Past President Heather Pfeifer for being my anchors throughout it all. I am forever indebted to my program co-chairs Jenn Wareham and Stacy Mallicoat and our national program team for their hard work, helping me keep my sense of humor, answering emails from me at all hours of the day and night, and for always ensuring I had copious amounts of coffee. I also appreciate the hundreds of friends and colleagues who served for me this past year and who gave of their time and talents.

Finally, thanks to my family: my parents Dick and Nancy Paquette and my four kids, Brittany, Nathan, Drew, and Genevieve, and our daughter-in-law Megan, who lift me up and are my everything every day. And last, but certainly not least, I am eternally grateful to my husband, Barry. You are the wind beneath my wings, making sure I have had the time to meet the demands for this role, always making me laugh, supporting me as I have traveled to represent the association and meet many deadlines, and being my biggest cheerleader in everything that I do.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you all this evening, for the tremendous honor of serving ACJS as president this year, and I look forward to the next few days where we will share fellowship, great research, and attend special events together. You—our members—are what makes ACJS so special.

Thank you. ■



Elizabeth Kelley & Francesca Flood's *Suicide and Its Impact on the Criminal Justice System*

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
ISBN-13: 978-1641059862

Review by Michael Klausner, PhD

Although differential rates of suicide among various segments of the population based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and social class have been studied, little has been done regarding the prevalence of suicide among people involved in the criminal justice system. *Suicide and Its Impact on the Criminal Justice System* by Elizabeth Kelley, JD, and Francesca Flood, EdD, fills this gap in an incredibly comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and practical manner exploring virtually all dimensions of this underexamined issue.

An expert writes each chapter on a specific aspect of the topic: mental health professionals, psychiatrists, criminologists, judges, public defense attorneys, prosecutors, law professors, correctional facility personnel, and former prison inmates.

A central theme of the book is that suicide and its negative consequences affect not only those

serving time in prison but also others directly or indirectly involved in the criminal justice system. Suicide impacts those waiting to be tried in court, defense attorneys, prosecutors, judges, correctional officers, and their families. Each chapter addresses how suicide impacts individuals.

Chapter 2, for example, written by Dr. Flood, who has researched organizational culture and criminal justice reform, and Elizabeth Kelley, a criminal defense attorney and editor of *Representing People With Mental Disabilities: A Practical Guide for Criminal Defense Attorneys*, discusses incidents of “noncustodial suicide,” a rarely publicized event when those out on bond or own recognizance commit suicide. Unlike suicides committed in prison by inmates, noncustodial suicides are generally not given media attention; only the families of those who committed suicide and their legal counsel become aware of its occurrence. They interviewed attorneys whose clients committed suicide while adjudication was pending. This chapter encapsulates their findings.

Chapter 4, “Recognizing and Addressing the Problem of Suicide Following Incarceration,” authored by Dr. Tracy D. Gunter, professor





of clinical psychiatry at Indiana University of Medicine; Dr. Kyle D. Webster, a first-year resident in psychiatry at Indiana University of Medicine; and Dr. Sandra K. Antoniak, certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in child and adolescent and forensic psychiatry, discusses suicides that occur after individuals are released from prison. Some may be more prone to suicidal tendencies and suicide due to the harsh prison environment. The authors examine how various unhealthy and oppressive prison conditions contribute to inmate suicides. Such conditions include poor food and sanitation, violence, and isolation. They indicate that many of those sentenced to prison may already have a variety of psychological, emotional, and physical pathologies which, after experiencing the prison environment, may result in them taking their lives.

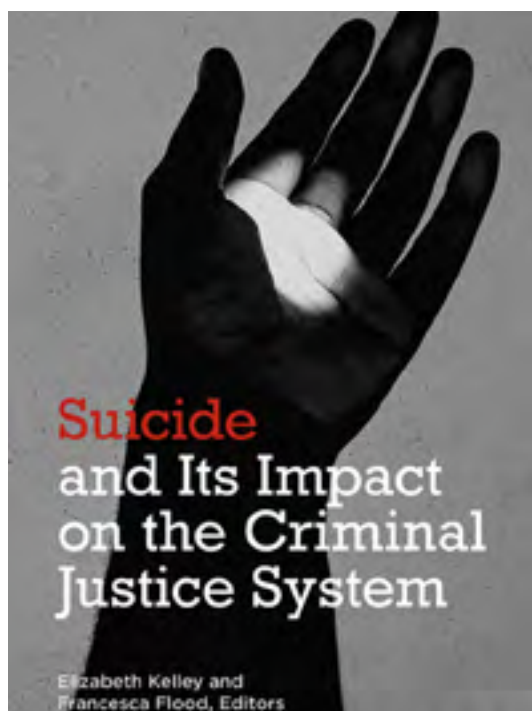
The importance of helping individuals released from prison to make a healthy transition is discussed. Post-incarceration suicide has long been neglected and is only now being addressed. The authors stress that correctional facility personnel should know the incarcerated person's background to be better equipped to recognize the signs of suicidal ideation. Moreover, established policies and practices should be utilized when at-risk inmates are identified.

The effect of inmate suicide on judges is usually not considered in discussions of suicide in the

criminal justice system. It is examined in Chapter 7: "When Judges Cry: Dealing with a Defendant's Death by Suicide," written by The Honorable Stephen R. Bough, a United States district court judge for the Western District of Missouri.

He writes that when inmates die, either by suicide or violence perpetrated by other inmates, the effects reverberate among everyone involved in the criminal justice system, including judges. He notes that judges are required to balance their compassion and sadness with their duty

to administer the law fairly. This balance, however, does not require the elimination of empathy and compassion from the decision-making process. It is evident that Judge Bough is a thoughtful judge who cares about those he is sentencing, their families, and the victims and their families. He also points out the importance of judges being compassionate about themselves and practicing a variety of self-care modalities, such as having a good diet, exercising, and sleeping.



What is an attorney to do if her client expresses suicidal tendencies? If not addressed, this question can cause much stress, ambivalence, and emotional unease for attorneys. Three chapters are devoted to addressing this issue. Each chapter is written by a person with expertise in a specific dimension of the question: public defender, forensic psychiatrist, and professor of ethics. The suggestions made by them are quite practical and actionable. If applied, they will alleviate much



of the anxiety experienced by attorneys when clients express suicidal propensities.

The last four chapters, “The Logistics of Suicide,” “Sentenced to Healing,” “Transformation,” and “An Insider’s View of Suicide in Prison,” are case studies written by people convicted of crimes and who contemplated suicide. They are incredibly compelling accounts of what they experienced and, most importantly, how they were able to transform their lives and positively impact society by being of service.

A significant plus of the book is that although it deals with a serious and all-too-common phenomenon that negatively affects those involved in the criminal justice system, all authors propose practical, actionable, and effective suggestions. If implemented, they can do much to decrease the rate of suicide and its negative consequences. In addition to raising the reader’s consciousness about the problem, this book sheds light on a topic that has been eschewed far too long and needs examination.

The book’s authors are to be commended for making it reader/scholar friendly. In addition to a detailed index, there is a list of suggested works arranged by chapter. These works would be of great value to those who want to dive deeper into some of the chapter topics. The suggested works, in addition to dealing with suicide in the criminal justice system, also address the topic of suicide in general. A brief discussion introduces each chapter, conveys the topic’s importance, and places it in a broader context.

Suicide and Its Impact on the Criminal Justice System would be appropriate for a wide-ranging audience. It can be adapted for senior undergraduate and graduate courses in the

following areas: criminology, sociology, law, psychology, and social work. In addition, it is a “must” read for those employed in *any* position within the criminal justice area: lawyers, judges, prosecutors, and correctional personnel.

It would be equally important for those involved in all branches of government—executive, congressional, and judicial—to read the book and hopefully create legislation that will reduce the prevalence of suicide in the criminal justice space and its far-reaching consequences. ■



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Interview on Ron Huff's Contributions to Criminology

By Brian Forst, PhD and Robert Worley, PhD

RW: Who is Ron Huff?

BF: C. Ronald ("Ron") Huff was a respected scholar, an inspiring teacher and storyteller, a highly effective administrator, a widely admired and jovial colleague, and a down-to-earth, really nice person. He earned his doctorate in sociology from Ohio State in 1974, studying criminology under his main mentor, Simon ("Sy") Dinitz. He became a leading authority on gangs and wrongful convictions. Ron served as a consultant on gangs, youth violence, and public policy to several federal agencies, including the US Senate Judiciary Committee, the FBI National Academy, the US Department of Justice, as well as state and local agencies and other organizations throughout the nation. His 13 books and more than 100 articles and book chapters have been widely read and cited not only in the United States, but across the world. About two thirds of his publications are co-authored, often with international colleagues and across disciplines. He died, tragically, of pancreatic cancer, still productive and upbeat until near the end in 2019, survived by his wife, Pat, two daughters, and two grandchildren.



RW: In a tribute to Huff, you called him a "criminologist for all seasons." Why?

BF: In endorsing the American Society of Criminology's honoring Ron with the Vollmer Award in 2015 (see *Criminology & Public Policy*, Volume 15,

Issue 1, pp. 17–26), I noted that the ASC selected a person whose career mirrored August Vollmer's—arguably the first criminologist for all seasons—in several remarkable ways. Like Vollmer, Huff was a renowned scholar, a university administrator, and a criminal justice executive. His scholarship in several major areas—gangs and youth violence, wrongful convictions, corrections, mediation, and police employment—further attest to his demonstrated range. His leadership in growing a vibrant criminology program as dean of the School of Social Ecology, University of California-Irvine, paralleled Vollmer's heading the first criminal justice program at the University of California-Berkeley. Ron's serving as a practitioner—director of psychiatric social work at the Lima State Hospital, a maximum-security institution for mentally disordered criminal offenders—roughly parallels Vollmer's brief term (1923–1924) as chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, and with greater success than Vollmer. And the similarities went beyond the professional. Both men, it turns out, were also accomplished athletes before establishing eminence in criminology—Vollmer a boxer and swimmer and Huff a football linebacker.

RW: You say his first major research was on gangs and delinquency. How did that work contribute to our knowledge of gangs?

BF: Ron's scholarship was both broad and deep. In the area of gangs and youth violence, his study of gangs in South Florida and the Denver area was one of the first to compare samples of gang youths with at-risk, non-gang youths to determine whether and how gang involvement influences criminal behavior. The US Department of Justice used the findings to address gang issues nationwide. Later, Ron directed research on gangs in Ohio, finding they were dominated by local youth and not the product of importation of Los Angeles or Chicago gangs, contrary to popular myths prevailing at the time.



Huff's Contributions to Criminology

Ron edited three editions of *Gangs in America*, a widely used and much-cited text documenting original research that informed both scholarship and public policy on gangs, crime, and delinquency. In 1993 he co-edited *The Gang Intervention Handbook*, the first book I know of to evaluate gang-prevention programs through the lens of social and behavioral science. In 1997, he co-authored a paper with Matthew Meyer on managing prison gangs, which was later used by federal and state prison authorities to assess their policies and procedures. He also co-edited *Youth Violence: Prevention, Intervention, and Social Policy* (1999), which applied theory to practices and policies on youth violence.

RW: And how did he contribute to our understanding of wrongful convictions?

BF: Ron's research contributions to the field of wrongful convictions and miscarriages of justice are no less substantial. His work on these problems became prominent in 1996 with the publication of his path-breaking book, *Convicted but Innocent: Wrongful Conviction and Public Policy*, co-authored with Arye Rattner and Edward Sagarin—a work that was stimulated by Ron's doctoral student, Rattner. They identified the primary sources of wrongful convictions: overly zealous police and prosecutors inducing false confessions and flawed informants, faulty lineup practices, and weak defense lawyers.

He followed up that research by committing, in his 2001 ASC presidential address, to understanding how wrongful convictions in the US compare with those in other countries. Ron made good on this pledge not long afterward: In August 2003, his international conference on wrongful convictions, funded by a grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation, was held in Breil/Brigels, Switzerland, hosted by the Swiss criminologist, Martin Killias. The conference brought together scholars and practitioners from the United States, Canada, several European nations,

and Israel to share information about wrongful convictions. I was an attendee, and I found it to be one of the most successful and rewarding conferences in which I have ever participated.

That conference set the foundation for the book, *Wrongful Conviction: International Perspectives on Miscarriages of Justice*, co-edited with Martin Killias (2013). The book consists of 15 chapters on the subject by 18 contributors from nine countries. It describes the problem of wrongful convictions in the United States and Canada, Europe, and Israel, synthesizing the information by focusing on key issues that transcend national boundaries. This work focused heavily on wrongful convictions, but it placed the subject in the larger context of miscarriages of justice and reported in some detail pertinent findings about different types of miscarriages of justice. It addressed the nature, sources, and frequency of wrongful convictions, offering explanations of the role of forensic science in reducing both wrongful convictions and failures to convict actual offenders. It examined the "innocence movement," offering insights into the challenges wrongfully convicted people face in trying to reintegrate into society after imprisonment, often many years of it. Other topics included the impact of plea bargaining on wrongful convictions, the impact of fear of terrorism on legislation that worsens the problem of wrongful convictions, and pressures to offer false confessions in the shadow of such legislation and political repression. The book was used by the International Division of the National Institute of Justice as the foundation for a 2012 international conference hosted by the National Institute of Justice to explore how this problem might be better addressed. Ron was the invited keynote speaker at the conference.

Several important policy implications emanated from that work. It became clear, first, that plea bargaining is a major source of wrongful convictions, which may be substantially reduced by restricting the practice to



Huff's Contributions to Criminology

the most serious crimes. It became clear as well that DNA evidence provided a useful window into the extent and nature of wrongful convictions and that this technology should be made more widely available in justice systems throughout the world.

Then, in 2018, Ron and I wrote a book chapter—"Preventing Violent Crimes by Reducing Wrongful Convictions," in the *Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression*, 2nd edition—on how wrongful convictions not only impose harms on the innocent, but they contribute to harms on society at large by diverting scarce criminal justice resources away from actual offenders, allowing them to commit more crimes. We were surprised to see how little had been written on this important issue in either the literature on wrongful convictions or that of the causes of crime.

RW: What about his other research contributions?

BF: Professor Huff's research on corrections, medication, police employment, and cross-national justice issues is also noteworthy. Other organizations have recognized his considerable achievements in all these areas. In 1992, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency gave him the Donald R. Cressey Award for "outstanding contribution to the field of criminology that promotes programs and policies that are fair, humane, effective, and economically sound." In 1993, the Western Society of Criminology gave him the Paul Tappan Award for "outstanding contributions to criminology." In 2010, the Academy for Criminal Justice Sciences gave him the Gerhard O. W. Mueller International Award for "outstanding contributions to international criminal justice." He also contributed to the improvement of criminal justice through his research assistance to many federal, state, and local agencies and advisory boards.

RW: Tell me more about his administrative accomplishments.

BF: Ron was an extremely effective administrator—as director of the Ohio State University's Criminal Justice Research Center and John Glenn School of Public Affairs; dean of the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine, from 1999 to 2009; and president of the American Society of Criminology in 2001. As dean at UC-Irvine, he expanded the school in number of students, majors, degree offerings, and faculty. But perhaps his most lasting contribution was the legacy he left the school for fundamental decency and daily acts of kindness. The faculty admired and loved him.

RW: What was he like as a person?

BF: Ron was a dear friend. His most endearing qualities were his authenticity, his enthusiasm and eternal optimism, and his intelligence. He was fun to be around—a great listener and conversationalist, curious, and always in good spirits.

I came to know him first by his published work, then at criminology meetings, and eventually as collaborators and good friends. But I came to know him and his wife, Pat, in the Swiss Alps, where Ron's research on wrongful convictions converged with mine on errors of justice. Ron loved telling stories. A favorite was how, as a hitchhiker, he was picked up by and befriended astronaut Neil Armstrong's father. The connection led to Ron's summer job at the Lima State Hospital, noted earlier. Three summers working there as a "gofer" led to experiential knowledge of psychology, administration, and criminology—all before receiving degrees in psychology and criminology.

His sunny approach to life continued even after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. About a year before the cancer finally overwhelmed him, he purchased tickets for a cruise in Europe with his wife, Pat, a trip he was never able to take.

RW: What are the main lessons he leaves for students of criminology?



Huff's Contributions to Criminology

BF: There are several. One is that there is extra benefit in gravitating toward research issues that are, to use Ron's words, "problem driven"—ones that aim to inform policy. Doing so can also contribute to respectability for the criminology profession, to emphasize its practical value for our society.

Another is the importance of pursuing a breadth of research interests. Gangs, miscarriages of justice, corrections, mediation, and police employment are distinct domains with not that much in common. In much the same way that a healthy investment portfolio will have a mix of assets with varying degrees of risk and yield across a variety of markets and instruments, so is it extremely valuable to have a mix of problem areas to pursue. Some will inevitably turn out more fruitful than others, but it's impossible to know in advance which ones will bear the most fruit.

But I think the deepest legacy for all criminologists that Ron left us is the power of positive thinking, a vital lesson for these fractious times. He was widely known for his infectious good nature, gregariousness, and can-do spirit. His preternatural positivity stimulated collaborations with more than the usual degree of research complementarities. This quality not only expanded the range and impact of his work, but it made for serendipity, too. Ron's life was a testament to the proposition that serious research in the service of scholarship and policy can be an enjoyable and memorable experience for all involved. With some luck, and our persistence in remembering and promoting this wisdom, the infection may spread. ■

Thank you to Michael Benson for reading this interview before it was published in ACJS Today.



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