

# BOOK REVIEWS

**CJM**  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE MATTERS

## Breaking & Entering

**P Cromwell, J Olsen & D Avary**  
California, London & Delhi: Sage  
(1991.) Hb. £30.50 Pb. £14.50.

This book is volume 8 in a **Crime, Law & Justice** series. It is subtitled 'An Ethnographic Analysis of Burglary'. The analysis is built around a study of thirty 'active' American burglars, all of whom were 'drug addicts or abusers of illegal drugs'. The method of data collection was what the authors call 'staged activity analysis', which consisted of long interviews to identify the motivations and strategies which the informants had used in burglaries they had previously carried out. The informants were then taken on 'ride alongs', taken to the neighbourhoods where they had performed burglaries and asked open-ended questions about how they identified and approached buildings which seemed likely targets. The method appears to have been both interesting and productive.

The difficulty with the study is the

overall theoretical framework in which it is set. It is a study of people who are already experienced burglars and it attempts to explain the decision making processes they use in deciding whether to burgle a particular site. The theoretical framework is that of a rational choice model, a limited rational choice model as the authors describe it, and although this produces some illuminating insights into the decision making process of burglars, and although it is accepted that many burglaries have an opportunistic element to them, it does run the risk of overstructuring the analysis of the data. In a short book (130 pages) it is not possible to explain fully how the raw data from interviews and 'ride alongs' is developed into a theoretical perspective but the appendix on the ethnographic approach is disappointing in ignoring the problems of working from respondents' accounts to observers' theoretical understandings.

Overall an interesting book which should stimulate the thinking of students

of criminology and the wider public of those interested in understanding 'street-level' decision making.

*David Kelleher, Senior Lecturer  
Dept of Sociology, City of London Polytechnic.*

## Treating Child Sex Offenders and Victims - A Practical Guide

**Anna C Salter. Sage. (1990). Hb £32.50. Pb £15.95.**

Anna Salter provides a comprehensive review of the literature and issues surrounding the treatment and assessment of child sexual abusers.

The prevalence of abuse is discussed and conclusions drawn from research utilising non-clinical populations. Salter states that the incidence of abuse is widespread and largely undiscovered, that in a significant number of cases abusers are known to victims and are frequently a male members of their



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families.

The manner in which victims, who tend to be female, have been held responsible for their own sexual abuse in the past by researchers and academics alike, is highlighted and criticised. As Salter rightly states 'a child who engages in sexual activity with an adult through ignorance, confusion, manipulation, fear or psychological dependency should not be labelled participating' (p34).

The later tendency on the part of the literature to blame mothers and families for abuse is also criticised. The former have been accused of denying their partners sexual relations thereby encouraging abuse, of failing to protect their children from abuse and of deliberately creating the circumstances that give rise to abuse. As Slater states, although mothers and families may unknowingly provide the opportunity for abuse, offenders must be motivated to do so and should therefore take full responsibility for their actions.

The latter half of the book considers methods of treating child abusers and assessing their progress via attitude testing questionnaires. The aim of any treatment programme, it is suggested, should be to enable abusers to come to terms with ongoing temptation. Practitioners should, it seems, be aiming to control this form of deviant behaviour rather than seeking to 'cure'. Addressing 'denial' is also seen as essential in work with child abusers and practitioners should seek to move from admission with justification to admission with guilt.

'Treating Child Sex Offenders and Victims' provides an interesting and informative read for a wide audience, from practitioner to academic.

*Julia Davidson, Assistant Research Information Officer, North East London Probation Service.*

## **Punishment under Pressure**

**Bob Broad. Jessica Kinsley, 118 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN. (1991). Hb £25.00.**

Dr Broad's book is a critical account of the work of an inner-city probation team which attempted to adopt a com-

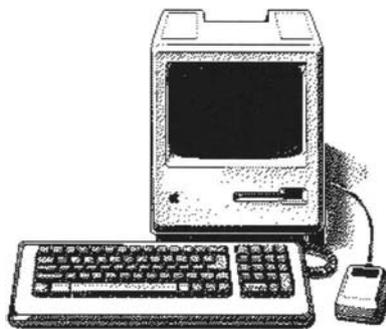
munity focus for its work. Work in the community it seems has been encouraged at the policy level without any clear view of precisely what the term means and parts of Dr Broad's work are concerned to identify what the term might have meant and what it actually meant in this particular case.

Books based on doctoral theses seemingly inevitably have to refer to some fairly theoretical issues and this one is no exception. This is not to say that it doesn't also manage to tackle important practical concerns such as how successful the community-focused practice was and the difficulties experienced in implementing it organisationally.

There is no strong message from the research to say whether this is a form of practice to be advocated. It certainly emerges as a form of practice that is difficult to implement in a service that organises itself in quite a different way. Dr Broad is especially pessimistic about the prospects for community probation work in a 'punishment in the community' policy framework. Policy that is primarily concerned with how to tackle individual offenders (especially how to control them) inevitably seems likely to restrict opportunities for promoting crime reduction through community action.

*Paul E Kiff*

*Research and Information Officer,  
North East London Probation Service.*



## **Everyday Violence: How Women and Men Experience Sexual and Physical Danger**

**Elizabeth Stanko. Pandora Press, London (1990). Pb. £6.99.**

This book dissects the day to day reality of how men and women negotiate their everyday lives in the context of the implicit and explicit threat of violence. It takes as its starting point the premise that violence is not only the extraordinary explosive event that suddenly targets a particular, unfortunate individual, but is also part of everyday reality. Stanko looks at danger and safety, and the extent to which the focus has been on 'crime' in the public domain, at the expense of focusing on danger in private. She uses interviews conducted over a four year period to describe how almost all of us take account of personal danger, incorporating strategies to protect ourselves into our normal routines.

Perhaps the most interesting chapters in this book look at how differently men and women perceive the potential for danger. Stanko finds that women perceive the threat to them to be both sexual and physical, and that 'Women's lives rest upon a continuum of unsafety'; men tend to think of their safety in purely physical terms. These attitudes are, of course mediated by other features, such as race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability and direct experience, but largely reflect the reality of how men and women live.

Although there is a large body of work on juvenile and adolescent street gangs, historically, the male attitude to danger, and the way men manage their personal safety, have received very little attention from sociologists and criminologists. Stanko says 'For men, there are no tips about personal safety in crime prevention handbooks... While we may assume men already know how to protect themselves, they don't seem to be very successful: men's recorded levels of victimisation are much higher than women's'. This book reveals, through the voices of the men interviewed, some of the complex systems of socialisation and negotiation that inform the way men understand their relationship to violence and danger.

*Yolande Burgin JP*

*NACRO & Action on Youth Crime.*