

## Book Review

### **Josie**

By Catherine Trimby

Publisher: Youcaxton publications  
(2016)

ISBN: 978-19111-753-08

(paperback)

Price: £10.00 (paperback)

Dissimilar to most books which are reviewed in the Prison Service Journal, *Josie* is a fictional novel. I decided to include it in the review pile partly because the subject matter of the book focuses on Josie's time at a women's prison and also because the author, Catherine Trimby, served as a magistrate in Shropshire for 34 years and is now a member of the Independent Monitoring Board for a women's prison.

The book opens with Josie being transported to prison having been sentenced for her criminal offence. At this stage of the book we don't know anything about her or the fact that she is an offender, just the experience of being transported in, what is often referred to as the sweat box. We soon learn the context and then follow Josie through her first evening and morning at Edgehill Prison. The book then sets the scene. Josie is a 'quiet and timid thirty-two-year old' (back cover) who lives alone and is involved in an operatic society. One of the society's members, Mike, pays her unwanted attention and one night on a ruse gets Josie to come back to his flat. Mike makes unwanted advances to her and through panic Josie forgets to put on her lights when driving away. She hits and kills a man and is later charged with death by careless driving. She is sentenced to a custodial sentence.

Chapter 13 onwards then describes Josie's life in custody. We are told about the detailed induction programme, her bedroom, her house (wing), the group of friends she begins to make, her time working in the gardens and her involvement

with a choir. The book also highlights her appointments with her probation/reintegration officer and the conversations which they have in order to get Josie to start taking responsibility for causing the death of a young man. This involves contact with the victim's mother and also Josie replying to this letter. The experiences are not all positive: she is involved in a small incident in the queue for dinner in her first few weeks in prison, she is involved in a hostage incident and she also sees one of her friends self-harm.

Overall I did enjoy the book. It was well written and I did want to find out what happened to Josie but in truth I did find it a little tame. I have never been inside a women's prison so do not know what the reality of a women's prison is like, but having read some of the academic literature and watched documentaries I didn't feel this book painted that realistic a picture. Despite including the incidents of self-harm and being taken a hostage and also touching on other issues such as the women missing their children, drug abuse, low education levels and post-conviction employment; none of these were really dealt with in any meaningful way and thus could have been much stronger. This could have been a way in which to get some important messages out to people about why women shouldn't be held in existing custodial institutions. Nevertheless as a novel, it was an interesting read.

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## Book Review

### **Regulating Judges: Beyond Independence and Accountability**

Ed. Richard Devlin & Adam Dodek

Edward Elgar 2016

ISBN 978 1 78643 078 6

Price: £105

This book considers the regulation of judges in 19 countries, including England and Wales. It proposes a new approach to analysing judicial regulation, which has traditionally been discussed only in terms of the twin necessities for judges to be independent and for them to be accountable. The book also provides a critique of regulation conceived merely as a process of setting, monitoring and enforcing rules or standards. Although this is not part of its design, the book may also help shed light upon the regulation of other aspects of social, economic and governmental activity, which the body of literature which has grown up alongside it often terms the 'regulated State'. This book adds to that literature and helpfully makes many references to it.

The importance of judicial regulation has long been recognised as a fundamental constitutional and philosophical issue (the question Plato asked in the *Republic* about how those who had power were to be controlled is of enduring significance). Judicial regulation is also topical given the scrutiny the senior judiciary in England and Wales have come under about whether the executive or the legislature can trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty to set in motion the UK's departure from the European Union. In November 2016 three judges in the Court of Appeal ruled unanimously that Ministers exercising the Royal Prerogative could not trigger Article 50 and that Parliament must formally empower them; and in January 2017 the Supreme Court upheld that decision, albeit with four of the 11 judges dissenting. The media coverage of those judgments, particularly the first (with the *ad hominem* attacks three tabloid newspapers made against the Appeal Court judges), has thrown into sharper relief issues relating to the accountability of judges (and indeed the media) as well as highlighting the tensions in the