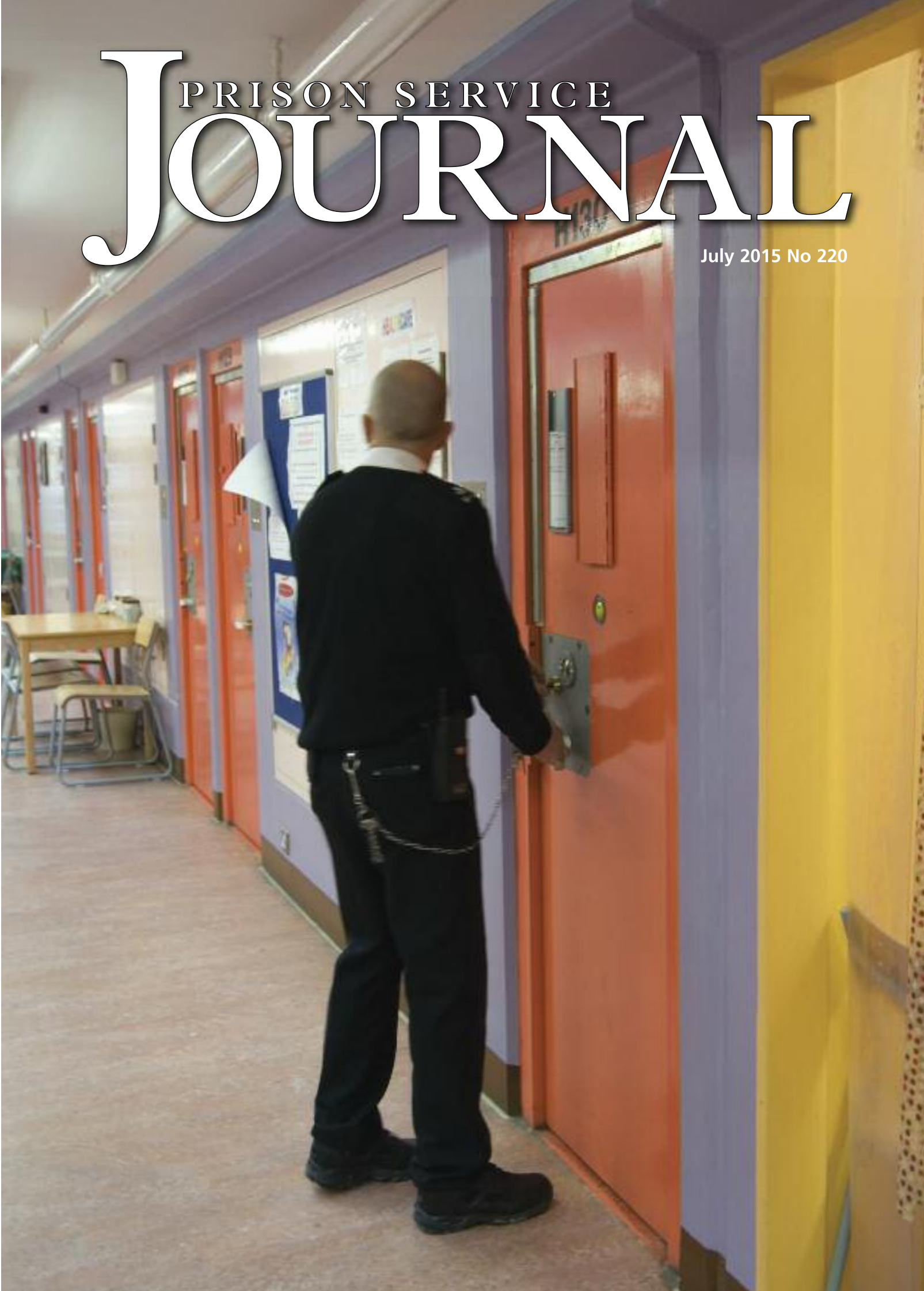


# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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# Reviews

## Book Review

### ***Nursing in Criminal Justice Services***

By Ann Norman and Elizabeth Walsh

Publisher: MandK Publishing

ISBN 9781905539-85-7 (paperback)

Price: £25.00 (paperback)

This short book (just 180 pages including a foreword, pen portraits of the 15 contributors and an index) is written principally for those considering becoming or who are about to become nurses in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). MandK the publishers provider training and development for healthcare professionals as well as publishing books in this field. This book is the first on this field of nursing since Norman and Parrish's *Nursing in Prison* (2002). Given the changes since then, which include the transfer of responsibility for healthcare in prison to the NHS; the Bradley review (2009) of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities in the CJS; and, most recently, the organisational reforms to the NHS which the Coalition Government has brought about — this is a timely publication. Its scope is broad: it covers the role of nursing in police stations, at court, in prison and when offenders are under supervision in the community. Its coverage of custody seeks to include the different types of prison as well as Immigration Removal Centres and police cells. Inevitably, such a succinct account cannot deal in depth or explore all the issues comprehensively.

This is not to quibble: the authors, both of whom have worked in prisons, have put together a clearly written set of contributions (the design and type-setting of the book is also attractive) in two parts. In the first part, an account is provided of the 'pathway' through the CJS from arrest and initial detention in a police

station to discharge from prison back into the community, with a consideration of the nursing role in each setting. The second part of the book deals with such broader issues as governance, legal issues and professional development. It also includes a chapter on Learning Disability and another on the lessons we can learn from inquests.

Prefacing the two parts of the book is an autobiographical account of a patient/offender (John Walker, who is now a practitioner). This provides a set of references for much of the rest of the book which, because of its brevity tends to describe structures and processes and systems rather than the dynamics of their operation. However, there are revealing chapters in the book which offer insights into those dynamics. In this reviewer's opinion, the richest of these insights is provided in the chapter subtitled 'beyond rhetoric in caring and custody' by Dawn Freshwater (Professor of Mental Health at the University of Leeds and a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing).

Without rehearsing them in detail Freshwater refers to the literature which deals with the 'caring-custody' dichotomy. She points out the fallacious distinction often drawn between 'theory' and 'practice' by emphasising the importance of thinking and reflecting about what is done as an integral part of practice. She uses this approach to consider the shortcomings in care practice uncovered at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust. In his 2013 Perrie lecture Nick Hardwick, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, used the failures identified by the Francis report into Mid Staffordshire as a lens through which he asked some challenging questions about prisons. While professionally different, there are parallels between

the caring role of nurses and the caring role of prison officers (and of all staff with prisoner-facing roles).

Freshwater's remark that 'the instability of health and correctional systems means that care-giving becomes fragmented and fractured...and care values may be subordinated to target-driven outcomes,' provides not only a response to the story John Walker tells but also a prompt that there is much we can learn from the nursing profession about the way we enable and support all those who work with prisoners. This approach complements and expands what we have learnt from the research at Cambridge (Leibling, Hulley and Crewe among others) into the importance of the 'staff professionalism' dimension of the 'Measuring the Quality of Prison Life' analyses. Freshwater identifies compassion, competence and the importance of relationships as key to addressing the difficulties which underlay the Mid Staffordshire shortcomings in care; and the importance of an emotional engagement in the latter too, particularly where power is a defining characteristic of the relationship. The chapter on 'Professional attitudes and behaviour' underlines the importance of recognising a nurse's emotional response to the difficulties which can be encountered in the custodial environment. Further work linking the literature and expertise on the caring profession of the nurse and the caring profession of the prison officer would, surely, be of interest?

In summary, in spite of being necessarily restricted by its length from exploring some issues in depth, this book does more than orientate the newcomer to the CJS. As well as marking the salient 'geographical' features of this complex 'delivery landscape', it has the potential to

engage its readers in some of the most profound issues which the care of prisoners and the running of prisons raise.

**William Payne** is a former prison governor who is currently seconded to the NHS.

#### Book Review

#### ***What works in therapeutic prisons: Evaluating Psychological Change in Dovegate Therapeutic Community***

By Jennifer Brown, Sarah Miller, Sara Northey and Darragh O'Neill Carey  
Publisher: Palgrave MacMillan (2014)

ISBN: 978-1-137-30619-7

(hardback) 978-1-137-30620-3

(paperback)

Price: £75.00 (hardback) £26.99

(paperback)

The expansion of therapeutic communities and social therapeutic approaches in forensic settings has been matched by a recent growth in academic interest. Sociological, criminological and psychological approaches have been used to offer an analysis of what and how therapeutic communities contribute to offender rehabilitation. *What Works in Therapeutic Prisons* examines in considerable detail individual and social outcomes following treatment in one democratic therapeutic community — HMP Dovegate. The book provides an in-depth analysis of therapeutic communities as a psychological intervention and an analysis of some of the organisational issues which emerge when attempting to establish an enabling social environment within the context of a prison. However, the primary aim of the book is to examine the broad range of outcomes Therapeutic Communities (TCs) aspire to achieve. The book provides an academic critique as well as an engaging narrative into some

of the tensions, challenges and difficulties experienced during the first 14 years of Dovegate's existence.

The authors observe that the goals of a TC have been wider than the arena of risk reduction and desistance and the book begins by setting out its mission to understand in what ways and with whom TCs can be most effective. It is argued that in order to capture the interpersonal, social and psychological changes TCs attempt to achieve, a range of research methods must be adopted. It is clearly evident throughout this text that the research team has been creative and innovative in this endeavour.

The book goes on to provide an in-depth summary of their underlying social and relational principles and the growth of TCs within the criminal justice system. It points to the power and potency which TCs have in affecting change and hints at one of the contradictions in TC practice; namely that the pro-social community milieu of TCs remains discrepant with the environments people will be eventually released into. This hints at some of the considerable challenges TCs face in creating an intervention which is successful in securing long-term change for their residents.

The book continues by touching on other controversial issues asking questions about whether it is possible to have a TC within the context of a prison and whether the contradictions are such that the uneasy alliance this creates is one too hard to broach. It also poses a question about the private sector and whether TCs can and should exist in this setting. This chapter concludes by identifying another significant development which has come out of the TC movement, namely that the physical environment can be key to shaping the pro-social and rehabilitative culture.

The next chapter sets out the two inter-link aims of the book. One

is to describe the process of treatment and 'following the journeys' (p46) of TC residents, the other to explore harder quantitative outcomes. The issues of the advantages, disadvantage and ultimately the possibility of conducting a randomised control trial within this environment is explored and a comprehensive overview of the TC population, research measures used and analytic procedures is given. The text focuses on the importance of measuring individual change, and rightly identifies research and analytic methods which are able to achieve this. The research design also allows for another important question to be answered: the extent to which changes in behaviour are maintained following transfer or release from Dovegate and, an analysis of the experiences of residents following their release.

The book continues by providing a useful discussion exploring the relationship between personality disorder and criminal behaviour, focussing on issues such as psychopathy and the assessment and treatment of personality disorder. While making a contentious claim that the 'TC is the only offender model which specifically targets personality disorder' (p84) it provides a helpful review of best practice in personality disorder assessment and provides a critique of the utility of relying on self-report measures for diagnosing personality disorder.

An interesting chapter on psychometric change provides support for the premise that psychological change occurs primarily in those residents who remain in treatment for at least 18 months and for the premise that short-term treatment can for some be counter-productive. A focus on individual level analysis where clinically significant and statistically reliable change is explored on an individual rather than group level demonstrates clinical improvements for those residents who remained in treatment for 18 months.

Another strength of the book is the extent to which it draws on the perspectives of residents and provides an in-depth analysis of experiences within treatment. The difficulties that residents can experience in engaging in TC treatment and how for some, the experience can be 'untherapeutic' are acutely evident. It also supports previous research, suggesting that therapeutic stages are passed through during the therapeutic journey and provides an honest critique of how community life can be either an affirming experience or one associated with hopelessness and disillusionment. This theme is continued in an invaluable chapter which explores the experiences of those people who have left the therapeutic community and highlights the essential role of the therapeutic relationship with staff as a key part of the therapeutic experience. Whilst more emphasis could have been placed on exploring what part of the therapeutic experience participants found most helpful in the change process, the chapter does offer some useful indications into what it was that participants experienced as important in desistance from crime and, in particular cites the role of family and moving in non-offending circles being central to desistance. This research also affirms the role that TCs have in helping men resolve and come to terms with abusive traumatic life experiences.

The penultimate chapter on reconviction rates acknowledges the immense difficulties in conducting a re-conviction study and accepts that without a randomised control trial or the absence of a control group, the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about the impact on reconviction is limited. Although the research provides a percentage figure of an overall reconviction rate it does not identify the reconviction rate of those who 'complete' treatment, only that the 'completed' group committed fewer offences. Whilst

there does not appear to be any significant difference between time spent in therapy and reconviction per se, more offences overall were committed by those who spend less time in treatment. Given however that no matched control group was identified (other than comparisons made with general prison samples), claims about the effect of treatment on reconviction leading to a '10 per cent reduction...which other treatment programmes have found difficult to achieve'(p220) appear hard to substantiate. This chapter does however make some useful observations about the nature of reconvictions citing that the majority of these were for breaches of licence, including absconding, and that there were no reports of reconvictions for violent and sexual offending. This chapter also observed that reduction in adjudication rates are sustained post TC.

The final chapter provides a useful summary of the answers to the questions posed by the authors early on in the text. It addresses questions such as who is likely to benefit most and least from a TC, provides a succinct summary of the process of change, identifies some of the struggles experienced in the reintegration of prisoners post-treatment and provides an overview of practice implications which stem from this in-depth body of research.

The book provides an important contribution to those who wish to understand more about forensic therapeutic communities and be more informed about the role they provide within the criminal justice system. The book not only offers an in-depth analysis of the way participants experience their time in therapy but also examines the experiences of those post TC treatment and provides an account of some of the factors crucial in supporting the desistance process. It gives an insight into what helps promote and sustain a potent therapeutic culture, and reminds us of some of the difficulties and strains

experienced by those attempting psychological change. It also offers a narrative which highlights the necessity of a critical and reflective approach to practice.

**Richard Shuker** is Head of Clinical Services at HMP Grendon.

In an ideal world, dangerous offenders would not exist. Unfortunately, however, reality sees a range of individuals committing both violent and sexual offences and therefore posing a great risk to the public in terms of their potential reoffending. Time has provided for a growing concern in relation to the dangers which other members of society pose; we fear the dangerous offender and the harm which they could bestow upon us. Upon examination of the statistics relating to serious crime and considering the fact that our current mainstream prison system is not actually working; it is refreshing to learn of new and alternative ways of dealing with dangerous offenders which aim to make society a better place. *What Works in Therapeutic Prisons* focuses on one such alternative: therapeutic communities.

This book is an essential read for anyone interested in deciding for themselves whether or not the missing link in reaching the ultimate goal of seriously reducing the number of dangerous offenders within society could in fact be within the system of a therapeutic community. I read this book whilst carrying out extensive research for my undergraduate dissertation and, though it predominantly focuses on Dovegate Therapeutic Community whilst my work concentrated on HMP Grendon's apparent success, it still proved to be invaluable.

The history behind the initial establishment of therapeutic communities is clearly depicted in chapter 2 of the book, *The 'What Works' Debate and the Fit of Prison-Based Democratic TCs*. It essentially

holds your hand and walks you through the aims of the therapeutic communities of the past and the problems which prompted the establishment of alternative options of punishment and reform such as these. It is a relatively modern belief that criminal behaviour can indeed be modified through the use of the wide range of programmes available today specifically designed with the aim of reforming offenders. Dovegate offers the unique method of therapy associated with therapeutic communities.

The book then goes on to examine specifically how Dovegate Therapeutic Community is run. Upon reading this; the differences between the system and running of a mainstream prison and that of a therapeutic community such as Dovegate is exceedingly recognisable. Personal insights into therapeutic community life are provided by way of quotes from residents both past and present. The general opinion and feeling gathered from such remarks is extremely positive, depicting how therapeutic community life allowed residents to really open up about their feelings and to establish very good relationships with the members of staff as well as with other residents. Available data from previous studies and research is critically analysed to provide a clear insight into the results from reliable sources and investigations. Different objectives and goals in relation to what such investigations attempted to establish are explained, suggesting that there is not one sole way of deciding whether or not Dovegate's system is successful. These include, for example, an assessment of the extent and process of psychological and behavioural change and also an assessment of residents' behaviour and experiences after release into the community. This is far more advantageous to the reader than

simply trying to establish Dovegate's success relating to reconviction rates. There are numerous different ways in which its success can be considered.

The authors also provide a detailed and eye opening explanation of the numerous theories behind the possible causes of criminality. Chapter 8, to provide one example, examines the research which has been carried out relating to sex offenders and what may cause some to commit such offences, attachment theory for example. The book's analysis of Bartholomew and Horowitz theory from 1991 proved to be very useful when analysing and classifying the different attachment styles of residents. I was very impressed with the way in which the book examines the release of residents who have spent time in the therapeutic community, providing a clear analysis of what is referred to as both premature leavers and TC graduates in addition to reintegration strategies and the changes which residents noticed as a result of their time spent at Dovegate. It marks residents as being the experts on therapeutic community life and therefore highly regards their views and opinions of the successes of such establishments. The true experts are those who have actually experienced the advantages of taking part in such a system.

Society tends to want to see criminals sentenced to some time in prison, and for those who are dangerous criminals the idea of a life sentence is extremely appealing. There is a public outcry to make criminals suffer longer sentences in the hope that they will be more protected from those who have committed crimes and pose a risk to society. However it is not the role of the criminal justice system to simply imprison everyone who breaks the law and it is pointless to simply lock offenders away without any attempt at reform. Society is quick to grasp at the dangerousness of the crime but not to understand why it was

committed and how the individual could be genuinely changed in order to prevent further crime. This is where the authors suggest the success of therapeutic communities' lies. This book is a fantastic read which makes you second guess your views on the current UK prison system, making it a must have purchase.

*Lilli Grigg is a third year undergraduate student at the University of Hull.*

Book Review

***Making crime television:  
Producing entertaining  
representations of crime for  
television broadcast***

By Anita Lam

Publisher: Routledge (2014)

ISBN: 978-0-415-63288-1

(hardback)

Price: £80.00 (hardback)

It is hard to pick up a newspaper, turn on the television or visit the cinema without being assailed by images of crime. This is a subject that has always intrigued and fascinated people and been a staple of storytelling. Many such stories offer a canvas for exploring broad human themes of morality, adversity, and emotion. However, such representations are often more than just a generic backdrop but also have much to say about the specifics of crime and criminal justice. As a result, contemporary criminology has increasingly come to be concerned with media representations.

For many writers, the media plays an important role in shaping public attitudes and perceptions. As Ray Surette has described:

*[P]eople use knowledge they obtain from the media to construct a picture of the world, an image of reality on which they base their actions. This process, sometimes called 'the social construction of reality', is*

particularly important in the realm of crime, justice, and the media<sup>1</sup>

In more direct terms, David Wilson has suggested that:

*'ultimately when we present an image of prison we shape the public's expectation about what prison is like, and what happens inside, of who prisoners are and what they have done'*<sup>2</sup>

The effects of this have been discussed and debated intensely. For many, the representation of crime and criminal justice is regressive, legitimising the dominant order,<sup>3</sup> and generating fear so as to soften viewers for commercial and political exploitation.<sup>4</sup> Others have challenged this view, arguing that representations of prisons offer diverse perspectives that reflect a range of criminological theories,<sup>5</sup> and that popular culture offers spaces that question and resist dominant ideas and even promote reform.<sup>6</sup>

The analysis described above focuses on specific media products such as films, television programmes or newspaper articles, and their relationship to criminological discourse and effects of consumers. In this book, Anita Lam, an Assistant Professor of criminology at York University in Canada, argues that such approaches, by starting with the final product do not offer an adequate account of media representation. Her approach is instead to focus upon the production process. This is not a unique concern, for example David Wilson has engaged in considered reflection upon his own involvement in media production<sup>7</sup> and for a decade, *Prison Service Journal* has been publishing interviews with film makers involved

in representing prisons. However, Lam does offer a more systematic, empirical approach including ethnographic observations and interviews with those involved in creating crime drama for television. She has produced an intriguing and enlightening book that makes a valuable contribution to the field.

The approach adopted by Lam is known as 'actor-network theory' (ANT). In this context the term actors does not refer to performance artists, but instead; *'ANT holds that people, institutions, ideas, texts, technologies and logics are all actors...[and] a television drama is collaboratively assembled'* (p.3, emphasis in original). Also, network does not refer to broadcast networks, but instead the concept is *'a tool for describing a series of transformations and translations made between and among actors'* (p.4). The focus is therefore upon the range of people and forces that are at play during the production process and how they intersect so as to shape, re-shape and change the programme before and as it is completed.

The chapters in the book follow the initial writing process, the various levels of approval and re-writing that take place before shooting and the decisions about location and setting. By exploring these aspects in detail the book is able to reveal the processes of power and domination that flow into mainstream production, creating products that reflect and sustain established order. For example, one fascinating chapter details how a draft of a drama series started with a representation of police corruption, but through processes of executive, legal and regulatory approval, it was transformed so that this element was

gradually minimised and then removed so that the final episode followed a more conventional narrative where the cops were good and the criminals bad.

This book offers a fascinating and important contribution to the literature on media representation of crime and punishment. The systematic focus on the production process is novel. It is also enlightening, revealing the micro-processes through which media production is entangled with power and dominant ideologies.

**Dr Jamie Bennett** is Governor of HMP Grendon and Springhill.

#### Book Review

#### ***Prisoners, solitude, and time***

By Ian O'Donnell

Publisher: Oxford University Press  
(2014)

ISBN: 978-0-19-968448-9

(hardback)

Price: £65.00 (hardback)

In this fascinating and unconventional book, Ian O'Donnell, Professor of Criminology at University College Dublin, takes a new look at two issues that are central to the experience of imprisonment; solitude and time. The book takes an idiosyncratic approach. Rather than reporting a specific and narrow study, it draws upon a diverse range of sources including empirical research, historical documents, philosophical treatise, literature, memoir and even photo-essays. This is the intellectual fruit of many years of close thought, reflection and analysis.

Solitary confinement has always been an issue of concern in prisons

1. Surette, R. (1997) *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice* 2nd Edition Belmont: West/Wadsworth p.1.

2. Wilson, D. (2003) *Lights, Camera, Action in Prison* Report No. 60 p.27-9, p.28.

3. Ericson, R.V., Baranek, P.M. & Chan, J.B.L. (1991) *Representing Order: Crime, Law And Justice In The News Media* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

4. Lee, M. (2007) *Inventing fear of crime: Criminology and the politics of anxiety* Cullompton: Willan.

5. Rafter, N. & Brown, M. (2011) *Criminology goes to the movies: Crime theory and popular culture* New York: New York University Press.

6. Wilson, D. and O'Sullivan, S. (2004) *Images of Incarceration: Representations of Prison in Film and Television Drama* Winchester: Waterside Press.

7. Wilson, D. (2011) *Looking for Laura: Public criminology and hot news* Hook, Hampshire: Waterside Press.

and particular to prison reformers. Historically, the separate and silent system was seen as a way of achieving rehabilitation through quiet contemplation and removal from the contaminating influence of the masses. However, there has been wide concern about the effects of isolation, particularly as the growth of the 'supermax' prison internationally has seen the use of solitary confinement become a more generalised aspect of prison administration.<sup>1</sup> Even in the UK where the 'supermax' model has been rejected, there has nevertheless been concern that the limited use of isolation is a form of 'extreme custody'.<sup>2</sup> Whilst O'Donnell accepts the potential painfulness and damaging nature of such practices, his focus is on the ways in which prisoners are able to survive, cope with and even transcend these conditions. He illustrates and elaborates the various strategies deployed that enable individuals to find some, albeit uncertain, pleasures in solitude and seek ways in which they can sustain their health and even, surprisingly, achieve personal growth.

In relation to time, O'Donnell explores another salient feature of contemporary imprisonment as sentence lengths expand and sentences themselves become increasingly indeterminate. Many face the best part of a lifetime in prison, with seemingly endless days stretching ahead of them. O'Donnell reveals the myriad of strategies deployed by prisoners to make sense of and take control of this time. Anyone working in prisons will recognise many of the behaviours described, but this book reveals the profound inner experiences and has empathy pouring from the pages.

The issues of isolation and time are both distinct and intertwined. They are also experiences that may

be relevant to specific extreme circumstances such as segregation, but are also more generalised and relevant to the experience of imprisonment more widely. From this perspective, O'Donnell has brought to attention two essential but often overlooked aspects of imprisonment. The book also walks a delicate tightrope. It recognises the painfulness and damage of isolation and time but also reveals modes of resistance, adaptation and agency. This is in no way an apologia for these practices, far from it; it is instead an attempt to draw attention to the resilience of the human spirit.

This book is a fascinating read and whilst it does not offer a manual for prison management or practice, those working in the field will find much that encourages reflection, albeit at times uncomfortable. For academics, this is an important text that offers rich material with which to make sense of the experience of contemporary imprisonment.

**Dr Jamie Bennett** is Governor of HMP Grendon and Springhill.

#### Book Review

#### ***Letters to a Lifer. The Boy 'Never to be released'.***

By Cindy Sandford

Published by Waterside Press (2015)

ISBN: 978-1-909976-15-3

(paperback)

Price: £19.95 (hardback)

Letters to a Lifer is a book which documents the relationship between Cindy Sandford, a registered nurse and mother of three living in Pennsylvania, USA and a man, Ken, a prisoner in a maximum security prison. Ken was convicted at the age of 15 for his involvement in the robbery and murder of two people and was sentenced to life without

parole, even though he did not actually kill either of the two victims. In 2014, Ken was one of 500 prisoners (p. 230) in Pennsylvania who had been sentenced to life without parole for a crime which had been committed as a juvenile. While this practice has now been held to be unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court, Pennsylvania is currently refusing to apply the Supreme Court's ruling retrospectively.

I have been interested in the sentence of life without parole since 2005 when I was fortunate enough to participate in a conference held within Graterford State Correctional Institution, Pennsylvania. The conference was looking at a programme called the Lifers Inc. Public Safety Initiative<sup>1</sup> and consisted of 55 academics and 80 life and non-life sentenced prisoners discussing its worth. I will never forget lunch where I had a really interesting conversation with a 19 year old man, who had been convicted of a gang related murder at the age of 17 and believed that he would never be released. I couldn't at the time, and still cannot comprehend the enormity of living under such a sentence. A book which discussed this area thus sparked my interest.

Written by Cindy Sandford, the book describes how Cindy and Ken first encountered each other; Ken is an artist and Cindy ran an art co-op, and then documents the growing relationship between them. This is not a romantic relationship however, with Cindy and Keith (her husband) taking on the role of parents in Ken's life. This does not happen overnight though. Cindy, early on in the book, states how she had previously classed herself as a 'tough on crime' advocate (p.vi) and so the book covers the battles which she had with her conscience about befriending a convicted murderer, largely due to her concern for the

1. Ross J (2013) (ed) *The globalization of supermax prisons*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

2. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2006) *Extreme custody: A thematic inspection of close supervision centres and high security segregation* London: HM Inspectorate of prisons.



victim's families. It is perhaps even more poignant then that as the book progresses you read how Ken begins to call Cindy and Keith 'Mudder' and 'Peepaw' and they regard him as another son.

The book gives readers an idea about life inside a maximum security prison, both in terms of how dreadful it can be but also how positive and generous some people are in such situations. It details for instance how Ken rescues little birds in the exercise yard and then cares for them until they are able to look after themselves; a practice which many of

the prison officers know is happening and keep quiet about. It also looks at the relationships which build up amongst prisoners and the care and support which many find when they are incarcerated within such institutions.

As previously mentioned the book is written by Cindy Sandford, but it also contains excerpts from Ken's journal. So, for example, you will read Cindy's account of a visit or some other event and then at the end of the chapter you will also see the same event from the perspective of Ken. These journal extracts also

allow an insight into what it is like to live under a perpetual sentence.

I really enjoyed this book and found it both engaging and informative. Although I already had an interest in this area it has sparked further thought and I would recommend it for others; both who have an interest in penal policy and also those who work within the system.

**Dr Karen Harrison** is a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Hull.



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1. See Harrison, K. (2006) 'The LIFERS Inc. Public Safety Initiative', *Prison Service Journal*, 166, 37-41.