PRISON SERVICE
JOURNAL

Reviews

Book Review
Flying Blind : How the Justice System perpetuates crime and the Corrections Department fails to correct
By Roger Brooking
Publisher : ADAC (New Zealand) (2011)
ISBN: 918-0-473180-75-1
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Available at
http://www.flyingblind.co.nz/

Roger Brooking has been conducting alcohol and drug assessments on offenders for over 12 years. During that time he has interviewed hundreds and hundreds of people caught up in the criminal justice system in New Zealand. He has also carried out extensive research, using convential methodology but also through numerous freedom of information requests to the Department of Corrections. Despite being kept at 'arms length' by the Department his knowledge , understanding and professional training means he is well placed to develop and articulate an analysis of the effectiveness of the system operating in New Zealand today. *Flying Blind* documents these issues in extraordinary detail. It provides a depressing picture of a system which, in his view, is more intent on 'punishment' than 'providing rehabilitation, treatment or support.' It describes the defects of the justice system — and the Corrections Department in particular — and charts the various approaches and failures of the system.

The headlines for New Zealand criminal justice present a bleak picture: the country has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in the OECD outside of the USA, imprisoning at the rate of near 200 people per 100,000 of the population,[1] and a shocking 700 per 100,000 for Maori, who represent 15 per cent of New Zealand's population as a whole. Whilst the cost per prison place is $91,000 (about 45,000 sterling) most of this expenditure is consumed by central overheads with only a small proportion being spent on front line services. Brooking is critical of a system that priortises new and expensive prison building, extravagances like expensive staff uniforms and other expenditure which is not committed to 'service delivery' or tackling the very real problems that New Zealand faces. He cites the failure to tackle the damage caused by alcohol (a personal area of expertise) as the biggest failure. New Zealand's geographical position means that it is still (fortunately) removed from the main drug supply routes that bring huge quantities of heroin and cocaine based substances into developed countries. It does however have extensive alcohol problems that negate this natural advantage. It also has one of the highest re-offending rates of any developed country and offending 'careers' that exceed the norm with desistance rates that mean many offenders remain caught in the cycle of crime and poverty long after their European counterparts have given up criminal behaviour.

Inevitably it is the (indigenous) Maori who suffer the most. Colonisation occurred late (mainly after 1850) and was for a long time focussed on trade of weapons and alcohol, whilst Westernisation (followed by urbanisation) occurred rapidly, displacing a culture and delivering social change at a rate not seen anywhere else in the world. To its credit, New Zealand has attempted to drive social integration and reform — it was the first country to give women universal suffrage (1893), and since the 1970's the 'Treaty of Waitangi' (1840) has had a special status in constitutional law, confirming civil rights for Maori (including land ownership) and enshrining the language within social systems — all school children are now taught rudimentary *Te Reo* which Olympic followers will have noted is part of the national anthem. Despite the apparent 'liberalism' and social enlightenment, society remains largely conservative and suffers from a significant social divide between rich and poor, and the inevitable consequence of this for social justice.[2] Whilst New Zealand criminal justice system faces the problems that all developed countries do — they are more endemic. This is all the more ironic given New Zealand's remarkably low rates of crime.

In any modern society, there are many factors which contribute to crime and the development of anti-social behaviour — such as parental conflict, alcohol and drug abuse, mental health problems, violence, psychological and sexual abuse. Poverty and other socio-economic factors also play a part.

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1. http://www.prisonstudies.org/info/worldbrief/
2. *Household incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2010*, Prepared by Bryan Perry, Ministry of Social Development, Wellington, July 2011

In *Flying Blind*, Brooking quotes Lord Bingham, a former chief Justice for Britain and Wales who describes the profile of a typical offender like this:

He is usually male, often of low intelligence, and addicted to drugs or alcohol, frequently from an early age. His family history will often include parental conflict and separation; a lack of parental supervision; harsh or erratic discipline; and evidence of emotional, physical or sexual abuse. At school he will have achieved no qualification of any kind, and will probably have been aggressive and troublesome, often leading to his exclusion or truancy. The background will be one of poverty, poor housing, instability, association with delinquent peers and unemployment.[3]

If this individual is also Maori his chances of success will be further worsened by participation in a strong gang culture, and a significant economic and governmental barriers to re-integration — unlike most of Europe there is no specific social housing obligations for the state for ex-offenders, and no provisions which limit excluding ex-offenders from employment.

In addition to these debilitating difficulties, Roger Brooking argues that the New Zealand Justice system then makes matters worse. He says that by failing to mandate dysfunctional offenders into treatment and rehabilitation programmes, the justice system creates a vicious cycle that perpetuates criminal offending.

Flying Blind documents three stages in the system where intervention could occur to break this cycle. The first stage is when offenders appear in court —

affecting approximately 120,000 New Zealanders every year. 80 per cent of this offending occurs under the influence of alcohol and drugs — according to the Law Commission which conducted a review of New Zealand's liquor legislation in 2010.[4] But historically, judges have ordered only 5 per cent of these offenders to attend an alcohol and drug assessment or treatment as part of their sentence.

This also applies to the more than 30,000 people convicted of drink driving each year. Even though it is abundantly clear that alcohol is a contributing factor, judges order only 5 per cent of drink drivers to attend treatment as well. In the last two years, as a result of initiatives implemented under the National Government's *Drivers of Crime* strategy, the percentage of offenders mandated into treatment went up to 10 per cent.[5] This is a step in the right direction but, given the size of the problem, it still only scratches the surface.

The second stage of the justice system where intervention could occur is when offenders are sent to prison. Each year more than 20,000 New Zealanders spend time in prison, the vast majority of them on remand. Those who end up in prison tend to have mental health problems as well as significant problems with substance abuse and addiction. However, very few are able to access treatment programs in prison. In the last four years, the National led government has doubled the availability of places in drug treatment units from 500 to 1000. But this increase still enables only 5 per cent of those in prison to attend alcohol or drug treatment.

Very few prisoners with mental health problems receive any help

either. Those with severe mental health disorders may be admitted to a psychiatric hospital, but those with mild to moderate issues are generally ignored. To illustrate this point, 45 per cent of prisoners (that's about 3,500) are estimated to have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) which often causes behavioural problems. Ritalin (or an equivalent) is the appropriate medication for this condition. But in 2012, only 17 prisoners in the whole country were prescribed ritalin or another medication for this disorder.[6]

The vast majority of prisoners also have problems with reading and writing. But the Department puts so many obstacles in the way of prisoners wanting to attend literacy training that in 2010, only 9 per cent of those who started a literacy program actually completed it.[7]

Some rehabilitation programmes do assist some prisoners avoid re-offending. But historically the number of prisoners able to attend these programmes has been so small that nothing the Department has ever done has made any difference. Approximately 24 per cent of prisoners are back inside within 12 months; and over 50 per cent return to prison within five years. For those under the age of 25, 70 per cent return within five years.

The third stage of the justice system where intervention could occur is when inmates come out of prison. In Canada, there are over 230 halfway homes funded by Canadian Corrections which enables 60 per cent of federal prisoners to find supportive accommodation on release.[8] In New Zealand, there are only two halfway houses funded by

3.   Tom Bingham, *The Sentence of the Court* in The Business of Judging, Oxford University press, 2000, p. 308.
4.   *Alcohol In Our Lives: Curbing the Harm*, 2010, Law Commission, Wellington New Zealand: www.lawcom.govt.nz
5.   Addressing the Drivers of Crime, Ministry of Justice website: and www.justice.govt.nz
6.   Data from a letter to the author by the Corrections Department in response to an Official Information request, February 2012.
7.   Corrections Department Annual Report , 2009-2010, page 37: www.corrections.govt.nz
8.   Amey Bell & Shelley Trevethan, *Community Residential Facilities in Canada: a descriptive profile of residents and facilities*, Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, June 2004, Executive Summary, p. I.

Corrections which means less than 1 per cent of New Zealand prisoners are able to access this kind of support.

Brooking argues that there have been some disastrous consequences to the lack of commitment by the Corrections Department to rehabilitate prisoners or provide support on release. He cites two recent high profile cases of William Bell and Graeme Burton — both of whom committed murders soon after being released from prison.

Brooking points out that Bell and Burton both had significant drinking and drug problems prior to being sent to prison — but neither was required to attend treatment while incarcerated. Despite a statutory requirement to keep the Parole Board informed, the Corrections Department also failed to provide the board with alcohol and drug assessments on them prior to their release. As a result, the board was not well-informed about the severity of their addictions or the role this had played in the violent offending for which they were in prison. Bell subsequently killed three people at the Panmure RSA under the combined influence of alcohol, cannabis and methamphetamine. When Burton was released on parole he spent the next six months beating up drug dealers in the Wellington area to obtain methamphetamine. He shot and killed Karl Kuchenbecker two days after assaulting yet another dealer.

In addition to recommending increased rehabilitation in prison and more halfway houses in the community, Brooking also suggests that penal policies need to be adopted which will cut the prison population in half. He points to Finland's success at reducing its rate of imprisonment from over 180 prisoners per 100,000 of population in 1950 to its current rate of about 60 per 100,000 — a drop of over 70 per cent.[9] While Finland's rate of imprisonment has gone down dramatically, in the last 50 years New Zealand's rate has gone up by a similar amount. It now stands just under 200 per 100,000 giving New Zealand the second highest rate of imprisonment in a Western Country.

Professor John Pratt of Wellington's Victoria University says the dramatic increase in New Zealand's prison population has been driven by penal populism[10] — a process whereby the two major political parties compete with each other to be tough on crime. The right wing pressure group known as the *Sensible Sentencing Trust* has been a catalyst in this process; for over ten years now; its principle sponsor Garth McVicar has consistently called for tougher bail conditions and longer sentences for just about everyone sent to prison.[11]

Brooking argues that this 'lock 'em up' approach to dealing with crime is a financial disaster. He describes the justice sector as an economic black hole which sucks up resources. He points out that crime costs the country over $12 billion a year — of which $5 billion is incurred by the taxpayer in court, police and prison costs and crime related health costs. In 2011, Finance Minister Bill English claimed that New Zealand was facing the biggest budget deficit in its history; as the fastest-growing Department in the public sector, Corrections was leading the charge into this financial black hole. At the same time Bill English was one of the few centrist politicians to call for an alternative approach to this spiral of increasing use of imprisonment and apparent failure of the criminal justice system.

Despite these high level hopes for reform, and because of further financial constraints, the Government has been unwilling to provide additional funding for rehabilitation programmes. But Brooking says an additional $350 million could be raised quite easily by adopting the New Zealand Law Commission's recommendation to impose minimum prices and increased levies on alcohol. *Flying Blind* highlights the point that alcohol causes more death and social destruction than all illegal drugs combined and endorses other key recommendations made by the Law Commission to reduce the damage it causes. These include reducing the availability of alcohol — by banning sales from supermarkets and dairies; reducing its legitimacy as a consumer commodity — by making it illegal for liquor companies to advertise on TV and radio; and reducing the destructive impact on teenagers by raising the legal age of purchase from 18 to 20.

In addition to reform of our liquor laws and increased rehabilitation, *Flying Blind* also highlights the need for early intervention strategies for vulnerable individuals and families. Since most of those who end up in prison come from dysfunctional family backgrounds, Government strategies need to identify individuals from at-risk families — and implement supportive programmes. When we don't, these psychologically damaged individuals frequently end up in court or in prison. If the Justice system also fails to intervene, it

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9. About Time — Turning people away from a life of crime and reducing reoffending, Department of Corrections, Wellington, 2001, p 12.
10. John Pratt and Marie Clark, Penal Populism in New Zealand, Punishment and Society, 7, 3, 2005, pp. 303-322.
11. Sensible Sentencing Trust: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensible_Sentencing_Trust

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creates a vicious cycle — one which locks offenders into the system and perpetuates their criminal offending.

And yet successive Corrections Ministers have repeatedly claimed that rehabilitation and reintegration are a Government priority. In 2012, the Government even set the justice sector a goal of reducing reoffending by 25 per cent. As part of its contribution to that goal, the Corrections Department announced that some old prisons would be closed freeing up $65 million to put into rehabilitation — at $16 million a year over the next four years. Ten years ago the Department claimed that a brand new $40 million system called Integrated Offender Management (IOMS) would also reduce reoffending by 25 per cent. In 2007, Professor Greg Newbold described IOMS as *'a large and expensive failure… another wreck on the scrapheap of abandoned fads of criminal rehabilitation.'*[12]

Brooking notes that real priorities require much greater financial commitment. *Flying Blind* provides a number of examples of Government priorities where large amounts of funding have been applied. One of them is to rebuild Christchurch — for which the Government has so far allocated about $10 billion. Now that's a priority. But we forget there's also an 'earthquake of crime' which costs the New Zealand taxpayer $5 billion each year. This is not a one-off earthquake; the earthquake of crime shakes the country year after year after year. $16 million is just drop in the bucket — thrown into the justice sector black hole. The Government needs to get serious; the $350 million that increased levies on alcohol would

raise is a serious figure. It would provide early intervention programs, rehabilitation in prison and halfway houses in the community.

But the National Government has other priorities — it plans to spend $900 million building a brand new prison at Wiri. Brooking concludes that:

'By failing to intervene, the Justice system exacerbates the underlying cycles of poverty, poor education, parental conflict, drug and alcohol abuse and physical and sexual abuse which sets so many people down the path towards crime in the first place. This is a systemic failure of monumental proportions with serious ramifications for the safety of the community. It makes a mockery of statements by former Corrections Minister Judith Collins that 'rehabilitation and reintegration are key government priorities'. They're not — and they never have been.'[13]

Flying blind relies extensively on newspaper reports and official information requests from the author; despite this it provides a valuable insight into a criminal justice system that has huge potential (and in some quarters a desire) for change, yet seems to lack the impetus or effectiveness to do this. Easy to read and poignant, *Flying Blind* is topical and of great value to those working in this sector both in and outside of New Zealand.

Steve Hall *is a Fulbright fellow and former Prison Governor in the England and Wales Prison Service now working as the Prison Director at Mount Eden Corrections Facility in Auckland, New Zealand.*

Book Review
The Sage Handbook of Punishment and Society
Edited by Jonathan Simon and Richard Sparks
Publisher: Sage (2013)
ISBN: 978-1-84860-675-3 (hardback)
Price: £95.00 (hardback)

The 'Handbook' currently appears to be the flavour of the month with the publishing world, with one of the newest additions being *The Sage Handbook of Punishment and Society*. Perhaps recognising this, the book opens with the question: 'Does the academy need another Handbook?' (p. 1). The editors, Jonathan Simon and Richard Sparks, proceed to answer this, explaining how this particular one is worthwhile because since the 1980s the subject matter of punishment and society has 'come into sufficient focus and achieved sufficient definition and discursive shape to provide a rallying point for our interest and concerns' (p. 1). Whether this reviewer agrees, is the point of this review.

The book is 510 pages long and made up of 22 chapters divided into four parts: punishment and social theory; mass imprisonment and inequality; modes of punishment; and, new contexts. The contributor list reads like a modern day who's who of the significant players in the penology world including, in addition to the editors: David Garland, John Pratt, Nicola Lacey, Alison Liebling, Ben Crewe, Fergus McNeil, Shadd Maruna, John Muncie, Barry Goldson, Pat O'Malley, Dirk van Zyl Smith and Kieran McEvoy, to name but a few. For this reason alone, although the price tag is rather expensive at £95, this is an excellent collection of the work of these notable scholars.

12. *$40m to stop crims reoffending 'a failure,* New Zealand Herald, Dec 6, 2007.
13. Roger Brooking, Flying Blind – How the justice system perpetuates crime and the Corrections department fails to correct, Wellington 2011, p 232.

While there are many interesting chapters in the book (more on this to follow), one of the most useful is the Introduction. This has been written as a true introduction to the punishment and society field, detailing the emergence of it as an academic enquiry and importantly includes all of the important seminal work in this endeavour. The chapter works as a reminder for those who are fully conversant in the current academic literature and as a 'nutshells' guide to those who aren't. I would include myself in the latter group, as I spent most of the chapter writing down references for articles and books which I thought sounded both interesting and important for me to read. My 'to-read' list has hence got much longer! I would therefore highly recommend this as a standalone chapter for all undergraduate criminology students and all those who have an interest in punishment and society but perhaps don't feel that they are fully initiated in the academic literature.

As previously mentioned the book is divided into four parts; commencing with seven chapters under the umbrella of punishment and social theory. The section begins with a chapter on punishment and social solidarity, by David Garland, which explains and analyses Emile Durkheim's theory of punishment and social solidarity. This argues that punishment should be shaped not by the demands of crime control, but by collective values and social relationships. In short punishment is a moral, rather than an instrumental institution and thus functions to enhance solidarity. This, Garland explains, has supplied the foundations for the scholarship of punishment and society (p. 24). The chapter does not accept the theory without question however, it fully analyses it and also looks at solidarity in modern sociology. Another interesting chapter is that by Jonathan Simon, who in Chapter 3 writes about the use of punishment and particularly the use of imprisonment as political technology. By this he means a 'political technology of the body . . . a craft, system, or method for organising bodies to produce specific effects that have a political value or purpose' (p. 62). The chapter focuses on the two seminal books, *Discipline and Punish*[1] and *The Prison and the Factory*[2] and suggests how they could be applied to later phases of penal evolution. In short Simon advocates the importance of these works and explains how they are just as important today as when they were first published. Other chapters in this section look at punishment as a tool of class control; punishment and the civilizing process and punishment and risk.

Part two of the book, which looks at mass imprisonment and inequality, opens with a chapter dedicated to punishment and inequality. As the authors, Christopher Muller and Christopher Wildeman, state, it has long been known that 'social inequality in the world outside the prison strongly predicts the distribution of inmates inside it' (p.169). However, inside of focusing on how social inequalities are evident in the prison population, the chapter looks at how punishment itself might intensify these inequalities; interestingly, looking at both negative and positive aspects of mass imprisonment in America. This is then followed by another interesting article on gender and punishment, authored by Mary Bosworth and Emma Kaufman. Rightly identifying gender as a significantly under researched area in this field, the chapter explains not only why gender matters in punishment and society, but also how gender theory can be used to inform critical accounts of punishment. In short this should compel 'criminologists to look differently at the relationship between the purposes and the experiences of punishment' (p. 199). Other chapters in this section include the carceral state and the politics of punishment; the social psychology of mass imprisonment; and, punishment (neo) liberalism and social democracy.

The penultimate part of the book, modes of imprisonment, was for me the most interesting. While the other sections of the book were compelling, my preference in reading is often knowledge about what is happening at a practical level and in this respect, this section of the book did not disappoint. The opening chapter by Alison Liebling and Ben Crewe looks at the shifting moral foundations of prison management; which for many readers of this journal would be of specific interest. Based on empirical research, the chapter focuses and reflects on the professional ideologies of past and present senior managers working in prisons. From comprehensive interviews and a full analysis of these, the authors conclude by arguing that prison managers should be inserted into the field of prison sociology (p. 302). The other chapters in this section show similar in-depth analysis and cover the punishment modes of capital punishment, community penalties, youth justice, restorative justice and financial sanctions.

Finally, part four looks to the future by looking at new contexts.

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1. Foucault, M. (1977) Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison London: Allen Lane.
2. Melossi, D. and Pavarini, M. (1981) The prison and the factory: Origins of the Penitentiary system London: Macmillan.

In particular it focuses on punishment and human rights (although as acknowledged by the author Dirk van Zyl Smit, this is not a new phenomenon); punishment and migration; and interestingly, and perhaps in conflict with the rest of the book: control without punishment. This latter chapter refers to the use of coercion with terrorists and the use of control in fighting the 'war against terror'.

As I hope I have summed up this is a engaging, well written book which will be useful to academics, policy makers, practitioners and those with a general interest in punishment and society. I don't think that it is an exaggeration to describe it as a 'bible' of punishment and society in that it collates and analyses past and present research, but also looks towards the future. In short, and in answering the initial necessity question, is this handbook needed, the answer is resoundingly yes.

Dr Karen Harrison, *University of Hull.*

Book Review
Radical: My Journey from Islamist Extremism to a Democratic Awakening
By Maajid Nawaz
Publisher: W H Allen (2012)
ISBN: 978 0753540763 (paperback)
Price: £12.99 (paperback)

This is a moving and fascinating book. It describes the turbulent life of a young, hip hop loving Essex boy, whose maternal grandparents were immigrants from North West Pakistan, as he became persuaded by Islamist ideology. His father grew up in Pakistan, but moved to the UK when he married Maajid's somewhat Westernised mother. Maajid's urge to civil action, fired

by his experiences of racism, violence and exclusion throughout his school years, take him into the belly of extremist plotting, in England's Universities, in Egypt and in Pakistan. He gradually becomes disillusioned with the key characters, and — paradoxically, in a brutal Egyptian prison — wiser about Islam, and he eventually departs from the organisation he is asked to lead, only to find his urge for action more persuasively satisfied by a fight against extremism and for democracy. His absorbing story shows how England is creating its own terrorists, in its failing schools and suburbs, and yet the account provides hope for ground-up movements for justice. It is a book about personal transformation, of both the dangerous and hopeful kind, and its conclusion is that being human is the most powerful weapon against violent extremism.

There are powerful moments throughout the book that, weaved together, make up the narrative of extremism: 'I will never stand along again', Maajid resolves, tearfully, after being excluded from a football game on the grounds of race at school; his bruising encounters with the police; coming across older, authoritative, resistant role models, and the appeal of these self-affirming, defiant identities; the discovery of a stance that creates fear in others. He discovers how to move from experiencing life as a target: where your skin goes, fear follows — to being able to target others. Carry a rucksack. Adopt Islamism: what he describes as a politicised and distorted version of Islam. It does what years of knife-fights could not do:

I caught a glimpse of its power, and how it was capable of transforming my standing at a stroke … I wanted a dose of that courage (p. 78) … the rising strength of Islamism and Jihadism meant for the first

time that you didn't mess with Muslims. With that knowledge, I could walk the streets with confidence (p. 109).

His political energy was channelled — from hip hop and race issues to 'something more global': a version of Islam where the political content was more prominent than the theological:

This globalisation of our grievance was what many would later come to know as the powerful Islamist narrative (p. 89).

To replace his confused and incomplete racial identity with a religious identity worked: the vacuum was filled. Loyalty and brotherhood were precious gifts. But he was united to others though anger and a sense of grievance. European Muslims were 'being radicalised by events in Bosnia', by Western hesitation: Maajid and his peers recognised the same vacillation they had witnessed by the police when the wrong young people were in trouble. Their fight back had startling effects:

Unlike the student protests in the 1960s, by using religion and multiculturalism as a cover, we brought an entirely foreign lexicon to the table. We knowingly presented political demands disguised as religion and multiculturalism, and deliberately labelled any objection to our demands as racism and bigotry. Even worse, we did this to the very generation who had been socialist sympathisers in their youth, people sympathetic to charges of racism, who were now n middle-career management posts … It is no wonder then that the authorities were unprepared to deal with politicised religion as ideological agitation, and felt racist if they tried to stop us (p. 114-5).

This was the 1990s ('the decade of Islamism') but is highly

recognisable in some contemporary prison dynamics. Radicalising others was easy — here was a message that declared a presence, demanding respect. Fearless religious zeal intimidated those who had until now claimed the upper hand.

Maajid calls his activism, in both directions, 'the romanticism of struggle'. Throughout both his extremist and his later democratic years, he was led by his heart, not his head, his radical idealism in the end being disappointed by flaws in the politics, strategy, tactics and personalities or characters of his radical organisation, as well as in their account of Islam. It took him five years to undo the emotional, intellectual, political and social commitments he had made, and he did the unpicking without guidance. He was 'reconnected with life and humanity' via Amnesty International, amongst others: they controversially supported him whilst he was in prison in Egypt. He 'grew up', read different books, established different networks, and for the first time, he really studied Islam, 'from its sources'. He found no support for the ideology he had followed. He had to grapple with moral complexity afresh; with Islamophobia as well as Islamism: they had much in common. The fire ignited by injustice within him had to find a better 'counter-narrative'. In the end, he came to believe that knowing cultures better, through conversation, art, literature, music, and respectful dialogue, and understanding religious texts more clearly, could hold out hope to a generation seeking a better political and social order.

The characters in this account all have their flaws, but the narrative is compelling, urgent, and deeply insightful.

Professor Alison Liebling,
University of Cambridge, Institute of Criminology.

Book Review
Professional and Therapeutic Boundaries in Forensic Mental Health Practice
Edited by Anne Aiyegbusi and Gillian Kelly.
Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2012)
ISBN: 978-1-84905-139-2 (paperback)
Price: £29.99 (paperback)

The Therapeutic Community Under Fire
Edited by John Adlam, Anne Aiyegbusi, Pam Kleinot, Anna Motz and Christopher Scanlon
Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2012)
ISBN: 978-1-84905-258-0 (paperback)
Price: £29.99 (paperback)

These two books, with authors who have contributed to both titles, focus on the difficulties arising from working with forensic mental health patients. Professional and Therapeutic Boundaries in Forensic Mental Health Practice, as the title suggests, takes as its theme, boundary issues when engaging with mental health patients while The Therapeutic Community Under Fire is a collection of papers from a series of seminars, convened between 2005 and 2011, and published to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the founding of the International Association of Forensic Psychotherapy in 1991. As such, the predominant paradigm underpinning many chapters in both of these publications is psychoanalytic/psychodynamic psychotherapy.

This means that unless one is working within a therapeutically focused unit with a treatment model that contains elements of psychoanalytic/psychodynamic thinking, there is probably little of direct relevance in these two books, particularly for the majority of HMPS staff working with

prisoners in a mainstream custodial environment. However, there are concepts contained within chapters in each of these books that can be applied within the wider prison service, whether one is a 'cognitive-behavioural' psychologist, an operational manager or, in some respects, a NOMS policy lead. For the predominant question posed is — what is the impact upon staff of working with disturbed, difficult, potential dangerous and vulnerable patients? How does working with disruptive and demanding patients/prisoners, whose behaviour causes staff so much concern, affect how staff operate? These books can therefore be read alongside the excellent recently published Department of Health/Ministry of Justice practitioners guide to working with personality disordered offenders (which is free to download).

It could be argued that the effect upon staff of working with prisoners who are particularly demanding and challenging is a matter which the Prison Service has insufficiently considered. Yes, we can have our professional standards unit which successfully prosecutes staff who have engaged in inappropriate, corrupt actions and who are guilty of 'misconduct in public office', but have we adequately enquired into why such staff breach security regulations? Is it simply for financial gain? Or, for personal gratifications derived from working relationships that have become too close and which are occasionally of a sexual nature? Is this just staff weakness or is there something about the nature of the containing environment that staff work in and the personalities of the prisoners who staff are often in daily contact with, which makes certain staff more susceptible than others to increased pressure, persuasion or even attention (especially if they

are encountering struggles in their personal life)? And, if so, is there anything the Prison Service can do to better assist such staff? A read of chapters in these books might provide some clues and assist in answering this question.

Professional and Therapeutic Boundaries in Forensic Mental Health Practice opens with a chapter on Relationships, Boundaries and Mental Health with an identification of relevant risk factors for those working in a forensic mental health setting and a listing of some institutional factors that contribute to an enhanced risk of boundary violations. Other chapters of potential interest include: the patient's experience of professional abuse in the psychological therapies; boundaries in forensic mental health nursing; boundary violations in medium security, with young people, when working with those who have learning disabilities or when interacting with those who have been diagnosed with a severe personality disorder.

The Therapeutic Milieu Under Fire takes some of the thinking within Professional and Therapeutic Boundaries in Forensic Mental Health Practice and in addition to clinical chapters, explores further the organisational dynamics arsing from engaging with forensic mental health patients. The editors acknowledge that the book is also set in the context of the recent closure of some notable mental health facilities: Henderson Hospital TC, Main House TC, Webb House TC, the Cassel Hospital Families Service, the Arbours Crisis Centre and the Pines Centre.

Chapters of potential specific interest to NOMS/HMPS members of staff include 'Complaints as a Tool for Bullying'; 'Your Friends and Neighbours: Professional Boundary Violations — A Review of Perpetrator Typologies and Impact on Clients'; 'Annihilating The Other: Forensic Aspects of Organisational Change' (the closure of the Henderson Hospital); 'What Makes a Secure Setting Secure' (from an interpersonal relationships/dynamics perspective) and, 'The Traumatised-Organised-In-The-Mind: Opening Up Space for Difficult Conversations in Difficult Places'.

For the majority of staff working in HMPS/NOMS these are books with an unfamiliar style, language and approach. Nevertheless, there are benefits to be obtained from 'dipping into and drawing pointers from' particular chapters, as opposed to being able to directly translate and immediately put into practice specific concepts and learning contained with individual book chapters.

Michael Brookes is Director of Therapeutic Communities at HMP Grendon and visiting Professor at Birmingham City University.

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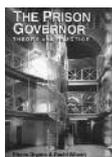
The Prison Governor: Theory and Practice *by Shane Bryans and David Wilson*
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