

BOOK REVIEW

John LaWall,¹ M.D.

A Review of Society, Crime and Criminal Behavior

REFERENCE: Gibbons, D. C., *Society, Crime and Criminal Behavior*, 4th ed., Prentice Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, 1982, 560 pages.

This book is a basic criminology textbook and, as such, is concerned with the study of crime and criminals. Presumably, this book is directed towards students of academic criminology programs who will ultimately work in various aspects of law enforcement and corrections. However, as the author points out, "Crime is a topic of enduring interest to most Americans." The study of crime and criminals should certainly be of enduring interest to forensic scientists who are pursuing highly complex disciplines themselves and have supporting parts in the overall drama of crime.

This book has a number of things to recommend it other than its overall topic. It is extremely well organized, well referenced, and, above all, readable. Its statistical data, which are contained in many tables and charts spread throughout the book, alone would make it highly useful.

What makes this book most useful to those interested in its subject is its comprehensive coverage of a wide variety of topics ranging from law through sociological theories of crime, types of crime and criminals, the process of becoming a criminal, the organization of courts and correctional systems, and the future of crime in America.

The author clearly indicates throughout the book his understanding that the causes of crime and criminal behavior are not clearly understood. He makes clear that his theoretical bias is a sociological one, at the same time presenting psychological and biological viewpoints relating to the origin of criminal behavior. This book is well referenced with many points of view discussed and clearly identified. Few statements are made that cannot be supported by some sort of data.

Overall, this book appears to be a fine introduction to basic criminology which has obviously stood the test of time and has been refined over the course of its four editions.

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