

## BOOK REVIEW

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### Review of: *Breaking the Chains*

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**REFERENCE:** Fugère R, Thompson-Cooper I. *Breaking the chains*. Robert Davies Multimedia Publishing, Westmount QC, 1998, Vol. 1, 235 pp. Vol. 2, 251 pp., \$44.00 Canadian

These two volumes contain a wealth of information directly pertinent to the understanding of criminal behavior but also significant to comprehending a significant part of the 20th Centuries contribution to the evolution of criminological thought, the practice of forensic psychiatry, and the concept of "clinical criminology." Perhaps, most importantly, they chronicle the work of a man whose efforts aimed to better understand the criminal and improve the environment of incarceration. The place in criminal psycho dynamics and its application to "clinical criminology" defined by Bruno M. Cormier (1919–1991) is known and acknowledged by most students and practitioners in the field. These two volumes are a tribute to his memory, his work, and the influence he had on a discipline vital for civilization and yet ignored by it.

In Vol. 1, the reader is provided a multifaceted view of the man through the experiences of several of those who knew him as colleague and friend. The scientist/practitioner is revealed in his human dimensions by way of vignette shared with the reader by those who lived the actual event. Each contributor offers refreshing insights to the man, his epistemology and his personal manner. His delicate intimate manner not only coached the development of his coworkers into professional criminologists but also contributed to their personal human evolution. Their accounts are informative, enlightening, and personal. They are historical, passionate, entertaining, joyful, heartbreaking, and inspiring. Here is the man that many of us only knew by his professional presentations and publications. He is a man with emotions like the rest of us, challenged by social necessity and frustrated by ignorance, politics, and societal indifference he nevertheless established and directed a pioneering center of forensic psychiatry and with few resources attracted a number of very talented minds whose contributions added to his indelible mark on criminology.

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With Vol. 2, we revisit a number of Cormier's significant contributions. Included are papers from throughout his career. His concern about the psychological effects of the deprivation of liberty on offenders is revealed through his 1957 publication on the subject. Likewise, his work on dangerousness and on adolescent homicide published in 1980 and 1981 are made available. Even after his death, one of his students who knew his insights well, prepared his work addressing pedophilia in middle and later life and we saw it published in 1995. To the academic, theoretical and applied criminologist these works stand as beacons guiding us along the roads of criminological understanding. For those pursuing refinement of the artistic skills necessary for crime scene behavioral reconstruction and analysis, Cormier's work is a major contribution to grasping the working of the interior of the criminal mind. Additionally, his efforts to reform penology through understanding the criminal is not forgotten. His compassion for the welfare of criminals and their clinical care stands as significantly coequal to that of his commitment to criminal etiology.

Of benefit to both the criminological historian and practitioner is the extensive bibliography offered by the contributions collectively. Most of the personal accounts appearing in Vol. 1 are accompanied by references. The papers comprising Vol. 2 include the citations originally referenced.

Bruno M. Cormier, M.D., was qualified as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and brought his understanding of the human condition to focus on criminal behavior. His work as researcher and practitioner gave direction to an emerging discipline and his talents as a teacher influenced many. *Breaking the Chains* not only remembers the man and his work it tells us about The McGill University Clinic in Forensic Psychiatry and the philosophy by which it was run and to which it was committed. For the senior members of the criminological community this work is a delightful step back to where we came from reminding us not only of the substance and content but also of the process. For the new comer to the field, this set is an indispensable part of one's professional preparation. In addition to its conceptual significance it will help one to understand the dedication and passion which propelled one man's contributions to a field which is at the core of societal stability and yet unappreciated and misunderstood. A refreshing visit to what once was and to what could be.