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By Jeffrey Reiman, Paul Leighton

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Illustrates the issue of economic inequality within the American justice system.

The best-selling text, *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison* contends that the criminal justice system is biased against the poor from start to finish. The authors argue that even before the process of arrest, trial, and sentencing, the system is biased against the poor in what it chooses to treat as crime.

The authors show that numerous acts of the well-off--such as their refusal to make workplaces safe, refusal to curtail deadly pollution, promotion of unnecessary surgery, and prescriptions for unnecessary drugs--cause as much harm as the acts of the poor that are treated as crimes. However, the dangerous acts of the well-off are almost never treated as crimes, and when they are, they are almost never treated as severely as the crimes of the poor. Not only does the criminal justice system fail to protect against the harmful acts of well-off people, it also fails to remedy the causes of crime, such as poverty. This results in a large population of poor criminals in our prisons and in our media. The authors contend that the idea of crime as a work of the poor serves the interests of the rich and powerful while conveying a misleading notion that the real threat to Americans comes from the bottom of society rather than the top.

Learning Goals

Upon completing this book, readers will be able to:

- Examine the criminal justice system through the lens of the poor.
- Understand that much of what goes on in the criminal justice system violates one's own sense of fairness.
- Morally evaluate the criminal justice system's failures.
- Identify the type of legislature that is biased against the poor.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Jeffrey Reiman is the William Fraser McDowell Professor of Philosophy at American University in Washington, D.C. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1942. He received his B.A. in philosophy from Queens College in 1963, and his Ph.D. in philosophy from Pennsylvania State University in 1968. He was a Fulbright Scholar in India during 1966–1967. He joined the American University faculty in 1970, in the Center for the Administration of Justice (now called the Department of Justice, Law and Society of the School of Public Affairs). After several years of holding a joint appointment in the Justice program and the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Dr. Reiman joined the Department of Philosophy and Religion full-time in 1988, becoming director of the Master's Program in Philosophy and Social Policy. He was named William Fraser McDowell Professor of Philosophy in 1990. He is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi honor societies, and past president of the American University Phi Beta Kappa chapter. In addition to *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*, Dr. Reiman is the author of *In Defense of Political Philosophy* (1972), *Justice and Modern Moral Philosophy* (1990), *Critical Moral Liberalism: Theory and Practice* (1997), *The Death Penalty: For and Against* (with Louis P. Pojman, 1998), *Abortion and the Ways We Value Human Life* (1999), and more than 60 articles in philosophy and criminal justice journals and anthologies. He is also coeditor, with Paul Leighton, of the anthology *Criminal Justice Ethics* (2001).

Paul Leighton is a Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at Eastern Michigan University. He received his B.A. in Criminal Justice from the State University of New York at Albany in 1986, and is indebted to Graeme Newman for helping to direct him away from law school to the Justice, Law and Society program at American University. While at American University, he met Jeffrey Reiman and assisted with revisions of the fourth edition of *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison*. He has worked on every edition since then. Dr. Leighton received his Ph.D. in Sociology and Justice from American University in 1995. He has been the North American Editor of *Critical Criminology: An International Journal*, and was named Critical Criminologist of the Year by the American Society of Criminology's Division on Critical Criminology. Dr. Leighton is the co-author of *Punishment for Sale* (with Donna Selman, 2010) and *Class, Race, Gender and Crime* (with Gregg Barak and Jeanne Flavin, 2nd edition, 2007). He is also coeditor, with Jeffrey Reiman, of the anthology *Criminal Justice Ethics* (2001). In addition to his publications, Dr. Leighton is webmaster for StopViolence.com, PaulsJusticePage.com and PaulsJusticeBlog.com. He is Vice President of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and is Vice President of the Board of SafeHouse, the local shelter and advocacy center for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

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