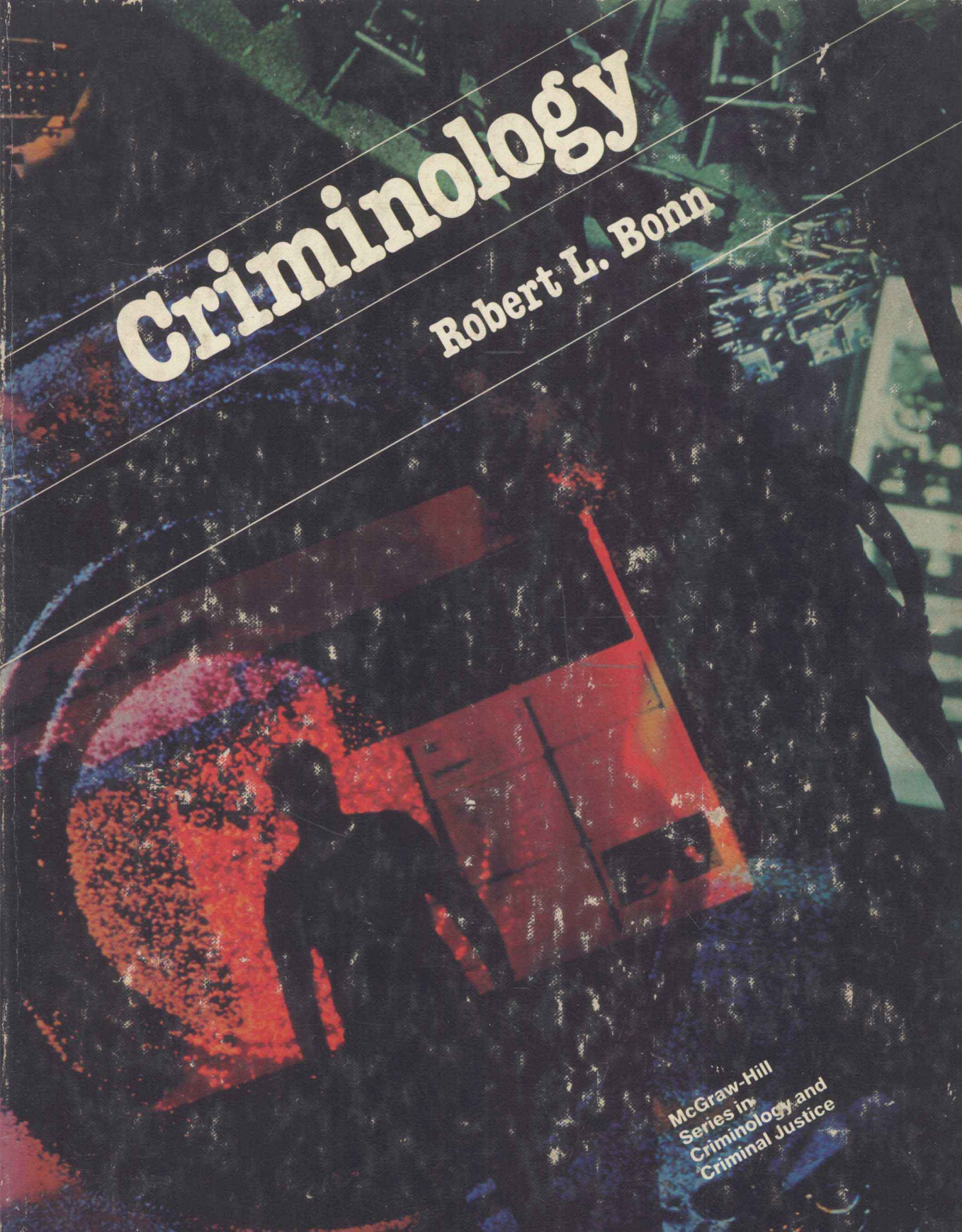


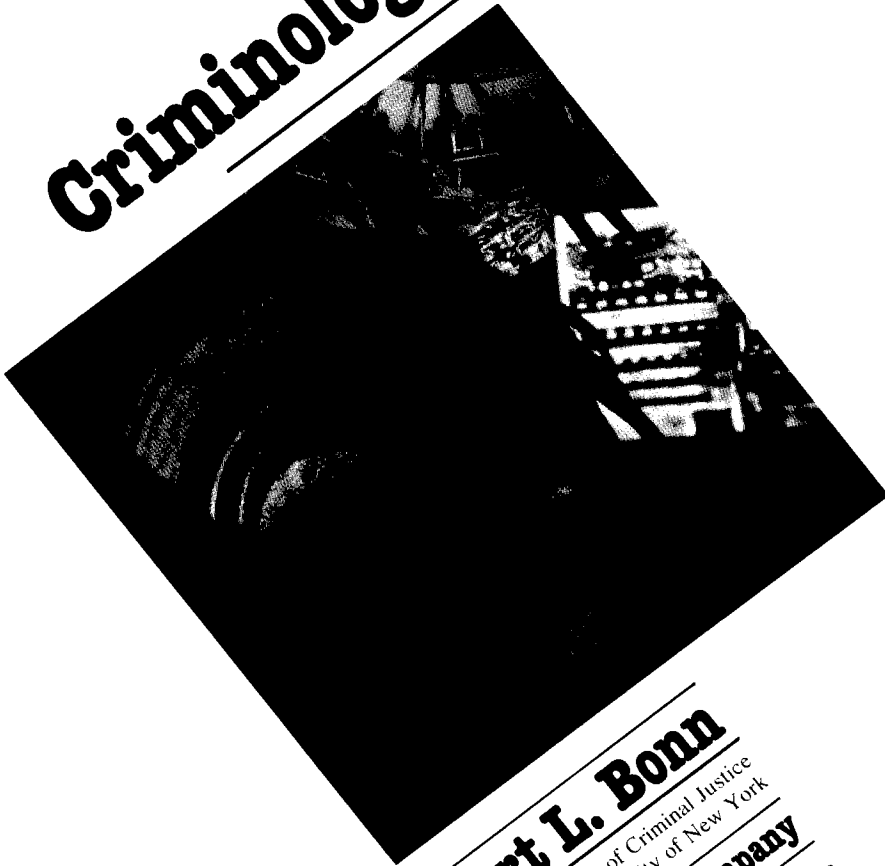
Criminology

The background of the cover is a dark, textured collage. It features a large, grainy, red and orange circular shape on the left side, which appears to be a stylized representation of a fingerprint or a similar forensic pattern. To the right of this, there is a silhouette of a person standing, facing right. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, blacks, and greys, with the red and orange elements providing a strong contrast.

Robert L. Bonn

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Criminology



Robert I. Bonn

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
The City University of New York

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Criminology

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Credits for Part-Opening Photographs

One CHARLES GATEWOOD
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To Ethel, Timothy, and Et

Preface

Crime is an intriguing and complex subject. Virtually everyone has been victimized by crime. Virtually everyone has committed a criminal act at some point in his or her life. Crime encompasses a broad range of antisocial activities: murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, marketing of defective products, some forms of price fixing, stealing from employers, some deviant sexual activities, some forms of substance abuse, some kinds of gambling, networks that organize criminal activity, and certain activities seen as threatening to the political or social order. Our response to crime is often emotional: fear, anger, outrage, and disgust are typical. Yet crime is also a source of endless fascination. It makes news every day, and it also provides the setting for much fictional entertainment. Crime, in fact, receives constant coverage by television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and books.

This book is about criminology, the academic discipline which employs scientific methodology to study crime. Criminology asks how much crime there is, what major forms it can assume, why it exists, and how the criminal justice system responds to it. In providing insight into crime, criminology deals with five key topics: *criminal acts*, *criminal offenders*, *victims of crime*, the *social contexts* within which crime occurs, and the *criminal justice system*.

COVERAGE

In writing this book, I have attempted to provide a comprehensive, balanced, clearly written work that does justice to the subject of crime and the discipline of criminology. Thus, the book includes analyses of theories of crime, data on crime, and the criminal justice system. My intent is to enable readers to appreciate the complexity and subtlety of the problem of crime while leaving them free to examine theoretical perspectives and to select the viewpoints that appear most reasonable to them. In this spirit, both “mainstream” and “conflict” perspectives are presented in detail at various points; and both “street crime” and middle- or upper-class crime are examined in depth.

ORGANIZATION

Part One of this book is a general introduction to criminology. The book opens with a chapter dealing with the definition of crime and criminology (Chapter 1), a chapter which draws on the recent historical research to discuss crime in the United States generally (Chapter 2), and a chapter on crime statistics (Chapter 3).

The first four of the five key criminological topics are the organizational basis for Parts Two and Three. In Part Two, one chapter is devoted to criminological work that has taken the *criminal act* as its focal point; two chapters are devoted to *criminal offenders*; one chapter is devoted to *victims*, and one to *social contexts*. Approaching criminology in this manner results in some overlap and duplication; certain criminological theories appear in more than one chapter. However, this approach provides clarity because it organizes criminology in terms of the topics discussed by criminologists. Moreover, this topical approach serves as an organizing structure for the chapters on types of crime in Part Three. Thus, for each of the seven major types of crime in American society, I discuss the criminal act, the criminal offender, the victim, and the social context.

The fifth criminological topic, the *criminal justice system*, is handled in Part Four. This topic has received extensive attention in recent years. My approach is to give equal weight to the three main parts of the system by devoting one chapter to the police, another to the courts, and a third to corrections. In each of these chapters, I identify three perspectives that can be used to understand the structure and operation of that part of the system.

Part Four closes with a chapter on alternatives to the criminal justice system (Chapter 19). This final chapter, an optimistic one, reflects my conviction that although the complete elimination of crime is an unrealistic goal, significant steps can be taken to reduce or curb crime. Chapter 19 describes some possible first steps, following the analytical scheme of Parts Two and Three: redefining criminal acts, rehabilitating criminal offenders, helping victims of crime, and restructuring social contexts of crime.

Finally, there is an instructor's manual which provides suggestions for classroom instruction and a test bank of multiple-choice and essay questions. The manual can be obtained from the McGraw-Hill Book Company. A student study guide is also available, for self-paced study or for classroom use.

SOME PERSONAL NOTES

This book has its roots in my experience of teaching criminology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (The City University of New York) over the past ten years. My students come from diverse backgrounds. Some are police, court, and correctional officers; others are aspiring to these positions. Still others are college students who are interested in learning about crime. Quite a few have been victimized by crime; some have been arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for crimes they have committed. Whatever their background, their reactions to

criminological thinking have encouraged me at many points to rethink, reevaluate, and explain afresh what criminology is all about.

A number of people have aided and supported me in various ways in the writing of this book. First, there were my colleagues at John Jay. Israel Gerver, Richard Korn, Robert Lin, and the late Arthur Niederhoffer provided helpful reviews and suggestions about the manuscript in its early stages. Charles Lindner made constructive comments about the chapter on criminal courts. Special thanks must go to Alexander Smith, whose support and encouragement throughout the entire project were invaluable. Finally, the cooperation of the library staff combined with the strong criminal justice library resources at John Jay greatly facilitated my work.

Second, the book has also benefited from the comments and criticisms of outside reviewers; in particular, Ronald A. Farrell, Robert F. Meier, Peter L. Sissons, Victoria L. Swigert, and an anonymous reviewer. Each outside reviewer provided important critical input at various points in the development of the book. Without doubt, their comments made the book richer and clearer, although the final responsibility for the contents of the book is mine alone.

Finally, the editorial staff at McGraw-Hill deserves to be acknowledged for kindly advice and support, with special thanks to Allan Forsyth, Christina Mediate, Susan Gamer, and Eric Munson. Their guidance in steering the manuscript through its sequence of developmental stages has been most appreciated.

Robert L. Bonn

Criminology

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PART ONE



**Criminology
and the Issue
of Crime**



Crime and Criminology

Chapter Contents

THE CONCEPT OF CRIME

Legal Definition

Assumptions about human
action

Criminal acts

Other issues

Social Nature

THE DISCIPLINE OF CRIMINOLOGY

Scientific Methodology

Key Topics

A Societal Perspective

American society

Types of crime

The approach of this book

SUMMARY

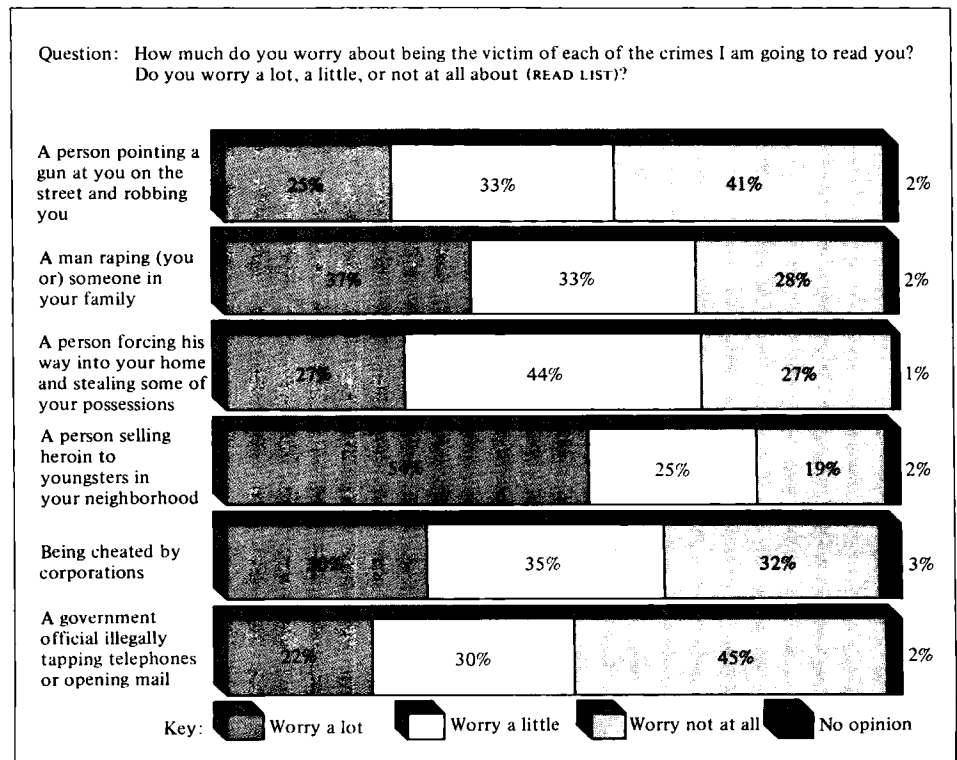
NOTES

Crime is a major social problem in the United States. It assumes a number of forms and stimulates a variety of reactions. Violent street crimes, for example, evoke fear in many people. Incredible though it may seem, nearly one of every two Americans is afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of home.¹ Those who do venture out often take weapons of self-defense: whistles, Mace, handguns, etc. Some have undertaken training in karate or other self-defense arts. Some rely on German shepherds or other pets, trained to attack. One study pessimistically concluded, "The fear of crime is slowly paralyzing American society."² Chief Justice Warren E. Burger has asked, "Must we be hostages within the borders of our own self-styled, enlightened, civilized country?"³

Some forms of crime evoke considerable worry. One of every four Americans worries "a lot" about someone breaking into his or her home. One of every two worries "a lot" about someone selling heroin to youngsters in the neighborhood. Similarly, many Americans worry about being cheated by corporations or being subject to illegal behavior on the part of government officials. (See Figure 1.) Responding to these worries, they guard property with alarm systems and

FIGURE 1.

Fear of victimization. (SOURCE: Nicolette Parisi, Michael R. Gottfredson, Michael J. Hindelang, and Timothy J. Flanagan, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics—1978*, U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1979, p. 289.)





Crime takes many forms; it may be as obvious as a street mugging in broad daylight, or as subtle as the illegal pollution of the air we breathe. (WIDE WORLD PHOTOS)

dogs, caution youngsters about their associations, create consumer protection bureaus, and form watchdog agencies.

Still other forms of crime raise concerns about the quality of life in our society. Spray-painted graffiti confront many city dwellers. Vandalism costs millions of dollars each year. Arson inhibits neighborhood development. Theft by employees reduces business profits. Gambling, prostitution, and narcotics have a dual impact: they siphon money from legitimate social activities and, at the same time, enrich the entity known as "organized crime." Dealing with these forms of crime may involve specialized police arson squads, lie-detector tests for employees, and periodic crackdowns on vice and organized crime.

Finally, there are forms of crime which threaten to undermine the integrity of American social institutions. Unsafe products, contaminated air and water, various illegal and unethical business practices, and "rip-offs" of consumers have so penetrated our consciousness that business is no longer trusted. A decade of political scandals—including Watergate, Koreagate, and Abscam, to cite only the major ones—has left us cynical or at least very disturbed about American political life. We have only begun to think about how to develop defenses against these types of crime.

In that they evoke fear, worry, concern, and threat, the various forms of crime absorb a great deal of our collective energy and attention. Selected crimes are reported as news in the papers, on television, and on radio. More serious analyses are presented in articles and books dealing with various aspects and problems of crime. Politicians running for office propose to do something about crime. Legislatures pass laws. Police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and corrections personnel are all employed by agencies in a criminal justice system established to respond to crime. Last but by no means least, writers fictionalize crime. They make it exciting, comic, and sometimes romantic. Books, movies, and television thrive on the mystery and response generated by crime.

This book will go further than the fear, worry, concern, and toleration that so often characterize the reaction to crime. It will attempt to develop a reasoned understanding of crime. To do this, it will examine the full range of topics which occupy criminological attention: topics such as the history of crime, the compilation of criminal justice statistics, criminological theories about crime, the major types of crime, and the operations of the criminal justice system. This opening chapter begins by looking at the concept of crime and the discipline of criminology.

THE CONCEPT OF CRIME

At the outset, we need to recognize that crime is a complex concept. First, we need to consider its definition in legal terms; second, its social nature.

Legal Definition

The basic legal definition of crime was advanced by Paul Tappan, a lawyer-sociologist:

Crime is an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law (statutory and case law), committed without defense or justification, and sanctioned by the state as a felony or misdemeanor.⁴

In a similar vein, concerning the people who are criminals, Tappan argued:

In studying the offender there can be no presumption that arrested, indicted or prosecuted persons are criminals unless they also be held guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of a particular offense.⁵

Clear though Tappan's legalistic definition may be, it involves a number of assumptions about human action, raises considerations of which acts are or