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Book Review: Neustein, A., & Leshner, M. (2005). From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running From Family Courts And What Can Be Done About It. Boston: University Press of New England. pp. 316

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to locations, including specific strategies for using “problem oriented approaches” to enhance criminal investigations. The subsequent chapter reinforces this with Rossmo’s detailed exposition on the problem-solving capacity of geographic profiling. Finally, in his article, “Problem Solving and Terrorism Vulnerability,” Poole’s discussion of cost-neutral domestic security strategies is insightful and invaluable, particularly given law enforcement’s constantly expanding role in homeland security.

The book concludes with a fifth, one-chapter section that quite logically considers the problem-solving approach in the “Twenty First Century.” Ikeda’s article offers a thoughtful analysis of not only the advantages but also the limitations of the problem-solving approach, discussing challenges to its acceptance and sustainability.

Throughout the book, charts and tables are user-friendly and geared for quick reference. All materials are useful for law enforcement professionals, as well as those who are assessing related social problems. Most of the book is strongly organized, although it would have been beneficial to have an introduction to each section, perhaps clarifying general issues and terms in each area.

One particular aspect of police problem solving warrants further development: crimes that involve specific victim characteristics, including but not limited to age, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The work focuses more on traditional “crime problems.” There is no extensive discussion of police problem solving and its efficacy in terms of hate crimes based on religion or violence directed against gays and lesbians. In addition, it might have been useful to examine police problem solving and its application to child abuse or domestic violence. Are there any efforts involving law enforcement and community partners that apply police problem-solving methods? It is essential to note that demographic factors are not overlooked. Many chapters mention them, as exemplified by the discussion of demographics in Scott’s chapter on disorderly youth. However, this book leaves the issue unfinished—perhaps warranting a second volume on “Police Problem Solving and Specific Populations.” Perhaps, it is a mark of its strengths that it leaves the reader wanting more.

This book recommends and explains an effective and useful law enforcement “best practice” which deserves greater consideration and usage. In turn, with its expert editing, writing, fine research, and overall quality, this work also offers cross-disciplinary value. *Police Problem Solving* is ultimately an excellent example of the intersection between academic research, public organizations, and the social good.

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Neustein, A., & Leshner, M. (2005). *From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running From Family Courts—And What Can Be Done About It*. Boston: University Press of New England. pp. 316.

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The last few decades of the 20th century witnessed a flurry of awareness campaigns, legal reforms, and interventions designed to combat domestic abuse. Prior to that period, a

woman who had been subjected to years of abuse at the hands of her husband—even abuse of the black-eyes, broken-bones variety—could expect little protection from the good old boys at the local cop precinct and even less help from the good old boys who adjudicated crimes at the local courthouse. The same went for her children, especially since the learning curve for society’s recognition of the harms of child abuse was barely ahead of the one for wife battering.

Following on the heels of The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 1974, research began to connect the dots between wife battering and child abuse, eventually uncovering a high rate of overlap (50% to 70%) between the two forms of abuse. In the early 1980s, around the same time when the term “battered woman” was entering the common parlance, the burgeoning movements against child abuse and wife abuse offered fresh promise of legal protections against domestic abuse for mothers and their children. Pamphlets alerting women to the signs of child sexual abuse were displayed in family courthouses and social services offices. Mothers were warned that they could be cited for neglect if they exposed their children to a violent or incestuous father. Shelters for battered women opened, some of which offered services to children, too. Billboards went up, admonishing women to take their children and leave if home was not a safe place.

One would expect, then, that children today who have been sexually abused by a biological parent would have a markedly improved situation in comparison with the days before all of this enlightenment and legislation were put in place. This expectation is belied, however, by reports that have been coming in for the past 20 years or so to staff at domestic violence agencies, to hotline workers at organizations such as the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to women’s groups such as the National Organization for Women, and to family lawyers who are fighting for their female clients’ custody rights. To this day, from every corner of the nation, report after report repeats the same scenario: Mothers are being ordered by family court judges to surrender care and control of their children to a biological father who the mother alleged had abused the children. Women are losing custody not, as one might anticipate, for failing to protect their children from gross harm but, counterintuitively, for the very act of trying to get orders of protection and no or limited contact between their children and a father who she believes abused them. Neustein and Leshner elegantly describe the upside-down, inside-out, Alice-in-Wonderland framework that permeates the family courts: the pamphlets warning mothers of the harmfulness of child abuse sit on tables outside courtrooms where children are ordered into the abusive father’s physical custody. Instead of rescuing their children from the trappings of abuse through family court orders—the only legal mechanism by which this goal can be achieved—an alarming proportion of separating or divorcing mothers end up losing the right to care for, or even have any contact with, their children.

How could such good intentions lead to such harmful outcomes? How could the legal system charged with protecting children morph into a mechanism by which mothers are forbidden, by court order, to do the very same thing that they are legally, morally, and ethically bound to do—protect their children from abuse?

Neustein, a sociologist who, two decades earlier, had personally experienced the madness to which the family court system has degenerated, and Leshner, a family law attorney practicing with complex custody cases in New York state, have written a scholarly yet eminently readable book. *From Madness to Mutiny* takes the doors off the Potemkin village-like family courtroom to reveal the perverse reasoning of judges, attorneys, and favored psychological

“experts” and the secret proceedings and money-and-power-driven culture that result in legal outcomes ranging from unjust to harmful to atrocious. Chapter by chapter, using titles like “Robed Rage,” “Lawless Law Guardians,” and “Anti-Social Services,” the authors deftly paint the picture of the perfect storm that is created by the confluence of the actors and their actions in this nightmarish legal drama. Using the sociological framework of ethnomethodology, the authors dissect the “meaning-making” processes by which normal, fit, and loving mothers are labeled as delusional, hysterical, or otherwise mentally deranged due to the mother having made a good-faith report to the court that her child was being sexually abused by his or her father.

The Overview (chapter 1) alone is worth the price of admission, with its little known chronology of the protective mothers’ movement and the movement’s resistance to these legal outrages. Each chapter places another piece of the puzzle into perspective, bringing into high and horrifying relief the perverse reality in which a mother’s protectiveness, vigilance, and empathy toward her children, viewed universally as desirable maternal traits, are used to label her, instead, as overprotective, hypervigilant, and borderline as a “parental alienator” who is therefore unfit. In this alternative universe, lawyers twist the legal rules of evidence, violating litigants’ due process rights in backdoor legal conferences that end with a judge’s order that to the mother and her allies is nothing less than insane but from the viewpoint of family court madness is “in the best interests of the child.”

Rather than resting on the shock value of this scenario to make *From Madness to Mutiny* a compelling read, the authors round out the book with a realistic and hopeful plan for true reform. Absent the total “rebirthing” of the system called for by Neustein and Leshner, the family courts are like a ship whose captain and crew have gone utterly mad, whose only chance of redemption is mutiny by the passengers.

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Barton, A. (2005). *Fragile Moralities and Dangerous Sexualities: Two Centuries of Semi-Penal Institutionalisation for Women*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate. pp. vi, 176.

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In my opinion, feminist contributions to criminology are often still marginalized or recognized in connection with rather too small an enclave of writers. For this reason alone, I feel it is important that there is a continued effort within the criminological community to focus on how gender impacts the big issues of social control and imprisonment. In this book, Alana Barton explores how women in particular experience social control, regulation, discipline, and imprisonment in the 21st century and compares and contrasts this with their treatment and experiences in previous centuries. Her particular focus is the “semipenal” institution, an important and rather overlooked institution where social control is perhaps underdocumented.

Following Weiner (1990), Barton explains that the semipenal institution is “neither ‘formal’ in the sense of a prison, nor ‘informal’ in the sense of a home, but which, at the same time,