



# ***The Critical Criminologist***

**NEWSLETTER 18:3, Winter 2008/2009**

Division of Critical Criminology

American Society of Criminology

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Note from the editor:

It has been a pleasure to have put out the newsletter these past few years. Having the opportunity to serve the members in some small capacity has been very rewarding and I really hope the membership has enjoyed our attempts to create a forum for essays, calls, updates, kudos, photos, cartoons and images. Please keep submitting your thoughts and contributions, you are the ones that make the newsletter possible.

With all sincerity,

Dawn

Chris



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The Division of Critical Criminology is currently taking applications for the following position:

Editor ( s ) of the Critical Criminologist Newsletter

Job Duties:

The newsletter is published and distributed to all members 4 times a year. The potential editor ( s ) would be responsible for sending out notices to members for submissions ( e.g., essays, photos, announcements, and other relevant division news ), editing, organizing, and accepting materials to be included then integrating them into the newsletter. The logo and format can be seen in past issue examples. The potential editor would need to have access to publisher and pdf writer programs ( and good knowledge of the programs ). It is a 2 year position, beginning January 2009-January 2011. Historically there have been joint editors that have worked together and/or are at the same institution.

If you are interested in the position please send the following information to Barb Perry by January 15, 2009:

Letter of Interest and expertise

Previous experience and DCC participation

Current CV

Letter of support from 1 reference

To Barb Perry

2008 Faculty of Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies

University of Ontario Institute of Technology

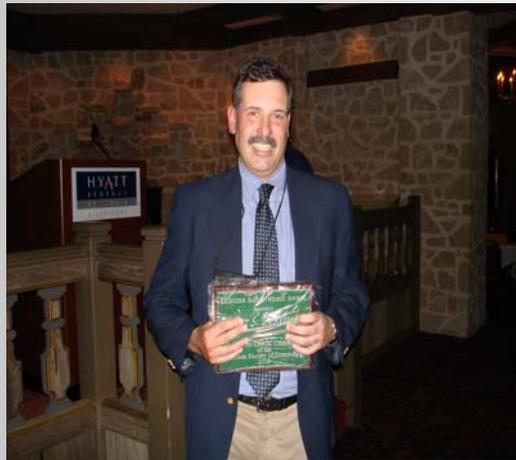
2000 Simcoe Street North,

Oshawa, Ontario, Canada L1H 7K4

e-mail: [Barbara.Perry@uoit.ca](mailto:Barbara.Perry@uoit.ca)



**Division of Critical Criminology Award Winners:**



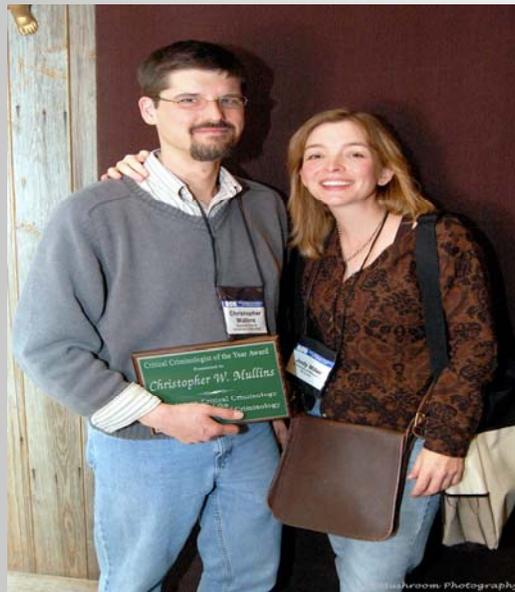
**Lifetime Achievement Award**

**Walter DeKeseredy, University of Ontario Institute of Technology**



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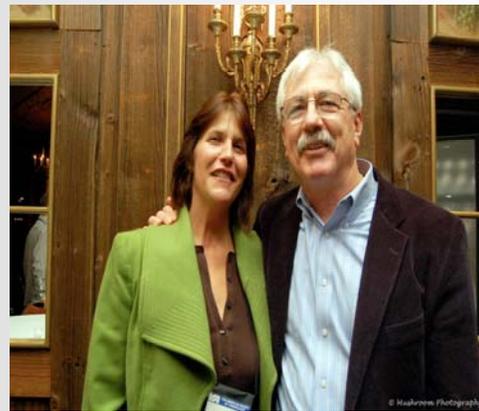


**Critical Criminologist of the Year Award**

**Christopher W. Mullins, Southern Illinois University Carbondale**



**Critical Criminologist of the Year Award  
Dawn L Rothe, Old Dominion University**



**Both Recipients of the Critical Criminologist of the Year Award  
Christopher W Mullins and Dawn L Rothe**



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**Graduate Student Paper Award**

**First Place**

**Travis Linnemann, Kansas State University**

**“Mad men, meth moms, and moral panic: Gendering meth crimes in the Midwest.”**

***NO PICTURE***



**Graduate Student Paper Award**

**Second place**

**Randy Myers, University of California Irvine**

**“Incarcerated youth in the news: Reports from the frontline of the U.S. war against the young.”**



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**Undergraduate Student Paper Award: Holly Pelvin, University of Toronto**

**“Wrestling with men’s violence against women: Media Coverage of the Benoit Familicide-Suicide.”**



## Economic Crisis and the War on State-Corporate Crime?

By Gregg Barak

Eastern Michigan University

Immediately after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 a common expression was that “everything is different now.” In fundamental ways, many things are different in relation to counterterrorism strategies and the enforcement and administration of criminal justice both at home and abroad. For example, the local police are now engaged in the “war on terror” in addition to fighting crime, and the FBI—originally devoted to domestic law enforcement—has international field offices today in places like Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Uzbekistan. Indeed, large portions of the criminal justice system, the military, and the intelligence and security institutions have been reorganized, largely through the Department of Homeland Security, to fight a war on terror that has neither a time frame nor a reliable means of measuring the extent of success or failure in this war.

More importantly, what has fallen below the radar are the connections between these changing legal-crime fighting operations and their effects on the missing war on white-collar and state-corporate crime. It is these “omissions” in controlling many financial practices from Wall Street to Main Street that may be linked to this country’s current economic crisis. In the midst of an imminent worldwide recession, or even worse, a global depression occurring, this economic crisis of tsunami proportions may incur 5 to 10 years of price deflation without state intervention. Many people especially



from such emerging economies like China and India are calling for a new world economic order or global restructuring of the Bretton Woods agreement that established the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the rules for global trade post WWII to the present.

Whether such a fundamental change in international economic relations happens now or in the future, the primary response by the USA to 9/11 and to the larger war on terrorism had been the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. This law created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which represented the largest and most dramatic transformation of the U.S. government since 1947, when President Truman combined the various branches of the military into the Department of Defense. On an even grander scale, President Bush ambitiously combined 22 previously separate agencies into the new DHS.

According to the legislation, the DHS was created for seven purposes. The one that I am addressing here is the one that is most often ignored by public and private conversations alike. I am referring specifically to the legal charge that the DHS will “ensure that the overall economic security of the United States is not diminished by efforts, activities, and programs aimed at securing the homeland.”

Although the DHS in its short history has certainly had its share of failures, the most egregious being its mishandling of the recovery in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, I would argue that Homeland Security’s most serious failure to date



has been not to replace those agents lost to the war on terrorism and to re-arm its divisions in the fight against the crimes of the economically and politically powerful. These omissions-- in light of the reorganization of the FBI from a domestic law enforcement agency to an international antiterrorist security agency-- by DHS along with the Bush Administration's refusal to adjust its focus and to adapt its regulatory agents in the areas of white collar and corporate crime control, reveals how this "non-priority" has proven to be an Achilles heel for the de-regulation and/or non-enforcement of financial transactions directly related to the current economic crisis.

For example, following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks the FBI shifted more than 1800 agents, or nearly one-third of all agents from law enforcement to terrorism and intelligence duties. So depleted were the ranks of the investigators in the areas of white collar and corporate crimes that many executives in the private sector were complaining that they had been having difficulty attracting the Bureau's intervention into even those cases that potentially involved frauds in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Moreover, since late 2003 and early 2004, the FBI had been requesting additional resources to the tune of one billion dollars as well as 800 more agents so that they could go after the perpetrators of mortgage fraud and other economic crimes that they viewed at the time as posing a looming threat to the financial markets.

While the agency did receive 50 million or 5% of their request for the "war on white collar crime," the current number of investigators for these crimes is down 625



agents, or 36 percent from 2001. Finally, after trying to acquire the necessary resources and person power for more than four years, the FBI has recently launched more than 1500 criminal investigations into this nation's mortgage-related business practices, including those financial and institutional transactions of such corporate giants as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the American International Group, and Lehman Brothers.

Unfortunately, the "stolen" money has already evaporated in cyberspace as evidenced by the downward spiraling stock and real estate markets. Before there is another economic crisis of global proportions, perhaps the United States will learn, once and for all, the powerful lessons of the adverse effects of anti-regulation policies and non-enforcement of upper world white collar and corporate crime on the wider society and world as a whole. Historically, that was not the case with either the Savings and Loans' scandals of the late 1980s or the corporate frauds perpetrated early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by those CEOs in charge of Enron, Health South, Adelphia, Worldcom, Global Crossing, Xerox, and Waste Management to name the most conspicuous offenders. And, when the U.S. Congress has acted to reform the situation by passing legislation such as Sarbanes-Oxley in an attempt to control and regulate "corporate fraud gone wild," it was only a matter of time before those legal efforts were stripped of their enforcement teeth by lobbyists working on behalf of anti-regulation.



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Gregg Barak: Essay Continued

Even Alan Greenspan has finally come to the realization that “free enterprise” without regulation is no way to run the economy. In fact, I would argue that it is criminal to run an economy that way, for which it is now costing the American taxpayers almost a trillion dollars as part of a plan to rescue the nation’s financial system from a Wall Street orchestrated, federally encouraged, multibillion-dollar pyramid scheme consisting of low-grade mortgages wrapped into flimsy securities insured by obscure derivatives that have been described by some economists as “radioactive waste in paper form.”

GB, November 1, 2008



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Photograph By Jeff Ferrell, Vancouver August 2008



## **Raising Hell: A Feminist Reflection on Truth Telling in the Academy**

By

Meda Chesney-Lind

One of the persistent problems with academic life is that one is encouraged to tell the truth, whether in research, the classroom, or the department meeting. Our years in graduate school, in particular, stressed the importance of meticulously documenting girls and women's lives, which had been rendered invisible by the virtually all fields; it was a heady time. I know that these days, the idea of truth is contentious, but in the real world in which we work, there are real problems that women confront (like sexual harassment, discrimination, and workplace violence) continue. Documenting these problems on our own campuses is a particular burden that feminist criminologists, as well as others, have taken on. It produces genuine challenges in a career that relies heavily on "collegiality" and "civility." This essay reflects on the costs of telling it

### **Surviving and Thriving in Academia:**

*On the Virtues of Marginality.*

I have lived and worked on the periphery of our field, both geographically and intellectually, and I have always suggested to others that there is much virtue and considerable freedom in marginality. Being at the center of the field (whether at an



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elite institution or submitting to an elite journal) can be tough on women and minorities, since the privileges afforded to those within these venues brings a tendency to be quite conservative to non-mainstream views—the very ones we bring to the table. My interest in girls, in particular, was seen as decidedly odd when I first began doing research in criminology, but it was tolerated at my institution because no one was patrolling the intellectual boundaries all that vigorously.

What about the teaching/research/service balance? For me, teaching has always been about creating new colleagues—young women and men who, even if they did not seek an academic career, maybe felt a little differently about girl's and women's issues than they did before they took my courses. If they cultivated a particular career track out of the exposure to my lectures, all the better. But, the bottom line is that I never want them to watch a sexist advertisement on television without wincing. If I can enlist them on that long march that still seeks social justice for women—the one that started well before any of us were born—that is even better.

*Teaching Smart.*

Teaching can be fraught with dangers, especially for a new scholar who can, during the first couple of semesters, face a slew of new preparations. Here is some advice. First, use your students to help you teach the class. This is a component of “active learning,” and it is a better way for them to learn. Active learning includes small group discussions, student presentations, and cooperative learning. You do not need



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to spend hours and hours perfecting a lecture that most students cannot remember five minutes after they walk out of the class. In other words, as one recent article stated, be “canny about class preparation” (McClain, 2003, p. C2). McClain noted that there is actually research to suggest that teachers who spend less time preparing (in order to write) end up with better teaching evaluations. Specifically, she noted, “when I had a class prepared to the minute, with a gorgeous PowerPoint presentation, film clips, and carefully-orchestrated discussions, the students could be overwhelmed into passivity” (McClain, 2003, p. C2). Often, she found that she had to cut off even interesting class discussions “in order to get to the next planned event.” When she was slightly less prepared, she found that her classes were more interesting and that she had more time to follow a discussion in the classroom to its conclusion.

McClain also noted that judicious use of films (and I would add videos) actually helps with this generation of visual learners, and my experience is that some of them provide a good opportunity for students to view the world almost as ethnographers (e.g. “Streetwise in Seattle” or “Hooker”) or present powerful visual images and complex arguments that can spur discussion and critical assessment (e.g. “Tough Guise” or “Bowling for Columbine”). It is the creative and constructive use of video that makes powerful points about the worlds of marginalized and incarcerated folks in ways that no lecture can. In order to effectively use video, students must move past the “bubblegum of the mind” state to a place where they genuinely watch, analyze, and



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interpret the video. Candidly speaking, video also gives you a bit of a break in course preparation. McClain also noted that some apparent time savers (like guest speakers and field trips) are not necessarily time savers.

Also, if you are a woman or minority, understand that teaching and particularly teaching evaluations can be both sexist and racist, so do not take these entirely to heart. Having taught in both mainstream and Women's Studies courses, I have learned that students do not necessarily shed all prejudices when they walk through the classroom door. Some research has found that women are expected to be "nice," "friendly," and to put up with all sorts of comments about their appearance and attire (Burns-Glover & Veith, 1995; Martin, 1984). In fact, in order to overcome sexist stereotypes in student teaching evaluations, Martin factitiously writes that women faculty should "be sure to wear a feminine blouse with [their] skirted suit[s]" (p. 491). Women and minorities can expect questions about their competence, and can face downright hostility if they take on the "tough" subjects of racism and sexism, so do not wear your heart on your sleeve.

Finally, I heartily advise folks to seek out Women's Studies Programs where you are able to teach and cross-list as many courses as you can with them. Similarly, seek out Ethnic Studies Programs or African/Asian American Studies Departments and do the same. In my experience, students in these programs or departments increasingly are there for a reason, and the reason is generally a laudable one. Having



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these students in your classes is a gift. They also fire up the class and make it more fun.

*Research Tips.*

What about research? I have always advised students and colleagues to only consider doing work that they can approach with passion, and if you are doing feminist research, do not be surprised if it is greeted with hostility (which is often carefully masked in reviews). Bowker (1988) did us all a terrific favor in his paper entitled "Publishing Feminist Research: A Personal Note from Lee Bowker." Bowker, whose publications number in the hundreds, made his name in many areas of criminology. But when he began doing work on wife abuse, he suddenly noticed problems with the peer review process that had never dogged him previously. In a table, he noted that when he submitted non-feminist article and book manuscripts, his acceptance rate was 85%. However, when he submitted what he labeled "feminist" publications, his acceptance rate fell to 54%. In reviews of his feminist work, he further noted that he was assumed to be female, and his work was generally rejected for poor methodology. He quipped, "From my experience with gatekeeper journals, I think I have found the answer to the question, 'What is the correct methodology for carrying out feminist research?' It is 'Whatever methodology you didn't use.'" (Bowker, 1998, p. 171). He even caught one editor shopping for a critical review through a slip-up in the editor's communication with him.



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However, the reaction toward feminist scholarship could be changing. I just got an e-mail from a student was doing a paper on my research. She asked, “I was just wondering if you thought that your research was feminist and why and why you call yourself a feminist? Does it help you to get work recognized and read more quickly by labeling yourself a feminist? Just some curious questions that I would love to include in my paper.” I admit, after years of getting my work rejected precisely because it was feminist, this comment made me laugh out loud. Still, the student makes a point.

There may well be some folks in some fields who see research on gender and race as smart career moves, rather than the “career suicide” it once was. Still, as our paper will show, it is still tough to actually be a woman or a minority in higher education (even if one is not doing explicitly feminist stuff), and it is potentially even harder if you take opposition to racism and sexism seriously (and attempt to make both your campus and your profession safer places for minorities and women).

As far as I am concerned, working in isolation is extremely difficult. If you team up with someone else, and increasingly that person can be geographically distant, you are more productive, smarter, and have more fun doing the work. My most rewarding work has been done with my colleagues around the world, and I use the national and regional meetings to create new colleagues, linkages, and possibilities. It goes without saying that going to these meetings is far more than going to sessions—it is about creating and nourishing a network. The Division on Women and Crime was my intel-



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lectual and academic birthplace in so many ways, and it can be that for others as well. Other Divisions, like the Division on Critical Criminology and the Division of People of Color are also provide crucial support and encouragement to those who's research on gender, race, and class may put them out of the mainstream of the field. Likewise, consider journals like *Women and Criminal Justice* for your work. These outlets are an antidote to the publication bias that is so evident in virtually all aspects of our professional life. Finally, expect the unexpected in research, and do not be afraid to publish what you find. There will be some bumps in the road (well, actually a lot of bumps if you are doing feminist work), but I like to think that nothing worth doing comes easily.

*What About Service?*

Leave the campus as often as possible (as traditional academics are a pretty self-absorbed, and often depressed bunch). Fortunately, early in my career, a mentor of mine made me go out and work with local agencies (some social service and some criminal justice). This got me in touch with folks then my age (and now a tad older) that were out in the real world doing some fairly powerful and important stuff. They sometimes took me out into that world, and got me talking to others. I learned that if you are going to evaluate a prison delinquency prevention program, it is not a bad idea to have taught in the prison before and to know many of the folks in the facility. If you are going to study gangs, it is not a bad idea to know the neighborhoods where gangs are everywhere and to know some of the folks who live and work there. Finally,



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I am fortunate to live in a place where most of the students, and many of my friends and colleagues, are culturally different from me. You learn an awful lot from difference, and you get some great meals out of the experience as well! Beyond this, you can gain trust and access to settings that might well provide you (and your students) with research opportunities.

Service to the community, to the campus, and to your profession can be a great source of moral and emotional support, but it can also be a “time vampire.” This is particularly true for minority and women scholars, who face multiple service commitments because their very status makes them “valuable” for committees that aspire to be “diverse.” Additionally, women are seen as more approachable than men and have a harder time saying “no,” according to Emily Toth, who writes on mentoring for the *Chronicle on Higher Education* (Fogg, 2003).

Finally, minority and women faculty are often sought out by students looking for a mentor who understands racism and sexism. These students are often experiencing marginalization on campus, and they see faculty who understand these pressures as essential to their survival on campus. Most women and minority faculty take this burden up willingly, but we also need to name the problem. Moreover, we need to get the traditional academy to recognize and reward this mentoring service (and reduce other demands accordingly). Finally, a personal bit of advice—use office hours and avoid making lots of specific “appointments” with students. Often students want to meet face



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to face when a five-minute phone call is all that is needed. If you are endlessly available to your students, you will not get the writing done that is critical to your survival.

*How can faculty, particularly untenured, minority, and/or women faculty, survive the high departmental demands for academic service?* First, learn that some administrative tasks are more important than others, pick carefully, and be sure not to overwork yourself. Whether at the departmental level or at the university level, try to select committee work that is meaningful to you. Learn enough about the social and political structure of your department and your college to spend your service hours wisely (and seek community work that could possibly lead to research opportunities). Learn to differentiate between critical tasks and “administrivia,” (trivial administrative or bureaucratic activities) such as meetings to craft mission statements, departmental budget committees where the chair makes all the final decisions, or completely unnecessary meetings that take an hour when a phone call would suffice. Make sure that you are making shrewd use of your service time, and try to “double dip”—that is, use your service activities to further your research or teaching agendas (such as making contacts with agencies that might later provide you with data or provide guest speakers for your classes). Further, if you do not know if some work should be undertaken, ask a trusted senior professor (not necessarily in your department). This is where former dissertation chairs or mentors that emerge out of a campus mentoring program can help.

*A Final Note About Time Management.*



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I once saw an excellent article by Gmelch (1996) on the need for professors to manage their time carefully. Among other things, the article forces one to confront the many sources of “urgent” but unimportant (like responding to many voice mails and e-mails) as opposed to non-urgent but important work such as publishing or revising an article. Academics are burdened by a system that does not provide us with a real screen between those who are contacting us (or want something from us) and ourselves. E-mail has only compounded this problem, turning our jobs into something that arguably could be a 24/7 workplace.

How should we manage our time? Gmelch argues that we need to spend some time every day planning. We need to establish our high priority areas, and we also need to be able to assess and intervene if the urgent, unimportant or, worse, the non-urgent, non-important activities interfere with these priority areas. Some things will simply fall off our “to do” list. Moreover, we may need to find a “hideout” or retreat where we can undertake these high priority activities without interruption (Gmelch, 1996). This can be a lab, a home office, research center, etc. Save the e-mail tasks until the time of day when you are least productive.

### **Making Trouble**

Here's my best advice to those who want to to be effective advocates on matters of interest to Critical Criminologists:



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**KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON**

First, and most importantly, know what's happening with (and to) girls and women. You get this information from a variety of sources. First, watch the numbers on your group...always read the UCR statistics and other BJS reports, but don't necessarily buy their interpretation of the data. Beyond that, be VERY hungry for perspectives on what's happening in the world. This involves actually getting off campus (and hopefully out of your state and country), so do it. We need to be talking to girls and women, themselves, and we also need to talk to those who work with them. This means folks who work on the streets, in the schools, in the courts, in group homes, in detention centers and in prisons. My best information comes from these conversations, and you also get to be friends and colleagues along the way.

**BE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW, AND KNOW HOW TO DO IT**

Since we are concerned about a population that is often incredibly marginalized, we have to know how to talk about what we are finding. This is particularly important since there is often so much misinformation (often incredibly racist and misogynistic) out there about "the woman offender." I understand that many folks have a lot of hesitancy about speaking "for" other women (particularly girls or women in prison), but I want to try to make the case for trying to do this, or at least for being willing to advo-



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cate for girls and women who can't speak (or who are not permitted to speak) for themselves. In a society where justice systems are increasingly closed to the media, such advocacy is vital. In this regard, it is particularly important that we find smart journalists and work with them on our issues. As the imprisonment binge continues, and as it threatens to expand into the juvenile justice system, it is imperative, that the crime beat be our beat as well. We need to learn how to talk simply but not stupidly about crime and justice issues, and we have to expand the number of places where we write, so that our work reaches larger audiences. This involves writing for magazines like *Corrections Today* that reaches a huge audience as well as academic journals. You'd be amazed at what they are willing to publish.

Beyond that, go out and speak in your community on girls and women's issues, and try to organize initiatives like one that recently passed in our state to require parity in programming for incarcerated girls and women. While the national political picture is mixed, I think there is a tremendous potential at the local and state level to get our issues on the agenda. Gender-specific and gender-responsive programming has become a focus in almost every state in the nation, and it is an opportunity to do important advocacy for those in the system. There are many women in mid-level (and sometimes higher) positions in agencies who welcome the talk about gender (I have a theory that its a chance for them to do feminist work with like minded women), so there are plenty of folks with whom to work.



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**NETWORK AND STAY CONNECTED**

I've always been a collector...of data, of papers, of books, of plates (no I won't go there), and of people. I definitely believe that women relish relationships, and smart advocates should do this intentionally. It is as important as other kinds of "work" and its fun. The people I stay in touch with are great to talk to (see one and two above), and they keep me hopeful and optimistic (even when I probably shouldn't be). Beyond that, you should connect those in your networks to each other. I sometimes feel like a matchmaker and human roledex (sp?), but this works to keep information flowing, and it also builds and supports the work that you and folks like you are doing.

Relationships also give us the courage and social support to speak truth to power (locally and nationally). Sometimes (often?) doing this sort of criminology means taking risks in terms of the traditional version of "career;" you'll need the support help of your friends when the inevitable consequences of the form of advocacy I'm calling for come back to haunt you. Depression is not a productive state, and friends can get you out of that and on the next phase of the work that must be done.

I also feel that I draw support from the history that I'm increasingly a part of. Some call it the long march, but I read the words of earlier advocates for girls and women, and I think about the courage that they had to show. Compared to force feeding, a vicious rejection letter from a book editor or journal or granting agency is not all that bad.



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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can  
change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."



## Rules for Feminist Scholars

By

Meda Chesney-Lind

**Rules for Feminist Scholars, especially  
when you need to make trouble**

**In general...**

**Show up**

**Work hard, they won't expect it, and it makes you  
feel better**

**If you get things, read them [most people won't]**

**Be nice, or at least, avoid being petty and mean**

**Have a sense of humor**

**Cultivate a broad social network and make a point  
of network maintenance**

**When working in groups, work small**

**Exercise to relieve stress/eat healthy, this ain't a  
game for the weak**

**When you need to push back...remember**

**Be in the "right" and check this out with others (see  
rule number 9, below)**

**Every bureaucrat has a boss**

**Never ask permission and always be prepared to  
apologize**



## **Rules for Feminist Scholars**

**Continued**

**Ask questions when told no including “May I see a copy of that policy”**

**Keep written records**

**File written memos, letters of complaint, etc.**

**Use ccs wisely and strategically**

**Avoid fighting over email**

**Don’t battle over paper clips**

**Be prepared for racism and sexism...don’t be surprised.**

**Think about going public, using the media, if necessary**

**By Meda Chesney-Lind**



CALL FROM BECKY HAYES TO GRADUATE STUDENTS FOR A STUDENT CORNER

Dear Critical Criminology Graduate Students,

I am writing this short note to you to encourage you to get more involved with the division. You can do this by submitting ideas and topics for the next issue of the newsletter. I am interested in creating a section of the newsletter for graduate student issues. I encourage you to submit questions. Topics could include: how to navigate your first conference, what to do on the job market, and how to start and therefore finish a dissertation. I would like help with this endeavor and your ideas are appreciated. I want to know if there is interest.

Best,

Becky Hayes-Smith

[mshayes@ufl.edu](mailto:mshayes@ufl.edu)

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BOOK SERIES

Transaction Publishers, directed by Irving Louis Horowitz, has agreed to begin a new book series that focuses on Comparative and International approaches to Criminology and Criminal Justice.

As series editor, I am looking for full-length book manuscripts that fall under this theme.

I have done three books with Transaction and am very happy with the quality and professionalism with this press.

Please send all correspondence to my e-mail address

[jeffreyianross@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffreyianross@hotmail.com)

thanks

Jeff

Jeffrey Ian Ross



**Advancing the Field Beyond the Walls of Academe:**

**Suggestions for State Crime Scholars**

By Emily Lenning & Sara Brightman

Though state crime researchers have been taking on the daunting task of confronting state crime for decades, there is more work to be done if we intend to develop the field beyond the current school of scholars. It is a running joke among many state criminologists that the field is somewhat incestuous and, while this serves as some off-needed comic relief in a discipline that can be quite depressing, the reality of the joke is rather serious. On a positive note, the “incestuous” nature of State Criminology is, in part, due to the invaluable mentoring being done in the field. However, since state crime is relatively new, the number of individuals doing such work is pretty low in relation to the larger field of Criminology more generally. Consequently, unless we can effectively grow the pool of scholars who take on this vital work and, more importantly, mentor them towards being strong academics and even stronger public criminologists, then the work currently being done will lose some of its obvious significance to the larger discipline of Criminology in general. In an effort to begin a conversation about how to take on this necessary task, we offer some suggestions for things that we can do to sustain and further develop State Criminology.

First, we need to place an emphasis on developing new scholarship in the field of state crime, which requires a focus on fostering young scholars towards a passion for understanding and continuing to explain such crimes. Though many Criminology departments are beginning to offer courses (especially at the graduate level) on corporate and/or state crime, they pale in comparison to the number of courses offered on more traditional issues (e.g., juvenile delinquency). The occasional course offering is obviously not conducive to developing a strong cohort of state crime theorists. Thus, we suggest that training in the methods of state criminology is offered not only in universities, but at national conferences, such as the American Society of Criminology (ASC). As the number of well-published state criminologist's is considerably lower than, say, specialists in homicide, providing mentoring through national-level organizations is likely to have the greatest effect on the future of this field. Surely, an increase in state crime scholarship is key to legitimizing the field within the realm of Criminology more generally.

Indeed, national-level organizations (such as the ASC) can also be key in terms of making state crime and



its consequences visible to non-academic criminologists, the public-at-large, and those criminologists who would otherwise focus primarily on street crime. The ASC's Division on Critical Criminology has been providing a forum for critical criminologists to network, share ideas and learn from each other since 1989. Most importantly, though, it has made the existence of state crime known to those who might never have considered it a relevant topic for Criminology. Simple recognition, however, is not enough given the enormous consequences of crimes committed or facilitated by the state. In 1989 the ASC issued a public declaration against the death-penalty, recognizing that its implementation was a form of institutionalized racism (i.e., facilitated by the state) and that no evidence suggests that it deters crime. If state facilitation of a moral crime (such as racism) is reason enough to denounce something, than certainly the ASC should be taking a public stance on those crimes against humanity that are committed by the state. If not the widespread state-sponsored rapes, assaults, war crimes and general crimes against humanity that critical work has investigated (e.g., Lenning & Brightman 2009; Michalowski & Kramer 2006; Mullins & Rothe 2008a; Mullins & Rothe 2008b), the ASC should *at least* be publicly addressing the contemporary genocides addressed by other scholars (e.g., Hiinton & Lifton 2004; Kressel 2002; Rothe & Mullins 2007; 2008a,b). If the ASC is willing to take a stand against the state-endorsed death of one individual, why not take a stand on the death of millions?

In order, of course, to expect the ASC to take a stand on crimes against humanity, Criminologists must become more involved in affecting relevant public policy. Just as death penalty researchers ventured into Public Criminology, which then prompted a reaction from the ASC, so must we as researchers of state crime. Thankfully, many state criminologists *are* engaging in Public Criminology. Indeed, there are probably more critical criminologists who do engage in Public Criminology than don't. Some of the most well-known critical scholars, for example, are making appearances on local television and radio shows, actively participating in U.N. committee meetings, working with NGOs, conducting field work in Sierra Leone and Rwanda, participating in protests, writing informative blogs for the general public, organizing public awareness events, and have been active in the International criminal tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Clearly, state criminologists are striving to make real social change. Due to the small pool of state theorists who currently constitute the field, however, we must engage in activism to an exaggerated degree if we intend to make useful contributions to the global community. Being a public criminologist on such a level, though, is easier said than done, and several issues need to be addressed to make activism more fea-



sible.

For one, social activism is learned and fostered, which again speaks to the importance of mentorship. Being an activist for issues as complicated as crimes against humanity, however, is not as easy as taking on (for example) a domestic issue. It is simply not enough to pester policymakers and political figures and participate in protests and local grassroots organizations. As it is the ICC, the U.N. and international-level NGO's (such as Amnesty International) who currently have the most power in terms of exposing and prosecuting such crimes, it is imperative that these are the organizations that we strive to have an impact on. This, for most people (including the authors of this editorial), is a daunting task, as it is difficult to even know where to start. Thus, in addition to seeing conference workshops on the methods of state crime research, it would be just as useful to offer forums that would teach people how to make connections to and within these organizations. The feeling of helplessness that we suspect many critical criminologists must have after their first few case studies must be overcome, and the key to doing so is through educating ourselves on how we can make a difference.

In addition to the notion of workshops, we suggest that publishing more scholarly articles on Public Criminology would also be conducive to social change. Learning about what others are doing is a great way to determine how our own efforts might best be spent. Not only does this require that scholars write such articles, though, it also means a shift in the current culture of publication. By this we mean the culture of rejecting or avoiding non-research based articles. While it is true that research-based articles represent the "meat and potatoes" of Criminology, so to speak, they do not paint an accurate picture of all that criminologists do. If none of our work is ever translated into making a difference, then what, we ask, is the point?

Now, simply because we have suggested that journals broaden the scope of acceptable scholarship, we do not expect editorial boards to start madly changing their practices. If our prediction is correct, then an alternative to including Public Criminology in academic journals is to simply take such work elsewhere. True, this is a horrifying notion for most, especially given the "publish or perish" culture of contemporary academia. Let's face the facts, though – some of us have earned tenure. In fact, those who have are probably the best equipped to write articles on how they engage in Public Criminology. So we, as young scholars, are imploring those of you who can to seek



alternative publication venues on occasion, so that your activism can impact the work and activism that we do in the future.

Finally, we offer two more suggestions. First, involvement of the magnitude that we are suggesting would almost inevitably require travel across borders. Thus, increased travel funding at the departmental level is absolutely necessary. Though it is certainly not the responsibility of academic departments to finance your social activism, other engagements, such as participation in U.N. or ICC functions serves the same purpose as, for example, correctional researchers visiting prisons. Therefore it is definitely reasonable to expect similar support. As many of our institutions are facing financial crisis, this goal in particular is perhaps not the timeliest and, as with changes in curricula, faces its own set of institutional barriers. Nevertheless, it should be a point of discussion at some point, and one that could certainly benefit from the input of senior scholars with experience in affecting similar policies at their institutions. Secondly, as many state theorists are conducting work (most often case studies) on countries other than their own, inter-national collaboration between scholars could only serve to strengthen the excellent work that already characterizes the field. Many state criminologists are doing this, and effective mentoring can teach young scholars how to carry on this growing trend.

While the suggestions here appear overwhelming, the scholarship and dedication of state criminologists suggests that, if any, this group of scholars is up for the challenge. As we have discussed, it is not that these things haven't been done, they have, but how to advance the field and get others involved beyond scholarship is the next challenge at hand. The groundbreaking nature and growing visibility of State Criminology has positioned the field for exactly the tasks we have discussed. We all have a stake in advancing the field, yet are each differently situated as to the role we will play. It will take the work of all of us to further advance the field of State Criminology beyond the walls of academe.



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