

A PEARSON EDUCATION AUSTRALIA CUSTOM BOOK

Perspectives on Criminology

Compiled by James E. Coughlan

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**CRIMINOLOGY TODAY: AN INTEGRATIVE
INTRODUCTION**

4TH EDITION
SCHMALLEGAR

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

ARRIGO

**CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR: A PSYCHOSOCIAL
APPROACH**

7TH EDITION
BARTOL AND BARTOL

CRIMINOLOGY: A SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

3RD EDITION
BARKAN



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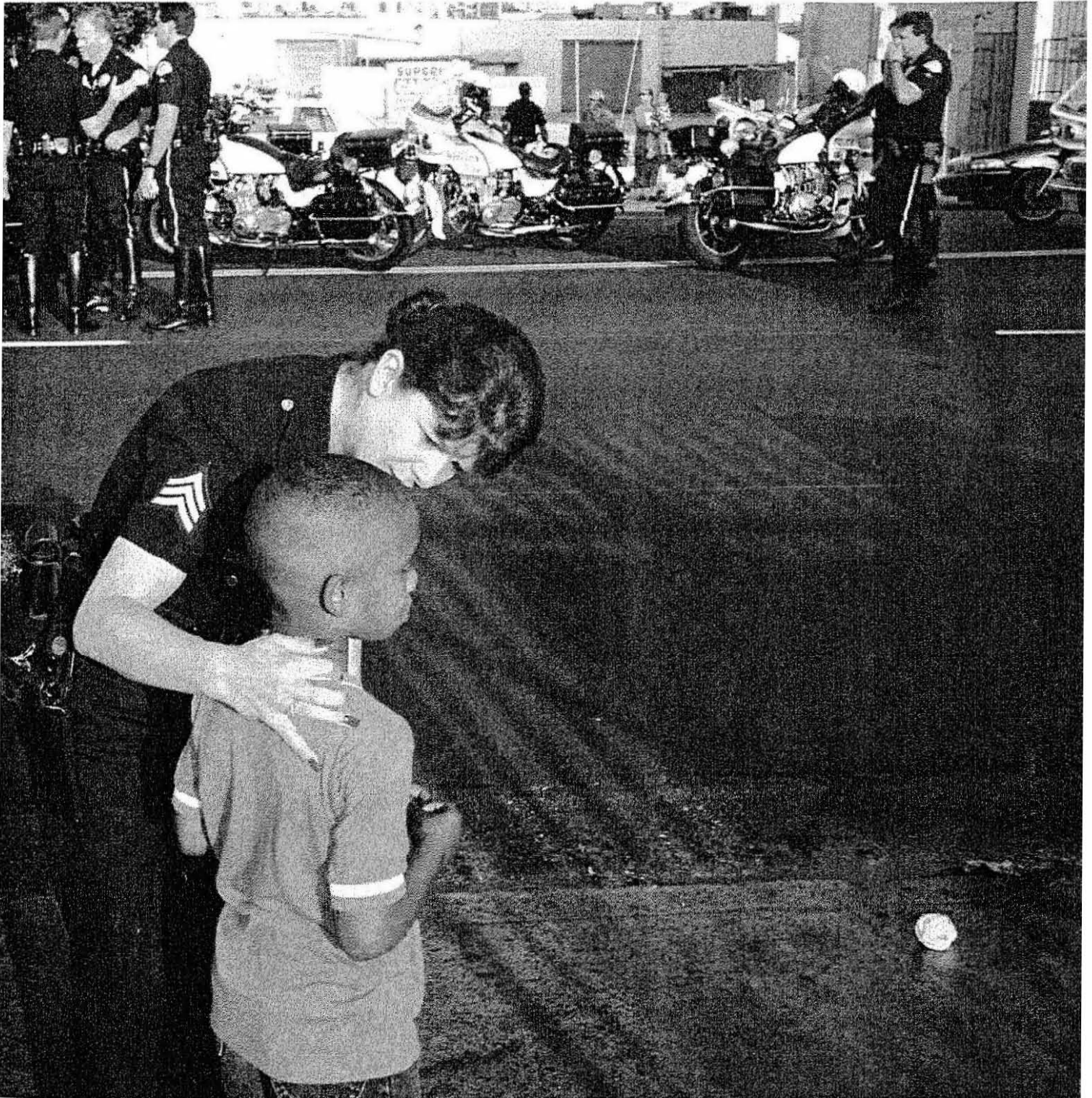
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What Is Criminology?



Outline

Introduction

What Is Crime?

Crime and Deviance

What Should Be Criminal?

What Do Criminologists Do?

What Is Criminology?

- › Theoretical Criminology

Criminology and Social Policy

- › Social Policy and Public Crime Concerns

The Theme of This Book

The Social Context of Crime

- › Making Sense of Crime:
The Causes and Consequences
of the Criminal Event

The Primacy of Sociology?

Crime is the only way to get ahead, Duke. You'll never have anything if you live your life within the law.

—*Dialogue from the NBC TV movie Beyond Suspicion*¹

Much is already known about the phenomenon of crime. Further development in theoretical criminology will result primarily from making sense out of what we already know.

—*George B. Vold and Thomas J. Bernard*²

The objective of criminology is the development of a body of general verified principles.

—*Edwin Sutherland and Donald Cressey*³

The whole paraphernalia of the criminal law and the criminal courts is based on the need of the upper class to keep the lower class in its place.

—*Jay Frost*⁴

Key Concepts

Important Terms

crime	criminology	social relativity
criminalist	deviant behavior	social responsibility perspective
criminality	general theory	statute
criminalize	integrated theory	statutory law
criminal justice	socialization	theory
criminal justice system	social policy	unicausal
criminologist	social problems perspective	

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

- Understand what criminology is and what criminologists do
- Define *crime*
- Recognize the difference between criminal and deviant acts and appreciate the complexity of this distinction
- Understand the legalistic approach to the study of crime and know why it is limiting
- Know what a theory is and explain the role of theorizing in the study of criminal behavior
- Understand the distinction between the social problems and social responsibility perspectives on crime causation

Hear the author discuss this chapter at crimtoday.com

Introduction

On May 1, 2004, pop music superstar Michael Jackson pleaded not guilty in a packed Santa Maria, California, courtroom to child molestation charges and charges of conspiracy to commit child abduction, extortion, and false imprisonment.⁵ The charges stemmed from a grand jury indictment containing 10 felony counts that had been returned against Jackson on April 21, 2004, and that accused him of not only molesting a young cancer-stricken boy whom Jackson had befriended, but also of keeping the boy and the boy's family at his Santa Ynez Neverland Valley Ranch against their will. At an earlier arraignment in January 2004, Jackson, 45, had pleaded not guilty to seven counts of committing lewd acts with a child and two counts of allegedly administering alcohol to a child to commit the molestation. Court documents show that deputies serving search warrants at Jackson's ranch had seized a total of 400 items, including computers and bedding—much of which had been viewed by members of the grand jury.⁶

Jackson's trial is scheduled to begin about the time that this book goes to press. His defense team includes noted attorneys Joe Tacopina, Thomas A. Mesereau, Robert Sanger, Susan Yu, and Steve Cochran. Mark Geragos and Benjamin Brafman, two high-profile attorneys who had appeared with Jackson at earlier proceedings, are no longer working with the team. As Jackson left the May hearing under \$3 million bail, his lead attorney, Joe Tacopina, who has also represented boxer Mike Tyson and actor Robert Blake, told reporters: "In no way, shape or form do I even remotely concede there is an ounce of truth to these charges. . . . Frankly, I don't think I'll have any difficulty in challenging the credibility of those allegations."⁷ Jackson's lawyers have said that the molestation allegations were brought by the child's family after a failed attempt to get money from the star. If convicted, Jackson could be ordered to serve up to 18 years and 8 months in prison.

Keep up to date with the Jackson trial and associated happenings at Web Extra 1–1 at crimtoday.com.

WEB EXTRA 1-1 at crimtoday.com



Fans light candles on Michael Jackson's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2004 in support of the singer following his arraignment on 10 felony counts alleging sexual misconduct with a child. AP Wide World Photos

A fan-sponsored Web site is accessible at Web Extra 1-2.

WEB EXTRA 1-2 at crimtoday.com

What Is Crime?

The Jackson case seems destined to take its place alongside other widely publicized criminal trials of recent years, including those of Scott Peterson, Deltway shooters John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, Oklahoma City bomber Terry Nichols, home-goods diva Martha Stewart (convicted of insider trading), and former football great O. J. Simpson (acquitted of the murders of ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman). Similarly, the popularity of prime-time television shows such as *Law and Order* (NBC), along with its spin-offs *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*; *CSI* (CBS) and the *CSI*

spin-offs *CSI: Miami* and *CSI: New York*; *The Sopranos* (HBO); *The District* (CBS); *The Shield* (FX); *The Wire* (HBO); and *Without a Trace* (CBS) reveals a penchant among American TV viewers for crime-related entertainment and a fascination with criminal motivation and detective work. Moreover, the American media show a clear interest in offenses involving celebrities, athletes, and other well-known people. During the 1990s, for example, the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson (for which football star O. J. Simpson was tried and acquitted), Gianni Versace (internationally known fashion designer), Ennis Cosby (son of entertainer Bill Cosby), James Jordan (father of basketball great Michael Jordan), gangsta rappers Tupac Shakur and Christopher Wallace (known to fans as Notorious B.I.G. or Biggie Smalls), and six-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey all received much press coverage. The alleged misdeeds of other celebrities—such as boxer Michael Tyson (who bit off parts of an opponent's ear in the ring after serving time in prison for rape), rappers Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs (arrested on assault charges, along with friend Jennifer Lopez) and Snoop Doggy Dogg (acquitted of murder charges), former Carolina Panthers wide receiver Rae Carruth (convicted in 2001 of conspiracy in the shooting death of his pregnant girlfriend), actor Robert Downey, Jr. (who repeatedly served time for drug possession), Dennis Rodman (convicted in California of DUI and driving without a valid license), actress Winona Ryder (convicted of shoplifting), and Brad Renfro (arrested for allegedly trying to steal a yacht), to name just a few—attracted considerable attention. Keep up to date with the latest crime news at Web Extra 1-3.

WEB EXTRA 1-3 at crimtoday.com

Of course, not all wrongdoing is crime. Crime can be defined in a variety of ways, and some scholars have suggested that at least four definitional perspectives can be found in contemporary criminology. These diverse perspectives see crime from (1) legalistic, (2) political, (3) sociological, and (4) psychological viewpoints. How we see any phenomenon is crucial because it determines the assumptions that we make about how that phenomenon should be studied. The perspective that we choose to employ when viewing crime determines the kinds of questions we ask, the nature of the research we conduct, and the type of answers that we expect to receive. Those answers, in turn, influence our conclusions about the kinds of crime control policies that might be effective. Hence, when we study crime, it is vital to keep in mind that there are differing viewpoints within the field of criminology as to the fundamental nature of the subject matter itself.

Seen from a legalistic perspective, **crime** is *human conduct in violation of the criminal laws of a state, the federal government, or a local jurisdiction that has the power to make such laws*. This is the definition of crime that we will use in this textbook because without a law that circumscribes a particular form of