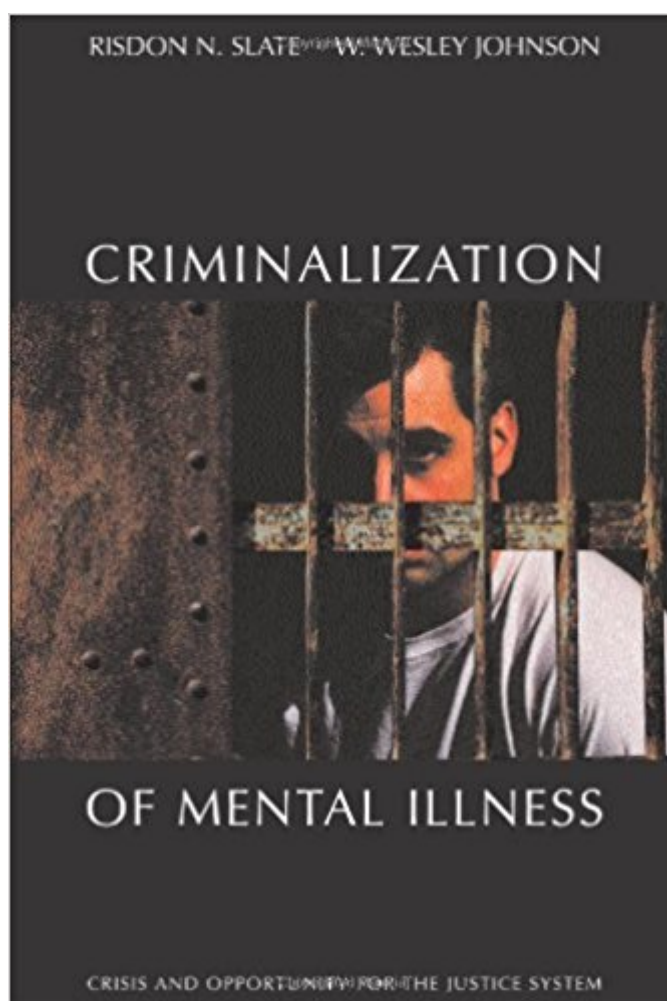


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# The Criminalization Of Mental Illness: Crisis And Opportunity For The Justice System



## Synopsis

For a myriad of reasons the criminal justice system has become the de facto mental health system, with the three largest inpatient psychiatric institutions in America being jails--not hospitals. This book explores how and why this is the case. Sensationalized cases often drive criminal justice policies that can sometimes be impulsively enacted and misguided. While there is a chapter that examines the insanity defense and competency, the primary focus of the book is on the bulk of cases that clog the criminal justice system with persons with mental illnesses (pwmi). Criminal justice practitioners are often ill-equipped for dealing with pwmi in crises, and this may even result in the emergence of mental disabilities for criminal justice professionals. However, via application of therapeutic jurisprudence principles some agencies are better preparing their employees for such encounters and attempting to stop the inhumane and costly recycling of pwmi through the criminal justice system. Coverage runs the gamut from specialized law enforcement responses, to mental health courts, to jails and prisons, to discharge planning, diversion, re-entry, and outpatient commitment. Also, criminal justice practitioners in their own words provide insight into and examples of the interface between the mental health and criminal justice systems. Throughout the book the balance between maintaining public safety and preserving civil liberties is considered as the state's police power and *parens patriae* roles are examined. Lastly, collaborative approaches for influencing and informing policies that are often driven by crises are discussed.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a highly insightful and important book which corrections staff, academics, students, and the general public should know about. --Ken Kerle, Ph.D, American Jail Association, March 2009[This

book] provides extraordinary insights into the manner by which people with mental illness are processed through the criminal justice system. I thoroughly enjoyed this work and would recommend it to anyone who has an interest in issues involving mental illness and the criminal justice system. I have seen a few books in this area, but have never found one quite as comprehensive and well-researched. It is, without exception, one of the best academic books that I have read in many years. --The Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice, Fall 2008 Without a doubt, it is the most comprehensive explanation of what has happened between the two systems during the past 40 or so years. It explains not only the crisis that exists and how we got here, but some interesting and innovative ways that local governments are providing solutions. ...[M]ore important than the chronicling of the impact of this social crisis, it demonstrates with pointed examples how the two systems intertwine with well-intentioned judicial and treatment policies. No matter how you view the issue of the mentally ill in prison, the book demonstrates that the person left out of the discussion is the defendant/offender/patient. --Corrections Today

Risdon N. Slate is chair of the department of sociology and criminology at Florida Southern College. W. Wesley Johnson is director of the doctoral program in the department of administration of justice at the University of Southern Mississippi.

A great book written by a man who has lived through it. Granted he was my college professor, and I respect him completely, he is a major reason why I majored in criminology.

Mental illness plays a big factor in CDV research and I would recommend this book for research on domestic violence

Great book!! Important read for any mental health professional.

The book is enlightening and delivers a foundational school of thought on the myths of mental illness. It is a must read for anyone interested in public policy, criminology and/or public health.

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