
In spite of all this, it is evident from these stories that even though the people experienced a denial of basic human rights and were treated intolerably, they do not reach back in anger or bitterness. I have also listened to stories about life at Yarrabah and life in the dormitories from my mother, grandmother and aunts. While the book does not explore the difficulties that the people experienced in depth, especially the hardships endured by the children, these are stories that must be told.

More books like *Reaching Back* should be written by Aboriginal people and read by many people in our wider society so that they are informed of Australia's true history and the inhuman manner in which the indigenous people of this country, and particularly their children, have been treated by the white invaders. *Reaching Back* should be introduced into schools where it would help children from non-Aboriginal backgrounds to confront the real history of this country and gain a better awareness and understanding of Aboriginal people. *Reaching Back* is also an example of how oral history brings the past alive.

PATRICIA BOYD*

Crimes That Shocked Australia by Simon Bouda, Bantam Books, Sydney, 1991

The connections between law and popular culture are myriad and complex. Most people "know" what they know about law not from direct involvement in the legal system as plaintiff or defendant, police or accused but rather from the series of ideological messages they receive through their contact with the organs and sites of the broader, or popular, culture. We learn about the rule of law and respect for the independence of the judiciary not from reading Dicey or Walker but from the fact that we "know", for example, that the batsman must leave his crease immediately and without question when the umpire gives him out. It is at the SCG or the WACA, not the High Court in Canberra, where most Australians learn the many subtle and often disguised messages about citizenship in a Parliamentary democracy. At the same time, we learn about the criminal justice system and the hidden construction of our collective notions of crime, criminality and criminalisation not by sitting in Magistrates Court but by watching the six o'clock news and reading the newspaper on the train or bus ride to and from work. What becomes important in our social understanding of crime is not what the judge or the barristers said, but what Brian Henderson or the headline writers at the *Telegraph-Mirror* tell us they said.

I do not mean to suggest here some simplistic view of the creation of ideology at some crudely superstructural level by "them" who impose their views on "us" against our will. The real phenomenology of the creation and recreation of criminality through popular culture is much more complex than that. Indeed, it is only if we begin to understand our own active participation in this process of the social construction of crime that we can fully comprehend the magnitude and complexity of the web of social interactions which create the culture in which we are all implicated. It is the reader of the *Telegraph-Mirror* and the

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faithful viewer of Channel 9 who creates her own understandings of the world and who recreates those views in all her activities.

Simon Bouda's *Crimes That Shocked Australia* could be easily and simplistically shunted aside as nothing more than a printed version of Hinch. It offers, in its eighty "chapters", a one-page summary of famous or infamous Australian crimes and on the facing page, reproduces the newspaper stories covering these crimes. Most of the newspaper clippings, but not all, come from the tabloid press, the so-called "lower" end of the newspaper hierarchy. Many are sensationalistic. In other words, they do greatly resemble Derryn Hinch's populist oversimplifying posturing on issues of criminal justice. But this reading of Bouda's book seeks to impose on the text the prejudices of the profession, of those of us who are deeply and personally implicated in the maintenance of a particular view of law and the criminal justice system. In other words, it simply re-enforces the traditional hierarchal relationship between "them" and "us". We are the insiders who know law because we practise or teach. They are the *hoi polloi*, the common masses who must, alas, submit themselves to the crass vulgarities of Derryn Hinch and the *Telegraph-Mirror*. Fortunately, there are a lot more of them than there are of us and we should start trying to understand this simple reality. Bouda's book is a good place to start. Here we will learn the "real" story of *Sodeman* and *Ryan*, of Australia's first drug dealer, of Jean Lee, the last woman to be hanged in Australia and many, many more. The book offers a good, accessible and readable popular history of representations of crime in white Australia.

We must avoid romanticising popular culture, just as we must avoid falling into the ideology of entrenched hierarchies. If we read Bouda's book with our minds open to the complexities of "our" social knowledge, we might begin to think about a project which could indeed deconstruct and decenter the traditional ideology of crime and criminality. This book is a good place to start a much more complex and contextualised reading of Australian criminal justice and democracy.

DAVID FRASER*

Lundy: The Destruction of Scotland Yard's Finest Detective by Martin Short,
Grafton Books, London, 1991.

Addressing a seminar of the Australian Institute of Criminology in 1984, Paul Byrne¹ introduced his argument for reform of aspects of the law relating to the use of informants in the administration of criminal justice by reference to a 17th century of Sir Matthew Hale:²

More mischief hath come to good men ... by false accusations of desperate villains than benefit to the public by the discovery and conviction of real offenders.

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1 Then a Commissioner, NSW Law Reform Commission, now of the NSW Bar.

2 Byrne, P "Granting Immunity from Prosecution", in *Prosecutorial Discretion*, Seminar Proceedings No 6, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1984, citing M Hale, *Pleas of the Crown*, p 226.