

Book Reviews

VIRTUOUS CITIZENS DISRUPTIVE SUBJECTS ORDER AND COMPLAINT IN A NEW ENGLAND COURT by Barbara Yngvesson, New York: Routledge, 1993. 168 pp., \$16.95 paperback, \$49.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Larry A. Rotenberg, MD

This is a useful and interesting book for forensic psychiatrists. It describes the disputes brought to public forums and the manner in which they are transformed in a concise and passionate way.

The author contrasts communities where people from lower socioeconomic groups have access to the court clerk as the main arbiter of their conflicts, and professionals and business people who have access to the full panoply of the court system as well as the appellate portions of that system.

The book is densely packed, both conceptually and textually. Consequently at times it becomes heavy going for a forensic psychiatrist on the periphery of the author's framework. Nevertheless, it is this very aspect of the book that makes it most fascinating. Many forensic psychiatrists may have very little knowledge of the underside of the legal system. It is this component of the judicial system, with all its complexities, that the author describes magnificently. She is sympathetic to the paradoxes within each aspect of the system. Yet, she can cull from the weaknesses of the system its strengths as well.

The author draws on the literature in anthropology, sociology, and history to make her points. She notes her interest in how complaints of violence brought by poor and working class complainers to state officials may shape the interpretation of rights. She indicates that parties to conflicts of property among professionals involves a capacity to hire attorneys and file suits in superior court. This distinguishes them from the working class and welfare poor who typically appeared before the district court clerk. She indicates the dynamic nature of the court system, noting that the court is not only shaped by professionals, but that the law, the court, legal officials, "formed in the exchanges of officials with victims, defendants, witnesses and others about the meanings of the words and actions that bring people to the courthouse." She describes beautifully the role of the local court clerk "who is empowered as much by his local identity and local knowledge as he is by his position as an official of the Commonwealth [of Massachusetts]." She discusses the tension in two settings in Massachusetts, between a fierce local wish for autonomy and the intrusion of the state. She describes the court clerk as an institution who in this particular case embodies functions of therapist, judge, jury, and crisis-intervention worker. Despite the court officer's shortcomings, the court clerk embodies the access of the average citizen to relief.

The text varies from scholarly, in the description of historical principles, to compassionately humorous in the author's description of a local homeless

person who challenges the establishment with considerable success.

Toward the end of the book, the author deals with issues of property as handled by the professional and business elite of a community, who generally have considerable resources. The author is able to delineate not only the access that this segment of society has to power and to resources, but how this segment of the community manages to enhance the value of its own properties in the process of pursuing an apparently altruistic aim of ecologic purity.

All in all, this book should be required reading for any mental health professional working in the forensic field.

MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT OF INSANITY ACQUITTEES: A MODEL FOR THE 1990s PROGRESS IN PSYCHIATRY/NUMBER 41 by Joseph D. Bloom, MD and Mary H. Williams, MS, JD, Washington, DC and London: American Psychiatric Press, Inc., 1994, 230 pp., \$31.00.

Reviewed by David W. Bean, MD

Management and Treatment of Insanity Acquittes: A Model for the 1990s is the 41st book in the *Progress in Psychiatry* series, the collaborative series between the American Psychiatric Association and the Scientific Program Committee and the American Psychiatric Press, Inc. David Spiegel, MD, series editor of the *Progress and Psychiatry* series describes

these ventures as "...designed to capture in print the excitements that comes from assembling a diverse group of experts from various locations to examine in detail the newest information about a developing aspect of psychiatry." Surely Dr. Spiegel, the American Psychiatric Association's Scientific Program Committee, and the American Psychiatric Press, Inc. must be greatly pleased with the 41st volume of their series, for this book truly achieves the goals of that series.

In their preface, the authors indicate that the book was written with "several purposes in mind," but add that "First, it is a program report, exploring a system designed for the management and treatment of Oregon's insanity acquittes." Specifically, this is a program report of the Oregon Psychiatry Security Review Board (PSRB), which was initiated in 1977 by the Oregon Legislature as the state of Oregon's response to the problem of insanity acquittes successful pleadings of not guilty by reason of insanity from their criminal charges.

To describe this book as a report is an accurate portrayal of this work, but to leave its description to just a "report" understates the importance of this volume to a great degree. The book provides a complete description of the theoretical and practical origins, development, implementation, and results of the manner in which the state of Oregon has faced the difficult issue of preserving and regulating successful insanity pleas.

For those individuals who are not familiar with specifics of the PSRB, the first chapter provides a national over-

Book Reviews

view of the insanity acquittee problem and Oregon's solution to that problem in a general context. The second chapter provides a similar overview presented in a legal context. These two chapters are sufficient in themselves to provide the reader an excellent perspective of the general problem of dealing with insanity acquittees nationally and as well a complete understanding of the solution to that problem that Oregon has initiated. Subsequent chapters describe the PSRB experience from various perspectives, including the nature of the insanity acquittees, elements of hospitalization and conditional release, diagnostic issues, community treatment, and other general items down to and including specific financial aspects of the PSRB.

For those individuals who are looking for a model program to handle insanity acquittees, this book describes the elements and activities of the PSRB in a manner that becomes a "cookbook" for those interested in developing such programs in their own state. Indeed, that portion of the title indicating *A Model for the 1990s*, is an accurate description of the PSRB and its operation for the appropriate handling of insanity acquittees on a state-by-state or national basis.

Often, books that are written as program reports tend to appeal only to those who have very specific interests in the subject. This book does report sufficiently descriptions and discussion of the elements of the handling of insanity acquittees in the state of Oregon through the PSRB to satisfy the most ardent student of this issue. However, it is also written in a manner that should capture

the interest of those who may have only a passing interest in the subject matter. Each chapter is written with introductory paragraphs, followed by supportive data, and concluded with an excellent discussion of the particular issue in relationship to the whole problem and proposed solution. The format of writing presents each chapter on a stand-alone basis, and yet each is well-integrated to become a significant piece of the whole report.

Bloom and Williams have presented in this book an excellent discussion of the management and treatment of insanity acquittees in the Oregon program. As such, this book merits the interest of those who have the specific desire to study or develop a model program for insanity acquittees as well as for those who simply wonder what is happening in the U.S. since the Hinkley affair in regards to the legal and psychiatric treatment of insanity acquittees.

This reviewer strongly recommends this work as a book of great interest to both forensic and nonforensic psychiatrists and as a useful volume for one's personal forensic library as one of the national models for the handling of insanity plea acquittees.

VIOLENCE AND MENTAL DISORDER DEVELOPMENTS IN RISK ASSESSMENT Edited by John Monahan and Henry J. Steadman, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, 324 pp., \$34.95.

Reviewed by Stewart Levine, MD

The editors of this multiauthored book are two of the world's leading researchers in the prediction of violent behavior. The interest in this field has steadily grown in recent years, not only from psychiatry, but also from within the scope of law, politics, and the general public. Drs. Monahan and Steadman have put together this volume to examine the past research in this field and where it has failed and from that, propose new approaches to the study of the risk assessment of violence. Their thinking is that in the past, risk factors for violence have been studied without sound reference to the theories of mental disorder or violence.

Their first chapter, entitled "Toward a Rejuvenation of Risk Assessment Research" outlines what the authors feel have been the major problems in violence prediction research. The authors look at predictor and criteria variables of violent behavior, subject sampling, and synchronization of research efforts as areas that can be ameliorated. Their discussion of these problems and potential solutions are clearly stated, but as with much of this volume, it is meant more for the researcher than for the clinical psychiatrist. It is this chapter that sets the framework for the rest of the book.

There are three main sections to this volume covering the major areas of risk assessment. Within these sections, many contributors have written about their own studies and have reviewed the lit-

erature. Some studies are being presented for the first time.

The first section focuses on dispositional risk factors including anger, impulsiveness and aggression, and psychopathy. As a whole, this section describes new or improved instruments of research as well as a review the literature in each area. As throughout this volume, there is a chance to understand the thinking behind the methodology that has been implemented. A good example of this is Hart, Hare, and Forth's description of the development of the "Psychopathology Checklist: Screening Version" (PCL:SV), which is based on their well-known Psychopathology checklist. They explain the development of this instrument, which is a shortened version of the original PCL, easily administered and meant for both forensic and civil settings. Parts of this section, though, might be too detailed for the nonresearcher, owing to emphasis on methodology and sophisticated statistical analyses.

The second section looks at the clinical risk factors for violence. There are five well-written chapters in this section. Two very interesting chapters present material on the analyses of community responses to study the relationship between mental disorder, substance abuse, and violence. Jeffrey Swanson presents his analyses of data from the Epidemiologic Catchment Area (ECA) study, finding mental disorder and substance abuse as significant risk factors for violence. Bruce Link and Charlotte Ann Stueve present their study of responses of community residents to a standardized

Book Reviews

interview, examining which specific psychotic symptoms are associated with violence. The other chapters in this section include a discussion of the Maudsley Assessment of Delusions Schedule and its use to examine the association between delusions and violence, a chapter reviewing the literature on the relationship between hallucinations and violence, and another reviewing research on personality disorders and violence. In all of these chapters, the review of the literature is carefully examined, well explained, and fully referenced.

The third section looks at the historical and contextual factors in the assessment of violence. Deidre Klassen and William O'Conner examine the literature and suggest implications for future research regarding such factors as modeling, parental supervision, and cognition. Sue Estroff and Catherine Zimmer present new and fascinating work concerning the effects of an individual's social network and supports on the risk for violence.

The last chapter of this volume is by Monahan, Steadman, and colleagues from the MacArthur Foundation group on risk assessment. They present their thinking on the design of a research project in which many of the past problems in methodology would be abated and in which the most important risk factors would be studied. Their conclusions are presented in a clear and precise manner, incorporating much of what has been presented in this volume. The authors' ability to present this complex material in such an easy-to-understand style is admirable.

This book is essential for all those who are interested in the study of risk assessment in violence. It is particularly important for the researcher in this area, owing to its emphasis on the development of methodology in many of its chapters. For the clinician who must make violence assessments it is important reading as well, for within this volume are presented the most important and recent developments in the field.