

## Book Review

**RAPE: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES: CRIMINAL PROFILES, FALSE REPORTS AND FALSE MEMORIES.** By John M. Macdonald. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1995. 205 pp. \$34.95 (paperback), \$56.95 (cloth-bound).

Reviewed by Maria C. P. Haine, MD

This book delivers exactly what the title promises: a presentation of controversial issues involved in the subject of rape. The author discusses a broad spectrum of subjects, which include rapist profiles, sexual homicide, date rape, rape of children, and judicial and treatment issues. The extent of coverage of each controversial issue varies. Information used in these discussions largely comes from the author's personal interviews with as many as two hundred sex offenders. In addition, the author cites current periodicals and popular literature. Some of the discussions refer to systematic, scientific research. Works which were not used directly in the text are referenced following each chapter to offer the reader a more extensive review of the literature.

The major portion of the text is dedicated to case vignettes that are illustrative of relevant issues. The author's style is bold and direct. Colorful language and graphic descriptions are captivating as well as memorable. He presents a very wide range of victim and offender experiences. The author succeeds in present-

ing an "up close and personal" perspective through the eyes of those most directly involved. This enhanced proximity to human experiences, emotions, and perceptions magnifies the controversy behind each issue. Objective, impersonal resolutions to the controversies are not easily reached by the reader. Difficulty in resolution of issues can be a matter of ethics, legalities, insufficient scientific knowledge, and social prejudices.

The author devotes two of the longest chapters to false reports of rape in adult and child victims. He offers an extensive review of motives for making a false accusation of rape. Clues that may help investigators determine the veracity of a rape charge are also discussed. These clues include lies told by the alleged victim, discrepancies between the statements of the victim and those of witnesses, and inconsistencies between reported accounts and physical evidence. When young children are involved, suggestive and overly aggressive interviewing techniques by investigators can yield false answers. The McMartin Pre-School and Wee Care Nursery School cases are offered as poignant examples of misinformation obtained from biased interviews, which resulted in financial hardship, legal consequences, and emotional trauma for those involved. The controversial issues of repression and false memories are also presented in light of adverse consequences for involved parties.

Throughout the text, the author mentions and describes investigative techniques and technology such as interviewing techniques, application of the polygraph, use of sodium amytal, appli-

cation of the computer voice stress analyzer, and the medical examination of victims. During these discussions a third perspective to rape is presented—that of the law enforcement agent, who has the difficult tasks not only of investigating rape, but also preventing it. Although application of criminal profiling has been helpful in these tasks, it is still considered a controversial tool.

*Rape: Controversial Issues: Criminal Profiles, Date Rape, False Reports and False Memories* presents a cornucopia of difficult issues pertaining to this crime.

The extent to which controversial topics are covered varies greatly. The sources used in each discussion range from individual accounts of anonymous interviewees to citation of published research studies, varying in magnitude and statistical power. The author meets his objectives of stating the issues and of raising many interesting questions. Answers to the questions are not provided, nor are they meant to be. This work is provocative reading for the general mental health practitioner or law enforcement agent interested in sexual crimes.