

New review in  
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**LAISSEZ FAIRE BOOKS**

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE?**

**The Legal System vs.  
 Individual Responsibility**

*ed. by Robert James Bidinotto*

*reviewed by David M. Brown*

Bidinotto has gone all out to gather many of the most readable and informed discussions of The Crime Problem now available.

Much commentary on the criminal justice system gets bogged down in emotional rhetoric or meaningless statistics. By contrast, these essays penetrate to the root of the matter, illuminating the principles and cause-and-effect operating in both the life of the individual evil-doer and in society at large. Contributors include Judge Ralph Fine, David Kelley, Stanton Samenow, Lee Coleman, Morgan Reynolds, and David Walter.

The editor's own deeply philosophical yet journalistically thorough analyses frame those of the other contributors. Bidinotto argues cogently against the social determinism of what he calls "the excuse making industry," stressing that no matter what social factors may aid and abet crime, criminals are volitional agents who must be regarded as self-responsible and treated accordingly. He also sets forth a retributive theory of justice that challenges not only liberal but also conservative and libertarian conceptions of appropriate punishment. No wonder psychologist Nathaniel Branden describes *Criminal Justice?* as "the most intelligent discussion of the principle of self-responsibility, as applied to criminals, I have ever read."

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*David M. Brown is a former managing editor of Laissez Faire Books.*

