

represent a wide range of respondents is important, so too is choosing them based on the participants' ability to fully articulate and color their stories. By relaying the details of the troublesome field recruiter and their own methodological calculus, the authors connect with the reader. They not only take us into the retaliatory world of persistent street offenders but also into the daily life and troubles of those engaged in qualitative data collection and research on violent crime. Elaborating on these issues increases the book's value as an academic resource because it can be used as an aid in understanding qualitative research methods.

The authors' writing style, insights, and analyses coupled with offenders' personal accounts successfully bring the reader into the criminal underworld so that we can understand the pressures and constraints associated with street vengeance. Those interested in qualitative criminology will find it a valuable resource.

Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves, by **Arnold Arluke**. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006. 221 pp. \$22.95 paper. ISBN: 1592134726.

LESLIE IRVINE
University of Colorado
 irvinel@colorado.edu

As I began reading *Just a Dog*, two incidents of animal cruelty occurred near my home. In one, someone stole a six-month-old pit bull puppy from a backyard, expertly butchered it, and returned the parts to the yard. In the other, a driver stopped to check on a yellow Labrador Retriever lying at the side of a highway. Someone had tied the dog to a sand-filled gas can and peppered his head with buckshot. The dog survived but lost the use of one eye.

People reacted with shock and horror. What kind of psychopaths would do this? What kind of monsters must these people be? These are the questions most of us ask about animal cruelty. They are certainly the questions that law enforcement and mental health professionals ask. However, by attempting to probe the mind of the animal abuser, these questions "have missed something larger and

perhaps more important than the abuser's personality—they have missed the abuser's social context" (p. 56).

Arnold Arluke has been asking about the social context of animal cruelty for over a decade. He has been asking how we define some acts as cruel but others, just as brutal, we define in neutral terms. Through courageous research, Arluke set aside his judgment to explore how abusers see their behavior. He has given us a sociological understanding of animal abuse that recognizes the situational quality of cruelty and its ability to shape identity.

In the research for *Just a Dog*, Arluke studied five groups of people whose lives intersect with animal abuse. His research among humane law enforcement agents reveals the inconsistencies in what qualifies as cruelty and what should be done about it. Citizens often see flagrant offenses where nothing prosecutable exists. When agents do take offenders to court, judges often dismiss charges or refuse cases altogether. In trying to educate people about the humane treatment of animals, agents risk being seen as activists, a characterization that fits some agents but not the majority. This leaves agents wondering about the value of what they do.

When animal cruelty comes to public attention, it often has a happy ending. The "marketers" of cruelty—the media affairs and development staff of humane organizations—exploit such cases for fund-raising purposes. Arluke examined how marketers determine which cases are disturbing enough to prompt donations but not so bad that donors will not open their mail. By shaping what will elicit sympathy and donations, marketers use cruelty to solidify support for animals and the mission of their organizations.

The egregious cruelty depicted in fund raising is not the most common kind. To investigate "ordinary" cruelty, Arluke interviewed college students who acknowledged previously harming or killing animals. Arluke compares adolescent animal abuse to other forms of "dirty play" (Fine 1986) that children use to experiment with adulthood. While taking care not to dismiss abuse as "just a phase," Arluke maintains that cruelty instructs kids how to keep secrets, establish boundaries, and acquire adult-like knowledge. Years later, students' disgrace over their actions indicates leaving the adolescent self be-

hind. Despite acknowledging that they had engaged in animal abuse, they did not identify themselves in terms of what they had done to animals.

The same is not true for hoarders, people who have far more than the usual number of animals and often severely neglect them. Everything in a hoarder's life revolves around the identity of having a mission to help animals. When cases appear in the media, reports emphasize filthy living conditions, reclusive behavior, and indications of mental illness. Hoarders themselves have no voice. When Arluke gave them the chance to define themselves and their behavior, hoarders see themselves as saviors, not abusers, of animals. They explain the squalor around them as the sacrifice of cleanliness to allow the animals more freedom. They explain reclusive behavior as replacing human friendships with the company of animals when humans stop coming around. Where others see cruelty and neglect, hoarders see only good intentions.

Workers in animal shelters also negotiate their identities through shifting definitions of cruelty. Since the founding of the first shelters, workers at various facilities have shared an occupational identity. Euthanasia was an accepted, albeit regrettable, way of addressing the problem of unwanted animals. All shelter workers coped with a "caring-killing paradox" (Arluke 1994), reconciling a deep commitment to animal welfare with the reality of their jobs. However, the recent rise of "no-kill" shelters has created a rift among workers and within the sheltering community. No-kill workers portray others as cruel for euthanizing, while no-killers are accused of being cruel for "warehousing" unadoptable animals.

In *Just a Dog*, Arnold Arluke uses cruelty to raise questions about what it means to be human. He also adds to our understanding of the complex and conflicting ways we humans regard other animals.

References

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- Fine, Gary Alan. 1986. "The Dirty Play of Little Boys." *Society* 24:63–67.

Immigration and Crime: Race, Ethnicity, and Violence, edited by **Ramiro Martinez, Jr.** and **Abel Valenzuela, Jr.** New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006. 238 pp. \$22.00 paper. ISBN: 0814757057.

CHARIS E. KUBRIN
George Washington University
charisk@gwu.edu

Immigration and Crime, edited by Ramiro Martinez Jr. and Abel Valenzuela Jr., is a much welcomed addition to the field. In the spirit of true integration, Martinez and Valenzuela have assembled a group of diverse criminologists and sociologists to examine immigration and crime. Perhaps most importantly, a collection of works on this topic is long overdue. The role of immigration in the race/ethnicity-crime link is crucial but has not been given sufficient attention in the literature. One contributor notes there are 10 times as many articles on race and crime as there are on immigration and crime. At the same time, the public is convinced that immigration and crime go hand and hand. In 2000, the General Social Survey interviewed a nationally representative sample of adults and asked whether "more immigrants cause higher crime rates"; 25% said this was "very likely" and another 48% said this was "somewhat likely." This widely-held sentiment exists despite the fact that historically, immigrants have been *less* involved in crime than native-born residents. Apart from any other reason, this book is valuable for challenging common stereotypes of immigrant criminality.

Findings from the chapters reinforce the idea that immigrants are not more crime prone. As just one example, Ruben Rumbaut and colleagues document that nationally, the incarceration rate among the native-born is four times that of the foreign-born. Apart from debunking myths, there are at least two significant points collectively made by the chapters. First, new research on immigration and crime is crucial given there is a clear distinction between previous waves of immigration and what is considered the new era of immigration. Changes are apparent, for example, in settlement patterns. In the early 1900s, over 20% of immigrants settled in rural areas compared to today, where only