

**BOOK REVIEW: *TWINS AND  
DEVIANCE: LAW, CRIME, SEX,  
SOCIETY, AND FAMILY*, BY CARMEN  
CUSACK, JD, PHD**

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In *Twins and Deviance: Law, Crime, Sex, Society, and Family*, author Carmen Cusack, JD, PhD, states, “Twins deviate from the norm the moment that they are conceived.”<sup>2</sup> As a result, she extensively explores what it is to be a twin, or parents, family members, friends, teachers, or acquaintances of twins, living in a world dominated by singletons. Cusack introduces readers to the complexity surrounding popular scientific and societal definitions of twins, including when the word describes a cellular division or a familial relationship. She refers them to centuries of mythical, historical, romanticized, and fanaticized notions propelled by human fascination with twins’

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<sup>2</sup> Carmen M. Cusack, *Twins and Deviance*, 1 (2016).

*otherness*, where sometimes twins appear as heroes. Nonetheless, society often sees twins “as being divided halves,” who “deviate from societal norms.”<sup>3</sup> Even when their behavior conforms to personal and family role models set on societal standards for singletons.

Cusack also introduces readers to the dark world of twins, and pornography, and criminality, proposing that societal fantasies about twins may be normal, but may also be aberrant. She explores problems unique to twins when waging a criminal defense. For instance, “DNA evidence may be used to convict an identical twin for a crime committed by a twin.”<sup>4</sup> Cusack suggests “the justice system is increasingly challenged by radicalization of reproduction...and [t]wins’ welfare may be compromised in cases where science is more advanced than current law.”<sup>5</sup> In Chapter Three, “The Twins,” she concludes “Twins are frail due to shared gestational environments, and ... may necessitate

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 63.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 168.

additional care and support from conception through adulthood.”<sup>6</sup>

Most importantly, Cusack exhaustively informs readers to the social impact the “twin” label carries. *Twins and Deviance: Law, Crime, Sex, Society, and Family* “analyzes how the word’s meaning influences perception and behavior within families, healthcare, and justice systems, religion, and society.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 55.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 2.