

**BOOK REVIEW: *ILLICIT SEX WITHIN
THE JUSTICE SYSTEM* BY CARMEN
M. CUSACK**

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Religion, tradition, sex, laws, and the justice system. Carmen M. Cusack, Ph.D., J.D., in *Illicit Sex Within the Justice System*, paints a detailed mural of how these four categories blend in, sometimes seamlessly, with each other. Cusack's book begins with an exploration of how laws are created by society's standards and are based off tradition and religion; both of which have been intertwined through time. She discusses that although times and society have changed, laws are not adapting and, in turn, are affecting the justice system.

Cusack's book highlights how morality comes from tradition, the backbone to the laws currently set in place. Although things have changed, some laws remain, as they are heavily saturated by morality and tradition. She specifically addresses

the role sex has played throughout time and place. She describes how traditions have progressed, but, yet the laws and the justice system have struggled to keep up. Because of society adopting certain norms, it is experiencing some negative effects from certain old-school mentalities. Cusack's book explains that the justice system's inability to adapt, to reflect the current times, has led to moral deviance, specifically sexual deviance, which has disoriented society's moral compass.

A timely, yet, still controversial topic, this book adds descriptive examples of how sex is viewed and used on all sides of the justice system. Cusack begins by laying out a foundation and discussing the essential role religion and tradition played (and still plays) in legislating and regulating. She describes both how the justice system is reliant on power and how power is achieved through many things, but particularly sex. She explains how sex is a commonly used tool and how morality has been used to suppress some while helping others advance. Cusack lays out vivid examples of this

throughout the justice system—from prisoners to judges, from police officers to federal agents. She elaborates on how civilians and officials both react to power and sex, leading to possible deviant behavior and leadership.

Cusack's book presents the urgency to end hypocrisy. Actions deemed to be immoral and/or illegal are being punished by those with authority. Yet, those with authority are also violators of such immoral and/or illegal acts. One broad example, which Cusack returns to frequently in her book, is adultery. In some states, adultery is illegal, yet, some of the authoritative officials enforcing, punishing, policing, or enacting such laws have been a party to said crime. Cusack further examines and expands on the negative effects this double standard causes. From victims of domestic violence not speaking up because of fear of being caught breaking the law to the population's loss of faith in the system or government.

Although Cusack suggests that laws and the justice system adapt to the times, she acknowledges

that society's moral compass has been cracked and needs to be replaced. Without certain laws set in place to protect women, men, homosexuals, etc., society will continue to morally decay. Cusack suggests that society's morals have evolved and the justice system is falling behind. Thus, the justice system is failing society, causing distrust, and leading to moral deviance. She holds that for society to function there must be trust in the justice system, which must lead by example.

Cusack's book is not for the faint of heart or the close-minded. It is a book begging for change; change that is necessary to appreciate each other's individuality without fear, for government to regain society's trust, and for our moral compass to be reset. Cusack, so wisely, proposes interaction between the justice system's members with authoritative power (e.g., officials and agents) and the civilian world to understand each other, identify, and come to terms with the new norm.