



No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison (Northeastern Series on Gender, Crime, and Law)

Lori B. Girshick

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Incarcerated women in the United States are largely an invisible population because of their small numbers, their involvement in less violent and serious offenses, and their neglect by most criminologists. Yet all too often prison has become a dumping ground for women who lack options for self-support, or who need drug treatment, job training, or a haven from battering.

This work draws on the life stories of forty women inmates at a minimum security prison in North Carolina. It explores their lives before imprisonment, enabling the reader to understand their incarceration within the context of childhood and adolescent experiences, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, low education levels, and poor work histories. Lori B. Girshick relates the prisoners' views of doing time, the criminal justice system, and their own rehabilitation. She also interviews family members, friends, and social service providers to show how support networks function or fail.

Girshick argues convincingly that the treatment of women in society creates circumstances that lead some of them to break the law, and she makes specific recommendations for policies that address the need for social change and for community programs designed to deter crime.

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