



# Hard Lessons: Reflections on Governance and Crime Control in Late Modernity (Advances in Criminology)

*By Gordon Tait*



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The essays in this engaging book catalogue a wide and varied range of instances where 'things go wrong' in the practices of criminal justice. The contributions document instances where laws, policies and practices have produced unintended consequences of the most deleterious kind, drawing attention to the prison system, 'boot camps', detention centres and specific penal policies such as the 'short, sharp shock', parental penalty and 'three strikes and you're out'. Also examined are policing practices such as 'zero tolerance', 'saturation policing' and punitive laws in the areas of drug use, sex offences and prostitution. It is demonstrated that in each of these cases the objectives of government resulted in the creation of new and unforeseen problems requiring further reform of the criminal justice system. This is a familiar tale characteristic of the modernist impulses of contemporary government based on the notion that crime can be identified, managed and controlled through the application and administration of institutionalised polices and practices. The present culture of 'high crime' - despite a top-heavy apparatus of crime control - appears to indicate the very opposite.



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