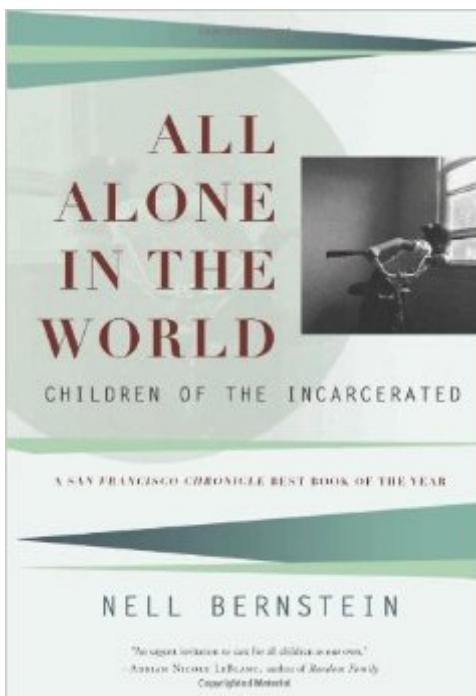


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All Alone In The World: Children Of The Incarcerated



Synopsis

In this "moving condemnation of the U.S. penal system and its effect on families" (Parentsâ™ Press), award-winning journalist Nell Bernstein takes an intimate look at parents and childrenâ over two million of themâ torn apart by our current incarceration policy. Described as "meticulously reported and sensitively written" by Salon, the book is "brimming with compelling case studies and recommendations for change" (Orlando Sentinel); Our Weekly Los Angeles calls it "a must-read for lawmakers as well as for lawbreakers."

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Customer Reviews

Its always easy to blame individuals for society's ills, it's been the American way for at least in the second half of the 20th Century. Maybe that is not always the case. Maybe our complex country -- especially its justice system -- is a lot more nuanced. Author Bernstein offers a glimpse into some truly horrifying machinations that go on in today's America, all in the name of protecting our communities. Some 2.4 million children nationwide have a parent behind bars. That is more the entire population of Denver, Colorado and its six-county suburbs. Offering intimate portraits of a numerous kids who are affected by the mass incarceration of non-violent felons in the 90s, she then connects the dots to show that through community neglect, governmental policy and condemnation by self-righteous citizens, we are neglecting our own. All is not bleak in Bernstein's world though, the resilience of many of the spotlighted kids is dramatic and emotional and she showcases some efforts and individuals (including cops) that are emerging to help change this social abomination.

Another way to look at the problem is to ask ourselves when a huge number of our country's youngest members - more than the population of a major metro area - are affected by a horrible problem not of their making, how can this be only their burden to bear? Now is time for us to apply the precept of reaching out to and helping "the least of these brothers of mine." And "All Alone in the World" is call to action.

Important, compelling, and sad book about the millions of children who have parents in prisons ("A six-year-old crouches behind his bed as armed strangers ransack his home, breaking through floorboards and throwing his parents to the ground. Downstairs, two police cars wait: one for his parents, one for him...."). Nell Bernstein and Soros Foundation deserve our thanks, and these children deserve our support. Ari Kohn

The solid if sad truth of what it is really like having a parent arrested and your life disrupted. Honestly and professionally told. I would recommend for teachers and school counselors because these children are in your school no matter where you are located. The more you understand the more you can quietly support the children.

This is a great read! I have to read this book for my masters program for a parental incarceration class that I'm taking. It is SO relevant and addresses the issue from a perspective you may not be familiar with. Brilliant.

The SF Chronicle says it better than I could so I am pasting part of their review below:"Chapter by chapter, Bernstein takes us through each lamentable phase of the incarceration cycle, from arrest to sentencing, to visitations and foster care and finally re-entry. She interviews scores of experts -- police officers, criminologists, sociologists and dedicated service providers, many of them reformed offenders who would never have been released from prison had they committed their crimes today. But Bernstein...derives her best expert testimony from the families themselves, whom she treats not as victims of an unjust system but rather as experts and resources, the best available analysts of their own experience and needs.Bernstein ... lays out 18 policy suggestions [in her conclusion]. Most of them are pure common sense -- remove financial barriers to communication (like the hiked-up fee for collect calls from jail), keep prisoners near their families so they can receive visits, and of course revisit our failed drug policies. What her suggestions have in common, besides being relatively easy (and cheap) to implement, is that they are focused on the basic premise that crime is

reduced by keeping families together, not ripping them apart. In terms of elegance, breadth and persuasiveness, "All Alone in the World" deserves to be placed alongside other classics of the genre such as Jonathan Kozol's "Savage Inequalities," Alex Kotlowitz's "There Are No Children Here" and Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's "Random Family." But to praise the book's considerable literary or sociological merit seems beside the point. This book belongs not only on shelves but also in the hands of judges and lawmakers. "

It was my honor to have read this book. Somehow she captures perfectly the trauma of a young child left in the wake of her parent's arrest and subsequent incarceration. You cannot read this book without a heavy pang in your heart for these children, but beyond that she is able to make you feel for the convicts when upon their release they are left stifled by an incredible lack of options.

This book was very well written. It is amazing how dysfunctional our system is when it comes to taking care of our children. This book is very informative and folks that work with children whose parents are incarcerated, or folks that work in law enforcement would benefit from reading this. I read this book for a graduate class at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and I also work in the field.

We have failed to measure the true cost of our policy of incarcerating offenders and Nell Bernstein describes the costs that we have yet to pay. The damage done to a whole generation of young people who have grown up without their incarcerated parents are coming of age, and we need to recognize and address the problems that the punishment policy has caused. Ms. Bernstein has introduced us to these children and the sadness that they will carry for the rest of their lives. She makes us care. She has also given us a well researched review of the system and the problems that have been created by society as well as making suggestions on how to prevent or diminish the damage that we are doing. A must read for anyone who cares about the health of our society.

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