



Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row

Forrest Stuart

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In his first year working in Los Angeles's Skid Row, Forrest Stuart was stopped on the street by police fourteen times. Usually for doing little more than standing there.

Juliette, a woman he met during that time, has been stopped by police well over one hundred times, arrested upward of sixty times, and has given up more than a year of her life serving week-long jail sentences. Her most common crime? Simply sitting on the sidewalk—an arrestable offense in LA.

Why? What purpose did those arrests serve, for society or for Juliette? How did we reach a point where we've cut support for our poorest citizens, yet are spending ever more on policing and prisons? That's the complicated, maddening story that Stuart tells in *Down, Out and Under Arrest*, a close-up look at the hows and whys of policing poverty in the contemporary United States. What emerges from Stuart's years of fieldwork—not only with Skid Row residents, but with the police charged with managing them—is a tragedy built on mistakes and misplaced priorities more than on heroes and villains. He reveals a situation where a lot of people on both sides of this issue are genuinely trying to do the right thing, yet often come up short. Sometimes, in ways that do serious harm.

At a time when distrust between police and the residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods has never been higher, Stuart's book helps us see where we've gone wrong, and what steps we could take to begin to change the lives of our poorest citizens—and ultimately our society itself—for the better.

Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row Details

Date : Published August 2nd 2016 by University of Chicago Press

ISBN : 9780226370811

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Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Sociology, History, Mystery, Crime, Law

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From Reader Review Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row for online ebook

Courtney says

"If we can be brave enough to put faith in our lowliest neighbors, we can build this future together. "

This book had me thinking about my time working in a homeless shelter and whether the work we did was truly benefiting those in the shelter. Combining stories of residents of Skid Row, police, and local community organizations, this book provides great insight into how we treat the poor and why. Although it took some time to get into, this book was very good and an easy read.

Joseph Carano says

Won a copy on Goodreads. This is a sociological study of the culture of skid row. It examines the life of the residents lives and struggles to survive. The police and their tactics are under attack in this study by the author, Forrest Stuart, though he claims that was not his original intention. Good writing, but I felt it was sort of a smear job on a Los Angeles government that wants to elevate the down trodden to a better place in society. Bleeding liberals will agree with the author, I do not.

Alisa says

Great read for anyone working in the field of homelessness services.

Genevieve says

Very interesting story of policing and the police on Skid Row, in Downtown Los Angeles. Stuart writes about the period of time during which the LAPD were implementing the Safe Cities Initiative, and residents of Skid Row found themselves heavily policed by "therapeutic policing." This, Stuart argues (convincingly), is the point at which punitiveness and the desire for rehabilitation come together, but with fairly disastrous consequences.

Stuart makes some of his research subjects into characters, who help drive the book forward. These characters, Stuart's thoughtful analysis of circumstances, and his willingness to engage both with police and community members makes this an important book for anyone interested in how our country deals with poverty.

Eric says

The best introduction to the internal politics, history and policing of LA's Skid Row I've yet found (if you

have suggestions for others, let me know!). Stuart undertakes an ethnography of Skid Row from the point of view of the people who live there and the police who run it, arguing that the establishment of the city's mega-shelters (all located in the 50 block radius), liberal politics and LAPD reforms have given rise to a "therapeutic" model of policing that is actually more punitive than previous "zero tolerance" models. Why? Because, as part of their duties, police in the area are drafted into becoming last-resort social workers and encouraged to shepherd Skid Row denizens toward the shelter system using every method at their disposal. The approach has given rise, Stuart argues, to a whole range of responses from the community as they seek to avoid unwanted attention, which he chronicles brilliantly.
