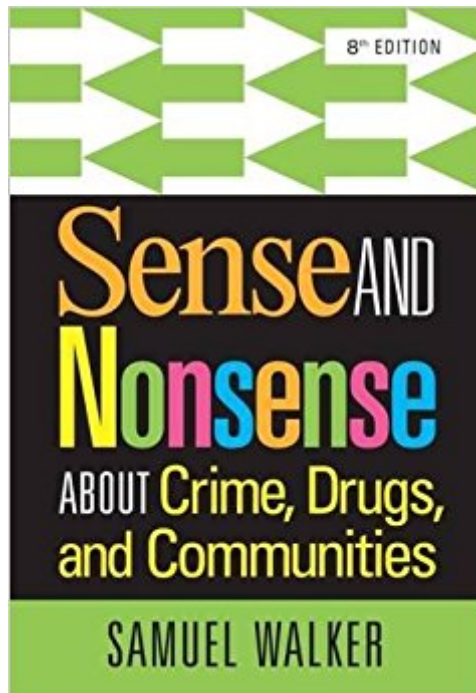




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# Sense And Nonsense About Crime, Drugs, And Communities



## Synopsis

Samuel Walker's *SENSE AND NONSENSE ABOUT CRIME, DRUGS, AND COMMUNITIES* was one of the first books to challenge common misconceptions about crime, and the new Eighth Edition remains uniquely effective at doing so. Described as a "masterful critique" of American policies on everything from crime control, to guns, to drugs, this incisive book cuts through popular myths and political rhetoric while emphasizing current research and proven practice. The result is a lucid, research-based work that clearly reveals what does not work in crime policy while identifying shared characteristics of successful approaches, including carefully defined, narrowly focused, problem-oriented programs in policing and prosecution. This engaging text captures the full complexity of the administration of justice while providing readers with a clear sense of its key principles and general patterns.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Samuel Walker is Professor Emeritus of Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska, Omaha, where he taught for 31 years before retiring in 2005. He is the author of 13 books on policing, criminal justice history and policy, and civil liberties. His current research involves police accountability, focusing primarily on citizen oversight of the police and police Early Intervention Systems (EIS). Originally trained as a historian, he is completing a book on U.S. presidents and civil liberties. His personal website, with information on police accountability is: <http://samuelwalker.net>.

One would not think it necessary to spend nearly \$150.00 for a book that dispels popular myths

about crime, drugs, and communities. But many concerned with such issues live in suburbia, never visiting high crime areas and knowing little about the realities of the streets and hoods. I have lived in nearly crime free suburbia; right now I live on the edge of the countryside with whitetail deer visiting the yard most evenings. But I also lived in South Central Los Angeles and was there during the Rodney King riots. Flames, smoke, and murder were up-close and personal during that time. It should not be necessary to shift through pounds of research studies to know that Propositions Six and Seven (Page xviii) are true. Simply putting more cops on the street will not reduce crime. Faster response time will not produce more arrests or lower the crime rate. Having lived in both suburbia and the hood it is apparent that police activities can have, at best, only very modest positive effects on crime. It should be clear that policing does not cause reduced crime because there are practically no police in low crime areas. Other social factors create low crime rates, not policing. To reduce crime in American hoods it is necessary to determine what factors foster the development of positive personal character and life styles not found among many people living in high crime areas. Some insight might be gained from observing that the following factors are present in high crime areas: large amounts of government spending on welfare and other social programs, prevalent attitudes focused on government dependency, low motivation to strive toward self reliance, and disproportionally high rates of lottery sales. Any effort to dispel our many popular and unfounded myths is a good thing. But I gave this book a 3 rating because Professor Walker is in serious need of studying Chapter 2 of Gary Kleck's Targeting Guns: Firearms and Their Control. In 61 pages Kleck briefly outlines illegitimate academic practices in summarizing research findings. Unfortunately Walker applies many such illegitimate practices in his book. For example, in discussing John Lott's More Guns, Less Crime (page 270) Walker gives equal weight to fifteen reanalyzing studies utilizing Lott and David Mustard's original data plus additional studies using different data sets and methodologies. From these studies Walker concludes, "The result of this intensive research effort is inconclusive." On page 32 Kleck includes a section titled "All studies are created equal": Failing to distinguish technically sound studies from poor ones. This is exactly what Walker does in coming to his conclusion. He reports no soundness analysis of the studies his conclusion is based upon. On the same page he speculates on the more guns/less crime issue supposing that, "Common sense, however, suggests that the availability of more guns at a mass shooting incident in a public area (say, a shopping mall or theater) would likely result in more deaths. In discussing so-called 'stand your ground' laws (page 272) Walker's Proposition 26 is based on speculation also. "Laws designed to allow more

people to carry guns and laws that allow them to use their guns in a greater range of circumstances are more likely to increase rather than reduce homicides. On page 37 Kleck discusses Using speculation to rebut empirical evidence. There, of course, is no empirical evidence to support either of these speculations. Not wanting to belabor the point, Walker violates other academic standards discussed by Kleck. It seems possible Professor Walker is unaware of standards for summarizing research studies. Kleck is a criminologist and applies empirical research standards in his daily work. Walker's academic background is in history in which empirical research-based standards and practices do not apply. Dr. Joseph L. Bass

Really enjoyed this book. Provides a lot of insight on both sides of the aisle. Gives stances on how liberals and conservative thinking can be wrong, and gives clear insight on what works and does not work. Very easy to read and provided clear statements on the entire stance after every argument. Best chapter was about gun control!

One of my favorite books I ever had to get for class! Very interesting to read if you are into criminal justice!

Course taken at Arizona State University, Good course book.

Unfortunately, this book contained very obviously biased information. It was difficult to read when it seemed the author had a clear opinion that he seemed to be intent on making versus presenting solely factual information throughout. Would not read again or recommend, feel it was a waste of time and money.

Very good textbook. Like the "propositions" Definitely helps to understand what policies have not worked and why. Helps to understand that law enforcement should move toward education to better policy options.

Text book that I needed for school. Relevant to the class. Came in great condition.

Loved this text. Will re-purchase for personal use

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