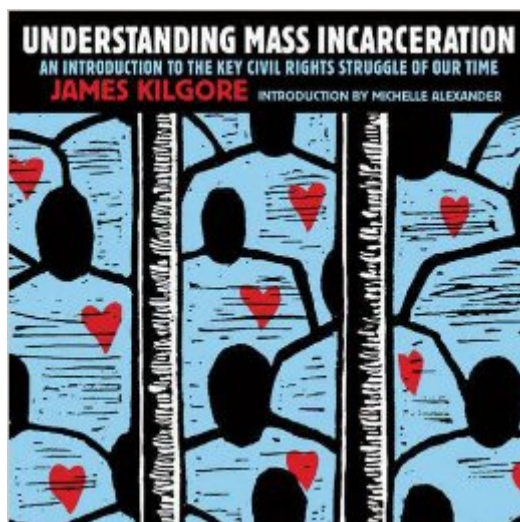# Understanding Mass Incarceration: A People's Guide To The Key Civil Rights Struggle Of Our Time

Synopsis

We all know that orange is the new black and mass incarceration is the new Jim Crow, but how much do we actually know about the structure, goals, and impact of our criminal justice system? Understanding Mass Incarceration offers the first comprehensive overview of the incarceration apparatus put in place by the world's largest jailer: the United States.Drawing on a growing body of academic and professional work, Understanding Mass Incarceration describes in plain English the many competing theories of criminal justice "from rehabilitation to retribution, from restorative justice to justice reinvestment. In a lively and accessible style, author James Kilgore illuminates the difference between prisons and jails, probation and parole, laying out key concepts and policies such as the War on Drugs, broken windows policing, three-strikes sentencing, the school-to-prison pipeline, recidivism, and prison privatization. Informed by the crucial lenses of race and gender, he addresses issues typically omitted from the discussion: the rapidly increasing incarceration of women, Latinos, and transgender people; the growing imprisonment of immigrants; and the devastating impact of mass incarceration on communities.Both field guide and primer, Understanding Mass Incarceration will be an essential resource for those engaged in criminal justice activism as well as those new to the subject.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Whether you know nothing about mass incarceration or have an advanced understanding of mass incarceration, this book is for you. Kilgore does a beautiful job of composing this book in a way that is absolutely approachable and could even be a fast read for some. However, don't let this

approachable style fool you. The text is rich with perspective. Kilgore presents the complexity of mass incarceration in a way that is balanced and informative. Yet, the message of this text is not lost. And that message is that mass incarceration is truly the civil rights struggle of our time and it is our urgent responsibility to critically engage with it.

This is a great introduction to mass incarceration. A good overview, a few stories, and enough facts and figures so you are armed with facts, but not so many to bog down the narrative.Kilgore also does a great job exploring the causes of the growth of the system, deconstructing the term "Prison Industrial Complex," and exploring alternatives, including restorative justice, transformative justice, and abolition.Final note: It took me a month to finish this book. During that month I visited 6 prisons, and reading about prisons was not exactly the best way to unwind at the end of a long, emotionally draining day of ..... visiting prisons. But doing so puts the immediacy of the horrors I saw everyday in perfect context. It is a good, quick read.

Kilgore has an amazing talent for gathering and presenting the facts on this important subject. His lucid, economic writing style and the unique formatting of this book kept my attention cover to cover. An important read for every taxpayer who wonders where their tax dollars are going and more so for anyone concerned with judicial justice and incarceration. He writes from the heart and head.

This is an important and useful book that adds to a growing list of books exposing what has become a terrible system of justice in this country. The justice system can't be separated from the problems of the society in general, the lack of opportunity or fairness. Since 1980, tax cuts for the wealthy during Republican administrations have increased the wealth of the top 5% by $15 trillion more than what would have happened normally. 96.3% of federal deficits in the 1950-2009 period came during Republican administrations due to tax cuts and increases in military spending. Shifting income and wealth upward is the other side of taking income and opportunity away from the people at the bottom. Locking people up not only deprives people of their freedom, it also deprives them of their right to vote and participate in the democratic process after they leave prison in most States. There are over 5 million people who are unable to vote because of their criminal history.Midwest Independent Research, mwir-law.blogspot com.

This valuable little book delivers what it promises -- a people's guide to the key civil rights struggle of our time. Since coming across it soon after publication, I have recommended it to dozens of

others and required it for a college course I'm teaching. Students, too, appreciate its accessibility: excellent organization of the topic's various aspects, lots of subheads, personal stories, boxes with anecdotes, sources for facts and figures given in end notes. The book accomplishes several purposes -- a quick read for someone in search of an introduction to how the U.S. became the world's largest prisoner, a source for additional information about specific aspects (the war on drugs, collateral damage to families, privatization, racism inherent in sentencing), plus historical and philosophical perspectives that aid ordinary folks in understanding how we got here: in the mid-70s, the paradigm changed from rehabilitation to retribution. With tragic results. The book ends with solid suggestions for how we, as a nation, can begin to pull ourselves out of a problem that's sapping our economy. Kilgore doesn't dispute the argument that people should be held responsible for destructive and anti-social actions, but argues instead that punishments ought not be so grossly disproportional to the crimes.

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