

SURVIVING INCARCERATION

INSIDE
CANADIAN
PRISONS
ROSE RICCIARDELLI



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Surviving Incarceration

Inside Canadian Prisons

Rose Ricciardelli

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Is prison a humane form of punishment and an effective means of rehabilitation? Are current prison policies, such as shifting resources away from rehabilitation toward housing more offenders, improving the safety and lives of incarcerated populations?

Considering that many Canadians have served time, are currently incarcerated, or may one day be incarcerated—and then released back into society—it is essential for the functioning and betterment of communities that we understand the realities that shape the prison experience for adult male offenders. *Surviving Incarceration* reveals the omnipresent violence in prisons, the heterogeneity of the prisoner population, and the realities that different prisoners navigate in order to survive.

The author draws on interviews with former federal prisoners to show how their criminal convictions, masculinity, and sexuality determined their social status in prison and, in consequence, their potential for victimization. The book outlines the modern “inmate code” that governs prisoner behaviours, the formal controls put forth by the administration, the dynamics that shape sex-offender experiences of incarceration, and the personal growth experiences of many prisoners as they cope with incarceration.

Rose Ricciardelli is an assistant professor at Memorial University. She has published in academic journals such as *Sex Roles*, *Criminal Justice Review*, *Qualitative Sociological Review*, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, and *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. Her research explores prisoner culture, wrongful conviction, desistance, and the coping strategies, gender identity, and risk perception of prisoners and correctional officers.

We are accustomed to the perceived risks associated with prisoners being released but lack sufficient information on the risks of imprisonment and release as experienced by offenders. In a careful and well-crafted account Rose Ricciardelli has brought to the forefront the lived experiences of prisoners and in doing so challenges the data-narratives created by the criminal justice system. In centring on the ways prisoners negotiate their prison time and respond to the pressures of re-entry Dr. Ricciardelli provides us with an informative and insightful perspective on prison life in Canada.

– **Donald G. Evans**, executive editor, *Journal of Community Corrections*; past president of the American Probation and Parole Association and of the International Community Corrections Association

Rose Ricciardelli’s study of Canadian prisoners is one of the best I’ve ever read on the subject of prisons. In the tradition of John Irwin and Donald Clemmer, she provides an excellent update on inmate culture and provides keen insights into the penal environment, which she calls “largely homophobic” and “built on power relationships with aggression and violence presented as acceptable platforms to express or enact masculine dominance.” A must-read.

– **Randall G. Shelden**, professor, Criminal Justice Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; author or co-author of several books, including *Girls*, *Delinquency and Juvenile Justice* (4th ed.) with Meda Chesney-Lind.
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