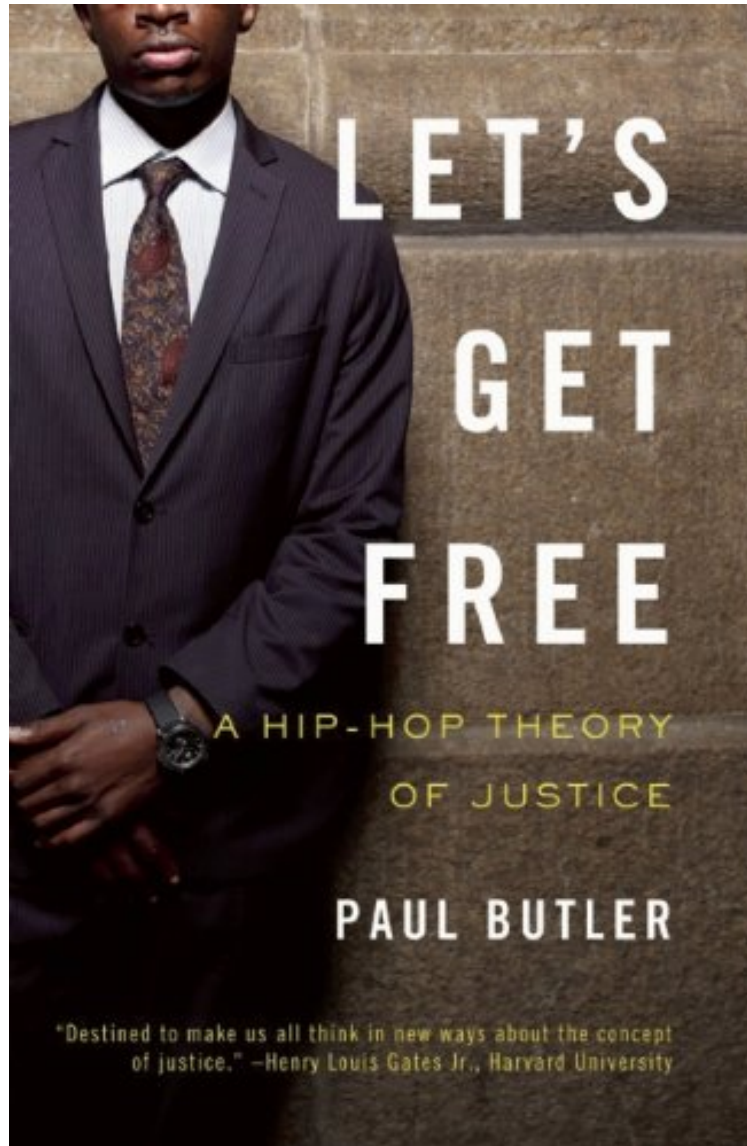


[Get free] Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice

Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice

Paul Butler

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#282679 in Books 2010-06-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.20 x .60 x 5.40l, .55 #File Name: 1595585001224 pages | File size: 74.Mb

Paul Butler : Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Punishment is one possible route, not the goalBy Mona Gustafson AffinitoFortunately C.W. Day has given a detailed review of Butler's book. That helps a lot, because I'm having trouble knowing where to start in expressing appreciation for it. What I want to know is why there are so few reviews? This is important! It should have a wide audience.So why did I give it only four stars rather than five? Because I take

issue with the statement on page 124, "Punishment should be the point of criminal justice, but it should be limited by the impact it has on the entire community." Everything he's said in the book would lead me to assume he has a different goal. As an enthusiast for the Restorative Practices movement, I believe, and I infer that he really believes as well, that punishment may serve a goal of individual and social justice, but is not a goal in itself. That takes us right back to the damage done by the focus on retribution, inflicting pain for pain, which has led us to the "Get tough on crime" thing in the first place. As he so aptly points out, getting "tough on crime" is nothing of the sort. It's "getting tough on criminals," which, as he points out, has the effect of increasing crime. On page 19 he says, "There is a tipping point at which crime increases if too many people are incarcerated. The United States is past this point. If we lock up fewer people, we will be safer." This point is elaborated on p. 25 by his pointing out that "Now, the United States has the largest rate of incarceration in the history of the free world." Interestingly, evidence from sources other than Butler's book suggests that the rate of imprisonment is directly related to the decision to privatize prisons. I recall a friend of mine - a former state administrator of probation - saying at the time, "Just watch. The rate of imprisonment will go up now that private ownership has to fill the beds." Toward the end of his book, Butler reflects on the advantage of alternatives like electronic monitoring. I was interested that he noted that these devices are produced by private enterprise. Given the importance of economics in our culture, perhaps this will be an opportunity to increase the involvement of private enterprise in a positive way - sort of the equivalent of green industry. I learned so much from this book, some of which hit me like, "Of course, I knew that." His summary account of the effects of excessive incarceration makes a lot of sense when elaborated. Here I'd like just to list the points, referring you to his pages 32-33.* The "replacement effect:" the vacancy created by imprisonment gets filled by someone else.* Mass incarceration disrupts families.* It changes the way people think about crime - young men expect that at some point they'll do time, a kind of rite of passage that reduces respect for the law.* It's extremely difficult for a released felon to find employment.* And it's very expensive: (p.34) Sixty billion dollars is the amount that the United States spends on prisons and jails every year. This does not include the costs of police and the courts. Again, in the class of "Of course, I should have known that," (see pages 112-118) "Like other politicians, prosecutors pander to voters. In the majority of jurisdictions, this means promising to get tough on crime, which translates to locking more people up. There are few risks to being overaggressive - even when prosecutors cross the line. Since 1976, approximately 120 people who received death sentences were later found to be innocent. In all these cases, prosecutors were responsible for these wrongful convictions. The number of prosecutors who have been disciplined for these egregious miscarriages of Justice? Zero. By contrast, the line prosecutor who goes against the "get tough" ethos too forcefully not only risks losing her job but also risks causing her boss to lose his. But what was really new to me was the option of Jury Nullification. (p.61) "When a jury disregards the evidence and acquits an otherwise guilty defendant, it has practiced jury nullification. The jury is saying that the law is unfair, either generally or in this particular case. The jury's decision is totally legal - indeed, the practice of jury nullification is a proud part of U.S. constitutional history." I'm trying to avoid getting carried away, but my next-to-the-last point is to refer to his two goals on p. 120. "Let's say we have two goals. First, we seek to reduce incarceration substantially. Our specific goal here is to return the United States to incarcerating "only" 1,750,000 people rather than the current 2.3 million. Our second objective is a major reduction in racial disparity in incarceration. The numerical goal here is to reduce the current eight-to-one black-white disparity to three-to-one, which is closer to the average black-white disparities in other measure of economic and social well-being" Finally, to get personal. One hopes that the disparity won't be decreased by increasing the number of "white" prisoners. I have seen the broad effects on the imprisonment of one (white) prisoner I care about. Having been on medical leave from work for a year in treatment for Hepatitis C, the latter six months of which consisted of treatment with interferon/Rebetol and Trzadone to treat depression caused by the interferon, he had completed the interferon injections but continued the Trzadone and had been back at work for two weeks. On a Sunday afternoon he consumed four beers between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. As he reports, "My last conscious memory was about 5:30. From that point on I was in a chemically induced blackout. My next real memory is coming to in the emergency room in ... and being informed that I had caused a crash that had ended the life of two children." After release from the hospital and three weeks at home, he admitted himself to a hospital, suffering deep depression over the lives he had taken. He was not allowed to communicate to the family his deep grief. [The latter prohibition is, I believe, part of victim protection.] Advised by his lawyer to plead guilty, he was sentenced to 12 years, six for each child. At no point did he do anything but accept full responsibility for his youthful behavior that led to the Hepatitis C or for the accident. On the other hand, the judge was never presented with the information about his medical condition. Nor was the judge aware that he had no priors, confusing his record with that of his son. At a future time, another lawyer prepared a brief making those two things clear. The Judge refused to review it. He has now been in prison since 2005, during which time his marriage has ended in divorce, the son with the priors fell off the wagon, his elderly mother, single and living alone, has suffered major health problems, from open-heart surgery to back surgery to near blindness, and many things in between, rendering her incapable of leaving home on her own. In prison he has become an instructor in the restorative practices course, earned enough credits to be close to an Associates degree, and contributed his knowledge to the prison's computer system. And at his most recent hearing he was denied parole. p.s. He was not allowed to accept the book I

sent him for his birthday, even though it was shrink-wrapped and sent directly from Border's Books. Nor was he allowed to receive a self-addressed stamped envelope from me so he could send me a letter. Yes, I think this is a perfect example of the futility of incarceration. This man is in no way a violent person, trying his best to care for his family from the confines of the prison. There is nothing to be learned about accepting guilt or "going straight." If nothing else, electronic monitoring would make it possible for him to care for his mother. I hope this latter story is acceptable to the author as an example of the points he is making. At the very least, I hope it's clear that I strongly urge that more people read the book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you want to understand questions about addiction and out of proportion sentencing of drug possession crimes, read this book. By E. A. Stowers

This book addresses a question I have had for a long time: Why, with all the might and power of the U.S. has there been hardly a dent made in the war on drugs. When I saw the interview of Paul Butler on C-S[an/Book T.V., I was intrigued by both the views and the research of the author. I thought there would be answers to my questions in his work, and I was not disappointed. The sad truth is that the "fight against drugs" has an underlying purpose, which today is beginning to be openly discussed: the deliberate decimation of a target population through addiction, incarceration (often for the financial benefit of others) destruction of communities, prison release with life penalties that deny jobs, voting rights, ability to meet responsibilities to family and community, and then re-addiction--a vicious circle. Drugs are a multi million dollar business; a stone that kills more than one bird. The truth, however, is finally being exposed. According to the author, hip-hop, which many people don't understand, but may be happy to learn about, has answers that make sense.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. If you want real social change Start Here! By pinkygirl10

I recently saw Paul Butler giving an interview on the Ferguson case. I was very impressed with his ideas about the judicial system and race in this country, and how we've basically become or have been a police state for some time. So I wanted to hear more from him so I looked on to see if he'd written anything, and I found Lets Get Free. What an insightful and inspiring work about real change. The kind of change that regular every day folk can do to make their/our neighborhoods safe. Definitely check it out if you want some practical solutions to everyday social problems. It's refreshing, seriously.

Paul Butler was an ambitious federal prosecutor, a Harvard Law grad who gave up his corporate law salary to fight the good fight until one day he was arrested on the street and charged with a crime he didn't commit. The Volokh Conspiracy calls Butler's account of his trial "the most riveting first chapter I have ever read." In a book Harvard Law professor Charles Ogletree calls "a must read," Butler looks at places where ordinary citizens meet the justice system as jurors, witnesses, and in encounters with the police and explores what "doing the right thing" means in a corrupt system. Since Lets Get Free's publication in spring 2009, Butler has become the go-to person for commentary on criminal justice and race relations: he appeared on ABC News, Good Morning America, and Fox News, published op-eds in the New York Times and other national papers, and is in demand to speak across the country. The paperback edition brings Butler's groundbreaking and highly controversial arguments on jury nullification (voting "not guilty" in drug cases as a form of protest), just saying "no" when the police request your permission to search, and refusing to work inside the system as a snitch or a prosecutor to a whole new audience.

"Useful analyses and original suggestions regarding the debate about how best to incarcerate fewer people . . . a debate that should have begun years ago." #8212 California Lawyer "[A] masterpiece in the literature of American criminal justice." #8212 Bookforum "An intriguing volume . . . the building block for future scholarship and conversations about racial issues affecting real people." #8212 LA Daily Journal "Provides a framework of solutions to a stressed and broken justice system that is in need of reform." #8212 purepolitics.com "A cant-put-it-down call to action from a progressive former prosecutor. Butler's take on controversial topics like snitching and drug legalization is provocative . . . smart and very entertaining." #8212 Danny Glover "A fresh and thought-provoking perspective on the war on drugs, snitches, and whether locking so many people up really makes Americans safer." #8212 Anthony Romero, executive director, American Civil Liberties Union