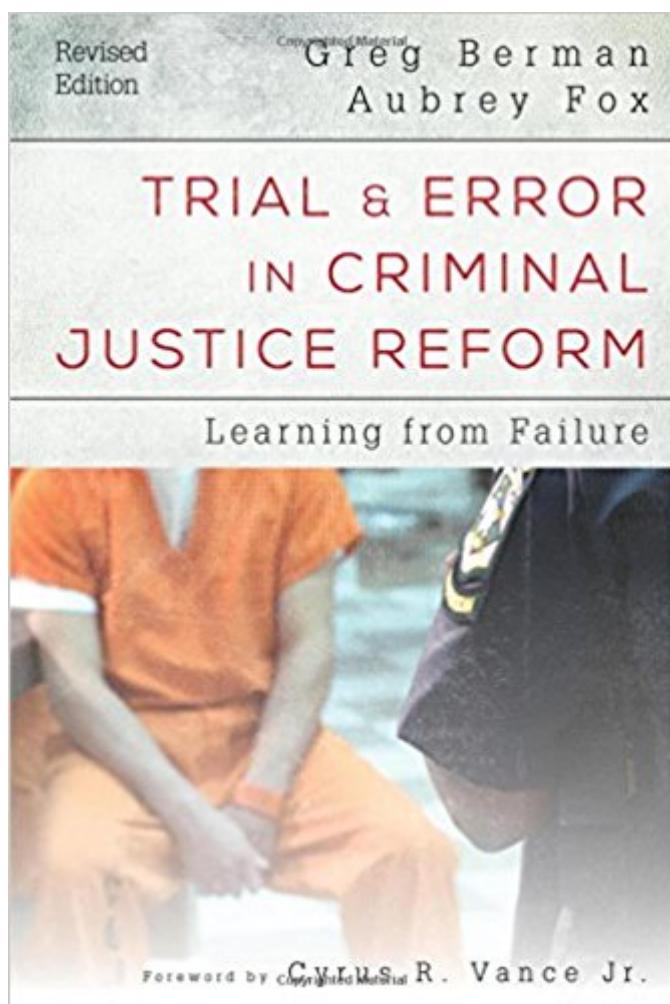


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# Trial And Error In Criminal Justice Reform: Learning From Failure (Urban Institute Press)



## **Synopsis**

In this revised edition of their concise, readable, yet wide-ranging book, Greg Berman and Aubrey Fox tackle a question students and scholars of law, criminology, and political science constantly face: what mistakes have led to the problems that pervade the criminal justice system in the United States? Their goal is to encourage a more forthright dialogue about criminal justice, one that acknowledges that many new initiatives fail and that no one knows for certain how to reduce crime. This revised edition is updated with a new foreword by Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and afterword by Greg Berman.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"The philosopher John Dewey once wrote that understanding things the way they are is the first step in making them different. This book tells us that understanding failure is the first step to creating a fairer and safer community for everyone." (Cyrus Vance, Manhattan District Attorney)

Greg Berman and Aubrey Fox demonstrate the need for experimentation—trial and error—in developing successful problem-solving programs. Their voice stands in sharp contrast to the bombastic cries and exaggerated claims of most so-called reformers.

—Malcolm M. Feeley, Author, *Court Reform on Trial* and *The Process is the Punishment*,

and Claire Sanders Clements Professor Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program, Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California, Berkeley This provocative book charts a promising path for criminal justice reform in this country. I can think of no other book like it, and I urge front-line practitioners, policymakers, and scholars to read it. As the nation faces severe budget cuts, the lessons learned from past failures seem more important than ever. *Joan Petersilia, Adelbert H. Sweet Professor of Law, Stanford University Law School* Peter Drucker once observed that Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times but also hit 714 home runs. We needn't be discouraged by Berman and Fox's findings; in fact, there's probably more to learn by diagnosing and embracing and learning from failure than in thinking we can easily or glibly replicate success. At a time when clarity and transparency and trust are so lacking and so needed in policy and politics, this book can help us all see more clearly the seeds of failure and the ingredients necessary for clear-eyed and sustainable success in criminal justice reform that really works. *Ira A. Jackson, Henry Y. Hwang Dean and Professor of Management, Peter F. Drucker and Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management, Claremont Graduate University* --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Great

great price

Terrible book from a law enforcement perspective. Maybe criminologists will like it. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone who isn't forced to buy it as part of a reading list.

I liked this short readable book primarily because it highlights the research of Joan Petersilia, my criminological theory hero- greater than Wonder Woman. If it is good enough for her, wow, I want to read it. It is only 123 pages long, but it presents in a nutshell the policy blunders that have fertilized mass incarceration (especially California and Connecticut). It should be read by every prisoner, mother of a prisoner, defense lawyer, judge and state legislator. It can be read during one plane flight; is more entertaining than true crime because it tells true case studies. If you are mildly interested in how screwed up criminal justice is and want some hope for redemption, buy and read this book; then pass it on to anyone else who needs to read it.

As someone who has worked in criminal justice internationally for many years, I found this book a

very helpful contribution to the debate. In the criminal justice world we are usually afraid to talk about failure, or when we do, it is done within the context of the blame culture. This book opens up a healthy dialogue - it discusses what failure actually is, and what is its role in the evolution of justice systems. Often, when designing a project, we ask "What does success look like?", but we rarely ask "What do we consider to be failure, and what will we do if it occurs?". The case studies and contextual aspects of this book are especially interesting, both to justice professionals and interested members of the public, and its style is refreshingly clear and lucid. Definitely worth a read whether you are a specialist or just interested in the subject.

All too often books on criminal justice policy are hampered by being divorced from real world practice. This book is different: as the authors have experience of setting up and running innovative projects or pilots they are able to help others navigate the criminal justice landscape credibly. And their advice isn't just applicable in the US, as someone who has worked on British criminal justice policy for a decade, I found the lessons in the book were pertinent and well argued.

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