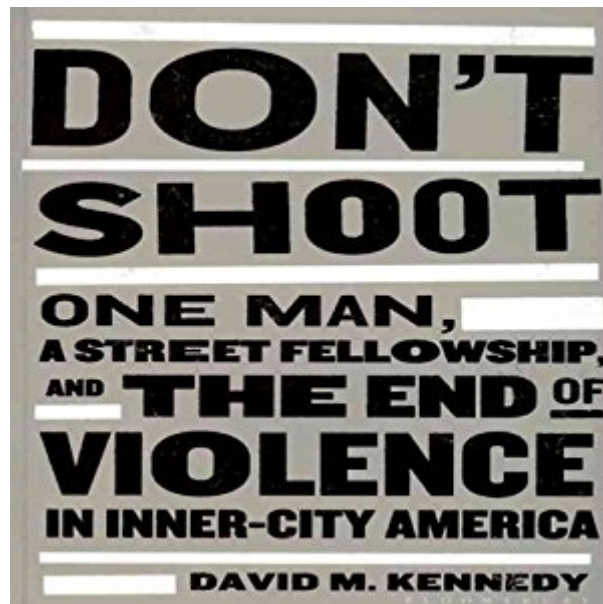


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Don't Shoot: One Man, A Street Fellowship, And The End Of Violence In Inner-City America



Synopsis

Gang- and drug-related inner-city violence, with its attendant epidemic of incarceration, is the defining crime problem in our country. In some neighborhoods in America, one out of every 200 young black men is shot to death every year, and few initiatives of government and law enforcement have made much difference. But when David Kennedy, a self-taught and then-unknown criminologist, engineered the "Boston Miracle" in the mid-1990s, he pointed the way toward what few had imagined: a solution. *Don't Shoot* tells the story of Kennedy's long journey. Riding with beat cops, hanging with gang members, and stoop-sitting with grandmothers, Kennedy found that all parties misunderstood each other, caught in a spiral of racialized anger and distrust. He envisioned an approach in which everyone - gang members, cops, and community members - comes together in what is essentially a huge intervention. Offenders are told that the violence must stop, that even the cops want them to stay alive and out of prison, and that even their families support swift law enforcement if the violence continues. In city after city, the same miracle has followed: Violence plummets, drug markets dry up, and the relationship between the police and the community is reset. This is a landmark book, chronicling a paradigm shift in how we address one of America's most shameful social problems. A riveting, pause-resisting listen, it combines the street *v* of *The Wire*, the social science of *Gang Leader for a Day*, and the moral urgency and personal journey of *Fist Stick Knife Gun*. But unlike anybody else, Kennedy shows that there could be an end in sight.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours and 17 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios for Bloomsbury

Audible.com Release Date: March 9, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00BRPAZ0M

Best Sellers Rank: #387 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Education #814

in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Violence in Society #993 in Books >

Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Education Theory > Reform & Policy

Customer Reviews

This is a strange and important book, one that is exactly right about policy and practice, but that also succeeds as a work of literature---in fact, succeeds because it is a work of literature. This is not a policy wonk's list of talking points; it is experimental non-fiction of a high order. "Don't Shoot" might be the "Seven Pillars of Wisdom" of the War On Crime. Like T.E. Lawrence's idiosyncratic masterpiece, "Don't Shoot" deploys a highly intelligent and unorthodox author/protagonist---a renegade intellectual turned man of action---a strong narrative drive, acute and colorful character sketches, bravura descriptive passages, and an entirely original analysis. Like "Seven Pillars," it is a book about a journey to There: in this case to the crime-blighted minority inner city where the average white American never goes, mainly because the average white American feels pretty confident of what he would find if he did go. But although Kennedy writes as an expert on There, his message home is that There is a socially constructed illusion. Kennedy mobilizes the traditions of the imperial adventure tale to show us what we should have known already: that everyone involved in the inner city crime crisis has more in common with each other than anyone involved has in common with anyone else. He shows that the cops, the shooters, the victims, the families, the communities, all start from the same human place. These are similar people trapped in extreme circumstances, not a radically and permanently different type of person. Kennedy shows how many features of the inner city wasteland of our public discourse---e.g.

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