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Drew Humphries (Editor): Women, Violence, and the Media : Readings in Feminist Criminology. Series: Northeastern Series on Gender, Crime, and Law

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Drew Humphries (Editor): *Women, violence, and the media : readings in feminist criminology*. Series: Northeastern series on gender, crime, and law
Boston : Northeastern University Press ; Hanover [NH] : Published by University Press of New England, c2009, 279p ISBN 9781555537036 (pbk. : alk. paper)

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This is a captivating examination of women's experiences of violence and how the media represents such violence against women. By framing the issues in both fictional and non-fictional accounts, Humphries is able to meet her two stated goals: developing a collection that would help readers to think more clearly about women's experiences of violence and organizing the readings into a natural progression by degrees toward a reflective, critical approach to media representations. The utilization of this progressive approach to explore the interrelation between women, violence and media, makes this book well- suited for course adoption.

The book consists of twelve articles and is divided into three sections. The first section, "Gendered Constructions: Women and Violence," examines assumptions made in news reports, on television, films, and in textbooks, and illustrates how the media depicts gender and violence. An article written by Michelle L. Meloy and Susan L. Miller, "Words that Wound. Print Media's Presentation of Gendered Violence", explores major gender themes in newspaper coverage of four high profile cases; Laci Peterson, Evelyn Hernandez, Susan Smith and Andrea Yates. In "Constructing Murderers: Female Killers of Law and Order", author Drew Humphries reports the findings of her study of female murders as depicted on the television series Law and Order. Humpries demonstrates how "masculine assumptions set the terms" for constructing female murders. "Screening Stereotypes: African American Women in Hollywood Films", author Frankie Y. Bailey examines the Hollywood- perpetuated stereotypes of African American women. The article discusses the "mammy, jezebel, and tragic mulatto" stereotypes in films such as *Gone With the Wind* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*; it explores the "ineffectual mothers, action heroes, and tough gal" stereotypes of African American female actors in Hollywood films of the 1990's, such as *Boyz N the Hood*, *New Jack City* and others. It also examines the careers of African American actors such as Whoopi Goldberg and Halle Berry, and the challenge of color blind casting in Hollywood today. In the final chapter of this section, Zoann K. Snyder reports on the "underrepresentation and marginalization of women by academic texts" in her article, "What About Women? The Representation of Women in Media, Crime and Violence Textbooks."

The second section, "Debating the Issues: Femicide and Sexual Terrorism" examines the issues of intersectionality and global media markets. In "Does Gender Make a Difference? The Influence of Female Victimization on Media Coverage of Mass Murder Incidents," the authors Janice E. Clifford, Carl J. Jensen III, and Thomas A. Petee, report the results of their research into whether mass murder incidents result in higher rates of females victimization than for homicide in general, finding a definitive bias in media reporting of such events. Mahfuzul I. Khondaker and Melissa H. Barlow report on domestic violence in Bangladeshi and the media in

"Rapist Freed, Victim Punished: Newspaper Accounts of Violence Against Women in Bangladesh". In "Media Images of Wartime Sexual Violence: Ethnic Cleansing in Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia," Yaschica Williams and Janine Bower review newspaper articles of sexual violence during conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, finding emotional reports of rape and violence in the former, while minimizing, and perhaps accepting, the same sexually violent crimes as wartime atrocities in Rwanda. The last chapter in this section, "The Haunting of Jane Tennison: Investigating Violence Against Women in Prime Suspect", written by Madelaine Adelman, Gary Cavender and Nancy C. Jurik, examines the British series Prime Suspect, specifically "The Last Witness" film which portrays the issues related to immigrant women in Great Britain and the plight that often surrounds them.

The final section, "Changing the Image, Feminist Critics and Criticism" examines potential ways to change the portrayal of women in the media. John W. Heeren and Jill Theresa Messing review the differences that particular new sources, such as police, domestic violence advocates, family and friends, have on how female victims of domestic homicides are represented in the news, and the accountability of the perpetrator in "Victims and Source: Newspaper Reports of Mass Murder in Domestic Contexts". Emily Lenning and Darren Kowitz examine the impact that gender has on the writers, producers and directors of made-for-television productions. In their article, "Running Out of Oxygen: Is 'Television for Women' Suffocating Women?", the authors, not surprisingly, conclude that productions created by women better reflect female experiences. The paradox of fear is examined in Deborah Jermyn's article, "Making Sense of Female Malady: Fear of Crime, Hysteria, and Women, Watching Crimewatch UK". Utilizing the responses of female viewers of BBC Crimewatch UK episodes, Jermyn reports on the anxiety produced by viewing television violence. In the final chapter, Lynn S. Chancer draws on her 2005 study of victim blaming and high-profile cases, and her prior interviews of journalists, politicians and others in "Victim Blaming Through High-Profile Crimes: An Analysis of Unintended Consequences", arguing for change.

While the individual articles are short in comparison to the lengthy reference sections associated with each, the book provides an opportunity for college students to develop critical thinking skills while providing an introductory sampling of recent research and resources on this topic.