

Book Review: Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. New York: Picador, 2014. ISBN: 978-1250065667 (Paperback). 279 Pages. \$16.00.

Reviewed by Robert M. Worley¹

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In her book, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*, sociologist Alice Goffman provides readers with an eye-opening and evocative examination of how urban young men become hopelessly entangled in the criminal justice juggernaut. To conduct her ethnographic study, the author spent seven years living in an impoverished neighborhood to which she refers throughout the book as 6th Street, in Philadelphia. According to Goffman, 93% of the residents in this neighborhood are African American, and virtually all of the families in the community receive some type of governmental assistance. Throughout her book, Goffman documents the various methods by which law enforcement personnel seek to control the urban poor. The author candidly discusses how young men living within these inner city areas are often subjected to police harassment, and she claims to have witnessed numerous acts of police brutality. As she writes in the opening of her book, “I watched the police punch, choke, kick, stomp on, or beat young men with their nightsticks” (4).

One aspect of Goffman’s book that may be of particular interest to many scholars is the differentiation she makes between *clean* and *dirty*

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