

Winter, Harold. The economics of crime: an introduction to rational crime analysis. Routledge, 2008. 131p bibl index ISBN 9780415771740 pbk, \$41.95

In 1968 University of Chicago economist (and now Nobel laureate) Gary Becker wrote a seminal journal article titled "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach." For the last four decades, other economists, standing on Becker's shoulders, have applied their theories and tools of analysis to the study of criminal activity and public policy actions to deter it. In *The Economics of Crime*, Winter (Univ. of Ohio) describes in an organized fashion what economists have learned over that time span. Approaching each issue with the economist's penchant for assuming rational decision making and the weighing of costs and benefits on the part of the criminal, he explores for the intelligent general reader--and also his public policy students, for whom this book serves as a text--many controversial, high-profile subjects such as the death penalty, race and crime, addiction and drug enforcement, and gun control. There are several obvious holes in terms of coverage, as well as a conscious decision (on Winter's part) not to dwell to any extent on alternative approaches (mainly by criminologists), but this slender volume constitutes an excellent, well-referenced jumping-off point for anyone interested in these topics or economists' perspectives on them. Summing Up: Highly recommended. General readers; all levels of students; researchers and professionals. -- A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago