

Yousman, Bill

Prime Time Prisons on U.S. TV

Representation of Incarceration

New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, Oxford, Wien, 2009. VIII, 200 pp.

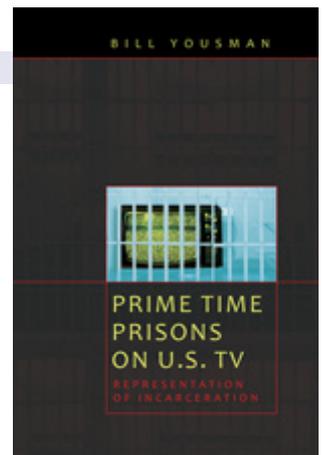
Media and Culture. Vol. 10

General Editors: Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis

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Book synopsis

In the current era of rampant incarceration and an ever-expanding prison-industrial complex, this crucial book breaks down the distorted and sensationalistic version of imprisonment found on U.S. television. Examining local and national television news, broadcast network crime dramas, and the cable television prison drama *Oz*, the book provides a comprehensive analysis of the stories and images of incarceration most widely seen by viewers in the U.S. and around the world. The textual analysis is augmented by interviews with individuals who have spent time in U.S. prisons and jails; their insights provide important context while encouraging readers to critically reflect on their own responses to television images of imprisonment. Appropriate for both undergraduates and postgraduates, *Prime Time Prisons on U.S. TV* is useful for courses in media criticism, media literacy, popular culture, television studies, and criminology.

About the author(s)/editor(s)

The Author: Bill Yousman received his Ph.D. from the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He has published essays in several media studies anthologies as well as in the journals *Communication Research Reports*; *Communication Quarterly*; *Communication Theory*; *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*; *The Journal of Communication*; *The Journal of Popular Film and Television*; and *Race, Class and Gender*. Yousman has taught media studies at the University of Hartford, Suffolk University, Central Connecticut State University, and UMass-Amherst.

Reviews

«Bill Yousman has written arguably one of the best books I have read in years on the American prison system. Analyzing the horror, brutality, and racism at the heart of this system through the media, especially television, he beautifully constructs how the politics of governing through crime and punishment is largely shaped by our ever expansive screen culture. This book is beautifully written, provides a model for sophisticated cultural analysis, and makes clear how any understanding of both politics and prisons has to be examined with great care through the notion of culture as a form of public pedagogy. This book should be read by anyone concerned about the shame of incarceration in the United States, the power of the media to legitimate it, and the role that culture plays as a major force for influencing how we understand and respond to the racialized prison industry and the punishing state.» (Henry Giroux, Global Television Network Chair Professor, English and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, McMaster University, Ontario, Canada)

«While police procedurals and law and order programming have dominated U.S. television since the early 1980s, representations of the material effects of law and order culture – the dramatic increases in prisons and prison populations – remain few. Contrasting the narratives told about prisoners and prisons on television with the material realities of incarceration, this book casts a brilliant and painful light on the framing of issues related to prisons and the consequences that follow from such distorted images and representations.» (Carol Stabile, Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon)

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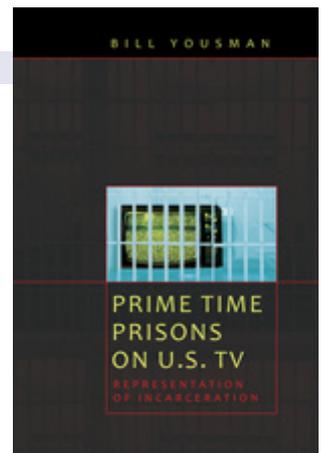
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