scientific reference, we are greeted by none other than the BBC (2010) “The Processes of Death and Decomposition”. Steinhoff continues to berate his opponents (as well as the rest of us): “[a]nd: once death occurs, human decomposition takes place in stages” (p. 30). So for the next three pages, we are subjected to a direct quote from a Wikipedia entry on “Decomposition”. Steinhoff is not finished by a long shot:

Thus, it would appear that even if one granted Wisnewski and Emerick their semantically incorrect (just consult the dictionary!) and dramatic claim that “Torture is a kind of death,” this would only mean that some kinds of death are preferable to others. For them those kinds of “death” that allow the victim to go on to see their children grow up, go to the movies and restaurants, write essays, go to bars, meet friends, travel around the world, visit museums and have sex, seem to be a very significantly better deal than the kind of death that immediately leaves the victim a slowly rotting feast for maggots. (p. 32, emphasis in original)

Of course, this review could go on (and on) but it is best to make some concluding remarks about the book. The blurb on the back cover states: “This is an indispensable work for anyone interested in one of the most controversial subjects of our times.” This reviewer respectfully disagrees. Readers are likely to be left in the dark without gaining further insight into the problems with torture. Subscribers to this journal will notice the conspicuous absence of scholarly references to Stan Cohen, Joshua Dratel, Conor Gearty, Karen Greenberg, Richard Leo, Alfred McCoy, Ken Roth, and Philippe Sands. One might wonder why an academic press would invest so much time and effort in a manuscript that fails to deliver a convincing discussion on an extremely important topic.

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The term police brutality is not difficult to understand. Most people hear names like Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo, and Rodney King, and immediately recognize these cases of extralegal violence. But what is police misconduct? We can probably agree that the term describes an officer who steals savings bonds from the apartment of a deceased person. What should we make of a police officer who continues to receive public assistance benefits after joining the department as a probationary officer? And what of a police officer who, while off duty, engages in a tussle with a woman with whom he has a sexual relationship, which results in her death by
means of his off-duty firearm? What of police officers who accept small gratuities from merchants?

In all of these actual instances, this conduct resulted in NYPD officers getting “jammed up”: shorthand to describe a departmental decision to investigate the alleged misconduct (p. 6). It is the study of this “career-ending misconduct” (p. 8) within the NYPD from 1975 to 1996 that forms the basis of this impressive book. Building upon a 1996 study of police misconduct by Robert Kane and the late James J Fyfe, Jammed Up examines the records of 3085 officers—1542 of whom were separated from the NYPD for misconduct of some kind during the 22-year study period. As the examples suggest, career-ending misconduct spans a great variety of behavior that includes crimes, dishonesty, impropriety, and administrative violations. The sheer size of the study sample and the unusual access of the authors to the data alone are remarkable.

While nearly every major American police department has had a misconduct-related scandal at some point (p. 19), the study of career-ending misconduct is a surprisingly difficult task, in part because it is hard to define. While many agree that some cases—such as criminal acts performed while on duty—should count, there remains a great deal of ambiguity about other examples, such as misconduct that occurs while off duty. To compound matters, there is little systematic collection of data on police misconduct. To that end, Kane and White develop their own classification system of misconduct. The career-ending misconduct of the 1543 officers who were separated from the NYPD during the study period fell into one of the following eight categories: profit-motivated crimes, off-duty crimes against persons, off-duty public order crimes, drugs, on-duty abuse, obstruction of justice, administrative/failure to perform, and conduct related probationary failures (p. 68).

Why did these officers become “jammed up”? The answer turns out to be based not only on individual factors but upon organizational and historical changes as well. Many personal characteristics that are predictive of misconduct turn out to be in line with conventional wisdom: comparative youth; a criminal history; poor previous work history; comparatively more citizen complaints; a lack of career advancement; and busy patrol assignments. A more complex finding of the study is that non-white officers were more likely to experience career-ending misconduct than white officers, a result that the authors address with care and nuance.

Equally important and fascinating is the explanation of career-ending misconduct in terms of the NYPD’s own changing needs and external pressures over time. When faced with the city’s fiscal crisis in the late 1970s, the department likely resorted to sanctions short of separation to avoid cutting an already shrunken department. When the department felt confident enough to hire 12,000 new officers in the early 1980s, insufficient vetting processes were probably to blame for a significant number of clearly problematic officers—arrested for crimes involving violence—who likely would have been screened out in a different institutional environment. Internal priority shifts proved equally important, such as the
introduction of drug testing in the late 1980s, which resulted in a new basis for separation.

Although the study results focus on the nature of career-ending misconduct and the significant characteristics of those who faced being “jammed up”, Kane and White also move beyond their central research questions. Being “jammed up” tells us something, but not everything, about policing in a democratic society. What counts as “good” policing is not simply the absence of police misconduct. Well-intentioned but aggressive policing may raise red flags associated with misconduct in ways that “legal minimalism” (p. 119) may not, but the latter form of policing is not especially desirable either. What counts as “good policing” is a vital topic, although in *Jammed Up* its discussion is necessarily tentative. I wish the authors had saved this for a separate volume, and devoted more attention instead, for example, to prescriptions that emerge from the data.

Overall, *Jammed Up* belongs on the reading lists of policing scholars, particularly those focusing on corruption, reform, and urban policing. As Kane and White demonstrate so compellingly, while police hold a special place in society, their misconduct is a variety of deviance. Attendant to that basic insight is the realization that being “jammed up” is a product not just of individual wrongdoing, but of institutional and historical forces that complicate not only the identification of police misconduct, but its very existence.

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