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David Weisburd and Elin Waring
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White-Collar Crime and Criminal Careers

Criminologists have turned their attention to the origins and paths of the criminal career for what this approach reveals about the causes, manifestations, and prevention of crime. Studies of the criminal career to date have focused on common criminals and street crime; criminologists have overlooked the careers of white-collar offenders. David Weisburd and Elin Waring offer here the first detailed examination of the criminal careers of people convicted of white-collar crimes.

Who are repeat white-collar criminals, and how do their careers differ from those of offenders found in more traditional crime samples? Weisburd and Waring uncover some surprising findings, which upset some long-held common wisdom about white-collar criminals. Most scholars, for example, have assumed that white-collar criminals, unlike other types of offenders, are unlikely to have multiple or long criminal records. As Weisburd and Waring demonstrate, a significant number of white-collar criminals have multiple contacts with the criminal justice system and like other criminals, they are often led by situational forces such as financial or family crises to commit crimes. White-collar criminals share a number of similarities in their social and economic circumstances with other types of criminals. Weisburd and Waring are led to a portrait of crimes and criminals that is very different from that which has traditionally dominated criminal career studies. It focuses less on the categorical distinctions between criminals and noncriminals and more on the importance of the immediate context of crime and its role in leading otherwise conventional people to violate the law.

David Weisburd is Professor of Criminology at Hebrew University Law School and Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Elin Waring is Associate Professor of Sociology at Lehman College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Ellen F. Chayet is Production Director of Criminal Justice Press.

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*For Sarit Esther, with respect for all she has accomplished and
with love for who she is – D.W.*

For Linnea and Bobby, with love – E.J.W.

*For my husband, Bob; daughter, Amelia; father, Al; and the
memory of my mother, Rebecca – E.F.C.*

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David Weisburd
Elin Waring