

Book relates public defender's experience with police cover-ups

Mary Ann McGivern | Mar. 14, 2013 NCR Today

The St. Louis Catholic Action Network is going to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* [1] by Michelle Alexander. I heard Alexander interviewed on public radio. Here's what I remember her saying about her motivation to write the book:

She was a public defender in San Francisco, and their office had begun tracking stop-and-frisk because clients were saying the police were framing them, saying they were holding dope when they were clean. This young man walked in with documented police searches, a long list of them, neatly laid out with dates, witness names and names of arresting officers.

Alexander interviewed him and was delighted with his data until she learned he had a felony conviction for possession. "But I wasn't holding," he said. "I was framed." She said she couldn't use the data and in front of her, he tore it up and walked out. She never found him, even though two years later it turned out the cops had indeed lied over and over about drug possession and many young men were exonerated.

I'm eager to read the book and hear what other readers make of it.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.amazon.com/New-Jim-Crow-Michelle-Alexander/dp/1595586431>