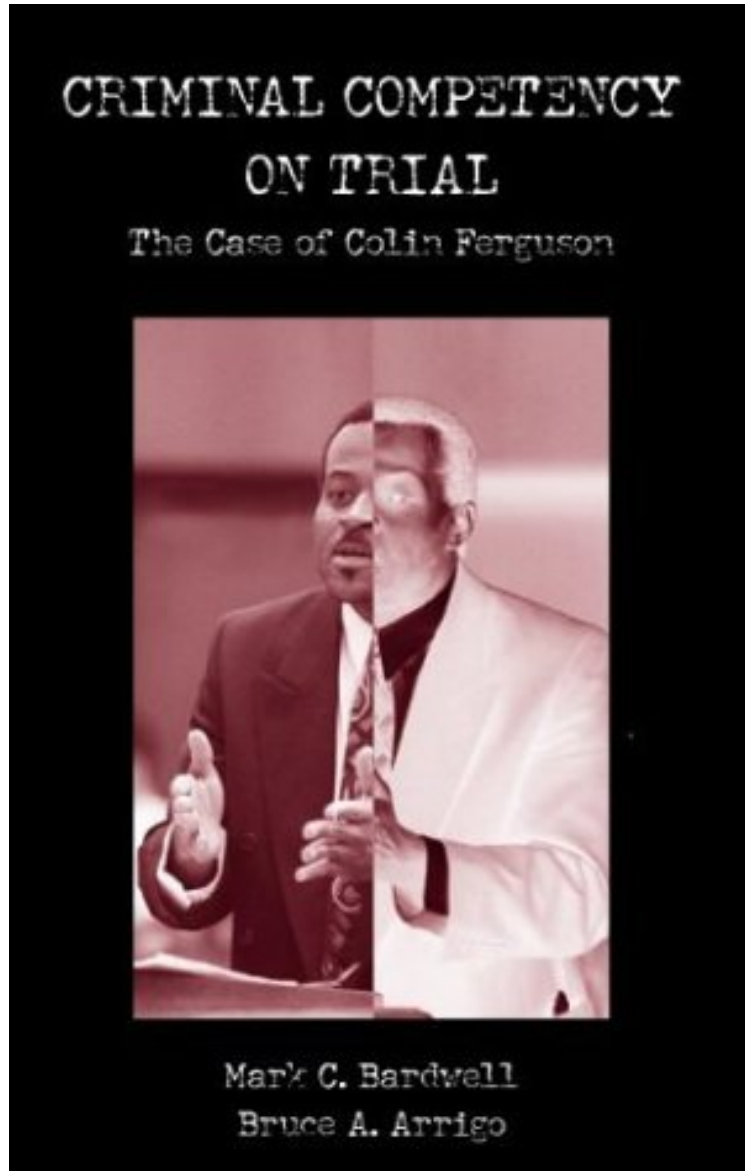


Criminal Competency on Trial: The Case of Colin Ferguson

Mark C. Bardwell, Bruce A. Arrigo
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This book is extremely informative regarding both competency to stand trial, as well as the insanity defense. It describes in easy to understand language how the court system handles individuals with mental illness. The two case examples, especially the case of Colin Ferguson, demonstrate how sometimes the courts may not make the right decisions regarding competency questions, and, as such, why mental health practitioners are key people in such cases.
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This book takes the reader into the world of a bright, yet mentally ill criminal defendant. It thoroughly explores the problems encountered with questionable criminal competency legal standards as well as the practical courtroom dilemmas that develop when paranoid schizophrenics are found competent to stand trial.

Criminal Competency on Trial examines the legal standards by which one can stand trial and the psychological instruments by which one's mental health status is assessed. Acknowledging that determinations of trial fitness represent the most significant mental health inquiry pursued in the system of criminal law today, thoroughly reviews and carefully explains the legal and psychological limits of competency to stand trial (CST). To highlight these limits, this text systematically investigates the controversial and high-profile case of Colin Ferguson, the New York City railway killer who, following a competency finding, elected to represent himself. He was found guilty on all criminal charges. This book proposes a series of clear, practical, and concise justice policy reforms designed to improve the understanding and employment of the CST doctrine. By demonstrating where and how these policy recommendations would substantially change the CST doctrine, especially in the case of Colin Ferguson and other high-stakes defendants such as Theodore Kaczynski (a.k.a. the Unabomber), *Criminal Competency on Trial* offers a systematic evaluation of the doctrine. No other book of its type has offered such a systematic evaluation of the CST doctrine while mindful of its legal, psychological, and criminal justice policy dynamics.