

THE REACTIONS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS TO A LAW REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

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INTRODUCTION

In advance of the 1998 Law Review Symposium, the University of Colorado School of Law invited a group of fifteen criminal justice professionals and eight law students to attend the full day of symposium events on Saturday, February 21, 1998, with the understanding that the group would return to the law school the following week for a "debriefing" meeting.¹ The main purpose of the debriefing exercise was to gather reactions from members of the bench, the bar, law enforcement, corrections, and policy-making sectors to the avowedly academic program organized by the Law Review. We wanted to know whether the symposium on Franklin Zimring and Gordon Hawkins's book *Crime Is Not the Problem: Lethal Violence in America*² had been a worthwhile event from the group's perspective, and whether the group saw the symposium as relevant to issues faced by criminal justice professionals in Colorado. Further, we hoped that reactions to the symposium could spur a more general discussion about the type of programming that the criminal justice community would like to see coming out of the legal academy. We named the assemblage the "Colorado Group."³

The law school chose the members of the Colorado Group for their experience and achievement in the criminal justice field. In addition, students were invited based on their prospective interest in the field. We biased the selection process in favor of persons we knew to take an interest in policy-level questions; many of the professional members had taught courses or individ-

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1. The Colorado Group events were organized by the authors of this report, with the encouragement and assistance of Dean Harold H. Bruff.

2. FRANKLIN E. ZIMRING & GORDON HAWKINS, *CRIME IS NOT THE PROBLEM: LETHAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICA* (1997).

3. If the Colorado Group continues in existence, as seems likely, some more descriptive name will be created.

ual classes at the law school, or had otherwise been involved in law school service. The group included (alphabetically): Judge Joseph J. Bellipani, Chief Judge for Boulder County; Justice Michael L. Bender of the Supreme Court of Colorado; Nathan Ben Coats, Chief Deputy District Attorney in Denver; Diana G. Colloton, Chief Probation Officer for Adams County; Elizabeth F. Griffin, Appellate Deputy in the Colorado State Public Defenders' Office; John M. Haried, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Denver; Judge Claudia Jordan, Denver County Court; Vicki Mandell-King, Assistant Federal Public Defender; Les Langford, Chief of Police for the City of Cherry Hills Village; Christopher A. Miranda, private defense attorney with Gerash Robinson & Miranda, P.C.; G. Bryan Morgan, private defense attorney with Haddon, Morgan & Foreman, P.C.; Terry Morrison, Associate Legal Counsel for the Colorado Judicial Branch; William F. Nagel, Chief Appellate Deputy, Boulder County District Attorney's Office; Michael Pellow, Deputy District Attorney in Denver's Gang Unit; and William Woodward, Director of the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety. The student members were Leslie F. Brown, Dina Cannariato Johnson, Darrel Taylor Davis, Danny E. Eskanos, James Hearty, Jill B. Lee, Jennifer Luke, and William J. Shapiro.

Despite the blue-ribbon composition of its membership, the law school entered the Colorado Group experiment with trepidation. Anyone who has worked in the academic world can attest to the frequent criticisms one hears about what goes on in universities. Phrases like "ivory tower," "soft-headed liberalism," and "irrelevant to the real world" are often applied to academic thinking; and we fear these invectives are sometimes deserved. On this score, the nature of the 1998 Law Review Symposium made us a bit nervous. It was a heavily cross-disciplinary program. With the exception of the Colorado Attorney General, there were no judges or practitioners on the agenda. Even legal academics were in a minority among the paper presenters; the emphasis of many panel sessions was on criminological knowledge, historical inquiries, cross-national comparisons, social theory, and so on. Because of the departure from a traditional legal emphasis, the 1998 Symposium was unusual. We had no preconceptions about how it would be greeted by the Colorado Group—especially after its members had sacrificed part of a weekend to attend.

I. REACTIONS TO THE SYMPOSIUM

We gathered responses from members of the Colorado Group who attended an evening meeting three days after the symposium,⁴ and responses from written feedback supplied both by members who attended the evening meeting and the few members who were unable to attend.⁵

The group's substantive evaluations of the symposium were mixed, but on the whole leaned toward the positive. Many members—and this was particularly true of lawyers and judges—drew a distinction between (1) the symposium's relevance to their daily jobs, and (2) the symposium's merit in addressing larger issues of interest. The remarks of Judges Joseph Bellipani and Claudia Jordan illustrated this distinction. Judge Bellipani said "there wasn't a whole lot" of information presented at the symposium that would influence him at his next sentencing hearing. Instead, the presentations "reinforced beliefs you've developed over time or challenged beliefs you've developed over time." Judge Bellipani analogized the level of discussion at the symposium to the *Lehrer News Hour*. He said there were "things that I heard that were interesting . . . I'm interested in an intellectual way . . . but as to whether it affects what I do, you'd have to give me some new information."⁶ Similarly, Judge Jordan said that "I'm not sure I learned anything that's new and useful" to specific decisions as a sentencing judge, although "all of [the symposium] goes together in terms of making me a better person—making me a better judge of character."⁷

4. A tape recording of the February 24, 1998 meeting is on file with the University of Colorado Law Review. In order to avoid a discussion that was slanted toward the academic viewpoint, Justice Michael Bender graciously consented to chair the meeting.

5. All of the student members of the Colorado Group attended the debriefing meeting, and all but three of the professional members: John Haried, Michael Pellow, and William Woodward did not attend.

6. Judge Bellipani alluded to data about the "age curve" of criminal careers that was discussed at the symposium. In his view, such data are pertinent to the sentencing of individual offenders, but the age curve was quite familiar to him before attending the symposium.

7. From the perspective of the Supreme Court, Justice Michael Bender echoed the sentiments of Judges Bellipani and Jordan: "I don't really think [the information presented at the symposium] would matter in terms of how you look at [sentencing] in terms of an appellate court function."

The distinction between day-to-day relevance and broader perspective was brought out by other members of the group. District Attorney Ben Coats said that, "from the point of view of practice, of prosecuting—no, I don't think [the symposium] was directly relevant," although he thought the overall model presented in *Crime Is Not the Problem* might affect some district attorneys' charging decisions or sentencing recommendations. Coats went on to say:

I thought clearly, though, [the symposium's] strongest tie with anything you would want to call "real world" or "practical" policy making or decision making had more to do with legislation. And we all have some influence in that, so I don't know that it's bad for us to be aware of those kinds of things. . . . For instance, the district attorneys are very much involved as a professional lobbying group, as a statewide organization, and these are the kinds of things it seems to me you would want to direct at a body like that to try to influence legislation.⁸

In the same vein, Federal Defender Vicki Mandell-King said "we shouldn't just ask how does this [information] affect us in practice" and that the symposium was "very worthwhile" in addressing "huge societal problems." For example, she cited Zimring and Hawkins's thesis that criminal punishments should be prioritized for crimes of lethal violence, and that sentences for nonlethal criminality should be reduced.⁹ Mandell-King provided examples of federal legislation and sentencing guidelines that, in her view, were inconsistent with that thesis:¹⁰

8. After the meeting, Coats gave me an example of a legislative issue currently before the Colorado General Assembly that was directly connected to the Law Review Symposium: The district attorneys were opposing a bill to enlarge the availability of the "make my day" defense in Colorado, which authorizes citizens to use deadly force against intruders in their homes. The proposed legislation would have broadened this permission—a result expressly disapproved of in FRANKLIN E. ZIMRING & GORDON HAWKINS, *CRIME IS NOT THE PROBLEM: LETHAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICA* 167-69 (1997). As it happens, Coats was called upon to testify before the General Assembly on this issue within days of the symposium. Telephone Interview with Nathan B. Coats, Chief Deputy District Attorney, Denver, Colo. (Feb. 26, 1998).

9. See FRANKLIN E. ZIMRING & GORDON HAWKINS, *CRIME IS NOT THE PROBLEM: LETHAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICA* 159-84 (1997).

10. In written comments, Mandell-King specified:

The United States Congress in enacting legislation such as the Armed Career Criminal Act (18 U.S.C. § 924(e) (1994)) and the Federal Three Strikes Law (18 U.S.C. § 3559(c) (1994)), and the United States

People in my office stand up next to twenty-year-old young black men who are convicted of distributing crack cocaine, . . . and they're sentenced to thirty-six years with no parole and with very little good time credit. That to me sure seems a whole lot like a life sentence, and to some people it would be harder than a death sentence. And so, I think it's important as a legislative matter—as a policy matter—to think about lethal violence versus nonlethal violence

In Mandell-King's mind, such issues of sentencing policy also had implications for the death penalty debate: "When we have these penalties for drug crimes, . . . what is there left to do but execute a person who murders someone?"

Defense attorney Chris Miranda echoed others in saying "I'm not so sure I learned anything nuts and bolts that can help me in my everyday practice," but went on to say:

I think what [the symposium] did do is it brought into focus for me our need for balance in our system. . . . It was motivation to say that the system needs people like me—criminal defense attorneys and that perspective—and the reason for that is [that our perspective is] not popular. What's popular right now is what's getting politicians elected, and no politician is going to be elected on "being soft on crime". . . . I'm not so sure that the reason for having [the Colorado Group] here is truly nuts and bolts and what's relevant to your everyday practice, but for me I walked away saying [to myself] that "the system needs people who believe in what you do, because you can bring balance."¹¹

Miranda also drew a contrast between practice-oriented continuing legal education programs and the Law Review Symposium, which he viewed as serving separate functions: "I haven't been to

Sentencing Commission in its sentencing guidelines, clearly take the position that drugs, firearms, and lethal violence are connected.

Written Comments from Vicki Mandell-King (Feb. 24, 1998) (on file with author).

11. Defense attorney Bryan Morgan made a similar comment:

There simply is no political constituency in this country for anything that sounds like it is in mitigation of a severe sentencing law or an affirmation of individual rights in the Bill of Rights. . . . Politicians do not run and they do not get elected saying "we need to think very carefully about the balance of power we have now created over the last thirty years between individuals in our society and the power of the state." So when you have debates like [the symposium], it at least is useful to an audience in the broad sense that someone mentioned earlier: Let me now go whisper into my legislator's ear and see if I can get him or her to make a change that I think is potentially useful.

a thought provoking, philosophical CLE [Continuing Legal Education] program for a long time. I needed this.”

District Attorney Bill Nagel also found the symposium “not very relevant” to his daily experience:

It seems to me [the symposium] was addressed to much broader policy issues than I ever get involved in. To the extent I get involved in legislation, it's that subparagraph (3)(a)(iii) should be amended by changing this word to that word. . . . Thinking about whether we should change the global sorts of things . . . that's just out of my realm of experience. Not that I wouldn't mind being in bigger issues than that, but I'm just not. . . . I was trying to think, how could I become more conversant with those types of issues given the time constraints on my work week?¹²

There was general agreement concerning the symposium's value to the policy making process. Defense attorney Bryan Morgan pointed out that:

The people who should have been attending this conference are principally legislators because sentencing is increasingly a legislative function: mandatory minimums, three strikes you're out, two strikes you're in. . . . Those are the people who needed to hear whatever the panelists had to offer. For most of the rest of us, useful information was put out, but I don't know that it would affect much of the way we go about our lives.

On the policy level, Morgan criticized the symposium for its failure to give greater attention to the media's influence on Americans' perception of the violent crime problem:

[The media has] finally figured out that the most gripping stories that they could ever come up with are happening everyday in the courtrooms across the country. It's everything

12. Some of the written comments from law students reinforced the message that the symposium was short on practical orientation for lawyers. *See* Written Comments from Jennifer Luke (Feb. 24, 1998) (“the symposium did lack real-world applicability. . . . It would be beneficial to include those involved more intimately in the process as well as academicians”) (on file with author); Written Comments from Darrel Taylor Davis & Dina Cannariato Johnson (Feb. 24, 1998) (The symposium “[d]iscussed problems in academic ways, but did not provide real-world solutions. Too many academicians, without a balance of people working in the criminal justice system.”) (on file with author).

they want: it's sex and it's violence and it's murder and it's emotions. And so, that's what they lead with. You know the old story from the news game, which I have been involuntarily immersed in for awhile,¹³ is "if it bleeds, it leads." And that's what they do. Now, I believe that issue has a grossly skewing effect on our perception on the level of violence in our society and what the political response to it is.

The nonlawyer members of the Colorado Group were, as a whole, more positive about the content of the symposium than the lawyers and judges. The nonlawyers did not see a divide between the symposium's relevance to their daily professional lives and to larger issues of criminal justice. They tended to speak about the symposium as relating to both. For example, Police Chief Les Langford said "I thought [the symposium] was great. I'm just sorry that more of my colleagues weren't in attendance. . . . The collection of speakers you brought and the topics they addressed were excellent." Chief Langford agreed with one message of *Crime Is Not the Problem*, that "our country is out of line in terms of our incidence of lethal violence Guns are part of it, gangs are part of it. . . . For me, all of the symposium pointed out the need for more study." As for the symposium's connection to policing issues, Chief Langford was impressed by "the need to give more attention to juvenile offenders." He felt that many police departments have had insufficient resources to intervene "when you start to see children start to have problems. I think we need to do a better job on that."

Chief Probation Officer Diana Colloton said "[The symposium] was very provocative to me, it was very useful for me on a daily basis."¹⁴ Colloton said the hardest cases for her office are

13. At the time of this writing, Morgan was counsel for one of the family members in the investigation of the 1996 murder of JonBenet Ramsey, which was the leading crime news story in the national media and the tabloids through 1997.

14. Colloton provided some specifics in writing:

As Chief Probation Officer for the Seventeenth Judicial District I make program decisions regarding both juvenile and adult offenders and also make regular decisions as to which violent offenders are accepted into the adult and juvenile Intensive Supervision Programs. . . . I will approach the selection of offenders and recommendations to the courts for probation intensive programs utilizing the information Mr. Zimring presented. The concept of loss prevention rather than crime prevention is an important factor in the choice between recommending community programs for juveniles and young adult offenders or incarceration. . . . Mr. Delbert Elliott's presentation was just as important for criminal justice practitioners. If we fail to focus on the developmental progression of offenders in this discussion we would be placing a band aid on a wound

cases of gun-involved juvenile violence. Although she has been exposed to much research in the area, the symposium added to her information base.

I think we do a pretty good job at assessing low-risk/high-risk for recidivism, but we do not do a very good job, in my opinion, on any kind of assessment for lethality. We have a very hard time differentiating between violent crime and lethal violence. . . . Obviously, we'll do a lot more in-depth research on that now.

Terry Morrison, Associate Legal Counsel for the Colorado Judicial Branch, has spent much of her career in the policy arena. She stressed the potential importance of events like the symposium to legislative decision making:

I've watched [the legislative] process all the way through. And [you need to] get legislators to either be involved in [events like the symposium], or get it out to the community, . . . to their constituents, because that's what they'll respond to. . . . How you can channel that, with the studies and the knowledge, to the policy makers is probably one of the keys.

Morrison also thought the symposium was relevant to the law school's teaching mission, and recalled her feelings, when she was a law student, of separation between the academic world and the real world: "It was like law school was one compartment and the practice of law was something somewhat vaguely related, probably through the bar exam. . . . I thought [the symposium] would have been great to have as a student, to have the contact with the real world."¹⁵

that will only grow larger with time.

Written Comments from Diana G. Colloton (Mar. 9, 1998) (on file with author).

15. Chris Miranda concurred, saying:

I would have liked to have been a student when this happened. In law school we get into that grind, you know, learning what we have to do to pass our exams and to pass the bar exam. But I thought for the students [the symposium] provided an overview of the criminal justice world . . .

Interestingly, law student Dina Cannariato Johnson said that the symposium was more similar than she would have liked to law school course offerings:

I would like more practical stuff. . . . Having the academics interact with [practitioners] I think would have been really interesting . . . and to have somebody come from probation and say, "No way, that's not what we see in Colorado," or "Yes, that's what we see in Colorado" . . . I think that would have, for me, brought [it] together a little bit more.

A recurring substantive criticism from the group was directed at the central policy recommendation of *Crime Is Not the Problem*, that "lethal violence" rather than "crime in general" ought to be the first priority of the criminal justice system. William Woodward, Director of the Division of Criminal Justice, wrote:

[F]ocusing on lethal violence alone would be possible if we wanted to think of the criminal justice system as an emergency room. If we simply provide more resources to our emergency room and fund bigger and better prisons; more and more competent staff across the system; and greater numbers of criminal justice programs, we can talk about suppression of violence. In this model the focus is on the system. I think this is the major problem I have with [Zimring and Hawkins's] book. The system is *not* the answer to the problem of lethal violence. No more than the emergency room is the answer to the injuries its doctors see. . . . We would be most arrogant to assume such a connection.¹⁶

Law students Danny Eskanos and William Shapiro sounded a similar critique: "It would be a mistake to switch resources from non-violent crimes to violent crimes. . . . By 'focusing on lethal violence' in order to fix the problem, there is a danger that we focus too much on the 'immediate problem' and ignore the 'underlying cause.'"¹⁷

Judge Bellipani questioned the novelty of the major thesis of *Crime Is Not the Problem*. He echoed Attorney General Norton's comments during the symposium that "it's not news to anyone that violent crime is more important than property crime . . . everybody knows that, everybody acts on that." Ben Coats did not

16. Woodward also wrote that:

Zimring did not respond to Dr. [Delbert] Elliott's clear connection between early criminal behavior and later violent crime. . . . I think Dr. Elliott made the case that offenders progress from minor crimes to violent crimes through a series of barriers. . . . This progression cries out for early and swift intervention after the most minor of offenses. . . . These adolescents must be held accountable immediately for their most minor behaviors. "Held accountable" does not need to mean, and probably should not mean, immediate detention time or jail. It does mean that we find out what is going on in this person's life around school, health, social connections, activities outside of school, psychological status, work (if any), family, and community concerns. . . . The goal of such assessments is to develop a plan of action for this particular individual.

Written Comments from William Woodward (Feb. 23, 1998) (on file with author).

17. Written Comments from Danny E. Eskanos & William J. Shapiro (Feb. 24, 1998) (on file with author).

agree personally with the perspective in Zimring and Hawkins's book, but nonetheless valued the ferocity of the academic debate: "The criticisms [of the book] were fascinating. . . . It struck me that, in a subtle way, you [academics] are more brutal with each other than we are in the courtroom."¹⁸ The paradigm-shifting ambitions of the book did not leave all members of the Colorado Group unmoved, however. District Attorney William Nagel wrote that "I found the book and the discussions interesting, and I expect that they will change the way in which I think and speak about crime and violence."¹⁹

All members of the Colorado Group agreed that the symposium would have had more practical impact if it had been designed to include speakers from the professional criminal justice world, as well as the academic presenters.²⁰ Terry Morrison, for example, suggested "maybe having some of the people here [in the Colorado Group] on some of those panels . . . to have somebody who can slow it down or stop it [when the academic program becomes too statistically abstract]."²¹ Public Defender Elizabeth Griffin went a step further, and recommended that the law school consult with practitioners in advance of program organization, to find out what issues are controversial, important, and recurrent. "To the extent you want it to be relevant to practitioners and really helpful in a practical way," she said, "we could work off each other a little bit more."

II. THE FUTURE OF THE COLORADO GROUP

Aside from a critique of a single law review symposium, already in the past, the Colorado Group addressed the issue of the law school's future interactions with the Colorado criminal justice

18. Chief Langford likewise said, "I appreciated Zimring's willingness to get up there and take his shots."

19. Written Comments from William F. Nagel (Feb. 24, 1998) (on file with author).

20. A related criticism, which Justice Bender framed as a "potentially devastating criticism," was that there was very little time after each panel discussion for questions and answers. Also, William Nagel said that the time allowance of twenty minutes per paper was too short to allow for a full airing of each presenter's arguments: "I sort of felt at the end [of each presentation], gee, now I'm going to have to buy the Law Review article . . . and I'll never read it."

21. Vicki Mandell-King likewise thought that each segment of a symposium "should have someone more practical on the panel." Judge Bellipani suggested a potential "debate" format between the academic point of view and other perspectives.

community. What kinds of collaborative projects might be productive? What sort of institutional structure could best further such projects? Should the Colorado Group continue in existence as a facilitator of such endeavors? Although the discussion of these questions was necessarily preliminary at the February 1998 meeting, several themes emerged.

First, there was agreement that law schools in general, and the University of Colorado Law School in particular, should work to become more integrated into the worlds of legal practice and policy making. Bryan Morgan said: "[T]he law school should be doing a lot more" of this type of thing. "I've always felt that the law school seemed to be at times almost sublimely oblivious to what's happening in the real world, particularly in the criminal justice field." Justice Bender drew an unfavorable comparison between the University of Denver's law school ("DU") and the University of Colorado ("CU"): "The DU law school is much more tuned into the bar; they're much more tuned into practical oriented [programs]; they're tuned into the court; where CU is not." More than one person held out the example of University of Colorado Sociology Professor Delbert Elliott (also the director of CU's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence) as someone who has done a great deal to become involved in real world policy issues. Judge Bellipani, speaking of Professor Elliott's work, suggested: "[M]aybe you could build on that."

Second, there was consensus that it is important for a law school to encourage roundtable discussions among judges, lawyers, and other criminal justice professionals, who do not often sit down with each other to discuss issues, and whose working interactions tend to be adversarial rather than cooperative. Justice Bender, for example, alluded to his experience in the early 1990s as Chair of the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section:

We couldn't have a meeting like this and discuss things [in the ABA]. By 1991 or 1992, it was virtually impossible because opinions between defense lawyers, judges, prosecutors, federal prosecutors had become so polarized that there was no way to have a discussion, period. And, I have heard [that] such situations have occurred in Colorado with other kinds of committees. . . . My point is that you have been able to get people up to attend a conference on Saturday, to come here and discuss matters with some intensity . . . and it's unusual in my experience, in terms of what's going on across the

country, and in Colorado. What you have done is really taken together a lot of diverse people and at least gotten them in the same room talking, which I think is wonderful . . . and I think a lot of good could come out of it.

Chief Langford had a similar reaction: "Another great benefit of the symposium is the broad range of occupations that it brought together. It helps all of us to understand that we are all working on the same problems, simply from different perspectives."²² There was agreement, however, that it was a shame no legislators had attended the symposium or had taken part in the Colorado Group.²³ The future involvement of the legislative branch was seen as a high priority among Colorado Group members.²⁴

Third, there was agreement that future Colorado Group activities should include students, and should take advantage of the high concentration of student interest in criminal justice at the law school. Law student Jennifer Luke said:

Law students are just a hugely underutilized resource. . . . It seems that the law school could incorporate some sort of group of students who can work on legislation, who can work on doing something practical. Call up the prosecutor, call up the DA and say, "What is your primary area of concern, and how can we help you with it?" Students will volunteer their time if it will look good on their résumé. . . . It seems like if you had . . . some program developed where students could be utilized in making some sort of outreach to the community in this way, it would be really helpful, and students would be willing to do it.²⁵

Fourth, the group agreed unanimously that future meetings should be scheduled to discuss possible projects co-sponsored by the law school and the Colorado Group (which, presumably, will find a better name for itself). The ideas floated included:

22. Written Comments from Les Langford (Feb. 24, 1998) (on file with author).

23. The law school had extended several invitations to legislators, but the symposium events overlapped with a busy period in the legislative session.

24. Terry Morrison noted the possibility that the Colorado Criminal Justice Commission, a former state legislative policy making body, discontinued in 1994, might be refunded by the Colorado General Assembly in 1998. If so, Morrison suggested that the Colorado Group might explore joint projects with the newly-constituted Commission.

25. Elizabeth Griffin supplemented this thought with a suggestion that cooperative efforts be pursued with students from other university departments, such as sociology, who are trained to perform statistical research.

(1) future conferences and seminars, planned and conducted with the full participation of the Colorado Group;²⁶ (2) preparation by the Colorado Group of a "white paper" nonpartisan report on the "state of criminal justice in Colorado," gathering data from scattered state agencies and offering comment on needed information that is not currently available;²⁷ and (3) a new law school course in the "Colorado criminal justice system" co-designed and co-taught by the law school faculty, members of the Colorado Group, and other criminal justice professionals, featuring in-depth study of all stages of criminal justice from crime commission to corrections. If such projects come to fruition, the Colorado Group will have become insinuated into the teaching, research, and professional outreach functions of the law school—in short, the group will participate in all major areas of the law school's activities.

Thus, the experiment begun during a weekend law review symposium succeeded at least in spurring serious discussion of the possible collaborative efforts that can and should be undertaken by a law school in partnership with its professional constituencies. It is too soon, of course, to announce that preliminary discussions will mature into successful programs. The Colorado Group experiment must be characterized as only beginning.

26. The particular idea that sparked greatest interest was Diana Colloton's suggestion that the group sponsor a program on juvenile violence in Colorado:

We have a lot of juvenile violent offenders . . . a lot of weapon charges that are being treated very lightly out there, and I think it's a lack of education. . . . I would really like to see the research on how many and what the statistics in Colorado are. The numbers of kids we see [with weapons offenses] who are not incarcerated, who are left in the community, are pretty phenomenal.

Other suggested programs included a conference on domestic violence, the sentencing and treatment of drug offenders, and the relative costs and benefits of Colorado's imprisonment policies.

27. Group members saw value in assembling information from different sources, and also in making recommendations to state agencies about data-gathering that would be most useful to system professionals. For example, Judge Bellipani said: "There are questions I want answered . . . but I don't have \$50,000 to hire somebody to go do it." Chief Langford observed that:

The crime stats that most of us gather are not nearly detailed enough for any of us to look at and make any kind of decision from them. The problem is, you'll have 35 homicides a year, but it won't tell you if the homicide was committed in the commission of a robbery, or if it was a sporadic thing, or just a drive-by. We [the Colorado Group] can generate a list of projects that we feel need to be studied in this state

Justice Bender took a poll at the end of the February meeting, and found unanimous sentiment that the Colorado Group should continue in being. As Justice Bender summarized: "I think we could all agree that there's a lot of positive energy, so the question is how best to harness that in a positive way, to continue the enrichment and at the same time do a few practical things." Judge Jordan concluded the meeting with an important caveat. She was fully supportive of a future mission for the group, but stipulated, "Could you not do it on a Saturday?"