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Provine, Doris Marie. *Unequal under Law : Race in the War on Drugs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Print.

*Unequal Under Law* by Marie Provine provides an in-depth examination of the relationship between law, segregation, and the continued presence of racism within the United States's judicial system. Provine examines the claim that the policies of the war on drugs have helped perpetuate racial inequalities and create a "racialized social system" by which people are assigned their placement in the economic, political, and social order. In this first chapter, Provine analyzes the case of Edward James Clary, where a judge deemed the mandatory ten year sentence for crack cocaine possession unfairly harsh and racially biased. Despite his efforts to challenge the law citing it as a violation of the 14th amendment, higher courts overruled the decision resentencing Clary. Provine utilizes this case to illustrate the wider overview of drug policy and its connection to the history of institutionalized racism within the United State's legal system. She discusses how mandatory minimum sentences for crack disproportionately affect young African American males and inner-city communities. Provine cites the targeted nature of the harsh crack-related policies by pointing out how despite the similar usage rates across racial groups, African Americans bear the brunt of crack-cocaine related arrests. Among other points, this exemplifies the deep-rooted and racist undertones of American drug policy, with Provine citing them as "implicit racial bias in legislating against crime associated with African Americans." (25). In her critique of these laws, Provine also describes the failure of these policies citing how they had minimal impact on the overall circulation of drugs but led to massive increases in incarceration rates. This increased rate of incarceration maintains the cycle of incarceration and poverty, acting as a mechanism by which socioeconomic inequality is perpetuated amongst low-income and marginalized populations, who are more susceptible to "vice industries" (19) and over-policing. Per Provine, this is one of the ways in which modern racism has evolved to be less overt but remain embedded within the structure of law and society. In a further analysis of the evolution of racism, Provine discusses the notion that "most Americans have grown beyond the evils of overt racial malice, but still have not completely shed the deeply rooted cultural bias that differentiates" (26) and discusses the racialization of drug abuse, and how this leads to "unconscious racial bias" (25) among policymakers leading to the point about the shift in racial politics in the United States. While racism today may not be what it was during Jim Crow, it still manifests itself via "laissez-faire racism" (36). This modern form of racism is defined by negative stereotypes of African Americans, shifting blame for the socioeconomic gap between them and whites, and resistance to policies that could address systemic racial inequality. This contemporary racism wrapped in the ideology of color-blindness refuses to address the systemic and historic inequalities created by entities at a federal level. Provine argues that nowhere is this more evident than in the evolution of American drug policy, which has consistently unfairly impacted racial minorities. She concludes by stating how understanding the racist roots of drug policy is crucial to addressing ongoing racial disparities within the United State's criminal justice system.