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The study of substantive criminal law is a study of human behavior. It is more than a study
of specific crimes; it is also an examination of the rules of human behavior and criminal
responsibility. Criminal law is based on moral values, and many of our crimes are also vio-
lations of our moral standards. The study of criminal law is controversial and exciting. For
example, what subject is more controversial than the issue of whether abortion is the exer-
cise of a woman’s right to privacy or simply murder? As with many other criminal law
issues, the answer to that question depends on one’s values and beliefs. As for being exciting,
otice how many of our movies and television programs are based on criminal behavior
e.g., Criminal Minds, NCIS, Law and Order, and CSI).

An important but seldom mentioned function of criminal law for social scientists is to
define the subject matter of criminology. Criminology is the sociological and psychological
study of the causes of crime, the control of crime, and the reasons for crime. Accord-
ingly, defining certain acts as criminal and others as noncriminal directly affects the subject
matter of criminology. As a comedian once stated, the only way to eliminate crime is to
abolish our criminal laws—then there could be no crime.

Too often, books on general criminal law devote a considerable portion of the text to
comparing majority and minority positions on specific issues. The result is that most readers
are confused and lack a general understanding of settled concepts. For the most part, we
have presented the prevailing positions with only an occasional reference to the majority–
minority conflicts.

This book is designed as an introductory text on criminal law and not as a research
book. Accordingly, to reduce its size and enhance its readability, endnotes are used spar-
ingly in chapters involving noncontroversial subjects. The text presents basic concepts or
principles of criminal law in definitions, focus boxes, and practicums. All these features
are designed to assist the student in understanding this often-confusing area of the law.

We have chosen to present this material in a narrative form rather than approach it from
a traditional law school casebook perspective. While we believe both techniques may be
used to teach criminal law, our goal is to present a clear, concise text that discusses back-
ground information necessary to understand the principles involved in criminal law and
sets forth the elements of the major crimes.

► New to the Seventh Edition

The seventh edition contains several significant changes. Those changes include the following:

• New material on organized and white-collar crimes
• Expanded discussions on criminal negligence, common inchoate crimes, solicitation
  crimes, the requirements of a voluntary act, the mens rea requirements, and accessories
to crimes
• Discussion on legal duties imposed by law
• Expanded section on theft crimes
• Expanded section on criminal trespass
• Discussion on the changing laws regarding marijuana use
Comments, corrections, or suggestions for improvement of the text should be forwarded to Cliff Roberson at cliff.roberson@washburn.edu. Enjoy the fascinating world of criminal law.

► Instructor Supplements

Instructor’s Manual with Test Bank. Includes content outlines for classroom discussion, teaching suggestions, and answers to selected end-of-chapter questions from the text. This also contains a Word document version of the test bank.

TestGen. This computerized test generation system gives you maximum flexibility in creating and administering tests on paper, electronically, or online. It provides state-of-the-art features for viewing and editing test bank questions, dragging a selected question into a test you are creating, and printing sleek, formatted tests in a variety of layouts. Select test items from test banks included with TestGen for quick test creation, or write your own questions from scratch. TestGen’s random generator provides the option to display different text or calculated number values each time questions are used.

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► Alternate Versions

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Comments, suggestions, and recommendations on this text may be sent to the authors by emailing cliff.roberson@washburn.edu.