

teresting twists to his analysis. Like Hernando de Soto in his path breaking book, *The Other Path*, Sorman directs his attention to the "little guy"—the poor farmer, the driver of an illegal taxi, the artisan in the underground economy. Sorman finds hope for the future in these individuals, if Third World governments would only strip away the myriad regulations and obstructions that deprive them of opportunities.

Sorman is on less firm ground when he recommends remedies than when he criticizes existing policies. In stressing technology as the antidote to hunger in the Third World, he seems to have forgotten his own earlier conclusions about government policy. For example, use of high-yield seeds, in which Sorman places great faith, has not been uniformly successful. Where it has failed to produce the expected results, government policies are often to blame. Thus, in parts of Sri Lanka, government control of irrigation deprives farmers of water applications at essential times, making the traditional seeds more appropriate.

Sorman finds in Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea important lessons for the Third World, arguing that all successful economies require a strong state. The Pacific Rim countries have enjoyed rapid growth and the diffusion of its benefits to both rich and poor because, he claims, these states provided infrastructure investment, ample public services (including especially strong educational systems), and selective aid to industry in early phases of development.

Sorman also seems to argue that the state should guarantee remunerative prices for agricultural product in order to secure the well-being of a peasant bourgeoisie. He says these policies should be accompanied by protections of individual and property rights, predictable commercial laws, policies that encourage savings, and fiscal responsibility.

Sorman is certainly right to point to the need for a stable rule of law that protects property, contracts, and individual rights. But his praise for policies to support infant industry is problematic. Elsewhere, such as in India or Brazil, Sorman himself notes that infant-industry protection led to some industrial growth, but the

benefits from that growth did not percolate through the population. Sorman might argue this is because these states failed to implement the other features of his economic development program, such as extensive education systems, property and contract protection, and deregulation. It's at least equally plausible, however, that infant-industry protection in Pacific Rim countries actually played a minor, or even negative, role in their development.

Sorman's praise for South Korea's industrial policy is somewhat akin to the overemphasis so many industrial-policy advocates have placed on Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry. To be sure, MITI made some investments in research and development and assisted some Japanese industries. But the agency played a relatively small role in overall investment decisions in Japan. And MITI sometimes actually served as a barrier to innovation and growth by at first failing to approve import licenses for technol-

ogy—for example, transistors—that later proved highly profitable in Japan.

Despite his perhaps too-hasty praise for agricultural price supports and infant-industry assistance, Sorman for the most part offers a sound assessment of what ails the Third World. He concludes that the poverty of nations is not inevitable. Rather, it is "the consequence of bad policies based on a false idea. This false idea under various guises is the notion that political leaders and everything that legitimizes them—powerful state, single party, military, public sector enterprises—constitutes progress. Inversely, everything private—the individual, dis-sidence, the critical spirit—is always backward." These notions, not multinational corporations, capitalism, overpopulation, or inadequate resources, have kept the Third World poor.

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Lines of Duty

BY JACOB SULLUM

Rush, by Kim Wozencraft, New York: Random House, 260 pages, \$18.95

Suppose that cops had to murder people to solve homicides or break into homes to prevent burglaries. Anyone who believes in the rule of law would be appalled by such a state of affairs. Yet in the drug war, it's routine: Police officers must violate the very prohibitions they are enforcing *in order* to enforce them.

This point, so obvious that it's generally ignored, is vividly illustrated in *Rush*, Kim Wozencraft's absorbing novel based on her experiences as an undercover narcotics officer in Texas. Because she understands the realities of the street and is familiar with the nitty-gritty of law enforcement, her implicit critique of the drug war (she now favors legalization) is in many ways more powerful than the arid arguments of academics and policy analysts.

The lawbreaking that Wozencraft describes is distinct from the more-

dramatic corruption of cops who are tempted by the vast sums of money involved in the illegal drug trade. It's due instead to the need, in the absence of victims, for police officers to become the complainants by seeking out and purchasing drugs. To maintain credibility (and, in some cases, to save their lives), they have to take drugs as well. Suspicious dealers often insist, sometimes at gunpoint, that customers sample their wares at the time of sale.

Rush's protagonist, Kristen Cates, whose experiences closely parallel the author's, discovers this dirty little secret after joining the police department of a small Texas city. At 21, Kristen is keen to appear tough, but she is unsophisticated about drugs. During her first undercover operation, her partner and soon-to-be lover, Jim, straightens her out when she tries to simulate drug taking: "You'll get

made in a stiff minute. Listen to what I'm saying here. *Simulation* is a word that comes in handy in court. We're out there to buy dope."

Kristen quickly learns to "be anything you have to be to make the case and keep your ass from getting shot." The necessity soon becomes a reward. During and after her first cocaine buy, she snorts some lines with a state agent, who tells her: "It's like this. We're out here risking our lives to keep fucksticks off the streets. But the job has a few fringe bennies." Later Kristen becomes familiar with the effects of a bewildering variety of pills and adept at injecting heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine—all in the line of duty. The irony of all this is powerful enough that



Wozencraft changed her mind about drug laws after trying to enforce them.

little is needed beyond exposition, but Wozencraft sometimes can't resist underlining the point, as when she intersperses excerpts from her law enforcement oath with candid descriptions of what the job really involves.

Still, Wozencraft's chronicle of her own chemical seduction illustrates a simple truth that is conspicuously absent from most of what passes for drug education: People don't take drugs because they've been possessed by the devil or overpowered by a magical potion. They take drugs because drugs make them feel good. "You can tell yourself you are doing it because you have to, to make the

case," Kristen says. "Because it's better than sex or it makes sex better. Because you feel like it today. But no matter what you tell yourself, how you explain it, there's only one reason. You are after the rush."

Given a sufficient reason—a cost high enough to outweigh the benefit—people will stop or curtail their drug use, as Kristen does and Wozencraft did. But what constitutes a sufficient reason varies from

person to person. For some people in some situations, almost no reason is good enough.

The more strung out Kristen and Jim get, the more they come to resemble the people they are setting up, the thinner their rationalizations become. At first it's easy for Kristen to imagine that she's putting away schoolyard pushers and other nasty characters. Some of the defen-

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dants have committed crimes against person and property. But many are guilty of nothing other than ingesting certain chemicals and selling them to Kristen or Jim upon request. Beneath the fog of her growing drug dependency, it dawns on her that there is no moral justification for betraying such people. But the police chief is pushing for more cases, and she and her partner oblige by continuing to entrap smalltime dealers.

Her sense of guilt becomes acute during the "bustout," when the police reel in all the defendants that Kristen and Jim have been building cases against. Witnessing the arrest of a dealer who will later get a life sentence, she says: "He trusted me. They had all trusted me....I hadn't counted on growing close to so many of the defendants. They'd believed I was their friend. I had pretended to be their friend. I felt like a snail, spreading ooze in front of me so that I could slither ahead another inch or so, not really getting anywhere, just going for the sake of moving forward. I sat there wondering if there was any way I could rationalize all one hundred and twelve arrests, knowing that I couldn't."

But while it's easy to incriminate druggies, netting the bigger fish requires some creativity. Under pressure from the police chief, Jim and Kristen fabricate evidence against a pornographer and suspected dealer, which ultimately leads to a bloody reprisal and their own conviction on perjury charges. Wozencraft describes the impact of these experiences, along with the depredations of Jim's and Kristen's addictions, in compelling prose, remarkably free of self-pity or lecturing.

Which is not to say that the book lacks a moral perspective. Accounts of police corruption can too easily turn into excuses for nihilism, not only denying the classification of certain people as good or evil but rejecting the categories themselves. Certainly Wozencraft tears down the distinction between drug users who carry badges and those who don't: "The difference between them and me was that I understood there was no difference."

But she is also firm in her indictment

of those who know the score and look the other way, such as the police chief. The real villain of the book, he wants to stay squeaky clean and advance his career while benefitting from other people's dirty work. Wozencraft also has harsh words for the decent, middle-class citizens who demand a war on drugs but don't want to know what it entails.

Kristen describes the attitude she encounters when she tries to tell them the real situation: "This is Texas, not New York City. This kind of thing can't happen here. Leave us alone. We have bills to pay, children to raise; you took the job, now just do what you have to to keep the drugs out. And do it quietly. We don't want to hear about it. The lawn needs edging."

Wozencraft does not shrink from ac-

cepting her share of responsibility. Neither in the book nor in the news media (she was profiled by the *Washington Post* and appeared on the "Donahue" show) has she sought to minimize her own crime, for which she served 13 months in federal prison. But the success of *Rush*—the movie rights went for \$1 million, unusual for a first novel—will give supporters of drug prohibition an excuse to dismiss her as just another felon seeking undeserved celebrity. They will also suggest that her story is atypical and that no lessons can be drawn from it about the morality of the effort to suppress drug use. They don't want to hear about it.

Jacob Sullum is assistant editor of REASON.

In a Word, No

BY BEN WILDAVSKY

A Future of Lousy Jobs?: The Changing Structure of U.S. Wages, edited by Gary Burtless, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 256 pages, \$10.95 paper

A shadowy drone holds a wrench in one hand, his neck shackled by a thick chain that extends straight into the air—held tight, no doubt, by some invisible hand. The grim image on the cover of this new release from the Brookings Institution demonstrates at least one marketer's belief that, where American jobs are concerned, misery still sells. So it's reassuring to discover that the worried question mark in the book's title, *A Future of Lousy Jobs?*, is far from perfunctory. The answer given here is no.

This anthology of five papers on changing U.S. wage patterns presented at a March 1989 Brookings conference incorporates a wide array of research findings. Although the various sections—with comments from other labor economists appended—form a disparate, occasionally contradictory whole, a helpful introduction by editor and contributor Gary Burtless, a senior fellow at Brookings, guides the lay reader through what might otherwise seem a morass of economese. The collection would come

alive with more vivid, real-world examples of workers and their jobs. But it's interesting for the way the authors at once reject certain conventional notions about what is wrong with the U.S. labor market and suggest some different problems that bear serious consideration.

The author's central premise—one which Burtless acknowledges is not shared by all economists—is that earnings inequality between the high, middle, and low ends of the wage distribution has grown for male workers, particularly in the last decade. To the extent that the rapid rise of wages at the top of the distribution accounts for this trend, it should alarm only those who find the very fact of differences among workers disturbing. The earnings gap, however, also reflects an absolute drop in wages for workers below the median. Robert A. Moffitt, for example, states that the real earnings (in 1982 dollars) of men in the 25th percentile dropped from \$9,500 in 1967 to \$8,400 in 1987.

Where does the "lousy jobs" thesis fit