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## A Fresh Perspective on the Continuing Problem of Housing Segregation and Move-In Violence: A review of *Hate Thy Neighbor* by Jeannine Bell

Review by Julie Spain\*

PRESUMED INCOMPETENT: THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND CLASS FOR WOMEN IN ACADEMIA. Edited by Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. González & Angela P. Harris. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press. 2012.

### INTRODUCTION

In her most recent book, Professor Jeannine Bell from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law investigates the current state of racial segregation in American housing, and reports on the violence and discrimination still experienced by minority families when they attempt to move into white communities. She terms this violence “anti-integrationist violence” because this violence is committed against minorities who are moving or have moved into a predominantly white neighborhood, and these acts of violence send a message to those families that they are not welcome. Because black families have been the primary targets<sup>1</sup> of anti-integrationist violence, the bulk of the data and anecdotes in *Hate Thy Neighbor* track their experiences. Bell began developing her expertise in hate crimes in the late 1990s. *Hate Thy Neighbor* builds upon her article by the same name, which

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1. Because these crimes target specific individuals based on their race, Bell rejects the label “victim” in favor of the term “target.” She asserts that “[o]ne who is attacked is a target, not someone who has been unlucky enough to stumble into some unfortunate circumstance.” JEANNINE BELL, *HATE THY NEIGHBOR: MOVE-IN VIOLENCE AND THE PERSISTENCE OF RACIAL SEGREGATION IN AMERICAN HOUSING* 7 (2013). I agree with this sentiment and will adopt her terminology in this Book Review.

was published in 2007.<sup>2</sup> Her newest book weaves together years of research and dozens of personal narratives from the targets of anti-integrationist violence into a powerful argument that housing segregation continues to cost minority families in America financial and educational opportunities, while increasing the likelihood that they will be the targets of anti-integrationist violence.

Bell divides her analysis into six chapters, beginning in the early 1900s with the history of housing proximity of black and white families and an explanation of the legal and cultural changes that created the current state of segregated housing.<sup>3</sup> She then analyzes the current state of move-in violence<sup>4</sup> before explaining how such violence continues to exist despite increasing racial tolerance.<sup>5</sup> Next, Bell narrows her discussion to interethnic cases of racial violence, meaning that both the perpetrator and the target are minorities of different ethnicities, and she inquires into the perpetrators' motivation in these cases.<sup>6</sup> Before concluding her book, Bell explains the difficulty of prosecuting acts of anti-integrationist violence and analyzes the available remedies for targets of this violence.<sup>7</sup> She concludes with a powerful call to action, suggesting opportunities for reform and urging readers to consider the "personal cost of increased vulnerability and rising crime"<sup>8</sup> that will result from a failure to remedy the problems caused by housing segregation.<sup>9</sup>

The structure of *Hate Thy Neighbor* is generally advantageous. Bell makes her data-heavy chapters manageable by breaking the chapters into several subsections. For example, in the chapter "Responding to Neighborhood Hate Crimes," she makes content about hate crime prosecution and potential legal remedies accessible to readers who may have no prior experience studying law by articulating the prosecution process and clearly distinguishing between federal, state, civil, and criminal remedies.<sup>10</sup> While readers will gain the most from a cover-to-cover reading of this book, Bell has written most subsections in a manner that allows readers to read them independently of earlier sections and chapters. Bell references earlier chapters when the subsection requires background information, allowing easy navigation between parts. This structure is especially useful for those completing research regarding a narrow aspect of housing segregation or anti-integrationist violence.

One of Bell's greatest strengths is her ability to communicate the extensive damage caused by housing segregation and move-in violence. For those without firsthand knowledge of the effects of hate crimes, Bell spells them out poignantly.

2. Jeannine Bell, *Hate Thy Neighbor: Violent Racial Exclusion and the Persistence of Segregation*, 5 OHIO ST. J. CRIM. L. 47 (2007).

3. BELL, *supra* note 1, at 11–52.

4. *Id.* at 53–85.

5. *Id.* at 86–116.

6. *Id.* at 117–35.

7. *Id.* at 164–90.

8. *Id.* at 202.

9. *Id.* at 191–207.

10. *See id.* at 164–90.

She describes the lasting psychological damage for the targets of move-in violence and emphasizes the significance of these crimes occurring in the home, an intimate space that is supposed to be a sanctuary.<sup>11</sup> Noting that these newcomer minority families often already experience isolation as the only minority family in the neighborhood, Bell explains that instances of anti-integrationist violence can deepen their feelings of isolation, hopelessness, and fear.<sup>12</sup> After discussing the possible actions of first responders to crime scenes, she analyzes the difficulty of prosecuting hate crimes and the lasting financial and psychological damage that these attacks cause.<sup>13</sup> Many of the families interviewed have never obtained justice; even when the perpetrator is caught and prosecuted, the psychological damage is lasting, and the law cannot make the target whole. In the words of one man: “I’ve had a hell of a sacrifice and it hasn’t ended yet. . . . It’ll never be over. . . . How can it be behind us when it destroyed a marriage of 18 years?”<sup>14</sup> By sharing their stories and advocating for reform, Bell pays tribute to the sacrifices made by these families.

*Hate Thy Neighbor* addresses an unintuitive and pervasive type of discrimination that deserves greater attention in academia and policymaking. Two trends cause many Americans to falsely believe that housing segregation is largely an issue of the past. First, housing segregation dynamics do not track the national progress made regarding racial tolerance in general.<sup>15</sup> While race relations in the United States may have improved over the past few decades, housing segregation has not followed this trend.<sup>16</sup> Bell presents evidence from studies, surveys, census data, and anecdotes that establishes that white families remain uncomfortable with the idea of living in a neighborhood comprised of a high percentage of black families, even though there has been a national increase in racial tolerance.<sup>17</sup> Second, the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968 means that housing discrimination based on race has been illegal for forty-six years.<sup>18</sup> This theoretical freedom for minorities to have the same access to housing as white families may lead some to believe that systemic barriers to obtaining safe housing in a desirable area no longer exist.<sup>19</sup>

Bell’s book explains the complexity of housing segregation and why the civil rights movement has not resulted in widespread housing integration. While the nature of move-in violence has changed over the last several decades, these

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11. *Id.* at 166.

12. *See id.* at 185–86.

13. *See id.* at 164–90.

14. *Id.* at 185 (second alteration in original) (citing Rose Livingston, *Black Man Wishes He Hadn’t Taken Klan Case to Court*, BIRMINGHAM NEWS, Jan. 30, 1994, at 18).

15. *See id.* at 89–97.

16. *See id.*

17. *Id.* at 98–104.

18. For a discussion about the effects of the passage of the Fair Housing Act on the upward mobility of black families, see PATRICK SHARKEY, *STUCK IN PLACE: URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE END OF PROGRESS TOWARD RACIAL EQUALITY* 8–10 (2013).

19. *See id.*

crimes still occur and they remain especially difficult to prosecute. The attention of policymakers and academics are needed to enact reform. *Hate Thy Neighbor* takes an important step toward renewing efforts to fight anti-integrationist violence by beginning an informed dialogue about why it occurs and what can be done to lessen the impact.

While many readers may be familiar with the idea of racial segregation, fewer readers may be familiar with the terms anti-integrationist violence or move-in violence. These terms describe the same illegal violence from two different perspectives. Bell defines anti-integrationist violence as “(1) extralegal acts of terrorism, or crimes directed at minorities immediately upon moving to white neighborhoods; and (2) crimes targeted at African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities while residing in majority-white neighborhoods that are designed to drive them out.”<sup>20</sup> The term anti-integrationist addresses the motivation of the perpetrator, while move-in violence defines the violence from the perspective of the targets that experience it when they move to a new community. These instances of violence typically occur at the residence of the target. Because these incidents occur in the intimate setting of the target’s home, Bell asserts that the analysis of these crimes must differ from other hate crimes.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout her book, Bell emphasizes the importance of the historical and cultural context in which these acts of violence occur. Homes provide security and a space to disconnect from the outside world.<sup>22</sup> These private spaces have long enjoyed special protection under the law: castle laws allow individuals to use extra force to defend themselves when an attack occurs inside of their home; the Third Amendment prohibits the nonconsensual quartering of soldiers inside of one’s home; and the Fourth Amendment prohibits warrantless searches (though some exceptions apply).<sup>23</sup> When individuals experience other types of hate crimes, they can still retreat home. This is not the case with move-in violence. By attacking families in their homes, the perpetrators destroy the families’ sense of safety.<sup>24</sup> Most of the individuals targeted have no other place to retreat, and they live in a constant state of fear. While some targets may overcome their fears and choose to remain in their homes after these incidents occur, many are forced to flee in order to protect themselves.<sup>25</sup> They leave their homes, their possessions, and their financial investments behind, but carry the psychological damage with them for years to come.<sup>26</sup>

*Hate Thy Neighbor* offers well-supported arguments that these crimes occur because middle- and working-class whites view minority families as a threat to

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20. BELL, *supra* note 1, at 4.

21. *Id.* at 5.

22. *Id.*

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. *Id.* at 190.

26. *See id.* at 185–86.

their economic status and their identity.<sup>27</sup> In the period that followed World War II, many middle- and working-class white families had recently obtained homeownership.<sup>28</sup> Owning a home was the first step to upward mobility, but in order to achieve upward mobility, a community must remain economically stable. America had developed the self-fulfilling prophecy that black families in a community would lower the property value of the homes, so the integration of black families into white neighborhoods threatened neighborhood stability.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, white middle- or working-class families who found their identity in their homeownership resorted to illegal and violent measures to keep minorities out of their neighborhoods.<sup>30</sup> The perpetrators who committed these crimes may have been motivated at least in part by a sense of self-preservation rather than racial hatred. Bell's analysis of the identity of these perpetrators scrutinizes class, ethnicity, and the role of public and religious institutions.<sup>31</sup> Bell also examines how housing segregation has changed since the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and she presents case studies of several major cities.<sup>32</sup>

Bell's analysis of where and how different groups experience the American racial structure makes chapter one especially worthwhile. After discussing how the Catholic Church and settlement houses<sup>33</sup> shaped American beliefs about race, Bell quotes historian Thomas Guglielmo: "Italians could encounter the color structure when entering hospital, living or visiting a relative in a nursing home, attending a summer camp or choosing a nursery school."<sup>34</sup> Here and throughout her entire book, Bell helps the reader empathize with the individuals and visualize the violence that they suffered. Her writing in these sections has all of the appeal of personal narratives while maintaining the usefulness of arguments supported by data.

By explaining the historical living arrangements of black and white families, Bell provides context for the current state of segregation and addresses stereotypes that many readers may believe about the past. Those who have not studied racial discrimination or housing law may believe that racial discrimination has been steadily declining since the time of slavery, however, housing segregation has not had such a linear path.<sup>35</sup> Bell explains that at several points throughout America's

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27. *See id.* at 43–44.

28. *Id.* at 43.

29. *Id.* at 46–47 (citing THOMAS J. SURGUE, *THE ORIGINS OF THE URBAN CRISIS: RACE AND INEQUALITY IN POSTWAR DETROIT* (2005)).

30. *Id.* at 43.

31. *Id.* at 44–45.

32. *Id.* at 54–73.

33. Settlement houses were places that taught immigrants how to be "American," and the Italian neighborhoods in Chicago did not allow African Americans to benefit from their services, much like other social services provided at the time. *Id.* at 45.

34. *Id.* at 46 (quoting Thomas A. Guglielmo, *Encountering the Color Line in the Everyday: Italian in Interwar Chicago*, *J. AM. ETHNIC HIST.*, Summer 2004, at 45, 53.)

35. *See id.* at 11.

history, minorities have lived in and even been welcomed into white communities.<sup>36</sup> Bell also describes integrated communities of the postbellum period, which formed partially by necessity when poor whites could not afford to move out of black neighborhoods.<sup>37</sup> During this “springtime of race relations” blacks could freely move into many northern cities.<sup>38</sup> Chinese Americans experienced anti-integrationist violence before African Americans, with attacks and expulsions starting as early as the late 1800s.<sup>39</sup> Anti-integrationist violence against African Americans followed shortly after.<sup>40</sup> The government reinforced this pro-segregation sentiment by creating segregation ordinances.<sup>41</sup> When the Supreme Court struck down the ordinances,<sup>42</sup> housing communities enacted covenants that effectively kept realtors from showing or selling homes to African American families.<sup>43</sup>

Anti-integrationist violence changed from group-oriented violence to individual violence throughout the decades. Early on, large groups of people would join together to terrorize black families in their communities. By the year 1930, 235 counties had “sundowned” African Americans, a violent process where townspeople threatened minority families not to let the sun set on them in that town.<sup>44</sup> By the 1940s, minority families often experienced mob violence upon moving into white communities.<sup>45</sup> Mobs would gather outside of a family’s home shortly after the family arrived, and the mobs would terrorize the families by throwing bricks through windows, screaming, or burning crosses on the family’s lawn. Minority families continued to experience move-in violence at the hands of large mobs until the early 1970s.<sup>46</sup> Neighborhood-wide campaigns declined a few years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968.<sup>47</sup> While the types of violent acts committed did not change significantly, individuals and small groups became the primary perpetrators, and their actions no longer had the support of the community. Today, it is primarily individuals and small groups that commit anti-integrationist violence.

Two of Bell’s chapters, “The Contemporary Dynamics of Move-In Violence” and “Anti-Integrationist Violence and the Tolerance-Violence Paradox,”

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36. *See, e.g., id.* at 38.

37. *Id.* at 13.

38. *Id.* (citing JAMES LOEWEN, *SUNDOWN TOWNS: A HIDDEN DIMENSION OF AMERICAN RACISM* 29 (2005)).

39. *Id.* at 14 (citing LOEWEN, *supra* note 40, at 50–51).

40. *Id.*

41. *Id.* at 15 (citing A. LEON HIGGINBOTHAM, *SHADES OF FREEDOM: RACIAL POLITICS AND PRESUMPTIONS OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORAL PROCESS* 120 (1996)).

42. *Id.* at 17 (citing *Buchanan v. Warley*, 425 U.S. 60 (1917)).

43. *Id.* at 30–31.

44. *Id.* at 14.

45. *Id.* at 57.

46. *Id.*

47. *Id.* at 58.



could stand alone as separate publications.<sup>48</sup> These data-driven sections of the book address the aspects of move-in violence covered by her earlier chapters and place these incidents in a contemporary context. Bell also discusses the current state of race relations in the United States and anticipates and addresses questions that may be lingering in readers' minds. Why do these crimes still occur when we are more racially tolerant as a society? Doesn't the election of a black President indicate that our society has made serious progress regarding race relations? With what frequency are hate crimes committed, and where? Bell provides answers to these questions and many more. These chapters are particularly helpful for academics, as the chapters interpret data from multiple studies and provide more empirical evidence than Bell's earlier chapters. Even with the substantial data analysis, Bell expertly draws the reader back to the human impact of this violence.

One unclear aspect of "The Contemporary Dynamics of Move-In Violence" is Bell's selection of the time period from 1990 to 2010 to represent contemporary segregation dynamics. When assessing the location of move-in violence and the frequency with which specific types of move-in violence are committed, Bell's data spans from 1990 to 2010.<sup>49</sup> While the United States has not passed legislation as significant as the Fair Housing Act during this time period, the country has experienced steady cultural shifts over the past fifty years.<sup>50</sup> Presumably, we have also experienced further cultural shifts in the last twenty years. If American culture has not changed in any noteworthy manner between 1990 and 2010, this goes unstated in the book. For readers who are unfamiliar with the dynamics of segregation over the past twenty or so years, additional information about why this time period was chosen to represent contemporary dynamics may have been helpful. However, the up-to-date data and thorough analysis in this section of the book makes it a relevant and informative guide.

After laying the groundwork for contemporary anti-integrationist violence, Bell investigates the trend of interethnic move-in violence perpetrated by Latinos against blacks<sup>51</sup> and explores the situations where class plays a bigger role than race as a motivator for violence.<sup>52</sup> These sections add two new layers of complexity to the study of anti-integrationist violence: they address the motivations of minorities who commit acts of anti-integrationist violence, and also examine the roles that gangs play in this violence. Due to the frequency with which Latino gangs in Los Angeles County commit violent hate crimes,<sup>53</sup> Bell focuses on the violence committed

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48. *See id.* at 53–85; 86–116.

49. *Id.* at 66.

50. *Id.* at 89.

51. *Id.* at 117–35.

52. *Id.* at 136–63.

53. "By 2007 Latino gangs had become . . . the region's leading perpetrators of violent hate crimes . . ." *Id.* at 121 (citing Teresa Watanabe, *Crimes Ruin a Dream Neighborhood*, L.A. TIMES, Nov. 29, 1992).



by these gangs specifically, rather than providing an assessment of the role played by gangs generally.

Bell's detailed analysis of Latino gang violence is useful and surprising. Readers learn that despite the similarities these groups share as socially and economically disadvantaged minorities, Latinos in Los Angeles County and other locales prefer to distance themselves from African Americans, both in their housing and in their social interactions.<sup>54</sup> While Latino gangs commit violence in part due to a fear of losing territory to black gangs,<sup>55</sup> individual Latinos who attack African Americans are often motivated more by racist ideology than by the factors previously discussed.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, Bell investigates the legal and community response to hate crimes. According to Bell, perpetrators of anti-integrationist violence often elude police and prosecution.<sup>57</sup> Bell's conclusion raises two questions: how and why does this happen? Bell explains that anti-integrationist violence often occurs in the form of low-level crimes such as vandalism, which often go uninvestigated.<sup>58</sup> In addition, investigations are difficult due to a lack of witnesses, and some communities may rally around the perpetrator and refuse to assist in investigations.<sup>59</sup> Bell introduces the reader to the criminal and civil remedies available to targets of anti-integrationist violence, as well as the shortcomings of each. The failure to find and prosecute these perpetrators makes clear the need for legal reform. Rather than suggesting drastic new laws, Bell suggests that the improvements must begin with community support and the enforcement of hate crime legislation.<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Hate Thy Neighbor* effectively educates readers about the history and current status of housing segregation and move-in violence. The book provides a comprehensive primer on the topic and also highlights the persistent and noxious pattern of racial segregation and inequality in American society. Bell's background as an educator is most apparent when she interprets studies and explains the data in a manner and format that is easily followed by students who are unfamiliar with this topic. While the first portion of the book describes the history of anti-integrationist

54. *Id.* at 128 (citing CAMILLE ZUBRINSKY CHARLES, *WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR? RACE, CLASS, AND RESIDENCE IN LOS ANGELES* (2006)).

55. *Id.* at 132 (citing Sam Quinones, *How a Community Imploded*, L.A. TIMES, Mar. 4, 2007).

56. *Id.* at 129 (citing Teresa Watanabe, *Crimes Rooted in Hatred Increase*, L.A. TIMES, July 25, 2008).

57. *Id.* at 164.

58. *Id.* at 167.

59. *Id.* (citing JEANNINE BELL, *POLICING HATRED: LAW ENFORCEMENT, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND HATE CRIME* (2004)).

60. *Id.* at 185–86.

violence clearly and efficiently, Bell shines in her analysis of the current state of housing segregation and the difficulties in addressing move-in violence. *Hate Thy Neighbor* showcases Bell's expertise and years of research, and will undoubtedly become an essential resource for those studying the intersection of housing and discrimination law.