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FRANK REMINGTON—A RECOLLECTION

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Early in the summer of 1960, our old Plymouth loaded to the brim, my family and I headed east for a visiting year at Harvard. On the way we stopped at Madison where a young fellow (we were all young fellows thirty years ago) named Frank Remington was to run a faculty seminar on the Administration of Criminal Justice. I can’t recall precisely what made me sign up. I’m sure it had something to do with geography and the attractions of Madison; also, of course, with interest in the subject, but I expect diversion rather than instruction was my main motivation.

Well, I wasn’t disappointed. Madison and its environs were resplendent that summer. So was the campus (coming from Salt Lake City, just the thought of ordering beer on the campus was staggering). The parties, the receptions, the dinners were admirable; the company unbeatable. All that was Frank’s doing, and we who participated have reason to be thankful. But those pleasures of the flesh, surprisingly, were not the most memorable features of that summer. It is widely known—and I expect others participating in this tribute will make the case—that Remington developed a way of thinking about and studying criminal justice that has had a great and continuing influence on legal scholarship in the area. That summer, I had direct and concentrated exposure to what that way of thinking was all about and it left its mark forever after. The pleasures Frank laid on for us have long gone the evanescent way of all pleasures; his intellectual gifts will endure.

Frank was then in the early stages of directing for the American Bar Foundation a series of path-breaking empirical studies of the workings of the criminal justice system. The books that emerged later in the 1960s are a tribute, of course, to their authors, but also to Frank, the General Editor of the series, whose insights and spirit permeated the entire enterprise. But others will speak to these. My message is a personal one. I was not a member of the Remington Team. I was just another young law professor who had the good fortune to come within the gravitational force of his thought. We read draft chapters the various authors were producing, we discussed their methods and their conclusions, we discussed what bearing these new factual findings had on traditional understandings, we traced the obscure lines of mutual influence interconnecting the various agencies of criminal justice and their actions, we speculated on the possibilities and the limitations of reform. I saw

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"we" did these things. True. But, it was Frank Remington who provided the music, the orchestration, the conducting. The recollection of Frank, his large frame sprawled to full length on his chair, drawling on in his utterly relaxed and somewhat convoluted way, but saying the most stunningly original and incisive things about criminal justice was a rare and wonderful experience.

I said that this seminar had a great impact on me. I can give chapter and verse. The year following that Madison summer, I wrote two articles, both of which I could not have conceived, let alone have written, apart from the Remington influence—one on counsel in sentencing and parole, and another on discretion in policing and corrections. I have no doubt that my experience was not singular. There is a whole literature of books and articles on the administration of criminal justice that owe their existence to the influence of Remington's thought. Frank, for laying on a helluva great summer of festivities, I thank you. For permanently enriching my understanding of criminal justice, I will always be in your debt.