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Expansion of Drug Treatment Services Continues in County Jails

By Pat Grossmith & Sheryl Rich Kern

Late in August, a woman wrapped in a padded, quilted garment appears passed out on the floor of a locked cell at the Hillsborough County House of Corrections, familiarly known as the Valley Street jail or just Valley.

"It's actually the safest place for her," says jail Superintendent David Dionne. The woman, he explains, is detoxing.

In another cell, an older woman, dressed in a green quilted suicide wrap with her hands cuffed in the back, is gingerly led out of her cell and walked to a room off an indoor basketball court.

She stands in front of an oversized Hillsborough County Department of Corrections emblem and talks to a 9th Circuit Court — District Division — Manchester judge via a computer as a court bailiff looks on. She is granted personal recognizance bail, ensuring her release that day.

These two women are among the 27 inmates — eight women and 10 men detoxing, and nine others on suicide watch — being closely observed by correctional officers.

They account for 11 percent of the 245 people being detained this August day and, Dionne says, the number is a reflection of the opioid epidemic sweeping the state and, in particular, Manchester.

EXPANSION *continued on page 16*

Behind the Data, Stories of Addiction Show Recovery Isn't a Straight Line

In and out of jail and rehab for 13 years, Benjamin Bryant can now envision a new chapter. Medication-assisted treatment is the source of his hope. (Photo: Jim Vaiknora)

By Kathie Ragsdale

Benjamin Bryant was nine years old when he started using drugs. Since then, he has been led out of his high school in handcuffs and has robbed stores and broken into homes to feed his addiction.

He has had pancreatitis and two heart surgeries owing to drug-related damage to his body. He has been incarcerated multiple times in multiple states for offenses related to his usage.

But for 20 years, he says he had never been offered medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for his drug use.

BRYANT *continued on page 21*

PRACTITIONER PROFILE

Albany's Alkalay is Trainer & Performer

By Kathie Ragsdale

Edward Alkalay is in his element standing before a crowd — whether in a courtroom, a classroom or on a performance stage.

The Albany, New Hampshire resident is a co-founding member of Conway-based Alkalay & Smillie, but also an experienced educator and a folk/country musician with two CDs to his credit.

After growing up in Ardsley, New York, and getting a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Albany, Alkalay came to Boston to pursue a musical career. He spent a couple of years as a street performer, playing acoustic "Americana music" and writing many of his own songs.

But the need for a steady income found him considering a different career path, and he was torn between the law and teaching.

With the law, he says, "There's a performance aspect to it. The same with teaching."

He ended up doing both.

ALKALAY *continued on page 23*

INSIDE

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THE DOCKET

Congratulations are in Order. Awards to be presented at the February Midyear Meeting are announced. **PAGE 2**

Introducing: Committee Corner. Find out more about how the Bar's committees can support you and your practice this year. **PAGE 5**

All Things Cyber. A new, ongoing column will tackle the latest cyber- and information-security issues. **PAGE 6**

Inside: Special Wellness Supplement

Health Law and Criminal Law

Changes coming to the state's therapeutic cannabis program, what criminal defense lawyers need to know about family law, and much more in this month's practice areas. **PAGES 26-33**

Q&A. A conversation with incoming NH Supreme Court Clerk of Court Timothy Gudas. **PAGE 34**

Book Review

A Fascinating Portrait of Accomplishment & Reinvention

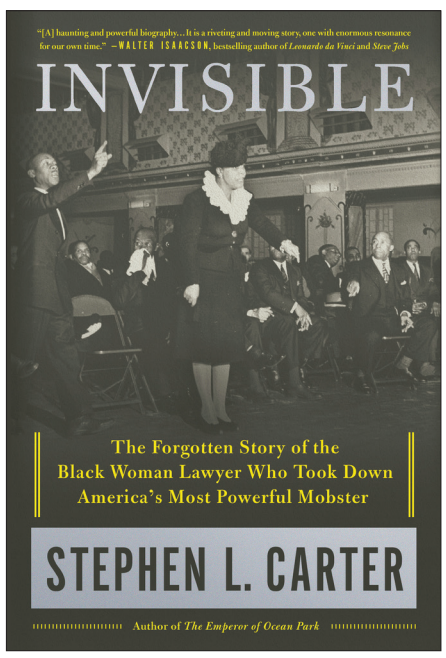
"Invisible" by Stephen L. Carter
Henry Holt (2018)
Hardcover; 384 pages

Reviewed by Kevin J. Powers

One Fletcher Henderson jazz album is titled, *A Study in Frustration*. Ironically, the title might as easily apply to Eunice Hunton Carter, who dated Henderson in her youth and again in her middle age. When she was not disappointing her high-profile mother by associating with lowly jazz musicians, Carter spent her days building a career as an attorney, activist, and quasi-diplomat — a career that will strike many readers as almost too incredible to be believed, because she lived this extraordinary life as a black woman during the early and middle twentieth century.

Yale Law School professor Stephen L. Carter paints a gripping portrait of a grandmother about whose achievements he did not learn until long after her death. Simultaneously, the author dusts the cobwebs off an oft-neglected aspect of black American history: an early-twentieth century Harlem aristocracy of attorneys, doctors, international executives, public speakers, and others. In this regard, Invisible serves equally well as a portrait of a forgotten society and as a portrait of a forgotten prosecutor.

Attorney Carter began her career as a social worker, only attending law school at night, years after graduating from Smith College. Although one gets the impression that her private law practice never particularly thrived, her government law practice kicked into high gear when her loyalty as a lifelong Republican politico landed her a position as an Assistant District Attorney under Thomas Dewey, who was appointed as an independent mob prosecutor and a sort of New York version of Eliot Ness. The only woman on the team, Carter was relegated to dealing with prostitution allegations, but she carefully scrutinized the evidence and pieced together a case against the mob out of what Dewey — reluctant to be characterized as a moralizing vice crusader — initially viewed as politically undesirable petty vice. Realizing that a plague of independent prostitution operations was too coordinated and too protected to be the product of hundreds of unrelated proprietors, Carter connected the dots to Charles "Lucky" Luciano, coordinated the raids that brought down Luciano and his key henchmen, and watched as Dewey achieved the first successful prosecution of an American mob boss of Luciano's caliber for something other than tax fraud.



Throughout her work for Dewey — later elected Manhattan District Attorney in his own right— on the Luciano case, on subsequent mob prosecutions, and finally as bureau chief of what today would be characterized as a misdemeanor prosecution unit, Carter's story was one of great successes falling just short of her aspirations. Dewey promoted her, but left her off of the front-line trial teams for the mob cases and promoted a black male prosecutor ahead of her. Dewey's successor kept Carter on after Dewey became Governor, but her advancement was limited. She spent years hoping for a judgeship, but watched as colleagues donned robes while she was left practicing law. Her career flourished, but she had what seems a somewhat distant relationship with her son until, as an adult, he embraced the practice of law.

Time and again, however, Carter proved relentlessly willing to reinvent herself and pivot based upon the opportunities before her. Ever cognizant of vicious Tammany Hall Democrat racism that she observed during her early political work for Harlem candidates, she remained unswerving in her loyalty to and willingness to campaign on behalf of the Republican Party and Dewey — even as he lost the 1940 Republican Presidential nomination, the 1944 Presidential campaign, and — infamously — the 1948 Presidential campaign. When she left prosecution, she resumed private practice, developed a public relations consultancy, and embraced international quasi-diplomatic work on behalf of women and minorities as the world shifted in the wake of World War II and the withdrawal of Europe from colonialism.

Throughout all of her setbacks, Carter hardly ever, if at all, blamed any disappointment on sexism or racism. While she was surely cognizant of the bigotries of the era, she seems to have lacked the time to worry about their impact upon her own life. Instead, the target of her resentment — and the man upon whom she blamed her failure to become a judge — would be her brother Alphaeus, a fervent Communist who went to prison for protecting the identity of his comrades, and who lived out his final years in post-colonial Africa.

Professor Carter has written a fascinating portrait of an extraordinary attorney and a vanished society. While the author never conceals the fact that he is writing about his grandmother, he displays a staunch willingness to question or altogether discount family tradition in favor of verifiable fact whenever necessary. And in a story that entails more than a little political nuance, the author manages a level of political impartiality that makes it impossible to tell where his own biases might or might not lie. This is biography of the first order.

Kevin J. Powers was admitted to the New Hampshire bar in 2006 and currently handles appeals and complex trial motions on a consulting basis for busy trial litigators who love going into court but lack time to decamp to a law library.

Bemis from page 20

part of her recovery process. The program provided structure. She had to go to a certain number of groups and AA meetings, and it gave her a secure timeline for her days that she had never experienced prior.

Without drugs, she had to develop something that could become the new center of her life. This new guiding force fills her days. It gives her direction, instills in her hope, and provides her with the solace she always unequivocally sought from a chemical release. This power, she calls God.

"I didn't think I was ever going to be able to do it — not without something else …" Bemis says of recovery. "That something today is God. I don't mean like a religious God, but I have something out there that's helping me.

"Before I used to try to micromanage my whole life and control and manipulate everything. And I still catch myself doing those things sometimes. But when I do, I create a mess for myself. But when I just do what's in front of me to do whatever that might be, and try not to be invested in the result, I'm good."

Since her release and subsequent sobriety, her life has not been perfect. The problems that existed for her the previous times she went to jail are still present. She has a long record, the majority for drug-related offenses such as felony possession, DUI, and felony sales. In the past, her record prevented her from gaining traction financially. She avoided businesses that required background checks due to her theft charges. Procuring housing was always a challenge —.she had no references, no credit, and had broken almost every lease she had ever signed.

This time, however, her sobriety gave her hope. When Bemis began to feel steady in her recovery she was able to voice to employers and potential landlords the truth — that she has a criminal record but is striving one day at a time to maintain her stability, self-confidence, and reliability.

She says that a gift of her sobriety today is, "The fact that people trust me and that I know I'm trustworthy. I have a little bit of integrity."

But, there was one more piece of the puzzle — her children. While she was actively using drugs, her children had been taken from her by Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Recently, though, she says that DCYF saw she was really trying, and she was finally able to have her two youngest children back in her life. She has created a home for them in a new apartment. They each have their own bedrooms.

Today, Bemis regularly attends drug court, counseling, and 12-Step meetings. Because of her spiritual growth, sound mental health, and network of supportive individuals around her who can identify with her past, she approaches each day with serenity.

"When I'm in a good spot mentally and emotionally, it's just like everything's magic..." she says. "When I was using, I don't remember ever laughing …

"I get to be happy even on the days that I'm completely lost. I know that I'll be okay. I never had that my whole life. That I think is probably one of the biggest gifts. It's just knowing that I'll be alright and I have what I need today."

Reporters Rachel Ford, Brianna Gilman, Violet Schuttler and Kendra Syphers contributed to this report.

In Memoriam from page 11

aircraft.

He leaves behind his wide of many years, Barbara Kelly. He also had three children: Sean Kelly, M.D., of Maine; Megan Kelly, of New Jersey; and Adam Kelly, of Arizona; as well as four grandchildren.

Lynne S. Mitchell

Lynne Sanderson Mitchell, 62 years old, who made her home in Plymouth, NH, passed away quite unexpectedly on Christmas night, 2019. She was in Florida, with her mother, helping her sister-in-law and her two nephews through some rough spots of life. That is who she was; a helper, a friend, and a good listener, who also always thought things through and gave the best guidance she could. Most importantly, she was a wonderful mother, grandmother, wife and friend.

She leaves behind her son Malcolm, and his fiancée Kelly; she so looked forward to their wedding next August. Her son Ben, and his wife Frances, and their little son Hank; she so looked forward to teaching Hank to ski and seeing him grow up. Her son Wesley; who she so wanted to see return to the east coast and start a new career that challenged him

IN MEMORIAM *continued on page 23*