

Don't Shoot: One Man, A Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America

David M. Kennedy

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Gang- and drug-related inner-city violence, with its attendant epidemic of incarceration, is the defining crime problem in our country. In some neighborhoods in America, one out of every two hundred young black men is shot to death every year, and few initiatives of government and law enforcement have made much difference. But when David Kennedy, a self-taught and then-unknown criminologist, engineered the "Boston Miracle" in the mid-1990s, he pointed the way toward what few had imagined: a solution.

Don't Shoot tells the story of Kennedy's long journey. Riding with beat cops, hanging with gang members, and stoop-sitting with grandmothers, Kennedy found that all parties misunderstood each other, caught in a spiral of racialized anger and distrust. He envisioned an approach in which everyone-gang members, cops, and community members-comes together in what is essentially a huge intervention. Offenders are told that the violence must stop, that even the cops want them to stay alive and out of prison, and that even their families support swift law enforcement if the violence continues. In city after city, the same miracle has followed: violence plummets, drug markets dry up, and the relationship between the police and the community is reset.

This is a landmark book, chronicling a paradigm shift in how we address one of America's most shameful social problems. A riveting, page-turning read, it combines the street vérité of *The Wire*, the social science of *Gang Leader for a Day*, and the moral urgency and personal journey of *Fist Stick Knife Gun*. But unlike anybody else, Kennedy shows that there could be an end in sight.



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