



KNOWLEDGE TO  
MEET THE CHALLENGE OF  
CRIME AND JUSTICE

## National Institute of Justice

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National Institute of Justice  
810 7th Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20531, U.S.A.

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## Director's Message

This issue of the *NIJ Journal* discusses three diverse topics—Russian organized crime, the Federal role in Indian Country justice, and pathological gambling. In the cover story, Distinguished Professor James O. Finckenauer and Elin Waring report the findings of a 4-year investigation into the operations of the Russian mafia in the United States. The investigation was conducted by a consortium of law enforcement organizations in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Their research describes the historical context and the types of crime in which Russian criminals in the United States have been implicated. It also compares Russian organized crime to the Sicilian mafia.

Unlike other population groups living in the United States, American Indians are experiencing increases in serious crime and victimization rates. Kim Baca explains how the Federal Government is rethinking its approach to crime and justice in Indian Country and discusses the impact of programs already in place. One key aspect of the Justice Department's efforts to improve conditions has been the combined funding of Federal agencies, but the article explores a more significant component—the encouragement of a government-to-government relationship that better appreciates tribal leaders' decisionmaking roles.

In this issue's third article, Charles Wellford points out that between one-half and two-thirds of the 1.8 million pathological gamblers in the United States today have committed some type of crime, such as theft, embezzlement, domestic violence, or child abuse and neglect, to feed their money-dependent habit. Because the last major study of gambling was conducted almost 25 years ago, Congress mandated a new study to look at the current state of gambling in the United States, emerging trends, and any relationships to crime trends. Wellford's article discusses this study and its findings, which were published by the National Research Council in the book-length report, *Pathological Gambling: A Critical Review*.

The three features this month have little in common with one another. Instead, they illustrate the breadth of the issues and the variety of challenges that face criminal justice professionals. The articles also demonstrate the *NIJ Journal's* commitment to publish stories that explore the changing face of crime and justice.