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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Preface -- Chapter 1. Introduction: Big, Dark Secrets and America's Prison System -- Chapter 2. Prisons and Crime -- Chapter 3. The Growth of America's Prison System -- Chapter 4. Raising Questions About America's Big Prison System -- Chapter 5. Explaining Prison Growth in the United States: The Materialist Perspective -- Chapter 6. Prison Effects: Who Gets Locked Up -- Chapter 7. The Imprisonment Binge and Crime -- Chapter 8. The End of Oil and the Future of American Prisons? -- Chapter 9. A Consuming Culture -- Notes -- References -- Index -- About the Author
Sommario/riassunto	The American prison system has grown tenfold since the 1970's, but crime rates in the United States have not decreased. This doesn't surprise Michael J. Lynch, a critical criminologist, who argues that our oversized prison system is a product of our consumer culture, the public's inaccurate beliefs about controlling crime, and the government's criminalizing of the poor. While deterrence and incapacitation theories suggest that imprisoning more criminals and punishing them leads to a reduction in crime, case studies, such as one focusing on the New York City jail system between 1993 and 2003, show that a reduction in crime is unrelated to the size of jail

populations. Although we are locking away more people, Lynch explains that we are not targeting the worst offenders. Prison populations are comprised of the poor, and many are incarcerated for relatively minor robberies and violence. America's prison expansion focused on this group to the exclusion of corporate and white collar offenders who create hazardous workplace and environmental conditions that lead to deaths and injuries, and enormous economic crimes. If America truly wants to reduce crime, Lynch urges readers to rethink cultural values that equate bigger with better.

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