

Faculty-Student Collaborative Research: Experiencing the Ethics of Joint Publishing with Gilbert Geis

Colin Goff
University of Winnipeg

Keywords: ethics, faculty-student collaborative research, joint publishing, white-collar crime

This article is a reflection on Gilbert Geis' article focusing on faculty-student collaboration with publishing. Gil Geis was the supervisor of my Ph.D. while I attended the University of California, Irvine and we co-authored a number of manuscripts during that time. The lessons I learned about collaborative publishing from him at that time continue to influence me during my academic career, which included more collaborative work with him.

Probably the most important "lessons" I learned about publishing while I was in the Ph.D. program in Social Ecology during the late 1970s and early 1980s occurred while I was talking to Gil Geis either in his office or walking with him to a variety of locations around the campus. It was during these occasions that Gil questioned, reasoned, debated, instructed, and informed me about numerous academic-related matters. Rarely during these instances did we talk about formal academic matters, such as my dissertation and if we did start discussing it, the topic quickly changed. On many occasions, our discussions were about the two issues that he raises in his paper, 'Observations on Student-Faculty Collaborative Research and the Ethics of Joint Publishing' (Geis 2012), namely the logistics and ethics of faculty-student collaborative research and various aspects of what he regards as problems with the processes involved in the publication of criminological articles.

At the time I listened intently, and assumed that most of what he said to me about these two issues was the norm among the academics I would work with in the future. It was these lessons (discussed below) that I took with me as

I started my career. As my career progressed, and as I met more people in my field of white-collar/corporate crime, I became associated with a number of academics who represented the best of what Gil stood for – including such notable individuals as Piers Beirne, Frank Cullen, Chuck Reasons, Neal Shover, and Peter Yeager. Over the ensuing years, however, I have been exposed to an ever increasing number of (mostly) undergraduate students who complained to me, in private, about professors who made questionable ethical decisions which had the impact of excluding them in a variety of ways (e.g., not identifying them as co-authors when much of the idea(s) or data collection in an article was theirs, or a significant portion was written and analyzed by the student). In such situations, I always reflect back to what Gil talked about, specifically about the ethics of faculty-student collaborative research. My advice to the students always mirrors the lessons I was taught by Gil.

In terms of elaborating upon his lessons and relating them to the ideas in his article, probably the best way is to discuss our joint work on Edwin H. Sutherland. This is because when Gil talked, he most typically made his points by telling me 'stories' as opposed to giving me any strict guidelines. When I first arrived at the University of California I had a few ideas for my dissertation topic that I submitted to Gil. None of them really impressed him to the point that he thought that any one of them would be suitable. It was during a meeting where we were going over one of my ideas for my dissertation that Gil mentioned that he had a research topic that he would like a

graduate student to do. The topic he had in mind was: why was it that Edwin Sutherland had created the term white-collar crime and how had that idea been developed by him until his death in 1950. I informed him that I wasn't interested, as I wanted to pursue a topic related to the area of the Sociology of Law. Later that semester, as we were walking from class back to his office, Gil mentioned to me that he was scheduled to present a paper at a conference in a few months and was concerned whether he would be prepared on time. I told him I could help him prepare the materials if he wanted; Gil accepted and informed me that the paper was about Edwin Sutherland and his work in the area of white-collar crime.

I was briefly given some topic areas that Gil wanted researched and assessed based on the current status of his paper, but was told that it was really up to me to determine what I should be doing. Soon I was in the university library, researching biographical accounts of not only Sutherland but many other individuals who lived at that same time. I can vividly remember taking some relevant information to a department meeting and placing it in front of Gil, who at that time was involved in a rather prolonged intense debate about the future course of Social Ecology. While another faculty member was attempting, in a rather harsh manner, to refute some of the things Gil had just mentioned, he read over the file I had handed to him and turned to me, saying that he was impressed with what he had just read. He then launched into a rather long critique of the comments just made by the other faculty member.

Over the next few weeks, while I continued my research of historically-relevant materials, Gil began to ask my opinion about Sutherland's history and career. Initially I was taken aback, but then slowly began to offer a number of suggestions, a number of which were immediately rejected, while others were discussed in great detail. On one day at the end of the term, Gil again asked me if I wanted to write about Sutherland's work in the area of white-collar crime for my dissertation, and I agreed that I would.

In any case, my work finding materials on Sutherland continued, and on the first day of classes at the start of the second term, Gil handed me his almost completed paper—with my name as co-author. I told him that he didn't have to do such a thing, but he insisted, saying that I had contributed in so many ways to the final product. The final title of the paper was "Edwin H. Sutherland: A Biographical and Analytical Commentary," which was presented at the White-Collar and Economic Crime Conference, held between February 7-9, 1980, at State University of New York, Potsdam. The article (Geis and Goff 1980) was published among a collection of papers presented at that same conference – *White-Collar and Economic Crime*, edited by Peter Wickman and Timothy Dailey. My role in the final version of the manuscript was minimal, as Gil correctly observes in his introduction to his book, *On White-Collar Crime* where he noted that the

"biographical piece on Sutherland was largely (his) work, though Colin Goff helped greatly with the research and discussion of ideas" (Geis 1982: xxi). Of course, by the time the book was published I was well into my dissertation about Sutherland's work on white-collar crime.

On numerous occasions (usually when I have had a graduate student facing seemingly unresolvable issues in their work) I have reflected on how Gil managed to involve me in taking on Sutherland and his work on white-collar crime for my dissertation, but also the process of how he developed my analytical skills when writing an intellectual biography. There were constant meetings, working sessions, moments of indecision and too many rewrites. As I now understand it, Gil was insuring that it was my decisions, my insights, and my analysis that appeared in my dissertation. Always quick to question me and inquire further, Gil was making me take on the role of an independent and original researcher. Yet, by the time I had finished my dissertation, at least to my satisfaction, another issue related to co-authorship presented itself. This issue began when, in mid-summer 1982 (a few months prior to my leaving the University of California for my first teaching job), I was discussing issues related to my final dissertation rewrite with Gil in his office. During our conversation, he received a phone call from Gladys Topkis, an editor at Yale University Press. She told Gil that they were starting a new series on white-collar crime, which was to be under the general editorship of Stanton Wheeler, then a professor in Yale Law School. They were planning a series of books that looked at various issues in the area, and were looking for a manuscript that would provide a general introduction to the field – she asked if Gil had one available. Gil replied that he didn't, then looked at me and asked if I knew of anyone who was working on such a project? I shook my head that I did not, but then quickly mentioned to him that Yale should publish the original manuscript of *White-Collar Crime* (Sutherland 1949) which contained a number of chapters that were excluded from the original edition of his book. Gil ignored the comment, and was starting to end the call when I literally threw myself across his desk, asking him to tell her about Sutherland's original, unpublished manuscript. After Gil mentioned it, Gladys immediately indicated her interest, and soon everything was in place for the manuscript to be the lead book for their series on white-collar crime.

Gil was asked if he wanted to write an introduction to the book. Gil accepted, but only if I was to be the co-author. Soon we were writing the introduction, feeling the strain of writing 20 to 25 book pages in virtually less than a month. Not surprisingly, Gil and I decided to include a substantial amount of what I had written for my dissertation into the introductory section. This was published as the 'Introduction' chapter in *White Collar Crime: The Uncut Version* (Geis and Goff 1983). Later, a

significant issue related to co-authorship presented itself. Gladys was coming to Southern California on related business and was bringing the contracts for the introduction with her. At the meeting held at Gil's house in South Laguna Beach, Gladys raised the issue of who would be the lead author. Gil immediately told her that I was to be the lead author, given that so much of the material in the manuscript was from my research. I immediately opposed Gil, suggesting that, given the significance of the publication of Sutherland's original manuscript after 34 years in a revised format, it was he who should be the lead author. I also noted that given his status in the area, it was only fitting that he takes on that role. After some more discussion, and despite his reluctance to accept it, he ultimately agreed (much to the relief of Gladys, I might add). To me, having my name associated with Gil and the publication of Edwin Sutherland's original manuscript was more than sufficient. To Gil, it was more a matter of insuring that the appropriate credit was given in the listing of the authors. It was only with a great deal of persuasion that he agreed to his name being listed as lead author.

Since that time, of course, my research career diverged – for example, studying Aboriginal gangs on site in Northern Manitoba and working in the area of Aboriginal justice – but I always asked Gil to be a co-author when I was asked to write a paper related to the history of criminology. On these few occasions when I co-authored a paper with Gil, I was the lead author since I wrote the bulk of the manuscript. But a few years ago I had the opportunity to work again with Gil on a biographical piece on a famous criminologist I wasn't totally familiar with. During the writing of the manuscript, I experienced the exact same process that occurred during the writing of my dissertation. This occurred when Frank Cullen contacted me in 2008 to write two articles for an upcoming book (*The Origins of American Criminology*) he was editing with several others. One chapter concerned Edwin Sutherland and his development of the theory of differential association (Goff and Geis 2011a), while the other was to feature Thorsten Sellin and his work in the area of culture conflict (Goff and Geis 2011b). While I quickly wrote up most of the piece on Sutherland, I wasn't as familiar with Sellin's work on culture conflict. As soon as this paper began to materialize, I realized that Gil was making me the lead author, not just by writing the article, but also by doing most of the research. It wasn't long before I was making key decisions about the development of the article as well as the analysis. When we completed the paper, I remember telling Gil that I had placed his name as the lead author on the final manuscript I was sending to Frank. Gil refused, and told me that I was to be the lead author as I had done the bulk of the work.

Beyond the transformative experiences of working with Gil as a graduate student and later on in my career, Gil steadfastly maintained the highest levels of integrity.

What I experienced, no doubt, is what others did too. I cannot express how important it was to know Gil throughout my career. I was lucky to have his association. Joseph T. Wells, the founder and Chairman of the Board of the Association of Certified Bank Examiners, in his foreword to a collection of essays about Gil (*Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice*, edited by Henry N. Pontell and David Schichor) noted that he had "only one regret about (his) experience with Gil; that (he) didn't meet him sooner " (Wells 2000: xi). And I wholeheartedly agree with him when he states "there is simply no one like him."

References

- Geis, Gilbert. 2012. "Observations on Student-faculty Collaborative Research and the Ethics of Joint Publishing." *Western Criminology Review* 13(3):34-38.
- . 1982. "Introduction." Pp. xiii- xxii in *On White-Collar Crime*, edited by G. Geis. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Goff, Colin and Gilbert Geis. 2011a. "Edwin H. Sutherland: The Development of Differential Association Theory." Pp. 37-62 in *The Origins of American Criminology: Advances in Criminological Theory Volume 16*, edited by F.T. Cullen, C. L. Johnson, A. J. Myer, and F. Adler. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- . 2011b. "Thorsten Sellin: Culture Conflict, Crime, and Beyond." Pp. 161-174 in *The Origins of American Criminology: Advances in Criminological Theory Volume 16*, edited by F.T. Cullen, C.L. Johnson, A. J. Myer, and F. Adler. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Geis, Gilbert and Colin Goff. 1983. "Introduction." Pp. ix-xxxiii in *White Collar Crime: The Uncut Version, Edwin H. Sutherland*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 1980. "Edwin H. Sutherland: A Biographical and Analytical Commentary." Pp. 3-21 in *White-Collar and Economic Crime*, edited by P. Wickham and T. Dailey. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Pontell, Henry N. and David Schichor, eds. 2000. *Contemporary Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice: Essays in Honor of Gil Geis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Sutherland, Edwin H. 1949. *White-Collar Crime*. New York: Dryden Press.

Wells, Joseph T. 2000. "Foreword." Pp. ix-xi in *Contemporary Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice: Essays in Honor of Gil Geis*, edited by H.N. Pontell and D. Schicor. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

About the Author:

Colin Goff is an Associate Professor at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Besides writing (with Gil Geis) intellectual biographies about the career of Edwin H. Sutherland, his publications have been in the area of green criminology and Aboriginal justice. At the present time he is conducting a longitudinal analysis of juvenile delinquency in the Midwest.

Contact Information: Colin Goff, Department of Sociology, University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 2E9. Phone: (204) 786-9360. Fax: (204) 774-4134; Email: c.goff@uwinnipeg.ca