

amending sections 18, 3013, 3559, 3571, 3572, 3573, 3611, 3612, and 3663 of this title and section 604 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure, and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 3611 of this title) may be cited as the ‘Criminal Fine Improvements Act of 1987.’”

#### SHORT TITLE OF 1986 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 99-646, § 1, Nov. 10, 1986, 100 Stat. 3592, provided that: “This Act [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘Criminal Law and Procedure Technical Amendments Act of 1986.’”

#### SHORT TITLE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 98-473, title II, § 200, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 1976, provided that: “This title [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984.’”

#### SHORT TITLE OF 1974 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 93-412, § 1, Sept. 3, 1974, 88 Stat. 1089, provided: “That this Act [amending section 3006A of this title and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 3006A of this title] may be cited as the ‘District of Columbia Criminal Justice Act.’”

#### SEVERABILITY

Pub. L. 108-21, § 2, Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 651, provided that: “If any provision of this Act [see Tables for classification], or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act, and the application of such provision to other persons not similarly situated or to other circumstances, shall not be affected by such invalidation.”

Pub. L. 107-56, § 2, Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 275, provided that: “Any provision of this Act [see Short Title of 2001 Amendment note above] held to be invalid or unenforceable by its terms, or as applied to any person or circumstance, shall be construed so as to give it the maximum effect permitted by law, unless such holding shall be one of utter invalidity or unenforceability, in which event such provision shall be deemed severable from this Act and shall not affect the remainder thereof or the application of such provision to other persons not similarly situated or to other, dissimilar circumstances.”

Pub. L. 104-132, title IX, § 904, Apr. 24, 1996, 110 Stat. 1319, provided that: “If any provision of this Act [see Short Title of 1996 Amendments note above], an amendment made by this Act, or the application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act, the amendments made by this Act, and the application of the provisions of such to any person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby.”

## § 2. Principals

(a) Whoever commits an offense against the United States or aids, abets, counsels, commands, induces or procures its commission, is punishable as a principal.

(b) Whoever willfully causes an act to be done which if directly performed by him or another would be an offense against the United States, is punishable as a principal.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 684; Oct. 31, 1951, ch. 655, § 17b, 65 Stat. 717.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 550 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 332, 35 Stat. 1152).

Section 2(a) comprises section 550 of title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., without change except in minor matters of phraseology.

Section 2(b) is added to permit the deletion from many sections throughout the revision of such phrases as “causes or procures”.

The section as revised makes clear the legislative intent to punish as a principal not only one who directly commits an offense and one who “aids, abets, counsels, commands, induces or procures” another to commit an offense, but also anyone who causes the doing of an act which if done by him directly would render him guilty of an offense against the United States.

It removes all doubt that one who puts in motion or assists in the illegal enterprise but causes the commission of an indispensable element of the offense by an innocent agent or instrumentality, is guilty as a principal even though he intentionally refrained from the direct act constituting the completed offense.

This accords with the following decisions: *Rothenburg v. United States*, 1918, 38 S. Ct. 18, 245 U.S. 480, 62 L. Ed. 414, and *United States v. Hodorowicz*, C. C. A. Ill. 1939, 105 F. 2d 218, certiorari denied, 60 S. Ct. 108, 308 U.S. 584, 84 L. Ed. 489. *United States v. Giles*, 1937, 57 S. Ct. 340, 300 U.S. 41, 81 L. Ed. 493, rehearing denied, 57 S. Ct. 505, 300 U.S. 687, 81 L. Ed. 888.

## Editorial Notes

### AMENDMENTS

1951—Subsec. (a). Act Oct. 31, 1951, inserted “punishable as”.

Subsec. (b). Act Oct. 31, 1951, inserted “willfully” before “causes”, and “or another” after “him”, and substituted “is punishable as a principal” for “is also a principal and punishable as such”.

### § 3. Accessory after the fact

Whoever, knowing that an offense against the United States has been committed, receives, relieves, comforts or assists the offender in order to hinder or prevent his apprehension, trial or punishment, is an accessory after the fact.

Except as otherwise expressly provided by any Act of Congress, an accessory after the fact shall be imprisoned not more than one-half the maximum term of imprisonment or (notwithstanding section 3571) fined not more than one-half the maximum fine prescribed for the punishment of the principal, or both; or if the principal is punishable by life imprisonment or death, the accessory shall be imprisoned not more than 15 years.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 684; Pub. L. 99-646, § 43, Nov. 10, 1986, 100 Stat. 3601; Pub. L. 101-647, title XXXV, § 3502, Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4921; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §§ 330011(h), 330016(2)(A), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2145, 2148.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 551 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 333, 35 Stat. 1152).

The first paragraph is new. It is based upon authority of *Skelly v. United States* (C. C. A. Okl. 1935, 76 F. 2d 483, certiorari denied, 1935, 55 S. Ct. 914, 295 U.S. 757, 79 L. Ed. 1699), where the court defined an accessory after the fact as—

one who knowing a felony to have been committed by another, receives, relieves, comforts, or assists the felon in order to hinder the felon’s apprehension, trial, or punishment—

and cited Jones’ Blackstone, books 3 and 4, page 2204; *U.S. v. Hartwell* (Fed. Cas. No. 15,318); *Albritton v. State* (32 Fla. 358, 13 So. 955); *State v. Davis* (14 R. I. 281); *Schleeter v. Commonwealth* (218 Ky. 72, 290 S. W. 1075). (See also *State v. Potter*, 1942, 221 N. C. 153, 19 S. E. 2d 257; *Hunter v. State*, 1935, 128 Tex. Cr. R. 191, 79 S. W. 2d 855; *State v. Wells*, 1940, 195 La. 754, 197 So. 419.)

The second paragraph is from section 551 of title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed. Here only slight changes were made in phraseology.