



Facing the Death Penalty: Essays on a Cruel and Unusual Punishment

Michael Radelet

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"These essays...show us the human and inhuman realities of capital punishment through the eyes of the condemned and those who work with them. By focusing on those awaiting death, they present the awful truth behind the statistics in concrete, personal terms."

--William J. Bowers, author of *Legal Homicide*

Between 1930 and 1967, there were 3,859 executions carried out under state and civil authority in the United States. Since the ten-year moratorium on capital punishment ended in 1977, more than one hundred prisoners have been executed. There are more than two thousand men and women now living on death row awaiting their executions. *Facing the Death Penalty* offers an in-depth examination of what life under a sentence of death is like for condemned inmates and their families, how and why various professionals assist them in their struggle for life, and what these personal experiences with capital punishment tell us about the wisdom of this penal policy.

The contributors include historians, attorneys, sociologists, anthropologists, criminologists, a minister, a philosopher, and three prisoners. One of the prisoner-contributors is Willie Jasper Darden, Jr., whose case and recent execution after fourteen years on death row drew international attention. The inter-disciplinary perspectives offered in this book will not solve the death penalty debate, but they offer important and unique insights on the full effects of American capital punishment provisions. While the book does not set out to generate sympathy for those convicted of horrible crimes, taken together, the essays build a case for abolition of the death penalty.

"This work stands with the best of what's been written. It represents the best of those who have seen the worst."

--Colman McCarthy, *The Washington Post Book World*

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