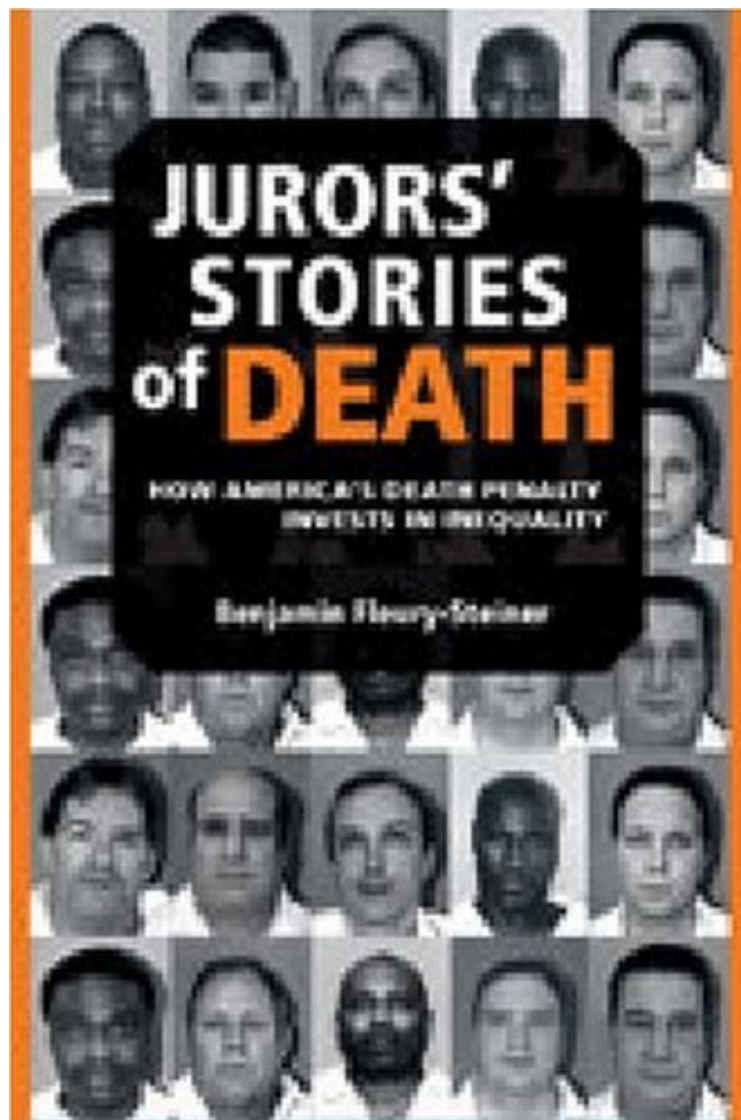


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Jurors' Stories of Death: How America's Death Penalty Invests in Inequality (Law, Meaning, and Violence)

Benjamin Dov Fleury-Steiner

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Benjamin Dov Fleury-Steiner : Jurors' Stories of Death: How America's Death Penalty Invests in Inequality (Law, Meaning, and Violence) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jurors' Stories of Death: How America's Death Penalty Invests in Inequality (Law, Meaning, and Violence):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fleury-Steiner had had a better editor to make it more readableBy

Susan Swope This book has important, if disturbing, information that justice professionals should know if they don't. I found it enlightening, if hard slogging. I wish Mr. Fleury-Steiner had had a better editor to make it more readable. Still worth the time and effort. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Disappointment By Mrs. Karen L. Demmy It is quite rare that I do not like a book, I just can not even get thru this one.....I hate the way it is written and it just is not at all interesting. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book! By reader This book is legally and academically important but also is a compelling read for anyone interested in the death penalty and what happens in jury rooms when capital punishment is being decided. It is meticulously researched and the author has amazing access to jurors who actually sentenced people to die. Using the jurors' own stories makes this a very interesting book because you really hear their thoughts in their own words. It is a must read for anyone interested in how the system actually works. It will be very difficult after reading this book to make the argument that race plays no role in the administration of the death penalty.

"What is most extraordinary about Ben Fleury-Steiner's book is that it seeks to shed light on the 'black box' of capital jury deliberations. Based on a remarkable social science survey of persons who served on capital juries, this volume illuminates the workings of the most closely guarded secret in the criminal justice system."-David Cole, from the Foreword "Perhaps the most powerful, routinely enacted civic ritual in American public life is that of capital punishment. This state-sanctioned extirpation of human life in the collective pursuit of justice is a searing act of civic pedagogy, made legitimate only by the deliberative endorsement of a small group of ordinary citizens-the jury. In *Jurors' Stories of Death*, Benjamin Fleury-Steiner has taken a cold, hard look at how these ordinary citizens come to terms with their extraordinary role, and how they rationalize their irreversible decisions. The result is a chilling portrait of how we---that is, all of us Americans---constitute ourselves as a political community."-Glenn Loury, Director, Institute on Race and Social Division "This illuminating and insightful examination of jury deliberations makes a terrific contribution to the study of capital punishment. Fleury-Steiner's synthesis of sociological, legal and theoretical concepts with vivid juror narratives and statistical data, thoughtfully animates and details how race and class consciousness continue to shape America's death penalty."---Bryan Stevenson, Professor of Clinical Law, NYU School of Law, Executive Director, Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama *Jurors' Stories of Death* is more than just another book on the death penalty; it is the first systematic survey of how death penalty decisions are made. Benjamin Fleury-Steiner draws on real-life accounts of white and black jurors in capital punishment trials to discuss the effect of race on the sentencing process. He finds that race is invariably a factor in sentencing, with jurors relying on accounts that deny the often marginalized defendants their individuality and complexity, while reinforcing the jurors' own identities as superior, moral, and law-abiding citizens-a system that punishes in the name of dominance. This biased story of "us versus them" continues to infuse political rhetoric on crime and punishment in the United States even today. *Jurors' Stories of Death* concludes with an original argument for abolition of the death penalty: If America values multiculturalism and cultural diversity, it must do away with institutions such as state-sanctioned capital punishment in order to begin to free itself from the racism and classicism that so insidiously plague social relations today.

From Publishers Weekly Opponents of the death penalty will find more fuel for the fire in this study of jurors who have voted to sentence someone to death. As civil rights expert David Cole puts it in his foreword, the book opens up the "black box" of jury deliberations and reveals that decisions on whether or not to administer the death penalty are influenced by "jurors attitudes unconscious or unconscious about race and class." Fleury-Steiner, an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware, lets capital jurors speak in their own words, which reveal thinking that the author sees as paternalistic, simplistic or as reinforcing the jurors sense of white superiority. Typifying this last form of thinking, one woman said, "I saw the defendant as a very typical product of the lower socioeconomic black group who grew up with no values, no ideals, no authority, no morals." This "us" vs. "them" mentality on the part of jurors, says Fleury-Steiner, is evidence that the death penalty is administered unfairly and should be abolished. At the very least, this book should serve as fodder for discussion. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Benjamin Fleury-Steiner is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware.