



A Life for a Life: The American Debate Over the Death Penalty

Michael Dow Burkhead

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Providing a new look at the intense public debate surrounding the death penalty in the United States, this book explores the various trends in public opinion that influence crime prevention efforts, create public policy, and reform criminal law. It examines eight core issues about the use of execution: cruel and unusual punishment, discrimination, deterrence, due process, culpability, scripture, innocence, and justice. It provides a brief history of capital punishment in the United States from the earliest known execution at the Jamestown Colony in 1608 to executions occurring as recently as 2008. Additional topics include the regionalization of capital punishment sentences, the spiritual and scriptural debate over the death penalty, the role of DNA evidence in modern execution sentences, and the ongoing effects of *Furman v. Georgia*, *McClesky v. Kemp*, *Baze v. Rees*, and other related court rulings.

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