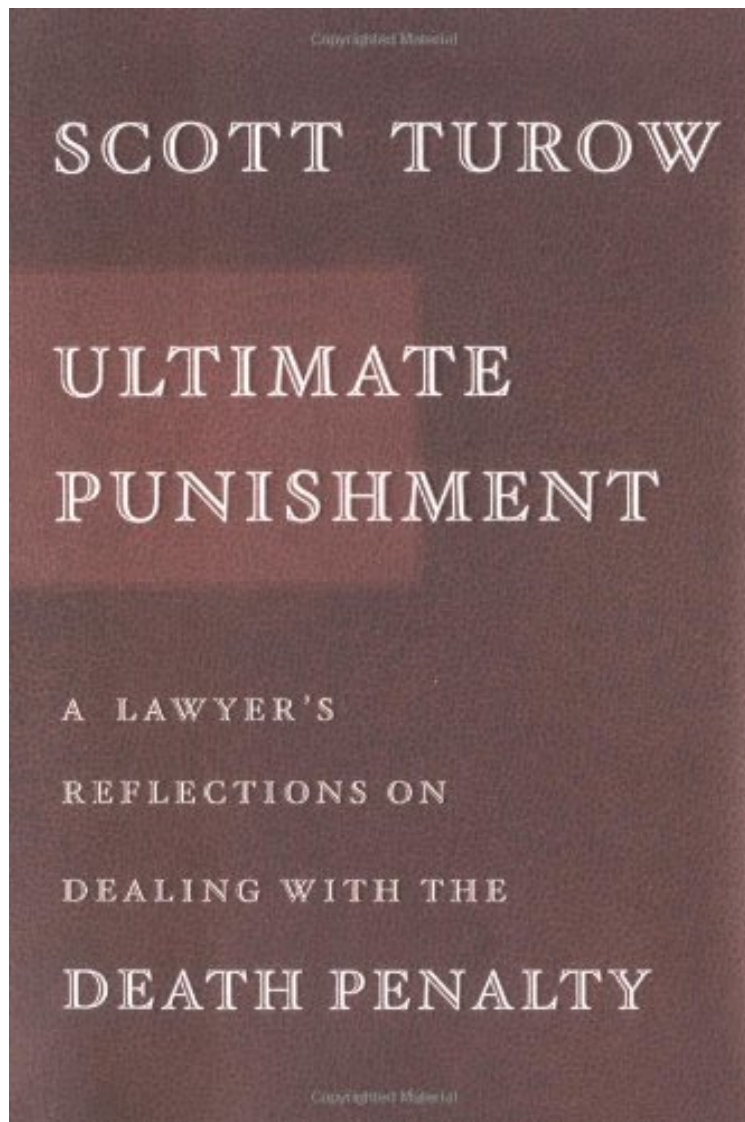


(Mobile pdf) Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer's Reflections on Dealing with the Death Penalty

Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer's Reflections on Dealing with the Death Penalty

Scott Turow

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Scott Turow : Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer's Reflections on Dealing with the Death Penalty before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer's Reflections on Dealing with the Death Penalty:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This Just Proves So Much...By Philip ScholzThis definitely proves that author Scott Turow's resume is even more impressive than I first realized. It's a true account of the man's work on

a commission appointed by then Illinois Governor George Ryan to study the state's capital punishment system and recommend changes to fix its problems. With over two hundred capital convictions, twelve executions, and thirteen exonerations since 1976, things certainly needed to be looked at. For your reference, this commission was appointed in 1999. Not far into the book, you'll notice what looks like Turow flip-flopping a lot when it comes to his feelings about capital punishment. That's not entirely the case. While his feelings are definitely there, it goes far beyond that. Turow explores the feelings about capital punishment from various points such as deterrence, victims' rights and feelings, the race and financial status of the condemned, nature of the crimes, etc. He includes accounts of his work on the capital appeals of Alejandro Hernandez and Christopher Turner, one of whom was ultimately exonerated while the other, having been sentenced under Illinois's "felony murder" statute, a broad piece of legislation that allows prosecutors a number of opportunities to seek a death sentence for murders that might otherwise not qualify, had his sentence reduced to 120 years in prison. He also discusses meeting Henry Brisbon, one of the state's most despised killers whose acts rival those of Richard Speck and John Wayne Gacy, in the supermax prison where the man was being housed at the time. I praise Turow for not only doing things like these before, during, and after his work on the commission, but also for using these events to offer us these greatly varying viewpoints on a system that's clearly broken but where no one truly knows what repairs need to be done. During his work on the commission, one of Turow's colleagues, a hardened opponent to capital punishment who knew that total abolishment would and could not be accomplished by that particular group, nevertheless put forth the question of whether or not the practice should be quashed altogether. Turow, like all the others, voted on this, though that vote never made it into their later recommendations to Governor Ryan. To know and understand what Turow's vote was, you have to read the book all the way through to the end...to the very last word. Enjoy.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Death Penalty Thoughtfully Examined By Barbara Frederick If you already know Scott Turow, you will want to read this book for that reason alone. He was involved in a big study of the death penalty in Illinois some years ago, and gives a very thoughtful analysis of all he learned through that process. I came away with the impression that he is much of the same opinion as myself: Not quite willing to say no death penalty ever, but willing to accept that it should be a rare and exceptional punishment. To me, it should be reserved for those who, like Gary Gillmore, would rather die than spend the rest of their life in prison with no possibility of parole. If I had to make the rules, I'd say all such life sentences would come with a lethal pill that the prisoner could take if and when he was ready.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A worthwhile look at capital punishment By CSDC Turow brings an interesting perspective to the death penalty issue. He has had experience as a practicing attorney, and he served as a member of the commission appointed by Governor Ryan of Illinois to study the issue and make recommendations concerning the continuation of the death penalty in that state. I find Turow's book a useful addition to such reflections on the issue as Sister Helen Prejean's compassionate Christian perspective in "Dead Man Walking" and Albert Camus' brilliant "Reflections on the Guillotine," which is, in my opinion, one of the most profound and persuasive commentaries on capital punishment ever written.

America's leading writer about the law takes a close, incisive look at one of society's most vexing legal issues. Scott Turow is known to millions as the author of peerless novels about the troubling regions of experience where law and reality intersect. In "real life," as a respected criminal lawyer, he has been involved with the death penalty for more than a decade, including successfully representing two different men convicted in death-penalty prosecutions. In this vivid account of how his views on the death penalty have evolved, Turow describes his own experiences with capital punishment from his days as an impassioned young prosecutor to his recent service on the Illinois commission which investigated the administration of the death penalty and influenced Governor George Ryan's unprecedented commutation of the sentences of 164 death row inmates on his last day in office. Along the way, he provides a brief history of America's ambivalent relationship with the ultimate punishment, analyzes the potent reasons for and against it, including the role of the victims' survivors, and tells the powerful stories behind the statistics, as he moves from the Governor's Mansion to Illinois' state-of-the-art 'super-max' prison and the execution chamber. This gripping, clear-sighted, necessary examination of the principles, the personalities, and the politics of a fundamental dilemma of our democracy has all the drama and intellectual substance of Turow's celebrated fiction.

From Publishers Weekly Is there anything new to say about whether the death penalty should be abolished? It turns out there is. Bestselling author Turow (Reversible Errors) has some useful insights into this fiercely debated subject, based on his experiences as a prosecutor and, in his postprosecutorial years, working on behalf of death-row inmates, and his two years on Illinois's Commission on Capital Punishment, charged by the former Gov. George Ryan with examining how the death penalty might be more fairly administered. This is a sober and elegantly concise examination of a complex, fraught topic by an admitted "agnostic." His views veering one way and then the other, Turow shares his back-and-forth reasoning as he carefully discusses each issue, from the possible execution of an innocent person (a serious danger) to whether execution is a deterrent (it's not). Perhaps most illuminating are Turow's thoughts on victims' rights (which he says must be weighed against the needs of the community); on what to do with "the worst of

the worst" (he visits a maximum security prison to meet multiple-murderer Henry Brison, who, Turow says, "most closely resembles... Hannibal Lecter"); and the question of what he calls "moral proportion," the notion that execution is meant to restore moral balance, which, he says, requires an "unfailingly accurate" system of justice. This measured weighing of the facts will be most valuable to those who, like Turow, are on the fence—they will find an invaluable, objective look at both sides of this critical but highly charged debate. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Popular legal-fiction writer Turow takes on the divisive topic of the death penalty in this concise, thoughtful essay. A self-proclaimed "death penalty agnostic," Turow didn't consider himself an expert on the issue even during his years as a prosecutor or when he helped in the defense of some high-profile capital cases. Nonetheless, in early 2000, after Illinois governor George Ryan declared a moratorium on further executions, Turow was appointed to a 14-member blue-ribbon commission charged with helping reform the state's capital punishment system. Ryan's groundbreaking moratorium began a wave of similar actions nationwide as more and more guilty convictions were questioned, whether via new DNA evidence or an overzealous prosecutorial machine (in two key cases in Illinois, a little of both). Turow traces the recent history of the death penalty through his own experiences, and though he was ambivalent about it at the start, he comes away with definite convictions. This is not a scientific study, Turow admits, but he does supply ample notes to back up many of the claims he makes throughout the book. Also included is the commission's report as submitted to Governor Ryan. Together with Mark Fuhrman's more procedural study, *Death and Justice* [BKL J1 03], Turow's reflections will spark further discussions on this troublesome issue. Mary Frances Wilkens Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "In that rarest of achievements, a page-turner filled with genuine wisdom, Scott Turow takes us with him on a mesmerizing voyage through the land of murder that he has sadly learned to navigate with skill and compassion, allowing us to hear the stories and feel the grief of the survivors who loved and will never see again those whose lives were stolen in acts of ultimate evil, enabling us to share the experiences of accuser and accused alike as they feel their separate ways through the corridors and courtrooms that constitute the elaborate machinery of death, holding us spellbound as we arrive finally at the secret lying at the heart of every one of Turow's gripping novels, a secret whose revelation exposes what we truly seek from capital punishment and why we will never find it there. Written with a fine lawyer's feel for fairness and with a superb novelist's gift for telling us truths beyond the power of laws logic to express, *Ultimate Punishment* is the ultimate statement about the death penalty: to read it is to understand why law alone cannot make us whole." --Laurence H. Tribe, Tyler Professor of Constitutional Law, Harvard Law School