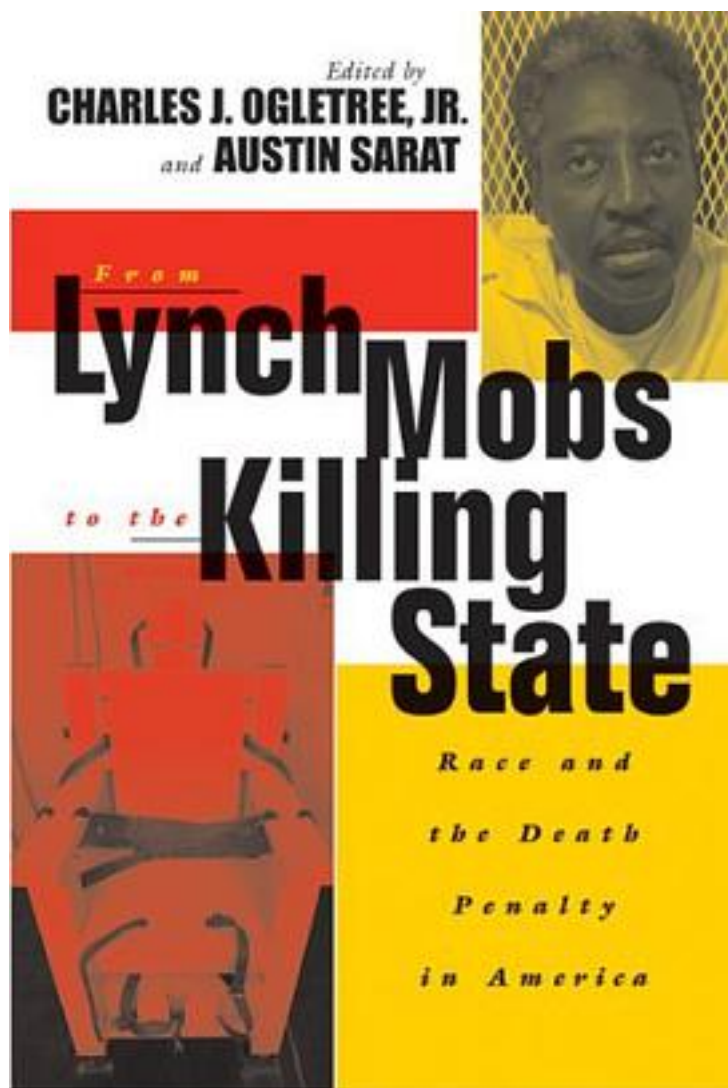# From Lynch Mobs to the Killing State

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Since 1976, over forty percent of prisoners executed in American jails have been African American or Hispanic. This trend shows little evidence of diminishing, and follows a larger pattern of the violent criminalization of African American populations that has marked the country's history of punishment. In a bold attempt to tackle the looming question of how and why the connection between race and the death penalty has been so strong throughout American history, Charles J. Ogletree, Jr. and Austin Sarat headline an interdisciplinary cast of experts in reflecting on this disturbing issue. Insightful original essays approach the topic from legal, historical, cultural, and social science perspectives to show the ways that the death penalty is racialized, the places in the death penalty process where race makes a difference, and the ways that meanings of race in the United States are constructed in and through our practices of capital punishment. "From Lynch Mobs to the Killing State" not only uncovers the ways that race influences capital punishment, but also attempts to situate the linkage between race and the death penalty in the history of this country, in particular the history of lynching. In its probing examination of how and why the connection between race and the death penalty has been so strong throughout American history, this book forces us to consider how the death penalty gives meaning to race, as well as why the racialization of the death penalty is uniquely American.

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目录:

[From Lynch Mobs to the Killing State_下载链接1_](#)

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