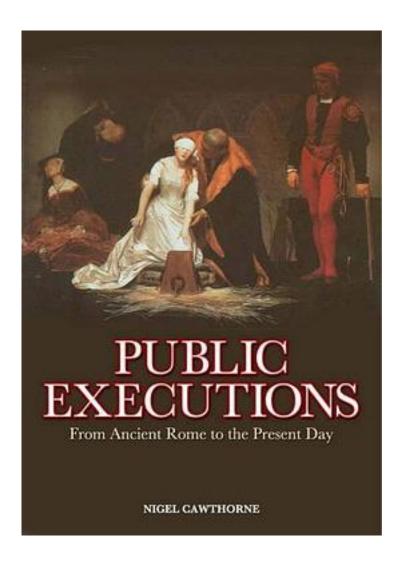
Public Executions



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著者:Christopher S. Kudlac

出版者:Praeger

出版时间:2007-08-30

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780275993078

This work examines how the media influences the death-penalty debate in the U.S.A.

The death penalty is one of the U.S.A.'s most controversial issues. The fairness of its application is debated in coffeehouses, classrooms, political arenas, and the media. However, despite its representation in the media, most death penalty cases receive surprisingly little media attention. In fact, of the 1000 people executed in the United States since 1977, and the 3,500 inmates currently awaiting execution, only a handful of cases can be recalled by the public. Those that are memorable are so because only a few are dramatically represented in the media. Why is it that those that receive the most serious penalty are virtually nameless, while the death penalty in general is one of the most discussed aspects of the criminal justice system? What makes some executions more "newsworthy" than others? What are the implications of this coverage for the public's understanding of this significant issue? This book looks at those death row cases that received the most intensive media coverage from the 1970s through to the present, and why. At the same time, it focuses on changes in public opinion about the death penalty and how newspaper coverage and evolving mass sentiment relate to one another. The author covers such celebrated cases as Karla Faye Tucker, Timothy McVeigh, Aileen Wuornos, John Wayne Gacy, and others that captured the attention of the public and affected public opinion about the death penalty through the help of the media. He considers issues such as religion, politics, race, gender, and class as he reveals the reasons for our attention to certain cases above others. It is part of the "Crime, Media, and Popular Culture" series. It includes well-known case's including Timothy McVeigh (the Oklahoma Bomber) and Aileen Wuornos (subject of the movie Monster). It considers how the media influence public opinion regarding the death penalty. It assesses the role of religion, politics, race, gender, and class in attracting attention and swaying public opinion.

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