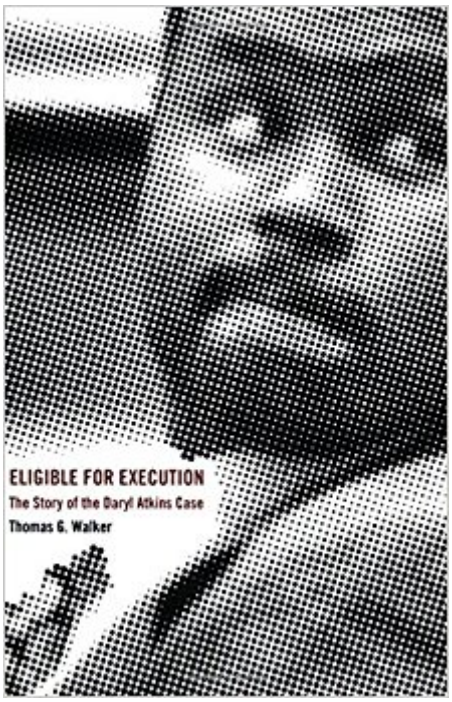
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Eligible For Execution



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Synopsis

This riveting and enlightening narrative unfolds on the night of August 16, 1996, with the brutal and senseless murder of Eric Nesbitt, a young man stationed at Langley Air Force Base, at the hands of 18-year-old Daryl Atkins. Over the course of more than a decade, Atkins's case has bounced between the lowest and the highest levels of the judicial system. Found guilty and then sentenced to death in 1998 for Nesbitt's murder, the Atkins case was then taken up in 2002 by the U.S. Supreme Court. The issue before the justices: given Daryl Atkins's mental retardation, would his execution constitute cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of the Eighth Amendment? A 6-3 vote said yes.Daryl Atkins's situation was far from being resolved though. Prosecutors claimed that Atkins failed to meet the statutory definition of mental retardation and reinstituted procedures to carry out his death sentence. Back in circuit court, the jury returned its verdict: Daryl Atkins was not retarded. Atkins's attorneys promptly filed a notice of appeal, and the case continues today.Drawing on interviews with key participants; direct observation of the hearings; and close examination of court documents, transcripts, and press accounts, Thomas G. Walker provides readers with a rare view of the entire judicial process. Never losing sight of the stakes in a death penalty case, he explains each step in Atkins's legal journey from the interactions of local law enforcement, to the decision-making process of the state prosecutor, to the Supreme Court's ruling, and beyond. Walker sheds light on how legal institutions and procedures work in real life-- and how they are all interrelated-- to help students better understand constitutional issues, the courts, and the criminal justice system. Throughout, Walker also addresses how disability, race, and other key demographic and social issues affect the case and society's views on the death penalty.

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Customer Reviews

Thomas G. Walker is Goodrich C. White Professor of Political Science at Emory University where he has won several teaching awards for his courses on constitutional law and the judicial process. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. His book, A Court Divided, written with Deborah J. Barrow, won the prestigious V.O. Key Award for the best book on southern politics. He is the coauthor of The Supreme Court Compendium: Data, Decisions, and Developments, 4th ed. (2007) with Lee Epstein, Jeffrey A. Segal, and Harold J. Spaeth.

Was assigned this book for class, and found it surprisingly interesting. If you have any interest in the high court system this book provides some enlightenment and a more in depth look at some things that turn out to be quite important(arguing definitions, jury selection process)

I had to read this book for my Constitutional Law class in College. THis book takes place in York county Virginia, near Virginia Beach and Norfolk. I wont tell anything about the plot but this book basically tells the background of Daryl Atkins and the other major players in this Supreme Court Case. A very good, interesting book good for any Political Science major or anyone interested in learning more about how the courts work.

This book needs to be required reading for the Criminal Justice degree programs. The best read ever!

I had to read this book for my Criminal Justice class taught by Professor Walker, the author of this book. The book was incredibly comprehensive and not only went over the Atkins trials but also the history of the death penalty and the judicial system in general. The book is written in a style that makes it easy for anyone, even those with nil knowledge on the criminal justice system, to read and understand. If you’re interested in death penalties, this is definitely a good read.

Good think I know how to bs my way through a class because this book was terrible. Pages missing -- some idiot highlighted practically everything and scribbled in the margins. If I honestly cared about the stupid class (I actually got a b), I would be more upset, but you’ve won this time and it won’t

happen again.

It is a very interesting book if you are looking for knowing more about the judicial system in USA

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