



White Mercy: A Study of the Death Penalty in South Africa

By Robert Turrell

Greenwood. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 304 pages. Robert Turrell presents a novel approach to the study of capital punishment in 20th-century South Africa. *White Mercy* focuses on official acts of mercy rather than on miscarriages of justice. Turrell bases his absorbing narrative on a thorough investigation of government statistics, court testimony, and judges reports. He shows that racism and sexism profoundly influenced death-penalty cases, but not in equal ways. Africans, whom white rulers considered the weaker race, and women, whom men called the weaker sex, entered a legal realm that both promoted preordained cultural difference and disproportionately granted clemency to females convicted of murder. What will perhaps surprise many readers is that a number of condemned white men went to the gallows because the court believed they exhibited the incorrigible instincts of the weaker race. *White Mercy* stands alone in South African scholarship as the only book-length history of capital punishment. It is also a pioneering study in the field of gender studies. Turrell's sharp analysis and engrossing vignettes will be welcomed by students in graduate seminars and upper-level undergraduate courses covering a range of themes from race relations and gender studies, to the death penalty and constitutional developments...



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