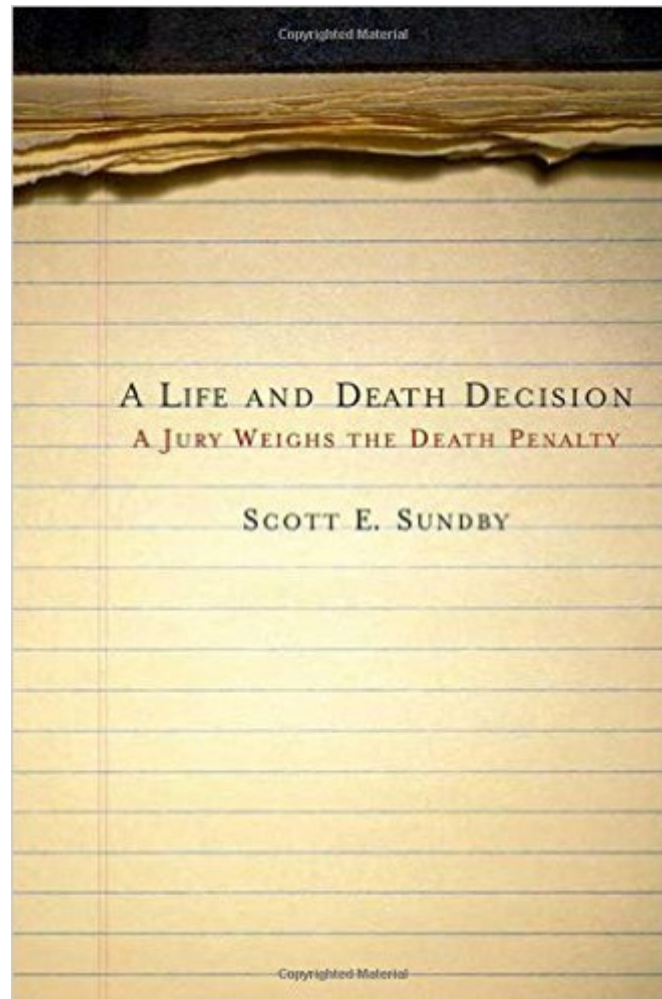


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# A Life And Death Decision: A Jury Weighs The Death Penalty



## Synopsis

With a life in the balance, a jury convicts a man of murder and now has to decide whether he should be put to death. Twelve people now face a momentous choice. Bringing drama to life, *A Life and Death Decision* gives unique insight into how a jury deliberates. We feel the passions, anger, and despair as the jurors grapple with legal, moral, and personal dilemmas. The jurors' voices are compelling. From the idealist to the holdout, the individual stories of how and why they voted for life or death drive the narrative. The reader is right there siding with one or another juror in this riveting read. From movies to novels to television, juries fascinate. Focusing on a single case, Sundby sheds light on broader issues, including the roles of race, class, and gender in the justice system. With death penalty cases consistently in the news, this is an important window on how real jurors deliberate about a pressing national issue.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Scott Sundby gives the reader a window, almost a fly-on-the-wall peek, into the capital jury room, a place most people do not experience first-hand. Whether or not you have a strong opinion about the use of the death penalty in the U.S. criminal justice system, this book will challenge your views and provide new insights. Professor Sundby has succeeded in writing a true page-turner that is at once emotionally provocative and incredibly informative. The prose is elegant and smooth, and it is a pleasure to read. Everyone interested in justice in America should read, and discuss the issues raised, in this book.

Sundby's book takes the reader beyond abstractions about how capital punishment decisions are made, and provides a rare and consistently fascinating account of how two actual juries reach their decisions. The book is filled with insights about the legal and emotional dynamics of the jury room and the courtroom in death penalty cases. It pulls off a couple of very difficult feats. It treats all the jurors interviewed with respect and understanding, and should be equally informative for those with strong feelings for or against the death penalty and for those who are undecided. In addition, it manages to convey quite a bit of valuable information about the death penalty and the criminal justice system in a way that should be accessible and interesting for those with or without a background in the law. In short, a must-read for anyone who wants a better understanding of the American system of capital punishment, or of jury decision-making in general.

This is a decent criminal justice book and it is an easy read. More than likely you are getting this book because it is required for a class. It gives a in depth look at what jurors on capital cases go through. I would recommend this if you have to read it for a class but maybe not so much for leisure reading.

Anyone who is involved in "Death Penalty" cases as a Lawyer, Investigator or a Mitigation Specialist needs this book in their toolbox. It is simple to understand and it speaks to the most important people in the process, "The Jury". No so-called "Jury Expert" in the world can provide the true insight this book does. After 20 years as both a Criminal Investigator and now a Defense Investigator, and 13 Death Penalty cases in the last 12 years, Sundby's book is a must. All the Attorneys I've recommended it to have thanked me.

Scott Sundby's book is a must read for anyone interested in the death penalty in the United States. It takes years of research by the Capital Jury Project and encapsulates it into two case studies. The cold statistics come to life as Sundby relates how different factors influence the life and death decisions that go on across America in death penalty trials through the eyes of each juror on the panel. A real eye opener. It should be required reading in every law school and for every lawyer who defends death penalty cases.

I can't say I enjoyed this book, because it's not a subject that is enjoyable, but it is insightful to look into the minds of twelve individuals and see how their opinions and personalities are shaped, what their prejudices are, how they reason.

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