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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910783263203321 |
| Autore | Edds Margaret <1947-> |
| Titolo | An expendable man [[electronic resource]] : the near-execution of Earl Washington, Jr. / / Margaret Edds |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | New York, : New York University Press, 2003 |
| ISBN | 0-8147-2279-2 0-8147-2244-X 1-4175-8820-9 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (260 p.) |
| Disciplina | 364.66/092 B |
| Soggetti | African American prisoners Death row inmates - United States People with mental disabilities and crime - United States Discrimination in criminal justice administration - United States Capital punishment - Moral and ethical aspects - United States DNA fingerprinting - United States |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Description based upon print version of record. |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Front matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Timeline -- 1. Countdown -- 2. Death in Culpeper -- 3. A Piedmont Son -- 4. Arrest -- 5. Confessions -- 6. The Trial -- 7. Prisoner -- 8. Deadline -- 9. A Discovery -- 10. Appeals -- 11. Strategies -- 12. An Ending -- 13. Revival -- 14. Freedom Delayed -- 15. The Aftermath -- Notes -- Recommended Reading -- Index -- About the Author |
| Sommario/riassunto | How is it possible for an innocent man to come within nine days of execution? An Expendable Man answers that question through detailed analysis of the case of Earl Washington Jr., a mentally retarded, black farm hand who was convicted of the 1983 rape and murder of a 19-year-old mother of three in Culpeper, Virginia. He spent almost 18 years in Virginia prisons—9 1/2 of them on death row—for a murder he did not commit. This book reveals the relative ease with which individuals who live at society's margins can be wrongfully convicted, |

and the extraordinary difficulty of correcting such a wrong once it occurs. Washington was eventually freed in February 2001 not because of the legal and judicial systems, but in spite of them. While DNA testing was central to his eventual pardon, such tests would never have occurred without an unusually talented and committed legal team and without a series of incidents that are best described as pure luck. Margaret Edds makes the chilling argument that some other “expendable men” almost certainly have been less fortunate than Washington. This, she writes, is “the secret, shameful underbelly” of America's retention of capital punishment. Such wrongful executions may not happen often, but anyone who doubts that innocent people have been executed in the United States should remember the remarkable series of events necessary to save Earl Washington Jr. from such a fate.
