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Autore	Foerster Barrett J. <1942-2010.>
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Altri autori (Persone)	Meltsner Michael <1937->
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Sommario/riassunto	"In this memoir of a distilling moment in the history of civil rights, Barrett Foerster writes about the summer he spent in the South as a law student in 1965 as part of a research team searching for evidence of racial bias in rape cases with convictions resulting in the death penalty. Specifically, he and his fellow law students navigated tense and, at times, violent threats in order to conduct undercover research on these cases as part of a larger study on capital punishment. This study was later a key component of a landmark Supreme Court case Furman v. Georgia, which resulted in a moratorium on executions throughout the

country"--

"This book tells the dramatic story of twenty-eight law students--one of whom was the author--who went south at the height of the civil rights era and helped change death penalty jurisprudence forever. The 1965 project was organized by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which sought to prove statistically whether capital punishment in southern rape cases had been applied discriminatorily over the previous twenty years. If the research showed that a disproportionate number of African Americans convicted of raping white women had received the death penalty regardless of nonracial variables (such as the degree of violence used), then capital punishment in the South could be abolished as a clear violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. Targeting eleven states, the students cautiously made their way past suspicious court clerks, lawyers, and judges to secure the necessary data from dusty courthouse records. Trying to attract as little attention as possible, they managed--amazingly--to complete their task without suffering serious harm at the hands of white supremacists. Their findings then went to University of Pennsylvania criminologist Marvin Wolfgang, who compiled and analyzed the data for use in court challenges to death penalty convictions. The result was powerful evidence that thousands of jurors had voted on racial grounds in rape cases. This book not only tells Barrett Foerster's and his teammates story but also examines how the findings were used before a U.S. Supreme Court resistant to numbers-based arguments and reluctant to admit that the justice system had executed hundreds of men because of their skin color. Most important, it illuminates the role the project played in the landmark *Furman v. Georgia* case, which led to a four-year cessation of capital punishment and a more limited set of death laws aimed at constraining racial discrimination. A Virginia native who studied law at UCLA, BARRETT J. FOERSTER (1942-2010) was a judge in the Superior Court in Imperial County, California. MICHAEL MELTSNER is the George J. and Kathleen Waters Matthews Distinguished Professor of Law at Northeastern University. During the 1960's, he was first assistant counsel to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. His books include *The Making of a Civil Rights Lawyer* and *Cruel and Unusual: The Supreme Court and Capital Punishment*. "--

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