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Autore	Hegel Robert E.
Titolo	True crimes in eighteenth-century China : twenty case histories // compiled and translated by Robert E. Hegel ; with contributions by Maram Epstein, Mark McNicholas, and Joanna Waley-Cohen
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Altri autori (Persone)	HegelRobert E. <1943-> EpsteinMaram McNicholasMark Waley-CohenJoanna
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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 271-277) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Judicial procedures -- Interrogation techniques -- Intent and premeditated violence -- Failure of "Confucian" family values -- Control of politically marginal groups and individuals -- Social mobility and crime -- Imperial intervention.
Sommario/riassunto	The little-examined genre of legal case narratives is represented in this fascinating volume, the first collection translated into English of criminal cases - most involving homicide - from late imperial China. These true stories of crimes of passion, family conflict, neighborhood feuds, gang violence, and sedition are a treasure trove of information about social relations and legal procedure. Each narrative describes circumstances leading up to a crime and its discovery, the appearance of the crime scene and the body, the apparent cause of death, speculation about motives and premeditation, and whether self-defense was involved. Detailed testimony is included from the accused and from witnesses, family members, and neighbors, as well as

summaries and opinions from local magistrates, their coroners, and other officials higher up the chain of judicial review. Officials explain which law in the Qing dynasty legal code was violated, which corresponding punishment was appropriate, and whether the sentence was eligible for reduction. These records began as reports from magistrates on homicide cases within their jurisdiction that were required by law to be tried first at the county level, then reviewed by judicial officials at the prefectural, provincial, and national levels, with each administrator adding his own observations to the file. Each case was decided finally in Beijing, in the name of the emperor if not by the monarch himself, before sentences could be carried out and the records permanently filed. All of the cases translated here are from the Qing imperial copies, most of which are now housed in the First Historical Archives, Beijing.
