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Payback: The Case for Revenge

By Thane Rosenbaum

The University of Chicago Press. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Payback: The Case for Revenge, Thane Rosenbaum, We call it justice - the assassination of Osama bin Laden, the incarceration of corrupt politicians or financiers like Rod Blagojevich and Bernard Madoff, and the climactic slaying of cinema-screen villains by superheroes. But could we not also call it revenge? We are told that revenge is uncivilized and immoral, an impulse that individuals and societies should actively repress and replace with the order and codes of courtroom justice. What, if anything, distinguishes punishment at the hands of the government from a victim's individual desire for retribution? Are vengeance and justice really so very different? No, answers legal scholar and novelist Thane Rosenbaum in Payback-revenge is, in fact, indistinguishable from justice. Revenge, Rosenbaum argues, is not the problem. It is, in fact, a perfectly healthy emotion. Instead, the problem is the inadequacy of lawful outlets through which to express it. He mounts a case for legal systems to punish the guilty commensurate with their crimes as part of a societal moral duty to satisfy the needs of victims to feel avenged. Indeed, the legal system would better serve the public if it...



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