



# When Children Kill Children: Penal Populism and Political Culture (Clarendon Studies in Criminology)

*David A. Green*

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*When Children Kill Children: Penal Populism and Political Culture* examines the role of political culture and penal populism in the response to child-on-child homicide.

The book explores the reasons underlying the vastly differing responses of the English and Norwegian criminal justice systems to the cases of James Bulger and Silje Redergard respectively. Whereas James Bulger's killers were subject to extreme press and public hostility, held in secure detention for nine months and tried in an adversarial court; Redergard's killers were shielded from public antagonism and carefully reintegrated into the local community. This book argues that English adversarial political culture creates far more incentives to politicize high-profile crimes than Norwegian consensus political culture. Drawing on a wealth of empirical research, the author suggests that the tendency for politicians to justify punitive responses to crime by invoking harsh political attitudes is based upon a flawed understanding of public opinion.

In a compelling study, this book proposes a more deliberative response to crime that accommodates the informed public in news ways - ways that might help build social capital and remove incentives for cynical penal populism.

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