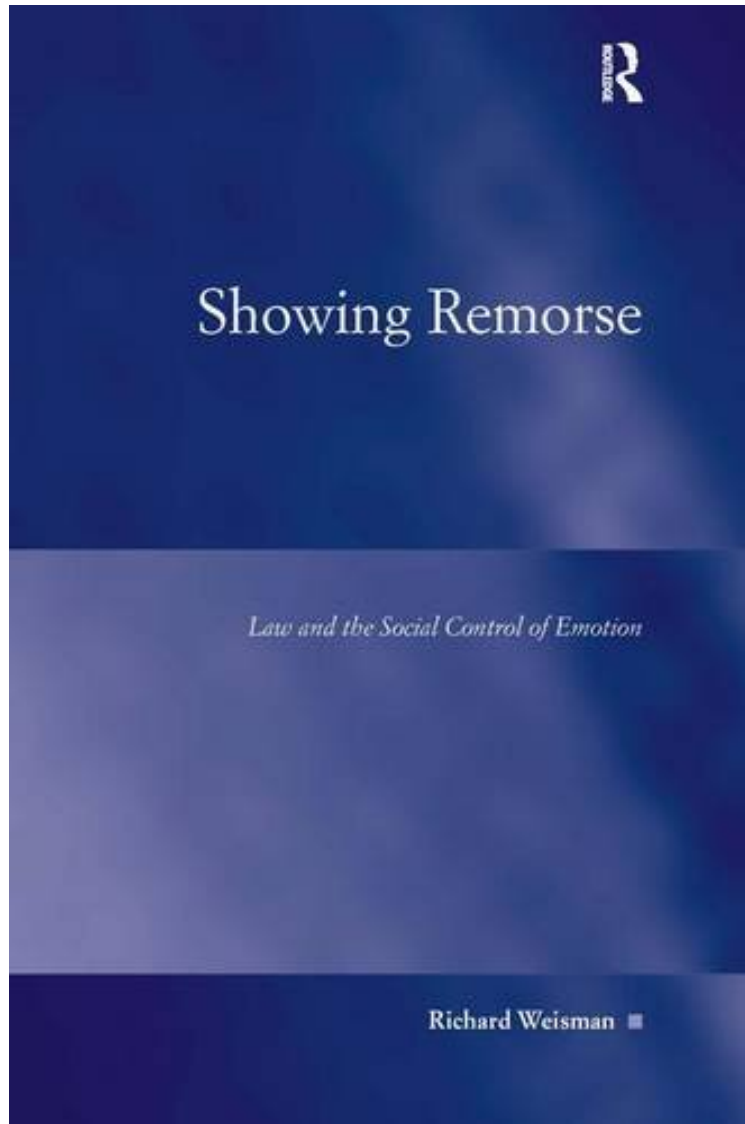


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Showing Remorse: Law and the Social Control of Emotion (Law, Justice and Power)

Richard Weisman

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Law and the Social Control of Emotion (Law, Justice and Power):

Whether or not wrongdoers show remorse and how they show remorse are matters that attract great interest both in law and in popular culture. In capital trials in the United States, it can be a question of life or death whether a jury believes that a wrongdoer showed remorse. And in wrongdoings that capture the popular imagination, public attention focuses not only on the act but on whether the perpetrator feels remorse for what they did. But who decides when remorse should be shown or not shown and whether it is genuine or not genuine? In contrast to previous academic studies on the subject, the primary focus of this work is not on whether the wrongdoer meets these expectations over how and when remorse should be shown but on how the community reacts when these expectations are met or not met. Using examples drawn from Canada, the United States, and South Africa, the author demonstrates that the showing of remorse is a site of negotiation and contention between groups who differ about when it is to be expressed and how it is to be expressed. The book illustrates these points by looking at cases about which there was conflict over whether the wrongdoer should show remorse or whether the feelings that were shown were sincere. Building on the earlier analysis, the author shows that the process of deciding when and how remorse should be expressed contributes to the moral ordering of society as a whole. This book will be of interest to those in the fields of sociology, law, law and society, and criminology.

'In this gem of a book, Richard Weisman wrestles with the concept of remorse in surprisingly novel ways, using rich illustrations to depict remarkably diverse rituals of apology. Weisman's effort to probe the contested meanings that remorse holds in our culture, law, and morality has yielded a tour de force.' Constance Backhouse, University of Ottawa, Canada
'In the legal system, much depends on whether an accused wrongdoer shows appropriate remorse, yet little attention has been paid to how and why remorse should be exhibited. Richard Weisman's important book explores what the community expects from a remorseful wrongdoer and what happens - or ought to happen - when those expectations are thwarted.' Susan Bandes, DePaul University College of Law, USA
'In this carefully argued and researched volume, Richard Weisman provides an original examination of the concept of remorse. The work constitutes a valuable addition to the literature on this complex issue and will be of great interest to sociolegal scholars and legal practitioners alike.' Julian V. Roberts, University of Oxford, UK
'While contemporary criminal justice is officially secular and fact-driven, offenders are nevertheless expected to show remorse, and lack of visible remorse can have a marked negative impact in parole and probation contexts as well as in sentencing. In this innovative work Richard Weisman explores the complex emotional, psychological and legal issues raised by the criminal justice's system unwritten expectations about offending and remorse. The book will be of interest to criminologists, sociolegal scholars, forensic psychologists, defence lawyers, and judges, but it is also accessible to the general public.' Mariana Valverde, University of Toronto, Canada
About the Author
Richard Weisman is Professor Emeritus, Department of Social Science, Law and Society Program, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, and Department of Sociology, Glendon College, York University, in Toronto, Canada.