The rules governing who will be punished and how much determine a society's success in two of its most fundamental functions: doing justice and protecting citizens from crime. Drawing from the existing theoretical literature and adding to it recent insights from the social sciences, Paul Robinson describes the nature of the practical challenge in setting rational punishment principles, how past efforts have failed, and the alternatives that have been tried. He ultimately proposes a principle for distributing criminal liability and punishment that will be most likely to do justice and control crime.

Paul Robinson is one of the world's leading criminal law experts. He has been writing about criminal liability and punishment issues for three decades, and has published dozens of influential articles in the best scholarly journals. This long-awaited volume is a brilliant synthesis of social science research and legal reasoning that brings together three decades of work in a compelling line of argument that addresses all of the important issues in assessing liability and punishment.
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