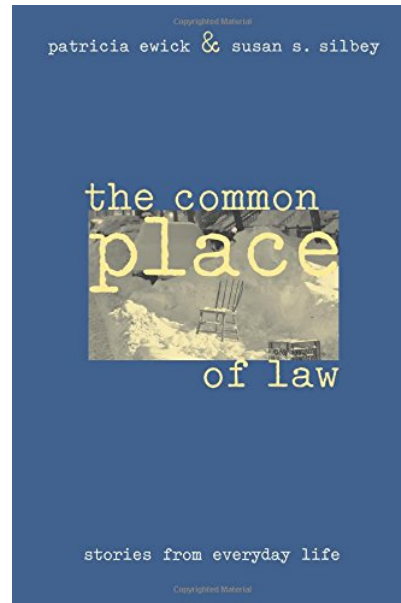


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Why do some people not hesitate to call the police to quiet a barking dog in the middle of the night, while others accept the pain and losses associated with defective products, unsuccessful surgery, and discrimination? Patricia Ewick and Susan Silbey collected accounts of the law from more than four hundred people of diverse backgrounds in order to explore the different ways that people use and experience it. Their fascinating and original study identifies three common narratives of law that are captured in the stories people tell. One narrative is based on an idea of the law as magisterial and remote. Another views the law as a game with rules that can be manipulated to one's advantage. A third narrative describes the law as an arbitrary power that is actively resisted. Drawing on these extensive case studies, Ewick and Silbey present individual experiences interwoven with an analysis that charts a coherent and compelling theory of legality. A groundbreaking study of law and narrative, *The Common Place of Law* depicts the institution as it is lived: strange and familiar, imperfect and ordinary, and at the center of daily life.

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