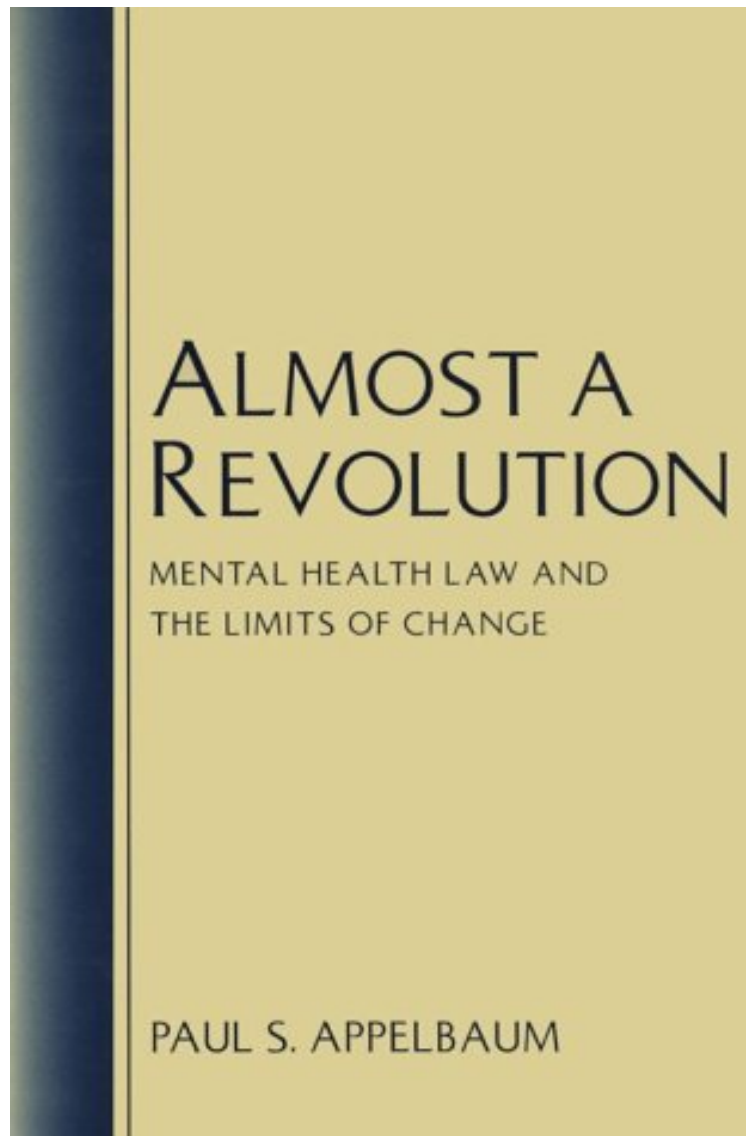


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## Almost a Revolution: Mental Health Law and the Limits of Change

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**Paul S. Appelbaum : Almost a Revolution: Mental Health Law and the Limits of Change** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Almost a Revolution: Mental Health Law and the Limits of Change:

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changes in mental health law in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. Required reading for psychiatrists and mental health professionals.

Doubts about the reality of mental illness and the benefits of psychiatric treatment helped foment a revolution in the law's attitude toward mental disorders over the last 25 years. Legal reformers pushed for laws to make it more difficult to hospitalize and treat people with mental illness, and easier to punish them when they committed criminal acts. Advocates of reform promised vast changes in how our society deals with the mentally ill; opponents warily predicted chaos and mass suffering. Now, with the tide of reform ebbing, Paul Appelbaum examines what these changes have wrought. The message emerging from his careful review is a surprising one: less has changed than almost anyone predicted. When the law gets in the way of commonsense beliefs about the need to treat serious mental illness, it is often put aside. Judges, lawyers, mental health professionals, family members, and the general public collaborate in fashioning an extra-legal process to accomplish what they think is fair for persons with mental illness. Appelbaum demonstrates this thesis in analyses of four of the most important reforms in mental health law over the past two decades: involuntary hospitalization, liability of professionals for violent acts committed by their patients, the right to refuse treatment, and the insanity defense. This timely and important work will inform and enlighten the debate about mental health law and its implications and consequences. The book will be essential for psychiatrists and other mental health professionals, lawyers, and all those concerned with our policies toward people with mental illness.

"I have always thought of Dr. Appelbaum as a scholar and a wise man. His latest contribution only reinforces my opinion. To understand and explain the past 25 years of mental health law, the author has reviewed the revolution in the field from the perspective of research studies and on the basis of his own practical knowledge gleaned from working at the interface between the clinic and the court. He has brought to this knowledge his own marvelous capacity to place things into perspective....As usual, Dr. Appelbaum's thinking, writing, and logic are remarkably consistent and lead clearly to his conclusions....I commend him and recommend this book to anyone interested in this cross-disciplinary field. I am sure I will use this book repeatedly in my teaching and practice over the years and will loan it to students and colleagues; I only hope they remember to return it."--The New England Journal of Medicine

"A medicolegal work by Appelbaum is a brand name product. The reader confidently expects sophisticated analysis of current legal trends and clinical issues, meticulously logical organization, pellucid writing, and valuable, often unique insights into the sociological underpinnings of new developments in mental health law. [Almost a Revolution] superbly fulfills these prophecies....Mandatory reading for advocates, policy makers, legislators, sociologists, and political and social theorists of every stripe. Meticulously researched, thoroughly documented and persuasively argued, this is a landmark publication."--Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease

"[An] excellent book. It should be required reading for all residents and practitioners."--Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law

"Appelbaum couples his erudition with an absorbing style of writing and the result is deeply impressive...An author who can effortlessly captivate his readers on the subjects of, for example, involuntary commitment standards and the insanity defence has rare and enviable gifts of communication. Appelbaum is a rarity and I confess my envy....An outstanding monograph, beautifully crafted, intelligently researched, and written with compassion and extraordinary wisdom."--Journal of Forensic Psychiatry

"A book written with an exceptional analytic clarity that will be of equal interest to mental health experts and novices....Fascinating reading for specialists in mental health, social sciences or law, as well as the interested but otherwise uninformed layperson."--Developments in Mental Health Law

"Paul Appelbaum...has made yet another outstanding contribution to the forensic psychiatry literature...The references are thorough...[Appelbaum] gives a useful clinical perspective to the data presented."--Jeffrey Janofsky (Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine) in Psychiatric Services

"Paul Appelbaum [is] perhaps the most distinguished and scholarly forensic psychiatrist of our day....The essays uniformly share two great strengths: (a) sensitive integration of clinical and legal perspectives and (b) a scholarly approach to the problems analyzed...An excellent collection of essays on the limits of mental health reform."--Stephen L. Golding (University of Utah) in Contemporary Psychology

"[Appelbaum's] analysis of the impact of recent legal changes on mental health intervention is insightful and pertinent...References are detailed and up-to-date, and the author's conclusions are important for professional mental health caregivers, judges, and attorneys practicing in this arena."--Readings: A Journal of Studies and Commentary in Mental Health

"A thoughtful critique of the era of legal activism of the late 1960's through the early 1980's...To his substantial credit, Appelbaum achieves what other critics from the psychiatric community have not: a fair and honest assessment of the empirical literature that evaluates the effect of mental health law reform....As always, he fairly and accurately presents his arguments and leaves the reader informed and contemplative. This book will play a pivotal role in our historical assessment of the past generations of mental health law and in mapping the discipline's future. It should be required reading for mental health professionals, scholars, and advocates."--Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law

"An excellent book, not only because of Appelbaum's conscientious scholarship but also because he is a superb writer....Appelbaum has done a masterful job...Should hold fascination for any medical care provider....A vigorously scholarly book that gives us pause but also renews our faith in human beings' ability to transcend headlong rushes to

judgment."--Journal of the American Medical Association

From the Back Cover

Doubts about the reality of mental illness and the benefits of psychiatric treatment helped foment a revolution in the law's attitude toward mental disorders over the last 25 years. Legal reformers pushed for laws to make it more difficult to hospitalize and treat people with mental illness, and easier to punish them when they committed criminal acts. Advocates of reform promised vast changes in how our society deals with the mentally ill; opponents warily predicted chaos and mass suffering. Now, with the tide of reform ebbing, Paul Appelbaum examines what these changes have wrought. The message emerging from his careful review is a surprising one: less has changed than almost anyone predicted. When the law gets in the way of commonsense beliefs about the need to treat serious mental illness, it is often put aside. Judges, lawyers, mental health professionals, family members, and the general public collaborate in fashioning an extra-legal process to accomplish what they think is fair for persons with mental illness. Appelbaum demonstrates this thesis in analyses of four of the most important reforms in mental health law over the past two decades: involuntary hospitalization, liability of professionals for violent acts committed by their patients, the right to refuse treatment, and the insanity defense. This timely and important work will inform and enlighten the debate about mental health law and its implications and consequences. The book will be essential for psychiatrists and other mental health professionals, lawyers, and all those concerned with our policies toward people with mental illness.

About the Author

Paul S. Appelbaum, M.D., is Arnold Frank Zeleznik Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, and Director of the Law and Psychiatry Program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. He has served as chair of the American Psychiatric Association's Council on Psychiatry and Law and Commission on Judicial Action, and is a member of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Mental Health and the Law. In 1990, Dr. Appelbaum received the Isaac Ray Award of the American Psychiatric Association for "outstanding contributions to forensic psychiatry and the psychiatric aspects of jurisprudence."