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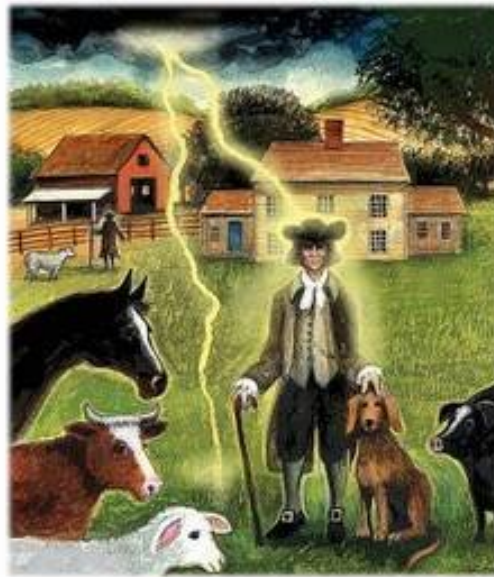
## Taming Lust: Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic (Early American Studies)

*Doron S. Ben-Atar, Richard D. Brown*  
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DORON S. BEN-ATAR & RICHARD D. BROWN

# Taming LUST

Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic



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**Doron S. Ben-Atar, Richard D. Brown : Taming Lust: Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic (Early American Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Taming Lust: Crimes Against Nature in the Early Republic (Early American Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Charge4for school0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It is always politicalBy D. SwayneGreat work, clearly shows the depths that politics will sink too in

order to denigrate the opposition, including the execution of two octogenarians to make the political ideology of the opponent look vile. Clearly politics have always been politics, and Washington was right to oppose the formation of political parties. 'There is nothing new under the sun'.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good readingBy RandGood history of topic.

In 1796, as revolutionary fervor waned and the Age of Reason took hold, an eighty-five-year-old Massachusetts doctor was convicted of bestiality and sentenced to hang. Three years later and seventy miles away, an eighty-three-year-old Connecticut farmer was convicted of the same crime and sentenced to the same punishment. Prior to these criminal trials, neither Massachusetts nor Connecticut had executed anyone for bestiality in over a century. Though there are no overt connections between the two episodes, the similarities of their particulars are strange and striking. Historians Doron S. Ben-Atar and Richard D. Brown delve into the specifics to determine what larger social, political, or religious forces could have compelled New England courts to condemn two octogenarians for sexual misbehavior typically associated with much younger men. The stories of John Farrell and Gideon Washburn are less about the two old men than New England officials who, riding the rough waves of modernity, returned to the severity of their ancestors. The political upheaval of the Revolution and the new republic created new kinds of cultural experience both exciting and frightening at a moment when New England farmers and village elites were contesting long-standing assumptions about divine creation and the social order. Ben-Atar and Brown offer a rare and vivid perspective on anxieties about sexual and social deviance in the early republic.

"Impeccably researched, vividly narrated, and persuasively argued, *Taming Lust* opens up a compelling prospect of a society in crisis, at once attracted and repelled by the seductions of a modern, cosmopolitan world fast advancing all over the new American republic. The conflict between old and new ways briefly erupted in the two fascinating cases at the heart of this immensely readable book, when judicial authorities took the rare step of prosecuting ancient men on the margins of their communities for a capital offense that had not occupied the courts since the last days of Puritan rule." Robert A. Gross, author of *The Minutemen and Their World* "A valuable contribution to the histories of both sexuality and the early republic." *Law and History* "Taming Lust performs a remarkable double feat of historical reconstruction. On the one hand, it uncovers the tangled roots of a pair of highly anomalous trials for bestiality in late eighteenth-century New England. On the other, it unfolds a broad panorama of the social, political, and sexual culture of an entire era. These paired objectives inform a writing that is strongly constructed, elegantly expressed, and larded with fascinating detail." John Demos, author of *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic* "Taming Lust expands our knowledge of a little-known facet of the history of sexuality the extensive record of human-animal intercourse and makes an intriguing contribution to an emerging thesis that the revolutionary era unleashed a sexual revolution that both seduced and terrified those who lived through it." *Journal of American History* "Strange sexual perversities can provide a window into basic values of ordinary people at a particular time and place. *Taming Lust* does just that, offering a perceptive peek at New England near the end of the eighteenth century, and doing so in prose that almost sings." Joseph J. Ellis, author of *Revolutionary Summer: The Birth of American Independence* About the Author Doron S. Ben-Atar is Professor of History at Fordham University and author of *Trade Secrets: Intellectual Piracy and the Origins of American Industrial Power*. Richard D. Brown is Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Connecticut and coauthor of *The Hanging of Ephraim Wheeler: A Story of Rape, Incest, and Justice in Early America*.