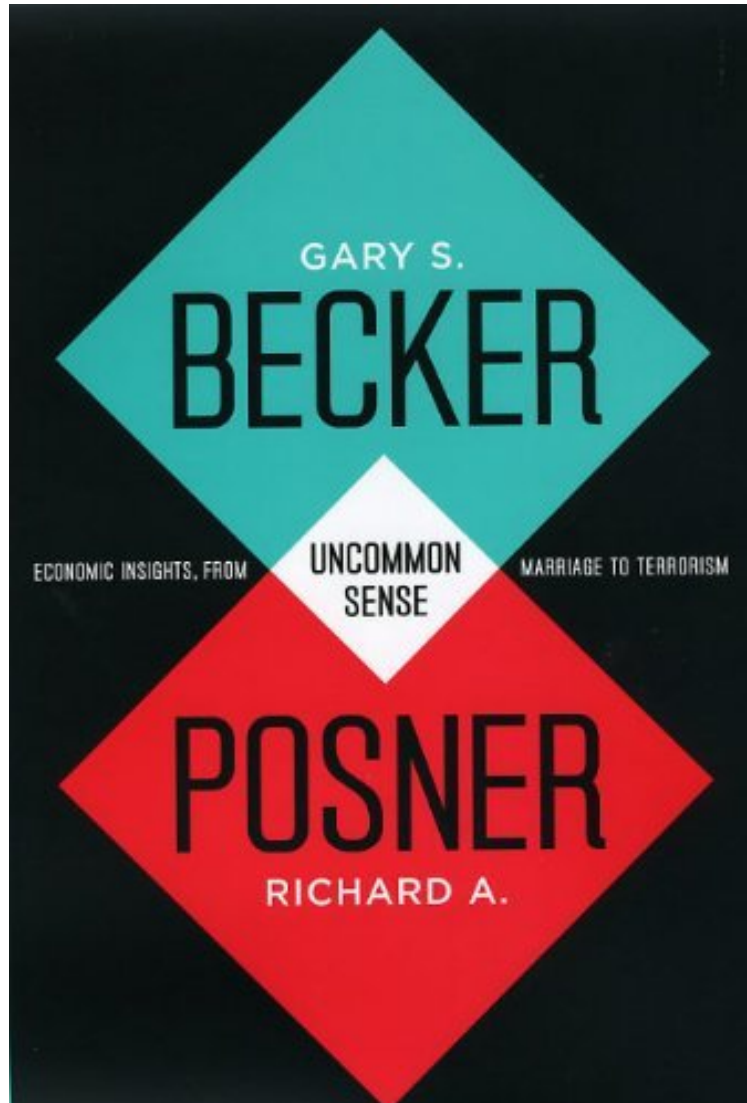


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Uncommon Sense: Economic Insights, from Marriage to Terrorism

Gary S. Becker

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Gary S. Becker : Uncommon Sense: Economic Insights, from Marriage to Terrorism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Uncommon Sense: Economic Insights, from Marriage to Terrorism:

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Antagonist vs Protagonist extraordinaire By Robert Johnston If you have followed Becker Posner's Blog, no need to buy this. If not, Common Sense is a very insightful set of brief and intelligible position papers on controversial topics that are debated as gentlemen are intended to argue their positions. There are 49 'current topics' that are adroitly argued with facts and insights. The topics are sharply distinguished as controversial, left and right, for or against, matters of the heart or otherwise. Whether you are for or

against the argument, for the sake of the argument, Common Sense is effective and interesting. This collection is certainly one of the best for serving up both sides of the issue. Quite interesting all around. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Warren C. Conklin A difficult read but comprehensive. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Nice and quick By Benjamin Great for short and powerful insights, as opposed to the more intensive books (even by the same authors) on the subject. Easier read.

On December 5, 2004, the still-developing blogosphere took one of its biggest steps toward mainstream credibility, as Nobel Prize-winning economist Gary S. Becker and renowned jurist and legal scholar Richard A. Posner announced the formation of the Becker-Posner Blog. In no time, the blog had established a wide readership and reputation as a reliable source of lively, thought-provoking commentary on current events, its pithy and profound weekly essays highlighting the value of economic reasoning when applied to unexpected topics. Uncommon Sense gathers the most important and innovative entries from the blog, arranged by topic, along with updates and even reconsiderations when subsequent events have shed new light on a question. Whether it's Posner making the economic case for the legalization of gay marriage, Becker arguing in favor of the sale of human organs for transplant, or even the pair of scholars vigorously disagreeing about the utility of collective punishment, the writing is always clear, the interplay energetic, and the resulting discussion deeply informed and intellectually substantial. To have a single thinker of the stature of a Becker or Posner addressing questions of this nature would make for fascinating reading; to have both, writing and responding to each other, is an exceptionally rare treat. With Uncommon Sense, they invite the adventurous reader to join them on a whirlwind intellectual journey. All they ask is that you leave your preconceptions behind.

From Publishers Weekly Nobel Prize-winning economist Becker (Human Capital) and U.S. Court of Appeals judge Posner (How Judges Think) apply economic perspectives to a wide range of contemporary issues in these unwieldy essays culled from their jointly written blog. Social problems ranging from terrorism and pre-emptive war to Internet gambling and steroid use are subjected to analysis yielding surprising arguments; for example, they argue that drunk-driving laws penalize behavior that is not criminal (drinking) instead of the harmful outcome (accidents) and ask, Why punish the 99-plus percent of drunk driving that is harmless? The book is most compelling when addressing the legal aspects of eminent domain and pharmaceutical patents, much less so when it pans over national and global issues like ethnic profiling, where the arguments feel well-worn. Despite some valuable insights, the writing itself is ponderous and lacks the references and rigor to make it genuinely academic, but comes across as too dense for good blog writing. And even though the authors acknowledge that their audience might be unfamiliar with the economic principles they apply, their only concession is a brief overview of economics in the introduction. (Nov.) Copyright © 2005; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. In the vast wasteland that most assume the blogosphere to be, Becker and Posner's work is a gem. Authentic, responsive, and enormously fun, it should be read both in real time, and in the reflection of a published work.