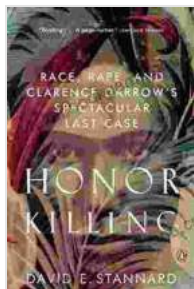


Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow: A Spectacular Last Case

Clarence Darrow, one of the most celebrated attorneys in American history, took on his last sensational case in 1933. The Scottsboro Boys case involved nine young black men who were falsely accused of raping two white women on a train in Alabama. The trial, which took place amidst racial tensions and prejudice, became a defining moment in Darrow's career and a pivotal event in the civil rights movement.



Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow's Spectacular Last Case by David E. Stannard

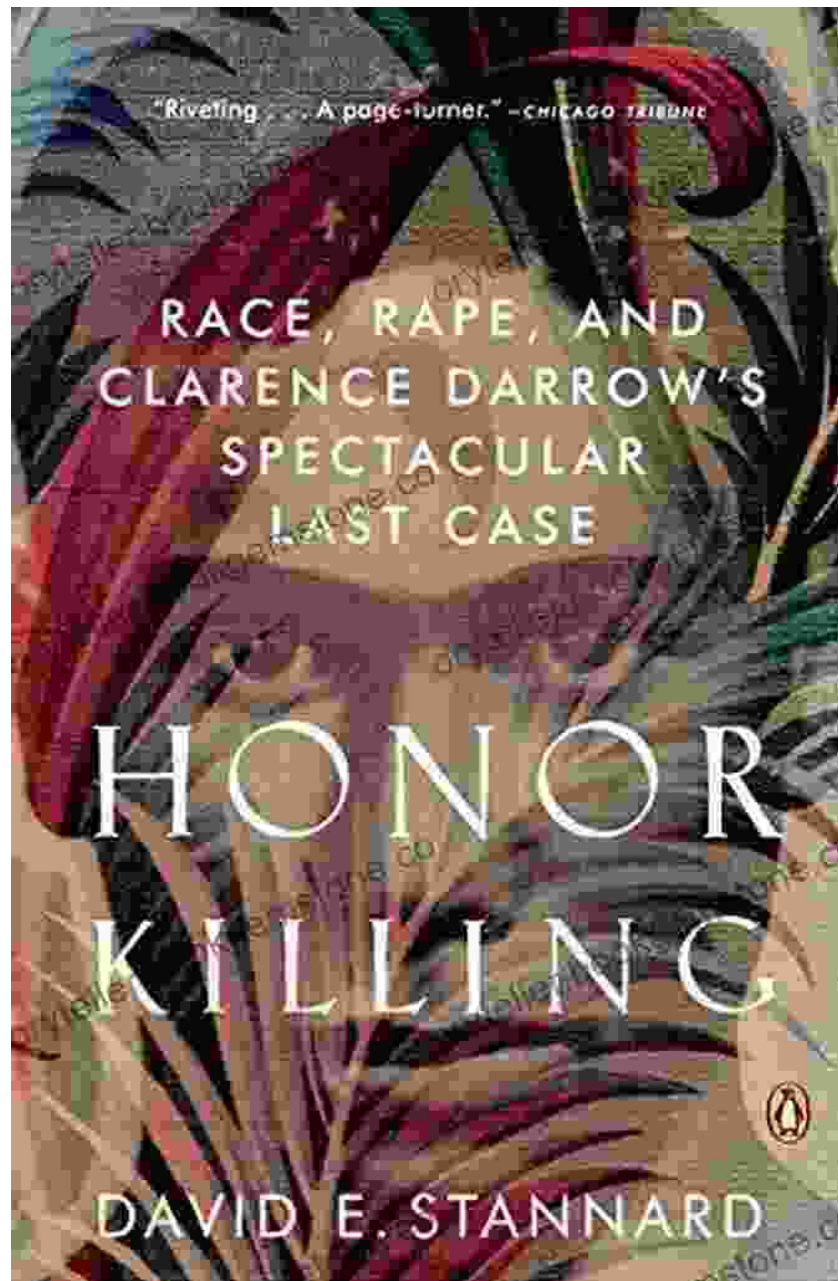
★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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The Scottsboro Boys

The so-called "Scottsboro Boys" were a group of nine black teenagers ranging in age from 13 to 21. On March 25, 1931, they boarded a freight train near Memphis, Tennessee, looking for work. A group of white passengers, including two young women, also boarded the train, and a fight broke out. The young women claimed that they had been raped and the Scottsboro Boys were arrested.



The trial was moved to Scottsboro, Alabama, a small town with a history of racial violence. The trial quickly became a media sensation, with newspapers and radio stations across the country covering the proceedings. The nine defendants were all convicted and sentenced to death, even though the evidence against them was weak.

Clarence Darrow's Involvement

Clarence Darrow, then aged 75, agreed to represent the Scottsboro Boys on appeal. Darrow was a renowned defense attorney, known for his brilliant legal mind and his commitment to social justice. He had successfully defended many high-profile clients, including labor leaders and political activists.



Darrow's involvement in the Scottsboro case brought national attention to the case and the injustices being committed against the young defendants. He argued that the trial was a sham, that the evidence was insufficient, and that the defendants were being denied their constitutional rights.

The Trial

The appeal trial began in Decatur, Alabama, in March 1933. Darrow presented a vigorous defense, arguing that the accusations against the Scottsboro Boys were false and that they had been coerced into confessing. He also attacked the Jim Crow system that prevailed in the American South, which denied basic rights to African Americans.

The prosecution, led by Alabama Attorney General Thomas E. Knight, presented a case based on the testimony of the two white women, who claimed to have been raped. The defense introduced evidence that the women had been drinking and that their accusations were not credible.

The Verdict

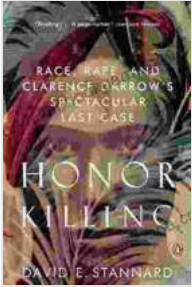
After a lengthy trial, the jury found eight of the nine defendants guilty of rape. The ninth defendant, Olen Montgomery, was found guilty of assault with intent to rape. Darrow was shocked and devastated by the verdict. He believed that the evidence had clearly exonerated the defendants and that the jury had been swayed by prejudice.

Aftermath

The Scottsboro Boys case had a profound impact on American society. It exposed the deep-seated racism that still existed in the South and the injustices that African Americans faced. The case also brought Clarence Darrow's career to an end. He died in 1938, at the age of 80, with the Scottsboro Boys case being his last major achievement.

The Scottsboro Boys were eventually released from prison, but the stain of their wrongful convictions remained with them for the rest of their lives. The case also played a role in the development of the civil rights movement, which fought to end racial segregation and discrimination.

The Scottsboro Boys case is a reminder of the horrors of racism and the importance of fighting for justice. Clarence Darrow's courageous defense of the nine young men marked a turning point in the civil rights movement and left a lasting legacy of social justice.



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