



BOOK RESUME: JUST MERCY

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

Title: Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

Author: Bryan Stevenson

Imprint: One World

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group

On sale date: August 18, 2015

ISBN: 9780812984965

Format: Paperback

Just Mercy is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"*Just Mercy* is every bit as moving as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and in some ways more so. . . . *Just Mercy* is a remarkable amalgam, at once a searing indictment of American criminal justice and a stirring testament to the salvation that fighting for the vulnerable sometimes yields." —David Cole, *The New York Review of Books*

"A searing, moving and infuriating memoir . . . Bryan Stevenson may, indeed, be America's Mandela. For decades he has fought judges, prosecutors and police on behalf of those who are impoverished, black or both. . . . Injustice is easy not to notice when it affects people different from ourselves; that helps explain the obliviousness of our own generation to inequity today. We need to wake up. And that is why we need a Mandela in this country." —Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*

"The message of the book, hammered home by dramatic examples of one man's refusal to sit quietly and countenance horror, is that evil can be overcome, a difference can be made. *Just Mercy* will make you upset and it will make you hopeful." —Ted Conover, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Inspiring . . . a work of style, substance and clarity . . . Stevenson is not only a great lawyer, he's also a gifted writer and storyteller." —*The Washington Post*

"Bryan Stevenson is a real-life, modern-day Atticus Finch who, through his work in redeeming innocent people condemned to death, has sought to redeem the country itself. This is a book of great power and courage. It is inspiring and

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*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

suspenseful—a revelation.”—Isabel Wilkerson, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns*

“Bryan Stevenson is one of my personal heroes, perhaps the most inspiring and influential crusader for justice alive today, and *Just Mercy* is extraordinary.” —Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*

“Words such as important and compelling may have lost their force through overuse, but reading this book will restore their meaning, along with one’s hopes for humanity.” —Tracy Kidder, Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*

“Bryan Stevenson is America’s young Nelson Mandela, a brilliant lawyer fighting with courage and conviction to guarantee justice for all. *Just Mercy* should be read by people of conscience in every civilized country in the world to discover what happens when revenge and retribution replace justice and mercy.” —Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Winner of the 2015 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction
- Winner of the 2015 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work – Nonfiction
- Winner of a 2015 Books for a Better Life Award
- Finalist for the 2014 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Current Interest
- Finalist for the 2014 Kirkus Prize for Nonfiction
- An American Library Association Notable Book
- Named One of the Most Influential Books of the Decade by CNN
- Named One of the Best Books of the Year by: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Seattle Times*, *Esquire*, *Time*

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Teacher’s Guide](#)
- [First-Year & Common Reading Guide](#)
- [Bryan Stevenson at the 2015 Conference on The First-Year Experience®](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- “The Upper Saint Clair school district board was scheduled to vote on whether or not to add *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson to the 9th grade honors English curriculum at their June 28, 2021, meeting. . . . That vote never happened because residents Barbara Austin and Lucinda Cafaro derailed the meeting by submitting statements opposing masking, vaccination, Critical Race Theory, and *Just Mercy*. . . . Neither Cafaro nor Austin is the parent of an Upper Saint Clair school district student.” —[Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy \(Vol 6 No 3, 2021\)](#), Office for Intellectual Freedom, an Office of the American Library Association
- [“ACLU of Illinois Condemns Vote by Yorkville School Board to Remove Civil Rights Book from High School Curriculum,”](#) ACLU of Illinois (2023)

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- “Since the Board acted in August to remove *Just Mercy*, a number of residents — led by students who have used the text at Yorkville High School — have spoken out publicly to condemn the Board’s actions.”

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