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Devil's Knot: The True Story Of The West Memphis Three



Synopsis

"Free the West Memphis Three!" - maybe you've heard the phrase, but do you know why their story is so alarming? Do you know the facts? The guilty verdicts handed out to three Arkansas teens in a horrific capital murder case were popular in their home state - even upheld on appeal. But after two HBO documentaries called attention to the witch-hunt atmosphere at the trials, artists and other supporters raised concerns about the accompanying lack of evidence. Now, award-winning journalist Mara Leveritt provides the most comprehensive look yet into this endlessly shocking case. For weeks in 1993, after the murders of three eight-year-old boys, police in West Memphis, Arkansas, seemed stymied. Then suddenly detectives charged three teenagers - alleged members of a satanic cult - with the killings. Despite stunning investigative blunders, a confession riddled with errors, and an absence of physical evidence linking any of the accused to the crime, the teenagers were tried and convicted. Jurors sentenced Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley to life in prison. They sentenced Damien Echols, the accused ringleader, to death. Ten years later, all three remain in prison. Here, Leveritt unravels this seemingly medieval case and offers close-up views of its key participants - including one with an uncanny knack for evading the law. Mara Leveritt has won several awards for investigative journalism, including Arkansas's Booker Worthen Prize for her book *The Boys on the Tracks*. A contributing editor to the *Arkansas Times*, she lives in Little Rock.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

America's criminal justice system is far from perfect for many reasons. When three 8-year-old boys

are gruesomely murdered, the people of West Memphis are outraged and scared. The police and detectives need to solve the crime to mitigate people's fear. Unfortunately, they accomplish this objective by finding suspects and attempting to prove their guilt rather than truly finding those responsible for the murders. The police, the district attorney's office, and the judge all contribute to the lack of justice in this case as three teenage boys are found guilty of murder with nothing more than circumstantial evidence. The unethical practices of those in charge show that those who wield power can often have more control than anyone desires. Leveritt presents an unfortunate, disturbing example of how our justice systems creates injustice. We must remember, "There by the grace of God go I" for anyone could find themselves in a similar situation.

I absolutely loved this book. However it makes me sick the way the police department handled this case. Not to mention the way the judge wouldn't even give these three boys a fair trial. No matter what their defense tried to do the judge would not let them defend their clients the way they should have been. My belief is the step-dad is the guilty one. Why did this little town not want the Arkansas State Police involved? What were they trying to cover up? This book lays out just how sometimes people have to prove their innocent. All the police, judge, lawyers had these three boys guilty before they even arrested them! How can did they get by talking to these kids without a lawyer or a parent present? Why did they only record or videotape only when they wanted to? Lots of questions about this police department. I only wish someone would investigate the police & judge!

I did not truly remember this story, even though I live in Arkansas, as I was a younger teenager at the time. After reading this alongside other online stories and recollections, I am embarrassed by the willful ignorance of the prosecutors and a judge vying for higher office. The mismanagement of evidence and railroading of someone with low mental capacity, alongside relying heavily on the local "occult expert" generating Salem like hysteria is ludicrous. The police truly needed some outside help with this one. Just glad these guys made it out the other side.

After having seen the movie of the same name I had to read this book. It is an excellent piece of journalism. It is not surprising that she writes for a newspaper and has received awards for doing so. It is surprising that she has only one other work of non-fiction to her name according to the books cover. The book is highly detailed in it's coverage of the case. The book has little in common with the film of the same name. An excellent true crime depiction of how the more than likely innocent can be sent to prison for what was to be the rest of their lives. After having read this I had to plan to

read the authors other work. The tale of Devils Knot is a grim tale of the death of three boys that leaves one with a feeling of who committed this horrible act. It seems quite plain that it was not those who went to prison for it.

The injustice depicted in this story is absolutely appalling. It shines light on how cruel our justice system can be. I would recommend this book to anyone over the age of 14. In fact, it should be required reading. We have made tremendous strides in the direction of diversification in the United States. As a result maybe things like this would not happen, but then again, maybe they could still happen. As for the book itself, it is well written. The questions are at least asked if not always answered. My only disappointment is not in the book itself but with the final outcome. It seems to me the verdict should have been overturned completely, a plea bargain should not have been requested of these individuals. In addition to my opinion of the book itself I would further recommend the audio compliment, Whisper Sync. It is great to read myself, but often times life gets busy and the ability to listen when I cannot read myself has added depth and dimension to this book.

I had heard some things about this case but had never really delved into it. This book, convinced me that it was important that I pay attention, and begin digging. I kept looking for evidence that the WM3 were guilty, without success. The truth is that this was a gross miscarriage of justice and the people who perpetrated these lies should be more than ashamed of themselves. In fact, they should all be prosecuted, but that is one of the reasons they will never admit that they fabricated this ridiculous case against these boys...and the people (and still some people believe the lies) bought it hook, line and sinker. I pray that the day will come that the WM3 will be pardoned. I am encouraged by the men these boys have become and wish them nothing but the very best that life has to offer in the future.

It is shocking that these kids were ever convicted. That being said, I also grew up in a small rural town where every one knows your business or thinks they do. Small town minds, lack of worldly experience and the importance of "not in our little town" thinking. The idea that what may go on in larger cities as witnessed on the evening news could and will happen in our little town is rampant. Looking different or investigating alternative religions would have convicted you in my little town also. I remember the rampage of accusations across the US regarding witches and covens.....they were everywhere. The idea that these 3 teenagers were convicted and spent 18 years in prison is as big a crime as the death of the 3 8 year old boys.

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