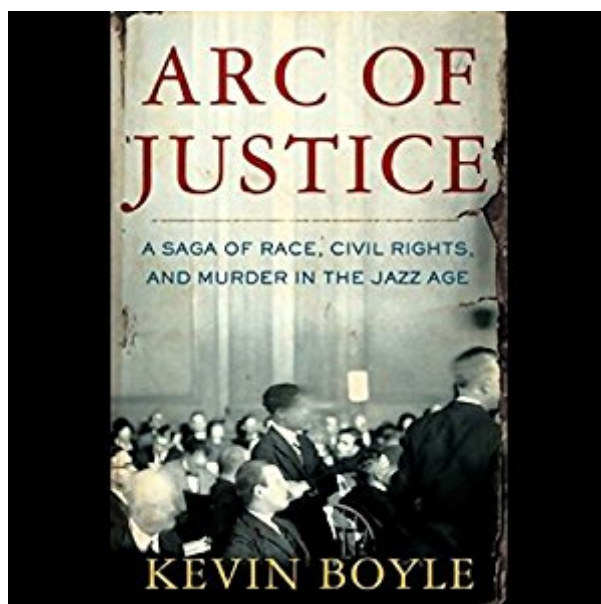


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Arc Of Justice: A Saga Of Race, Civil Rights, And Murder In The Jazz Age



Synopsis

An electrifying story of the sensational murder trial that divided a city and ignited the civil rights struggle. In 1925, Detroit was a smoky swirl of jazz and speakeasies, assembly lines and fistfights. The advent of automobiles had brought workers from around the globe to compete for manufacturing jobs, and tensions often flared with the KKK in ascendance and violence rising. Ossian Sweet, a proud Negro doctor-grandson of a slave-had made the long climb from the ghetto to a home of his own in a previously all-white neighborhood. Yet just after his arrival, a mob gathered outside his house; suddenly, shots rang out: Sweet, or one of his defenders, had accidentally killed one of the whites threatening their lives and homes. And so it began-a chain of events that brought America's greatest attorney, Clarence Darrow, into the fray and transformed Sweet into a controversial symbol of equality. Historian Kevin Boyle weaves the police investigation and courtroom drama of Sweet's murder trial into an unforgettable tapestry of narrative history that documents the volatile America of the 1920s and movingly re-creates the Sweet family's journey from slavery through the Great Migration to the middle class. Ossian Sweet's story, so richly and poignantly captured here, is an epic tale of one man trapped by the battles of his era's changing times. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the afterward to his brilliant and captivating "Arc of Justice," the story of a pivotal but largely forgotten incident in America's Civil Rights movement in 1925 Detroit, historian Kevin Boyle writes

that segregation is so "deeply entrenched" in this country that it can't be uprooted. Even today, he writes, black and white neighborhoods across the United States are "separated by enduring discriminatory practices, racial fears and hatreds, and the casual acceptance by too many people that there is no problem to address." It's a stunning statement to many, no doubt, yet surprising in its obliqueness: a century of lynchings and race riots following the Civil War are over, having taken a full hundred years to slow to a crawl and then die. But many vestiges of discrimination remain. Because the practice has continued, many of us give no pause to the one singular thriving aspect of the black/white conflict, that of racial segregation in our cities and towns. Residential segregation continues to go unchecked because, from the comfort of our living rooms and our front porches, we continue to proudly (but blindly) proclaim that - as some citizens of Detroit in 1925 proclaimed - we harbor no prejudices. Boyle's meticulous research delves into that problem - the intersection of prejudice and the marketplace and the role that force plays in maintaining the color line, particularly with respect to restrictive covenants in real estate - by examining the story of Ossian and Gladys Sweet, a black doctor and his wife who purchased a home in a white neighborhood in Detroit in the simmering summer of 1925.

Kevin Boyle, a history professor, and National Book Award-winning author of "Arc of Justice: A Saga of Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age," has written the best true crime book I have ever read, including Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood." A Detroit native, Boyle tells one of the city's most important civil rights episodes - the September night in 1925 when black people took up arms to defend their home from a white mob. His narrative of the sensational murder trial, which ignited the Civil Rights Movement, is electrifying! Boyle's research is meticulous. He interweaves the incidents leading up to the murder, the police investigation, and the courtroom drama of the trial, with history that documents the volatile America of the 1920's. He re-creates the Sweet family's inspirational journey from slavery through the Great Migration to the middle class. "Arc Of Justice" reads like a suspense thriller! I was riveted to the page. I thought I was relatively well informed about the Civil Rights Movement. However, I was amazed at how little I did know, especially about the period before the mid-1950's. I learned so much from this book about the significant and fascinating history of the Great Migration and many of the events which took place afterwards, especially in the North during the 1920's. "I have always been interested in the colored people. I had lived in America because I wanted to... The ancestors of the Negroes came here because they were captured in Africa and brought to America in slave ships, and had been obliged to toil for three hundred years without reward. When they were finally freed from slavery they were lynched in court and out of

court, and driven into mean, squalid outskirts and shanties because they were black....

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