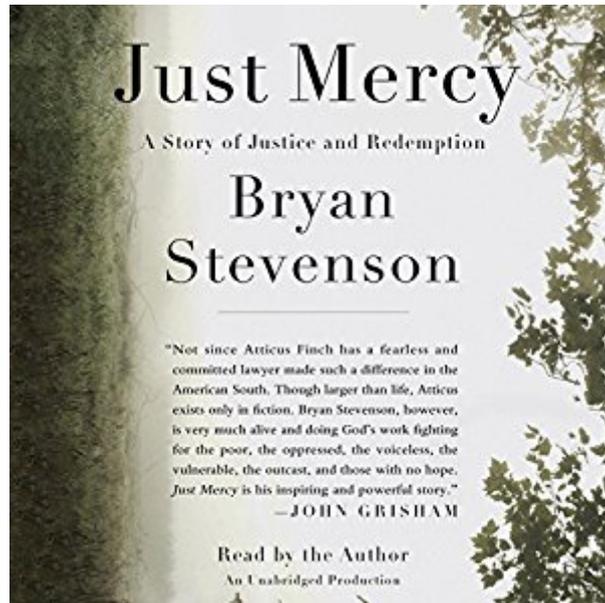


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# Just Mercy: A Story Of Justice And Redemption



## Synopsis

A powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice - from one of the most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time. 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. *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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

At its core, Bryan Stevenson's *JUST MERCY* is about the inherent inhumanity of the American justice system. As Stevenson puts it, "Presumptions of guilt, poverty, racial bias, and a host of other social, structural, and political dynamics have created a system that is defined by error, a system in which thousands of innocent people now suffer in prison." This is a system that condemns children to life imprisonment without parole, that makes petty theft a crime as serious as murder, and that has declared war on hundreds of thousands of people with substance abuse problems by

imprisoning them and denying them help. Stevenson is an attorney with the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, an organization that offers free legal services to the poor and disenfranchised. His book is a sobering look at criminal justice from the perspective of those least likely to be treated fairly. JUST MERCY explores a number of devastating cases, including children as young as fourteen facing life imprisonment, and scores of people on death row - mostly poor, and mostly black - who have been unfairly convicted. But the central focus is on Walter McMillan, a black man sentenced to death for the murder of a prominent young white woman. McMillan claimed he did not commit this crime, and he had a score of alibi witnesses, but he was quickly railroaded into both a conviction and a death sentence. Stevenson spent years working to get McMillan a new trial, and the two men remained connected throughout the remainder of McMillan's life. It's a fascinating case, one that involves perjury, police corruption, a racist judge, and prosecutors more intent on protecting their political positions than finding justice.

The author, Bryan A. Stevenson is the founder and executive director of the Montgomery Alabama Equal Justice Initiative which was formed initially to provide free, quality legal services to condemned men and women on death row in Alabama and to challenge the injustice of the criminal justice system against poor people and people of color. He has represented those on death row, mentally disabled people whose illnesses have landed them in prison for decades, and abused and neglected and emotionally ill and cognitively impaired children who have been prosecuted as adults and imprisoned in adult prisons and suffered horrible sexual and physical abuse. Bryan Stevenson is a hero to the many whose lives he has saved. Stevenson states in the introduction to the book that he's writing about, "...Getting closer to mass incarceration and extreme punishment in America....how easily we condemn people...the injustice we create when we allow fear, anger and distance shape the way we treat the most vulnerable among us."\* America has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. The U.S. is the only country that condemned children (currently 2,500) to life imprisonment without parole. Race is the greatest predictor of who gets the death penalty in the U.S. There are many instances of bad lawyers, later disbarred who inadequately defend indigent clients. Just Mercy's focus is on the author's tireless, almost Herculean efforts and constant struggles to get those who've been unjustly accused off death row and also to advocate for children as young as 13 years who've been sentenced to life without parole. The book's main character is a man who has been framed and is scheduled to be executed.

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