



Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case

By Chris Crowe



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The kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till is famous as a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old Black teenager from Chicago, was visiting family in a small town in Mississippi during the summer of 1955. Likely showing off to friends, Emmett allegedly whistled at a white woman. Three days later his brutally beaten body was found floating in the Tallahatchie River. The extreme violence of the crime put a national spotlight on the Jim Crow ways of the South, and many Americans-Black and white-were further outraged at the speedy trial of the white murderers. Although the two white men were tried and acquitted by an all-white jury, they later bragged publicly about the crime. It was a galvanizing moment for Black leaders and ordinary citizens, including such activists as Rosa Parks. In clear, vivid detail Chris Crowe investigates the before-and-aftermath of the crime, as well as the dramatic court trial, and places it into the context of the nascent Civil Rights Movement.

With lively narrative and abundantly illustrated with forty fascinating contemporaneous photographs, this impressive work of nonfiction brings fresh insight to the case in a manner that will be accessible and eye-opening for teenagers and adults alike.



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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up-"The Emmett Till case was not the sole cause of the civil rights movement, but it was the final indignity that caused the flood of outrage to overflow the dam of racial injustice." Mainstream history has all but forgotten about this 14-year-old African American from Chicago who was murdered by two white men in Mississippi for making "ugly remarks" to one of their wives. The men were acquitted, and several months later, they were interviewed by *Look* magazine and publicly confessed to the crime. The event galvanized black Americans, and even many of the whites who had supported the defendants were appalled at their national confession. Four months after Till was killed, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus, and the wheels of the civil rights movement were set in motion. Crowe's research is extensive and his writing is well suited to his audience. The black-and-white photographs add tension and realism to the story. The picture of the boy in his casket originally published in *The Chicago Defender* is a graphic, powerful testament to the brutality of the crime. This book is a mandatory addition to all libraries because of the impact and importance this crime had on our history.

Lynn Evarts, Sauk Prairie High School, Prairie du Sac, WI

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7-12. Most American history books don't include Emmett Till, the black 14-year-old from Chicago who was brutally murdered while visiting relatives in the Mississippi Delta in 1954. But the gruesome, racially motivated crime and the court's failure to convict the white murderers was a powerful national catalyst for the civil rights movement. Crowe, the author of *Mississippi Trial* (2002), a YA novel about Till's story, begins this nonfiction account with the events that led to the murder: on a dare, Till allegedly flirted with a local white woman; several days later he was kidnapped by the woman's husband and other men. In accessible, succinct, and sometimes colloquial language, Crowe details what happened on the horrible night, the court proceedings, and how the nation responded-- the "aftershocks" of the unbelievable ruling. Crowe is particularly successful in placing the murder within its larger historical context, detailing life both in the segregated Jim Crow South and in Emmett's less volatile but still segregated Chicago, and he doesn't shy away from the horrifying details (there's a shocking black-and-white photo of Emmett's disfigured corpse among the illustrations). Crowe's occasional re-creations of events are vivid, but like the rest of the text, they would have been better served with more extensive source notes; only a few in-text references and a concluding bibliography are provided. But Crowe's powerful, terrifying account does justice to its subject in bold, direct telling, supported by numerous archival photos and quotes from those who remember, including Emmett's mother, who wrote on her son's gravestone: "A little nobody who shook up the world." A time line and a list of further resources conclude. *Gillian Engberg*

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Review

A Jane Addams Book Award Honor book

An Orbis Pictus recommended book

An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

A School Library Journal Best Book

"This book is a mandatory addition to all libraries because of the impact and importance this crime had on

our history." —*School Library Journal*

"Crowe's powerful, terrifying account does justice to its subject in bold, direct telling, supported by numerous archival photos and quotes from those who remember, including Emmett's mother." —*Booklist*

"Crowe pays powerful tribute to a boy whose untimely death spurred a national chain of events." —*Publishers Weekly*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terri Rouse:

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Timothy Rhine:

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