Although the second edition includes updated statistics and information, the legal use of marijuana will certainly inform and expand future revisions. Also, the numerous scholarly references and extensive legal research give a multidisciplinary and comprehensive survey of related literature.

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**Reviewed by:** Brian Chad Starks, University of Delaware, Newark, DE, USA
DOI: 10.1177/0734016815612529

When I first received the invitation to review the book, I was immediately struck by the title, knowing the racism of the criminal court system in the South and throughout the United States. The title gives the readers hope and despair simultaneously. The despair comes from the pain of reading how Blacks were treated and the senseless disrespect, beatings, torture, and killings that were inflicted during the Jim Crow and Civil Rights Eras, while at the same time, it breathes a sense of hope into its readers that these injustices will be revisited and addressed in the pages to come.

There was also a closer connection to me as a Black male born in South Carolina and hearing the number of tragic stories of Black men going on “fishing trips” with White men during the 1930s through the 1960s and never returning to their families. One man in particular was my great-grandfather Willie Clark whom I never had the honor of meeting for he left home on a Saturday morning with three White men (all blood brothers) to go fishing and was not seen again until he was pulled out of the local lake. The rumors were that it was an accidental death claiming Willie Clark fell off the boat and drowned. The three White men were never questioned, let alone arrested for the death of my great-grandfather.

Filled with a sense of accountability and awareness, Renee C. Romano demands her readers to be conscious of the racial tensions during the Civil Rights Era and how America’s criminal court system devalued the lives of Blacks by not holding their murderers responsible for these racially charged killings. Romano shines a bright light on the lack of judicial process in the criminal courts in America. In the Introduction, Romano does a good job at setting the stage for historical racial reckoning. She specifically uses the case of Emmitt Till to exemplify the racial violence Blacks too often faced by White supremacists, as well as the discriminatory legislation that would not allow Blacks to serve on the jury, which helped ensure that the two White men accused of Till’s murder would be found not guilty. She offers strong statistical evidence of the government ignoring the series of more than 100 Black victims murdered at the hands of White men in the South. Not until 1977 did the nation witness its first Civil Rights Trial.
In Chapters 1 and 2, Romano puts the Southern White community, police, political figures, and the federal government on trial for either standing by quietly allowing the racial violence to be perpetuated on Black Mississippians or participating in the melee of racial hatred. She details the rise in Ku Klux Klan killings of many Black men and the institutional racism that was rampant in the South. During the mid-1960s, the media began to shine a light on the criminal justice system’s continued discriminatory practices against Blacks, gaining some national attention. As the coverage of racial hatred increased without a response from criminal justice officials, the federal government felt pressure to respond. In 1966, the Department of Justice stepped in and began to prosecute some White men for murdering Blacks, but for the most part, they too were unsuccessful in securing guilty verdicts.

In Chapters 3 and 4, Romano focuses on revisiting many cold cases that were found during the Civil Rights Era and the government’s new interest in “doing what’s right,” using the Medgar Evans-Byron de la Beckwith case. In line with critical race scholarship, Romano demonstrates that the new political approach was one not done out of morality but done from a perspective of interest convergence. Racism was still rampant in the South, but it was no longer beneficial to be publicly racist. During the late 1970s, a small switch in political ideology had begun, with Black politicians emerging in local and state office and an ideological shift in Whites’ attitudes toward race. In the last two decades of the 21st century, journalists covering stories of racial discrimination began to climb the corporate ladder and large media outlets, such as National Broadcasting Company (NBC), created programming which documented the racial hatred and uncovered cold cases buried beneath the Southern criminal courthouse buildings.

In Chapters 5 and 6, Romano discusses how the media has edited and presented the majority of the conversations on historical racial hatred during the civil rights murder trials as the White male hero has come to save the day. Blacks are often sidekicks to the White hero and get no credit for enduring hardships and fighting for racial change. She questions the media in movies, documentaries, and television for giving the South credit for atoning for its racial sins throughout history. They had begun to rewrite history in saying that the White supremacists were few in number and the criminal court had zero tolerance for such racial hatred.

In conclusion, this book offered a historical context of race relations through the lens of White privilege, a biased criminal justice system, and a contemporary context of the power of politics and the media. Romano writes to make us aware of the past afflictions done to Blacks and the current ones as well. She does not paint the picture that racism is “colorblind” or a thing of the past, and it is my contention that she is informing her readers of its new form.


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DOI: 10.1177/0734016815611174

In civil and criminal cases, a central concern in the examination and determination of intellectual disability (ID) is the validity of results (i.e., whether test results accurately reflect an examinee’s actual capabilities). In some circumstances, the truthfulness of an examinee’s claims is a matter