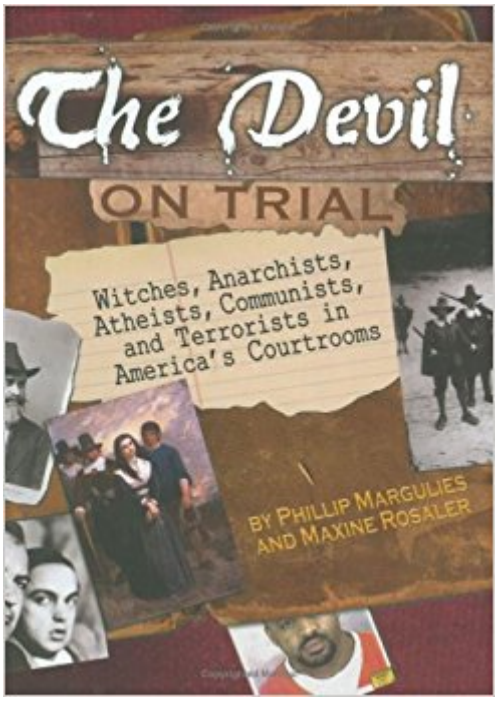
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The Devil On Trial: Witches, Anarchists, Atheists, Communists, And Terrorists In America's Courtrooms (Junior Library Guild Selection)



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Synopsis

Featuring five famous trials, this book examines the way our right to a fair trial can be threatened, when people are tempted to abandon their principles in the name of safety. Trials included are the Salem Witch Trials, the Haymarket Affair Trial, the Scopes Ã¢â ¬Å“MonkeyÃ¢â ¬Â• Trial, the trial of Alger Hiss, and the trial of Zacarias MoussaouiÃ¢â ¬â •the latter not yet covered extensively in any book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6Ã¢â ¬â œ9Ã¢â ¬â •In this excellent example of nonfiction that is at once dramatic and informative, Margulies and Rosaler examine five highly emotional court cases, each of which served as a litmus test for the health of America’s justice system at the time it occurred. The seminal cases are presented chronologically, starting with the Salem witch trials and ending with the recent trials of Zacarias Moussaoui. In between are the Haymarket bomb trial, which hanged four anarchists based on flimsy evidence and a climate of panic, the Scopes "Monkey" trial, which raised questions about the teaching of evolution in schools, and the trials of Alger Hiss, which started the post-World War II hunt for Communist spies. Each chapter gives historical context of the court proceeding, describes its progression in some detail, and comments on the political and intellectual aftermath. The language is straightforward, with enough descriptive details to make it colorful and engaging reading. Illustrations, including photographs, arrest warrants, and other primary-source materials, break up the text nicely: almost every spread contains a relevant image and caption. During each

case, fear and prejudice came up against justice and the limits of the law. In some instances, justice prevailed; in others it did not. The questions raised are worth pondering, and readers are challenged to consider what it means to be impartial and fair in the most charged and complex situations. A highly relevant and riveting book, this is an fine addition to any collection.Ã¢â ¬â •Emma Burkhart, formerly at the Windsor School, Boston, MA Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review In this well-researched and affectingÃ Â offering, Margulies and RosalerÃ Â tie some of the most importantÃ Â trials in American history to the countryÃ¢â ¬â„¢s frequent need to find a Ã¢â ¬Å“devil:Ã Â not justÃ Â a threat to the community, but an incarnation of evil.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Five cases areÃ Â examined in depth: the Salem witch trials, in which the threat was literally the devil; the Haymarket bomb trial, which putÃ Â anarchists in the devilÃ¢â ¬â„¢s suit; the Scopes Ã¢â ¬Å“monkey trial,Ã¢â ¬Â• in which evolution locked horns with religion; the Alger Hiss case, which pittedÃ Â Communism andÃ Â democracy; and the trials of Zacarias Moussaoui,Ã Â the face of evil for a new century. With an oversize format, a crisp typeface, and an illustration-filled design, this is an appealing-looking read. However,Ã Â it is notÃ Â light reading;Ã Â the depth in which the authorsÃ Â examine these trials is both complete and sobering, especially when set against whatever public sentiment was raging at the time. Putting these trials into a historical context is something they do particularly well. Readers will learn as much about why religion and science were butting heads in the 1920s as they will aboutÃ Â the Scopes trial (which was originally a test case encouraged by the ACLU). Impeccably sourced, with an extensive bibliography, this examination does sometimes drop a few threads (what did happen to SalemÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Tituba?) and sometimes stretches the devil connection. Yet young people who spend time with thisÃ Â intriguing title will find themselves more deeply and thoughtfully informed about the U.S. and its legal system. Grades 8-12. --Ilene Cooper

Every now and then civilization goes a bit awry with fear and uncertainly. Something innocuous can and does portend something evil or threatening and society gets all in a collective rip tear to eradicate a perceived threat, a threat that perhaps doesn’t even exist. These fears have often affected the emotional welfare of our country. This book takes a look at five separate waves of hysteria that have harmed the innocent and in some cases have spelled out their death sentences.In Salem Massachusetts two young girls, Betty and Abigail’s bizarre behavior and accusations set the scene for one of the most unusual and destructive finger pointing incidents in

United States history. In 1692 they began make accusations of witchcraft against their fellow colonists. Some died and many of the "accused were made to languish for months in filthy, rat-infested prisons." Nineteen had swung on the gallows before them.Between 1880 and 1930 the word "anarchist" could make the average citizen's hair stand on end. The word invoked the image of a "wild-eyed fiend, armed with a smoking revolver and a bomb." There was a bomb that not only exploded in Haymarket Square, killing seven policemen, but was an explosion that rocked and fueled the American fear of anarchists, even harmless ones. "It tested the court's ability to put what it considered to be the devil on trial."In the 1920s yet another pot was being stirred. Religion and science would clash. Charles Darwin had published his revolutionary treatise on evolution in 1859, "providing overwhelming evidence" that contradicted "the story of creation." "Christian Fundamentalism" was born in 1919 and they were going to trial with Darwin. A simple conversation in a drugstore would pit teacher John Snopes and the "monkey" against religion. The Snopes "Monkey" trial would rock the world.In the 1940s the world would sense and try to eradicate yet another demon . . . Communism. Whittaker Chambers pointed his finger at Alger Hiss claiming that he was "a secret member of the Communist Party." Of course, the accusation was not taken lightly and Hiss later famously retorted that "I am not and never have been a member of the Communist Party." Many would later be caught up in these ridiculous accusations and "for years [Joseph] McCarthy conducted baseless investigations."In 2001, after 9/11, America once again went into a frenzy. This time "terrorist" was the word of the day. A young man, Zacarias Moussaoui, an odd duck, appeared to have been involved in the attacks on the Twin Towers and was an al-Qaeda operative. Was he really evil and was he an integral part of the attacks or simply a man known to be "not right in the head and having a bad character."This is a very serious, thoroughly researched and well written book. There is a very extensive notes section, a bibliography, an index and numerous photographs and illustrations. This is not a book that can be read in a day or so, but is rather what I call "a thinker." I read short sections at a time, often not even completing a chapter. This is an excellent resource for the student who is interested in pursuing further research on any of the five trials. The devil didn't necessarily go down to Georgia, he has visited all across America.

THE DEVIL ON TRIAL takes the reader on a journey through the evolving justice system of the United States. A fact-based reference; the authors use five very distinct historical trials to demonstrate the changing cultures as our country grew from the days of the Puritans to post-September 11, 2001.The first case presented is the Salem Witch Trials. It's appalling to learn that those accused in the early days weren't offered defense counsel. The accused were better off

admitting to crimes that they were innocent of and having their lives spared. Those that denied any wrongdoing were sent to the Gallows.In sharp contrast to the Salem Witch Trials, the trials (yes, there was more than one) of Alger Hiss demonstrate that a fair trial can be achieved even in the face of distorted testimony and massive media coverage. In the age of the Cold War and the fear of Communist infiltration, Alger Hiss was accused of secretly spying on the State Department for which he was a high-level employee. Even years after his trial, controversy surrounds his guilt or innocence. Richard Nixon, prior to becoming president, was part of the investigative panel reviewing Alger Hiss.Another trial that was better known than others of the time is the Scopes Monkey Trial. The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) convinced a young school teacher, John Scopes, to come forward and admit to teaching evolution in his classroom. They offered to pay all his fees and support him. As a young teacher with no family, he had little to lose in the deal. The ACLU had a secret agenda, though; it was going to take on the government to prove the unconstitutionality of the law. A strong Christian Fundamentalist and possible future presidential hopeful, William Jennings Bryan, agreed to prosecute the case. And when Clarence Darrow volunteered his services as defense attorney, the stage was set for a battle of wills. At the time, Tennessee was put in the spotlight, with a legal battle between the Bible and evolution. But sticking to the primary crux of the case, the presiding judge found Scopes guilty on the issue of teaching evolution and refused to hear the defense’s position.The book also covers the Chicago Haymarket Bombing as well as the more current 9/11 attack on the United States. The bombing case, as with the Salem Witch Trials, astounds the reader at the lengths that were went to in order to prove people guilty, even without proof. And everyone has an opinion on the 9/11 attacks.For anyone even remotely interested in the legal aspect of the United States, THE DEVIL ON TRIAL will not disappoint. The book is filled with fascinating details of the justice system of this country. Definitions are spelled out, aided by a glossary at the back of the book. The authors do not choose sides on the cases, but point out the fall-out and improvements that each case brought to this country. The content is appropriate for sixth grade and beyond.Reviewed by: Jaglvr

Sadly, throughout our history, ignorance and fear have combined to create imagined, nameless, faceless forces of evil bent on destroying the treasured American way of life. People embodying these "devils" - also known as witchcraft, anarchism, evolution, communism and Islamic terrorism - eventually were jailed and received a trial, fair and otherwise. The events that led to the emergence of such ideas, the trials that took place and the impact on American democracy are the subject of Phillip Margulie and Maxine Rosaler’s fascinating book.First off, I love books with short, snappy

titles and/or eye-catching cover graphics that grab the reader’s attention. That’s what happened with me as I strolled past a book rack and saw THE DEVIL ON TRIAL. What, The Devil on Trial!?! And there, right on the cover, are pictures of Joe McCarthy...and witches. Hmm, the Devil, witches and Joe McCarthy; this could be interesting!Interesting is an apt summary of THE DEVIL ON TRIAL. Margulies and Rosalier do an excellent, informative job of describing the background to each trial - What, for instance, brought about the Salem Witch trials? How did the fight over evolution in early 20th Century America come about? Why John Scopes?? - and then summarizing the resulting dramatic trials that usually made ’Boston Legal’ theatrics pale by comparison. Clarence Darrow vs. William Jennings Bryan; it doesn’t get much, more dramatic than that!THE DEVIL ON TRIAL is a triple threat title. It’s a good read; a good, basic history of some very dark times; and a vivid confirmation of Edmund Burke’s statement that "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." Highly recommended.

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