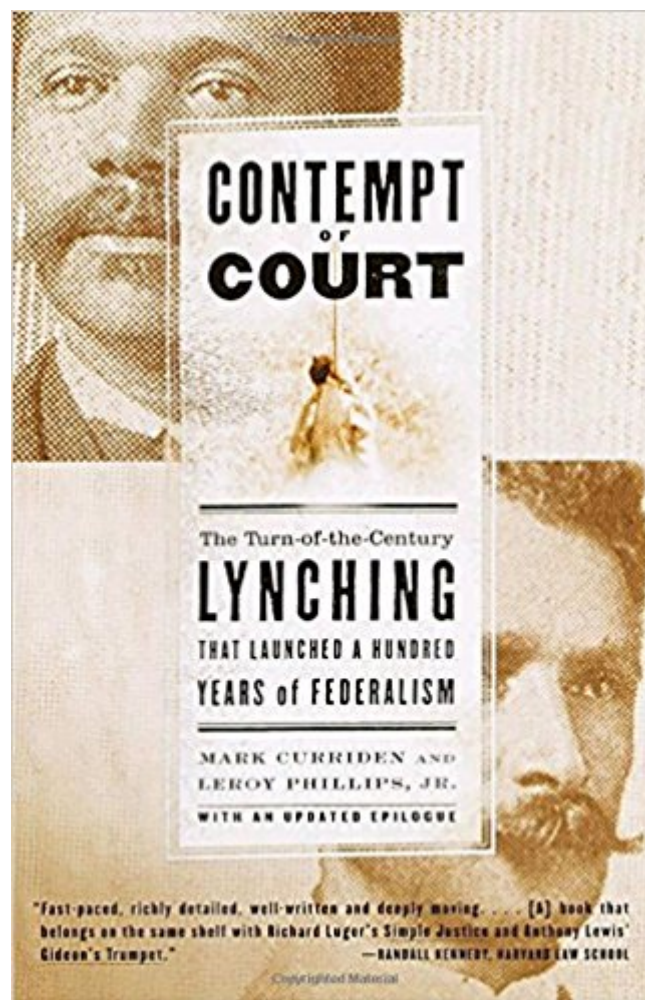




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# Contempt Of Court: The Turn-of-the-Century Lynching That Launched A Hundred Years Of Federalism



## Synopsis

In this profound and fascinating book, the authors revisit an overlooked Supreme Court decision that changed forever how justice is carried out in the United States. In 1906, Ed Johnson was the innocent black man found guilty of the brutal rape of Nevada Taylor, a white woman, and sentenced to die in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Two black lawyers, not even part of the original defense, appealed to the Supreme Court for a stay of execution, and the stay, incredibly, was granted. Frenzied with rage at the decision, locals responded by lynching Johnson, and what ensued was a breathtaking whirlwind of groundbreaking legal action whose import, Thurgood Marshall would claim, "has never been fully explained." Provocative, thorough, and gripping, *Contempt of Court* is a long-overdue look at events that clearly depict the peculiar and tenuous relationship between justice and the law.

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## Customer Reviews

“Contempt of Court should join the handful of books such as Anthony Lewis’s *Gideon*’s Trumpet as required reading for anyone who wants to understand how the Constitution protects individual citizens.” —Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

In this profound and fascinating book, the authors revisit an overlooked Supreme Court decision that changed forever how justice is carried out in the United States. In 1906, Ed Johnson was the innocent black man found guilty of the brutal rape of Nevada Taylor, a white woman, and sentenced to die in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Two black lawyers, not even part of the original defense,

appealed to the Supreme Court for a stay of execution, and the stay, incredibly, was granted. Frenzied with rage at the decision, locals responded by lynching Johnson, and what ensued was a breathtaking whirlwind of groundbreaking legal action whose import, Thurgood Marshall would claim, "has never been fully explained." Provocative, thorough, and gripping, *Contempt of Court* is a long-overdue look at events that clearly depict the peculiar and tenuous relationship between justice and the law.

I needed this book for a group project in history class, it was very interesting, I haven't read the entire book, just my assigned chapter.

I enjoyed the book but thought it was written a bit one-sided. Hard to believe that it wasn't that long ago that black people were lynched without recourse or justice.

"*Contempt of Court*" is a superbly written account of American social injustice and the courageous attempt to correct the workings of our state and federal courts. This is a "Must Read" for anyone working in the field of law or criminal justice.

This is a terrific and rarely-told story from our nation's legal history. This well-written book will be fascinating to anyone who has an interest in the law, civil rights, our nation's history, or just in captivating stories.

Terrific read. Another context to constitutional law, state rights, federalism. Easy to read for the busy law student or attorney. Highly recommend!

I ran across this book reviewed in the Harlan Family news letter otherwise I would probably never have noticed it. The review was good enough to get me interested and I really liked the book even though I don't read a lot of history or legal nonfiction. I'm glad that Justice John Marshall Harlan was there to play a part in early civil rights legislation. My Mother's maiden name was Harlan and I fit somewhere in the family.

Product was as advertised the only problem was the shipping. It was unable to be shipped with next day delivery as originally requested.

An amazing book, "Contempt of Court" traces the story of Ed Johnson, a poor black man accused of raping a young white woman. It's a tragic story yet an important and fascinating one. In it are two of the most significant issues in constitutional law, federal jurisdiction vs state jurisdiction and whether the Bill of Rights applies at state level. Throughout the book, it seems that the fate of poor Ed Johnson and the fact that he was almost certainly innocent gets forgotten while the legal issues take center stage, but the Epilogue on Ed Johnson rectifies this and can't help but make you smile. It's just so upsetting that the perpetrators get off with such a light sentencing. It is wonderfully written and an engrossing story. It's one of those rare, but satisfying, stories where justice (to the extent it could be) is done and the bad guys go to prison. I would highly recommend it if you have an interest in race relations or Constitutional law. But even if you don't, you'll find it just a great read. Well worth it.

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