

Famous trials

Law



Due Case: Leo Frank (1913) Facts of the case Mary Phagan was 13 year old girl who worked at a local pencil company in Atlanta, Georgia. She was brutally murdered at the company's premises on 27th April, 1913, when she went to pick her paycheck. A watchman, Newt Lee, found the corpse in the basement of the company and alerted the police. As one of the prime suspects, Newt Lee was taken in for interrogation. However, the coroner's reports indicated that there had been trials to assault the girl sexually and thus the prime suspect was Frank Leo. Frank Leo was regarded as a sexual addict who molested women to have sexual contacts with him. The investigations asserted collected evidence from Frank Leo partners, such as Jim Conley to nail him during the trial.

Evidence introduced against the defendants at trial

The investigations were based on the evidence collected at the scene of the crime. The notes found at the scene were used as leads to finding the murderer. However, the notes were discarded as they were considered a cover up. Consequently, a sweeper, Jim Conley was used as a witness to recount the happenings at the material day when the victim was murdered. The witness recounted how Leo Frank requested that Conley keeps the door locked for him to make out a sexual activity with Paghan.

The witness disclosed to the court that he kept the doors locked so that no one could access the room. He and Leo had made an arrangement on how they would communicate. The prosecution used the witness to assert that the suspect, Mr. Leo admitted to Conley that he hit the victim and called for his help in dumping the body. The prosecution also took issue with the conduct of the suspect in regard to female workers. As Conley and several women witnesses stated, Leo was a pervert who lured girls into having sex
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with him.

Outcome of the case at trial and on appeal

Upon completion of the hearings, the amount of evidence availed by the prosecution was sufficient to hand a death sentence by hanging. The trial jury held that the suspect, Frank Leo was indeed the murderer and would be executed by hanging. The defense was dissatisfied and sought to appeal in the supreme court of Georgia. The appeal was based on availability of new evidence. However, the court dismissed the case on a 4-2 vote. The then governor of the state of Georgia, John M. Slaton, believed in the innocence of Leo Frank and reduced the sentencing into a life sentence.

Legal issues involved in the case and historical significance of the case

The defense was categorical that the case was racially motivated and biased. Despite the widespread cases of child labor in the state, the murder, especially committed by a Jew, was supposedly the most influential issue in the case. The defense accused the juror and prosecution of racial bias. Consequently, it is evident that the juror was acting to appease the masses that were baying to Leo's blood.

The rejection of appeals based on new evidence and admission from Jim Conley and some other female witnesses is disturbing. This is because Conley's evidence as instrumental in the case. The Supreme Court should have accorded Leo a new trial. The issue posed a challenge to the American system, further supplementing the defense assertions that the case was racially motivated.

Conclusion

The case of Leo Frank posed a challenge to the America judicial system. The technicalities involved complicated the case. The defense was not amused

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and though the prosecution and the jury were acting on public interest rather than rendering impartial trial. This trial depicted a perfect example of how race and ethnicity influence the outcome of the case in a highly divided society and justice would be compromised. As seen in the end, Leo Frank was innocent, and his extra judicial killing by Paghan sympathizers is unfortunate.

Work cited

" The Trial of Leo Frank: An Account." UMKC School of Law. N. p., n. d. Web. 27 Apr. 2014.