

At the hands of  
persons unknown:  
the lynching of black  
america by philip dray



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Before reading the first word of this book and analyzing the book cover you can suggest that this book isn't going to be on a warm and fuzzy subject. Philip Dray examines the African-Americans horrific historical past, lynching. The author perustrate the white Americans justifications they used on their terrible actions of lynching and the real intentions on the abominable acts. At the Hands of Persons Unknown provides an unbiased and powerful view of the foundation of lynching and how the roots are deeply planted in America's being. Within this book Dray uses testimonies, investigation reports, laws that were passed by Congress, and Supreme Court rulings. Dray doesn't leave anything untouched or unsaid during his studies on lynching. He also tells the story of the men and women who led the long and difficult fight to expose and obliterate lynching, including Ida B. Wells, James Weldon Johnson, Walter White, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

While reading this book you will put on an emotional rollercoaster. There are somethings that will make you angry to the point you have to put the book down. Sometimes I found myself on the verge of tears, or reading with my mouth wide open so shocked of these horrors. I felt very ignorant and ashamed after reading. In high school, teachers and the textbook would down play these actions as if it was something small. You learn in this text that lynching was actually an American systemized terror. To know that that this was legal under local, state, and federal government is sickening. For decades lynching was a consistent source of intimidation to African-Americans. It held all blacks from reaching their full potential. They were defenseless and feared to make the wrong move.

The one thing that frighten me the most is that slavery was happening a hundred years ago. My grandma was born into slavery and watched her mother and father to make away for them. Even though it really wasn't much of a choice. White Supremacists was very superior and showed it. Even though lynching was abolished first they killed blacks and did what wanted because of their control. That's what makes me angry the most. Just because you dislike someone color and the texture off their hair doesn't mean you kill them or make up lies to get them killed. African-Americans were terrified because their life is literally in the hands of someone else.

Lynching had almost died in the late 1920's completing a decline that had started in 1884. Dray says that " 1944 was the year that lynching started to decline strongly." Even though the physical aspect of lynching has died mentally blacks are still being lynched till this day. The emotions that occur while reading this novel makes the book stronger. You can't feel the pain that your people felt, but as the author describes some of these occasions you can only fathom. Some questions arise while reading such as, what if White Americans have reaped what their ancestors sewn? Or What if the tables were turned so they can feel the gruesome pained that my ancestors felt. The world may never know. Our past is what makes our future so rich. African-Americans has grown exponentially since then and we are going to continue to make a change.