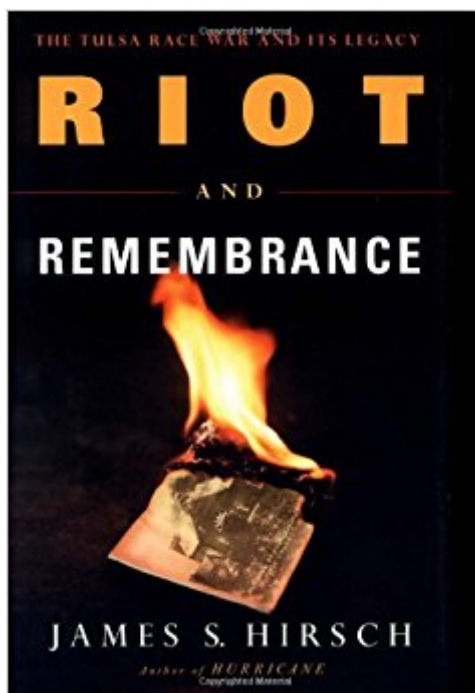


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Riot And Remembrance: The Tulsa Race War And Its Legacy



Synopsis

A best-selling author investigates the causes of the twentieth century's deadliest race riot and how its legacy has scarred and shaped a community over the past eight decades. On a warm night in May 1921, thousands of whites, many deputized by the local police, swarmed through the Greenwood section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, killing scores of blacks, looting, and ultimately burning the neighborhood to the ground. In the aftermath, as many as 300 were dead, and 6,000 Greenwood residents were herded into detention camps. James Hirsch focuses on the de facto apartheid that brought about the Greenwood riot and informed its eighty-year legacy, offering an unprecedented examination of how a calamity spawns bigotry and courage and how it has propelled one community's belated search for justice. Tulsa's establishment and many victims strove to forget the events of 1921, destroying records pertaining to the riot and refusing even to talk about it. This cover-up was carried through the ensuing half-century with surprising success. Even so, the riot wounded Tulsa profoundly, as Hirsch demonstrates in a compelling combination of history, journalism, and character study. White Tulsa thrived, and the city became a stronghold of Klan activity as workingmen and high civic officials alike flocked to the Hooded Order. Meanwhile, Greenwood struggled as residents strove to rebuild their neighborhood despite official attempts to thwart them. As the decades passed, the economic and social divides between white and black worlds deepened. Through the 1960s and 1970s, urban renewal helped to finish what the riot had started, blighting Greenwood. Paradoxically, however, the events of 1921 saved Tulsa from the racial strife that befell so many other American cities in the 1960s, as Tulsans white and black would do almost anything to avoid a reprise of the riot. Hirsch brings the riot's legacy up to the present day, tracing how the memory of the massacre gradually revived as academics and ordinary citizens of all colors worked tirelessly to uncover evidence of its horrors. Hirsch also highlights Tulsa's emergence at the forefront of the burgeoning debate over reparations. RIOT AND REMEMBRANCE shows vividly, chillingly, how the culture of Jim Crow caused not only the grisly incidents of 1921 but also those of Rosewood, Selma, and Watts, as well as less widely known atrocities. It also addresses the cruel irony that underlies today's battles over affirmative action and reparations: that justice and reconciliation are often incompatible goals. Finally, Hirsch details how Tulsa may be overcoming its horrific legacy, as factions long sundered at last draw together.

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Customer Reviews

Try as one might to disguise and forget the shameful events of the past, murder will out. So James Hirsch, author of the acclaimed book *Hurricane*, shows in this careful examination of a particularly shameful episode in modern American history. On the evening of May 31, 1921, fueled by rumors and newspaper headlines charging that a young black man had assaulted a young white woman, a mob of armed white citizens burned much of the predominantly African American Greenwood section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to the ground. More than 35, and as many as 300, Tulsans died, most of them black. Tulsa's city fathers did all they could to keep the news of this mass lynching from spreading; they found convenient scapegoats (including a blameless but prominent African American businessman) and went about excising mention of the Greenwood affair from official documents. Yet the memory of the crime lived on, and Hirsch's narrative shows how modern Tulsans translated that memory into justice--or at least the possibility thereof. A remarkable book on an astonishing incident too long overlooked, *Riot and Remembrance* tells us that history does not always belong to the victors, and that the past is never truly forgotten. --Gregory McNamee

"But our boys who had learned their lesson/
On the blood-stained soil of France/
How to fight on the defensive/
Proposed not to take a chance." This rousing piece of verse is not a post-WWI veterans' drinking song but a poem recounting African-American resistance to a white riot ignited when blacks banded together to stop a 1921 Tulsa, Okla., lynching. But despite the bravery displayed, the riot, which was the worst in U.S. history, was a cataclysmic event in which the entire prosperous black neighborhood of Greenwood 1,256 homes, churches, stores, schools, hospitals and a library was looted and burned to the ground, while three hundred people were killed and the black residents

were finally forced at gunpoint into detention centers. Even more shocking is that the event has been virtually wiped from history with newspaper accounts, police records and state militia records destroyed. Hirsch's reconstruction of this history, which reads as a horrifying narrative, is illuminating and grim. Relying on oral histories, investigative journalism, court and archival records as well as published memoirs and government reports, Hirsch (*Hurricane: The Miraculous Journey of Hurricane Carter*) paints a complex portrait of a prosperous city where oil was discovered in 1901 and where African-Americans had obtained some degree of economic and cultural independence in a state with an already troubled history of racial tension. Political organizing by the International Workers of the World in 1917 had set the stage for social unrest; veteran status gave black men a new identity after WWI. Hirsch unearths an important episode in U.S. history with verve, intelligence and compassion. (Feb.) Forecast: This book may not hit bestseller lists, but it could be shortlisted for awards. The fight for economic compensation to Greenwood's victims can be related to the larger current struggle for reparations for African-Americans. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

If you study Jim Crow history, slavery, etc, this book will shock even those somewhat hardened to this history. Very visceral, very shameful but so predictable in this nation's culture. And regardless of where you believe we as a nation are in regards to racism, this book will remind you Tulsa is just around the corner in many places in this country.

Good book reinforced what I had previously learnt, but great refresher course in Racial situations when Blacks were well established, and the white gentry found this pretty offensive.

this is a well put together book. the history of which was only 85 years ago is ugly but yet THE BURNINGS CONTINUE. the history of tulsa oklahoma at least on the black side demonstrates that blacks were never lazy and that we wanted a piece of the "american pie". in 2006 after the death of Mrs. King it will take you more than two hands to count the burnings of churches after her death. THE BURNINGS STILL CONTINUE. this book demonstrates that blacks are not lazy, or even 3/5ths of a human being or sub-human rather. ever since 1619 8 years after the king james bible, us blacks wanted all the good things in life as well. it took a long time to come, but we started to do for self rather than have it done for us by masters who did not know us or care! if we could not live along side the masters we lived next door meaning on the other side of town. naturally we would build a church and a school and yet still be slaves. now if our town that we built up became to nice,

or just better than there's they would riot. before 1865 and well into the early 1900s all riots were white inspired. riots were synonymous with whites only. only free people could riot. a slave held against his will does not riot but revolt and obviously that's what all living things do when held against their will. a phrase by public enemy is "it took a nation of millions to hold us people back". (i can see why the kkk wears the mask, because you might of had presidents out there lynching as well) this book demonstrates how media, police, mayor and even governor was all part of what was conspired against the black people of tulsa. reader if you research media you will find all types of racist media that inspired riots. in this book the media lied as usual, and said a black boy sexually assaulted a white girl. next thing you know everything is burned down and hundreds of people die. this book covers one riot in one city. there were hundreds of riots maybe even thousands in different cities all for the same reason; to keep the black man down! but tulsa was a lot different obviously because it was compared to wall street which is synonymous with money. this is a great book but i encourage the readers to get a book first on riots in general and then get a book on a riot per riot. fire is synonymous with the white man. in europe where it was cold and always cloud covered they had no sunshine (no tans either) so they worshipped fire. today the racist christians burn their own cross? THE BURNING STILL CONTINUES AND ITS TIME FOR THEM "TO GET OVER IT" like us blacks are told so often.

This book was and is a gold mine of information about black history. I am glad that had this book on it's list. I very much enjoyed this book. I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

All Americans should read this book. Excellent.

Great book. Shipped timely and in the condition stated. Will deal with this vendor again.

I read Martha Southgate's novel of three generations of black Tulsa women, each hiding a horrible tragedy. The name of the book is THIRD GIRL FROM THE LEFT. The oldest woman, Mildred, has lived through the Tulsa race riots of 1921 and has kept her secrets well. After reading this accomplished novel I wanted to know more about the holocaust in Tulsa, and to find out why it was so underreported at the time and for the next 50 years. James Hirsch's book seems to be about the best of a new crop of revisionist history, and I read the whole thing in about two and a half hours. At this late date there is no smoking gun, and a five month search for rumored mass graves in the surrounding areas of Tulsa proper turned up nothing out of the ordinary. That will never stop people

from assuming that more than the 36 victims of vigilante action were killed, their bodies disposed of summarily. Hirsch thinks that the figure is probably somewhere between 75 and 300. Thousands of people lost their homes, and acres of Greenwood, the so called "black Wall Street" were burned to the ground. The famed historian John Hope Franklin came to Tulsa four years after the riots and bears witness today to the sense that, in 1920 black Oklahomans had made some definite progress, but after the catastrophe they lost their confidence and never could make up the backwards steps. Of course trauma studies indicate that such a devastating blow can never be recuperated, not entirely. That is why the issue of reparations has come to the forefront of the debate in recent times, for it seems, following Freud, that money is the only thing that people really sit up and take notice of, and as such it is the only proper way of dissolving guilt from human relations. (One of Hirsch's chapters is called, "Money, Negro," which is what Hope Franklin told a black politician who asked him what reparations represent.) The latter half of the book is almost a personality parade as two men, the aforementioned pol, Don Ross, squares off against the driven, white liberal who wrote extensively about the forgotten tragedy as early as 1971--Scott Ellsworth. Neither of the two men care a fig about the other, it's plain to see, while elegant, courteous and magisterial John Hope Franklin rises above it all with his super acuity and his refusal to bend principles.

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