

PARADE
Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION:

Parade is based on a true story – a series of shocking events in Atlanta, Georgia that made headline news between 1913-1915. On its surface, the story presents an ugly chapter of a particular time in American history that is long gone. Yet boiling under the drama are potentially explosive divisions of racial, class-based, religious, and regional tensions that continue to exist not only in the South, but across the nation. The aftermath of the trial of Leo Frank, the play's main character, would lead to the rise to power of the Ku Klux Klan, and the activism that rose up to combat the Klan and to promote civil rights for all Americans. An in-depth analysis of *Parade* offers us the opportunity to gain new perspectives on this volatile chapter of America's past, to spark dialogue in the present, and to envision a different future.

THE STORY BEHIND *PARADE*:

BACKGROUND:



Mary Phagan lived in Atlanta's Bellwood section, a poor White neighborhood surrounded by factories and an impoverished Black neighborhood. Mary's father, a farmer, had died a few months before she was born in Alabama. Around 1900, Mary's widowed mother, Fannie, carried the children back to the family's home near Marietta in Cobb County, twenty miles northwest of Atlanta. The family later moved to Atlanta when the mother remarried. Like many girls her age, Mary had quit school to help her family make ends meet. At the age of ten she had a part time job, and in 1912 she started her full time position at the National Pencil Factory, where she was paid ten cents an hour to run a machine that inserted rubber erasers into the metal tips of nearly finished pencils. On the day of April 26, 1913, thirteen-year-old Mary planned to attend the Confederate Day parade, the highlight of which was the marching of five hundred aging Confederate veterans. First, however, she had to collect her meager pay of \$1.20 from the Pencil Factory. She never made it to the parade, and by evening her parents were worried.

Leo Max Frank also did not attend the parade. The twenty-nine-year-old man was at the National Pencil factory, where he worked as superintendent. Like most Saturdays, he spent the morning in his office working on the books. A small, slender man of five feet, six inches and 120 pounds, Frank was born in Texas, but grew up in Brooklyn. He was well educated, having studied at both the Pratt Institute and Cornell University. Although an outsider, his life in Atlanta was seemingly secure. He was a well-respected and well-known member of the highly assimilated German Jewish community in Atlanta. Frank had also married well. His twenty-three-year-old wife, Lucille, was the granddaughter of Levi Cohen, cofounder of Atlanta's Reform synagogue, and her father worked for the family's business, West Disinfecting. Through his marriage, Frank had formed relationships with many leading figures in the Southern Jewry, and he was the newly elected president of the local B'Nai Brith, which sponsored dances, recitals, and lectures.

Despite its poverty, in 1913 the City of Atlanta was gaining status as place of commerce and culture, featuring the Municipal Auditorium, which housed opera and other events. The newly elected governor, John Slaton, and his wife was Sallie Grant (an heiress to a \$2 million estate), were welcome amongst Atlanta's elite society. Slaton was also a lawyer, representing many of the city's biggest businesses, including Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill. His wife, an actress, was something of a local celebrity.



Lucille and Leo Frank, 1909

THE MURDER INVESTIGATION:

At three in the morning on the 27th, the police received a call from the Pencil Factory's night watchman, an African-American male named Newt Lee, who told them he had found the body of a dead White girl in the basement. From the factory lobby, there were only two ways into the basement—an elevator and a wooden plank ladder that descended from a scuttle hole. After meeting the men, Newt Lee took them to the scuttle hole, where they went down one at a time. There the police found Mary Phagan's body lying on a dark, filthy basement floor that was covered in coal dust and pencil shavings. Her body was so dirty, it was initially believed that she was Black, and the police had to pull down one of her stockings to confirm her skin color. They could see that the girl's dress was hitched up around her knees and a shoe was missing. She had wounds on her face and head, and a cord had been twisted around her neck. It also appeared that the girl had been raped or mutilated.

The group present at this first investigation included: Sergeants Brown and Dobbs, Call Officer Anderson, former officer W.W. "Boots" Rogers, and Britt Craig—a young *Atlanta Constitution* reporter, who was there either because he had been waiting at headquarters for a ride, or more likely, because he had passed out drunk in Boot's car.

During this time period, the Atlanta police force was poorly trained, ill equipped, and had a reputation for corruption. They were also known to be brutal, especially towards African-Americans. There was no fingerprint lab, and almost no one on the force had a police car. By not sectioning off the crime scene, the police lost some important evidence, including bloody fingerprints and a trail in the dirt that would have shown from where Mary Phagan had been dragged.

They did, however, discover what would become key evidence—two “murder notes.” These notes said:

- 1) he said he wood love me land down play like the night witch did it but that long tall black negro did boy his slef
- 2) mam that negro hire down here did this i went to make water and he pushed me down that hole a long tall negro black that hoo it wase long sleam tall negro i wright while play with me

Whoever had murdered Mary had presumably written these notes, pretending to be Mary writing to her mother (“mam”) before she died. After reading the notes, the officers suspected Newt Lee (“the night witch [watch]”), and he was cuffed and taken away. The Chief of Detectives, Newport Lanford, brought in two of his best men on the job, John Black and John Starnes. Detective Starnes toured the basement, looking for more clues. Back at the station after the investigation of the murder scene, the police noticed that the murder notes had been “borrowed” by the *Atlanta Journal*’s Harold Ross. They had not even been dusted for fingerprints or examined by any experts yet, but no one seemed concern about the missing evidence.

“Boot” Rogers’s sixteen-year-old sister-in-law worked at the factory. Thus, Grace Hicks was brought in to identify the body. She then called a mutual friend, Helen Ferguson, also sixteen years old, who brought the news to Mary’s parents in person since they did not own a telephone. Then Boots, together with Detective Black, went over to Leo Frank’s house. Detectives Black and Starnes were suspicious of Frank because he had failed to pick up the phone that morning whereas they had no difficulties reaching the factory’s major stockholder, Sig Montag. What’s more, Newt Lee had also claimed that he had tried to phone Frank after discovering the body but was unable to reach him. The detectives, therefore, were curious to see how Frank would react to the news of Mary Phagan’s murder. When they met Frank he seemed agitated and nervous. Frank later explained that he was nervous when the police visited him because he supposed that something bad had occurred at the factory, which was after all his responsibility. Moreover, the police had refused to tell him what was going on; the men simply took Frank to see Mary’s body. Again a reporter was present—this time it was Harold Ross, the aforementioned reporter from the *Atlanta Journal*.

When the police brought Frank to the factory to see the spot where the body had been found, he once more appeared nervous as he operated the elevator down to the basement. When the elevator hit the bottom, it squashed a fresh mound of human excrement causing a foul stench. The police, who had noticed the excrement on their prior visit (before it was smashed), never collected this substance for scientific examination.

The officers and Leo Frank then met with Chief Newport Lanford. Frank checked Newt Lee's time slip, and said that everything was in order. Later that day, Lanford dismissed Leo Frank. Although the police were still suspicious of Frank's nervous behavior, at this point they thought the murder was a "Negro crime" and that Newt Lee probably did it. All Sunday, police investigators interrogated Lee. Meanwhile police were following other leads. As police were investigating the murder, ten thousand people made their way to peer at Mary's open casket. The body, which had been prepared for the viewing, had not yet been given an autopsy.

On Monday morning, a factory worker named R.P. Barret claimed to have found a red spot that looked like blood on the factory's metal department floor near the women's dressing room. He also claimed to have found six or eight strands of auburn hair that he swore were not there on Friday. He told Lemmie Quinn, a foreman, who notified the police. Police Chief James Beavers came to the factory and tested the spot on the floor with alcohol. When it did not dissolve as it would with paint or oil, he announced that it was blood. This evidence suggested that Mary had been attacked on the second floor of the factory, a theory reported by the Atlanta newspapers.

Detective John Black and another officer then made another visit to Frank's home, from whence they took him to police headquarters. When Frank was handed Newt's time slip, this time Frank stated that earlier he had overlooked the fact that Lee had actually missed three punches. Frank's lawyer, Luther Rosser, realizing that Frank was under suspicion, insisted that a man who had committed such a crime would have scratches and marks on his body. Frank then showed them his torso, which was unblemished. A second lawyer, Herbert Hass, then suggested that they search the laundry at Frank's house. No bloodstained clothing was found.

The pressure to convict someone in this case was strong. On Tuesday morning the *Constitution* offered reward money of \$1,000 for information about the case and criticized the police department for not moving faster. The *Georgian* offered even more money. That same morning, Mary Phagan's funeral was held in Marietta. The *Georgian* covered the funeral, emphasizing the family's call for vengeance. This put even more pressure on the department.

On Tuesday police arrested Leo Frank. At the coroner's inquest, George Epps testified that he had ridden the trolley with Mary the day of the murder and that she had told him she was afraid of Mr. Frank's lecherous behavior towards her. Although Mary's mother said that Mary didn't even like George Epps, the papers, of course, made headlines of his story. Two conflicted images of Frank existed after this testimony. One held by Atlanta's White working class and the other by the city's German Jewish community who maintained that Frank was an exemplary man and a loyal husband. These conflicting images would continue far into the future. Stories of Frank's supposed improprieties with females were prominently reported in the paper, and Frank's character became a central issue in the trial.

Soon State Prosecutor Hugh Dorsey had become involved in the case. Dorsey needed a courtroom victory, having lost many high-profile cases since his appointment as Fulton County solicitor general. During the coroner's inquest, the police admitted that they had little evidence as to who committed the crime. Doubts about the case were voiced in Atlanta's newspapers. Thereafter, Dorsey worked hard to build a case against Frank and to sway public opinion. The papers soon printed parts of Monteen Stover, a 14-year-old factory employee's affidavit in which she stated that she came to Frank's office at 12:05 on the Saturday, and was not there, although he said he left at 12:15.

The Phagan grand jury convened at 11 am on Friday, May 23, 1913. The prosecutor, Hugh Dorsey, had to suggest a motive, which was not easy since the coroner Dr. Hurt had reached the conclusion that Mary Phagan had not been raped. Still, Dorsey claimed that Frank had attacked Mary out of lust and then murdered her and attempted to do away with her body. It only took the jury five minutes to indict Frank, even though the grand jury was comprised of businessmen who might have expected to sympathize with Frank, as well as four Jews (one was out of town).

Nevertheless, Dorsey's case was shaky, and it lacked evidence. The crucial evidence came when the police arrested James Conley. On May 1, the day watchman, E.F. Holloway, had spotted Conley washing red stains out of an old blue work shirt. Startled, he dropped the garment. It seemed as if he had something to hide, but later Conley swore that he was just trying to rinse out some rust stains. In his initial statement (which the police didn't take until fifteen days after his arrest), Conley claimed that on Saturday, April 26, he visited a number of saloons, bought whiskey, and arrived home at 2:30 AM. He then said he remained at home that night. Conley had worked in the Pencil Factory as a sweeper. He not only had a drinking problem, but he had also been arrested before, including the time he fired a shot at his common-law wife (missing her but grazing another African-American woman). The police did not suspect him, however because he swore he couldn't do what the killer or accomplice (one of who had to have authored the murder notes) could do—that was write. Conley's claim fit in with their stereotype of African-Americans as ignorant and unintelligent.



JIM CONLEY, 1913

Atlanta's Black population was divided along class lines. The wealthy were associated with the all Black colleges—Spellman, Clark, and Morehouse—and businesses like Standard Life Insurance and Atlanta Mutual Life. The poor lived in shantytowns where the average life span was thirty-five years. But it was difficult for the Black community to demand better treatment because of Jim Crow laws (since 1905 the parks, restaurants, bars, train cars, barbershops, elevators, the zoo, haberdasheries, and the library were segregated by race) and the pervasiveness of lynching. Between 1882-1930 Georgia recorded 508 lynchings. While in other states lynchings had been on the decline, Georgians had “lynched more Blacks between 1900 and 1920 than they had in the previous twenty years.” In 1906, there had been a race riot, resulting in 25 African-Americans dead and 150 wounded. So, in 1913, an African-American male who had been arrested knew that in order to protect himself he needed to “act the fool” with the White police. But in truth, Jim Conley had been a student for two years in one of Atlanta's best Black schools—and he could read and write.

A week after the police interrogated him, and after some time in a dark, desolate, solitary confinement and hours before Frank's indictment, Conley admitted to writing the murder notes. Conley then made a statement, saying that on Friday night Frank had dictated the murder notes to him and had offered him some money. After Conley wrote the notes, his story went, Frank had laughed and told him that he had wealthy people in Brooklyn to protect him, and then declared, “Why should I hang?”

At this point, the police believed that Conley had written the notes, but were not sure about the rest of his story, especially because it meant that the murder had been premeditated, which didn't fit into their theory about the crime. Over the next few days the police played “good cop and bad cop” with Conley until he was scared and disoriented. Subsequently, Conley asked to make a second affidavit, claiming that he only said that his meeting with Frank had occurred on Friday so as not to arouse suspicions for being at the factory on that Saturday. He then claimed that he saw Frank in town and that the superintendent had asked to come to the factory with him. He said Frank asked him to sit amongst the boxes near the entrance and after a while had whistled for him. Back in Frank's office, Frank asked him to write the murder notes and gave him money, which Conley then spent and then went home, where he remained that night.

The police were pleased with this latest statement. Still, questions lingered, like what happened to Mary Phagan's purse with the pay she had just received? Once again, the police ruthlessly interrogated Conley, producing yet a third affidavit. This time, Conley claimed that Frank had asked him if he wanted to make some money. Frank had supposedly confessed that he had grabbed a girl, let her fall, and that she had hit her head. After Conley informed him that the girl was dead, Frank then ordered Conley to bring the girl to the elevator using a piece of cloth. Because she was so heavy, both men were needed to carry the body. Conley stated that Frank unlocked the elevator, and they carried the dead body down to the basement in it. Afterwards, they went into Frank's office where Frank dictated the murder notes to him. Frank then said, “Why should I hang, I have wealthy people in Brooklyn?” Conley claimed that Frank offered him \$200, but then took it back, promising to give it to Conley if all went well.

This third affidavit was greeted enthusiastically, and like the one before, its contents were printed in the paper. The police brought Conley to the murder scene, and he re-created the whole scenario for them—as well as a gaggle of reporters.

While Conley had become something of a local celebrity, the police, along with Conley's lawyer William Smith were concerned about Conley's interviews with the press. Afraid that he might say something to contradict himself, they kept him locked up until the trial. Smith meanwhile joined forces with Hugh Dorsey in proving Frank's guilt, believing that obtaining Frank's conviction was the best way to help his client. Smith's position also suited him, for he had worked passionately to help the African-American community, and he was a friend of Hugh Dorsey.

Soon after, Lucille Frank wrote an open letter to the citizens of Atlanta in which she swore her husband's innocence and her faith in him. Rosser, Frank's lawyer, then followed with a letter attacking Conley, whom he called "a very ordinary, ignorant, brutal negro." Black and Jew had been pitted against each other. Rosser also argued that Conley had attacked Mary to rob her—for why else would her purse and her money have disappeared, an amount that could hardly have interested the superintendent? Awaiting the Frank's trial, Conley spent his time in tutorials with his lawyer William Smith on how to conduct himself on the stand.

THE TRIAL:

At the trial, the defense made the terrible blunder of bringing in hundreds of character witnesses. Not only did this act probably turn off the jurymen, it also introduced the issue of Frank's character, allowing the prosecution the ability to introduce witnesses to testify about Frank's supposed lechery. The main issue in the trial had to do with Frank's integrity—whether he knew Mary personally and had lecherous designs on her, and whether or not he had sexually harassed female employees in general. But two other important issues in the trial had to do with the time the murder occurred (and if Frank was present then or not) and where the murder took place.

Because the weather was so hot, Judge Roan ordered the windows to be opened, which made the proceedings accessible to the masses outside. At one point a mistrial was almost called because after a recess Judge Roan had come in reading the Georgian's latest extra. The jurors could see the headline: "STATE ADDS LINKS TO CHAIN," and the defense saw them craning to read the story that described the prosecutions latest victories. However, the defense was confident about how things were going, and so they let the matter go.

When Conley was called in for testimony the spectators applauded. Despite the State's witnesses who had attested to Frank's bad reputation and the circumstantial evidence the prosecution had gathered against Frank, the case would most likely not have gone in their favor if it hadn't been for Conley's testimony. Not only was Conley able to hold his own against Frank's ruthless lawyers during over thirteen hours of examination on the witness stand, but what Conley reported was devastating for Frank's case.

To his previous story, Conley added some new details. Conley claimed that Frank had previously employed him to stand watch while he had trysts with women. Other witnesses would later claim that such trysts had not occurred at the factory and that on the days mentioned Conley was not even present, yet these stories had made quite an impression. Conley then described in detail the various people he saw pass through the factory that day, including Mary Phagan. After Mary went upstairs, Conley claimed, he heard her footsteps going toward the front of the office, then towards the metal room, followed by screaming. When Frank called for him he was shivering and acting funny. Conley then described how he and Frank had dealt with the body and how Frank had dictated the murder notes, but now he also added the ways that Frank had tried to cover up his crime. Conley said that Frank had asked him to burn the body. When Conley hesitated, Frank told him that if he returned that night Frank would pay him. Conley said he agreed to return to the factory that night, but in fact had gone to a saloon to drink and never came back. He didn't know how the murder notes had ended up beside the body. Upon his cross-examination, Conley claimed that he couldn't read newspapers very well (only "little words like 'dis' and 'dat.'") and when asked how to spell "cat," Conley spelled it with a "k." He also admitted that despite earning a salary, he was often in debt and had often used the basement door to escape creditors who would come to the factory on payday. After he was finished, Conley was flocked by reporters, but his lawyer dismissed them. William Smith then left Conley with a stack of newspapers which he then read (contrary to his testimony that he could barely read).

After Conley stepped down, the defense questioned the admissibility of his testimony. Judge Roan said that although he had doubts about its admissibility, he was going to allow the testimony to remain since although "it may be extracted from the record... it is an impossibility to withdraw it from the jury's mind." Upon hearing this, the packed courtroom burst into applause, spectators hooted and stamped their feet, while others shouted the news out the windows.

Another witness who testified was Alonzo Mann, a 14-year-old office boy. Mann had worked a half day on April 26, but was often around until 4 P.M. Mann stated that he'd never seen the man Conley claimed joined Leo Frank in his trysts at the factory and that he had never seen Frank bringing women in for drinks. However, Alonzo was so nervous that his testimony was barely audible to the stenographer. Many years later, Mann's nervousness would be explained.

Finally, towards the end of the trial Leo Frank himself took the stand. Although it was against Georgian law for a person to testify at his own trial, he could make a statement. Frank began by declaring that in his marriage he had been "exceptionally happy—indeed it has been the happiest days of my life," to which Lucille smiled up at him. But then Frank spent an exhaustive amount of time explaining the work that he did at the Pencil Factory. His point was to show how intricate the work was, making it impossible for him to have finished all he needed to do that afternoon had he just committed a murder. However, his long-winded explanations made his testimony dull and alienating, and gave the impression of Frank as a stodgy and egotistical man.

Yet in the end Frank became impassioned:

Gentlemen, I was nervous. I was completely unstrung. Imagine yourself called from sound slumber in the early hours of the morning, whisked through the chill morning air without breakfast, to go into that undertaking establishment and have the light suddenly flashed on a scene like that. To see that little girl on the dawn of womanhood so cruelly murdered—it was a scene that would have melted stone. Is it any wonder I was nervous?...

The story as to women coming into the factory with me for immoral purposes is a base lie and the few occasions that he [Conley] claims to have seen me in indecent positions with women is a lie so vile that I have no language with which to fitly denounce it...

Gentlemen, some newspapermen have called me ‘the silent man in the tower,’ and I have kept my silence and my counsel advisedly, until the proper time and place.

The time is now; the place is here; and I have told you the truth, the whole truth.

Many were moved by Frank’s words. According to the Georgian, “Very few in the courtroom had much to say until they had managed to subdue that troublesome lump in their throats.” Lucille burst into tears and Frank took her in his arms. One juror cried.

But this was not the end. Dorsey proceeded with several witnesses against Frank’s character, including pretty factory girls. Although the defense also had several witnesses that stated the contrary, the prosecution ended by painting a picture of Frank as a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In their closing remarks, Frank’s lawyers claimed that the hostile treatment he had received from the beginning was a result of his being Jewish. The lawyer, Reuben Arnold, pointed to one of the State’s witnesses who supposedly had said, “they ought to hang Frank because he is a Jew.” Arnold further suggested that such feelings stemmed from the fact that “Frank comes from a race of people that have made money,” and the witness was likely not alone in having such feelings. Arnold then suggested that Frank had been set up. Finally, the defense ended by stating that the trial had based on two “p’s”—prejudice and perjury. Many of the State’s testimonies against Frank were later renounced, but then people renounced their renouncements, leaving the truth as to Arnold’s accusations of perjury unresolved.



The Trial, 1913

The next day, Dorsey went on a full-scale attack against Frank, describing in explicit terms how he believed Frank had committed the crime, and accusing Frank of covering up the crime to protect the reputation of the Jewish people as a whole. By the time Dorsey had completed his attack, Reuben Arnold asked to speak to the judge without the jury present. He asked for a mistrial due to the many anti-Frank outbreaks that had occurred throughout the trial. Dorsey disputed that such displays had affected the jury. Judge Roan overruled the defense's motion, and he brought the jury back in. However, aware of Atlantans' increasingly hostility towards Frank, the judge had suggested that Frank and his lawyer not be present when the jury declared its decision, fearing that if the jury acquitted Frank the crowds would break out in violence against him, to which the defense agreed. When the jury declared Frank guilty, people shouted and wept. As Dorsey walked out of the courthouse he was amazed to see cheering people for blocks on end. News of the verdict was posted on the scoreboard of the Atlanta Crackers' baseball game, and the spectators cheered.



Prosecutor Hugh Dorsey

In February 1914, Jim Conley was tried as an accessory to the murder. Prosecutor Hugh Dorsey said, "If the law didn't demand his conviction, I would say let him go." Judge Ben Hill sentenced Conley to one year on the chain gang. Because he had already been convicted as an accessory to the murder, according to the double jeopardy statute, Conley was immune from prosecution for the same crime. In other words, Conley could not be tried again for the murder since he had already been tried and convicted for his involvement in that crime.

APPEALS AND NEW EVIDENCE:

In October 1913, the defense asked Judge Roan for a new trial, stressing irregularities that took place during the trial and the claim that the jury was influenced by public opinion. Judge Roan denied the defense's motion, but did state that he was not thoroughly convinced of Leo Frank's guilt: "Gentlemen, I have thought about this case more than any other I have ever tried. I am not certain of this man's guilt. With all the thought I have put on this case, I am not thoroughly convinced that Frank is guilty or innocent." The defense then appealed to the Georgia Supreme Court. However, on February 17, 1914 the court declared its decision to deny a new trial by a four-two vote.

In March 1914, the *Atlanta Journal* ran an article “Frank Should Have a New Trial?” The murder, the article said, had so upset Atlanta that “a degree of frenzy almost inconceivable” had led the populace to demand a scapegoat. The article spurred many Atlantans to speak out on Frank’s behalf, including many pastors. Other papers followed the *Journal*’s lead, causing Thomas E. Watson to enter into the fray. A relentless advocate for the workingman early on in his career, Watson’s political life was thwarted when he lost reelection to the House of Representatives because a rival political faction stuffed the ballot box. By 1914, Watson was the editor of the *Jeffersonian*. Watson’s anti-Frank bias was due in part to the fact that the pro-Frank *Journal* was run by his old rival, but the Frank case was also well suited for him with its divisions of rich and poor, boss and workers, Yankees and Southerners. What made Watson such a key figure, however, was the vehement anti-Jewish language that he would use in his attacks.

Meanwhile, people began looking into the evidence in the Leo Frank case. By the time of the appeals, Jim Conley’s lawyer, William Smith had learned about certain evidence, including that the police department had failed to get a laboratory test to determine whether the stains on Jim Conley’s shirt prior to his arrest were blood or rust, as Conley claimed. The police also did not attempt to match Conley’s fingerprints with those on the plant’s basement door (where the defense claimed he exited after the murder). Smith, together with his wife, then took a closer look at the case. First, he took his family to the factory. Seeing the abundance of coal dust and pencil grinds on the basement floor, Smith realized that Mary’s face could only have gotten covered so dirty by struggling on the basement floor. Her condition did not make sense if she had fought her attacker on the hard wooden floor upstairs. In the lobby, Smith had his wife conduct an experiment. She went back to the metal room and screamed, as Conley had said that he heard Mary Phagan scream that afternoon. But the family couldn’t hear her at all, even though they had been straining. Smith then looked back at the trial transcripts. Conley had told the court that he could barely read the newspapers, making out only simple words like “dis” and “dat.” He had also spelled cat with a “k.” But Smith remembered that he had seen Conley avidly reading newspapers, and decided that Conley had pretended to be illiterate to avert suspicion: “We thought he was densely ignorant, when in fact he is shrewdly cunning.” In the trial, Hugh Dorsey had claimed that the murder notes had to have been composed by an intelligent, educated mind, and therefore had to have been Frank’s creation, not Conley’s. The prosecution’s prejudice seemed to have blinded them—and the jury—to Conley’s possible culpability in the murder.

Smith and his wife then spent weeks combing through the trial transcripts, Conley’s correspondences, and the murder notes to see if they could find a common way of speaking and writing, a “verbal fingerprint.” They did. The couple found many grammatical quirks and distinctive phrasings. For example, the language used in the murder notes was completely consistent with the language Conley had used both on the stand and in his other letters—for example, “make water” for urinate, “play” for sexual intercourse. The Smiths also found similarities in the punctuation, mis-spellings, and other verbal tics. While the prosecution might argue that Frank had purposefully imitated Conley’s verbal style when he dictated the notes, this argument seemed highly unlikely.

How could Frank in two and a half minutes (the time Conley testified it took to write them), imitated Conley's language style? Based on these studies, in mid-September Smith approached the Atlanta Police Department, having private meetings with Chiefs James Beavers and Newport Lanford. They rejected his evidence. Similarly, Smith approached his friend, the prosecutor Hugh Dorsey. According to Smith's son, Dorsey replied, "It's too late." While this statement cannot be verified, what is certain is that Dorsey too rejected Smith's new evidence.

In the meantime, many Christian clergy spoke out urging a new trial for Frank, suggesting that mob conditions had surrounded the trial. The defense then filed a motion in Fulton County Superior Court asking that Frank's conviction be set aside on the grounds that he was absent from the courtroom when the jury returned its verdict, which deprived him of his Constitutional right to due process. This motion was rejected. Thus the defense's sole option was to appeal directing to the U.S. Supreme Court. After the first appeal failed, in February 1915, Louis Marshall, president of the American Jewish Committee and a well-respected lawyer, made a second and final appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court for a new trial. Marshall stressed the hostile environment that surrounded the trial, as the mob-like behavior after the verdict had been given. But on April 19, 1915 the Court rejected the defense's appeal 7-2, the minority opinion believing that the jury responded to the passions of the mob. When the news reached Leo Frank he was shocked, but steadfast. When Lucille arrived she was strong and composed. She reached through Leo's cell, pulled him toward her, and kissed him on the cheek.

THE COMMUTATION:

The only recourse left to Leo Frank was to petition the prison commission [which failed] and ultimately the governor of Georgia to commute Frank's sentence from execution to life imprisonment. Jews and Christians alike urged Governor Slaton for clemency -- including U.S. legislators, governors, and senators, and seventeen pastors from Atlanta. In May 1915 petitions were being signed imploring Frank's commutation, and speeches were being delivered in temples and churches alike. In New York, organizers manned booths, and school children collected signatures. Chicago declared May 24 *Leo Frank Day*, and in Boston the newspaper published daily coupons addressed to Governor Slaton reading "The Undersigned believe that there is strong doubt as to the guilt of Leo Frank. We hereby respectfully petition you to commute his sentence." Mrs. Lucille Frank worked continually on her husband's behalf during this time, asking the American public to help clear her husband, and writing and visiting her husband regularly during his twenty-seven months in prison since his arrest. The governor received over 100,000 letters asking him to spare Frank, as well as petitions with over two million signatures. Even Georgians supported the commutation including the *Atlanta Journal*, well-known lawyers (one of them being Hugh Dorsey's partner) and reverends. One startling letter came from Judge Roan, who had since died of cancer. The letter, signed in December 1914, confirmed his doubts of the original verdict in the Frank case and recommended that the governor commute Frank's sentence to life imprisonment.

Still, Governor Slaton was hoping he would not have to decide this issue, as he only had a few weeks left in office. He was already receiving death threats should he commute the sentence, and mass meetings and protests had been held in Marietta and Atlanta to oppose the commutation. Tom Watson was fighting his battle as fiercely as ever, warning that if Frank was not executed as planned, “there will almost inevitably be the bloodiest riot ever known in the history of the South.” At another protest, hillbilly musician Fiddlin’ John Carson debuted “The Ballad of Mary Phagan,” sung to the tune of an old standard.

On June 20, 1915 Governor Slaton went against popular opinion in Georgia and commuted Frank’s sentence to life imprisonment. Slaton made his decision after sifting through more than a thousand pages of evidence. In the end, Slaton explained that he had serious doubts about Conley’s testimony: “The mystery in the case is the question as to how Mary Phagan’s body got into the basement.” Conley’s testimony had stated that he helped Frank take the girl’s body to the basement using the elevator on Saturday afternoon. However, he also testified that on Saturday morning he had defecated in the basement’s elevator shaft. When the detectives climbed down the ladder to the basement at 3 AM the following Sunday, they noted the excrement in the shaft in “natural condition.” Slaton had himself tested the elevator to make sure that it always hit the ground when it stopped in the basement; therefore if the elevator had been used to transport the body the excrement would have been smashed, as it was on the Sunday following the murder. Slaton also noted that wound on Mary’s head had bled freely, but the spot on the metal room floor where Conley claimed the murder took place had a miniscule amount of blood. What’s more, medical examination of the strands of hair found in the metal room did not match Mary’s hair. He cited William Smith’s studies, and Judge Roan’s letter. He also explained that the prosecutor himself had admitted that Frank was convicted on the basis of circumstantial evidence. But ultimately, he admitted, the decision had been one of conscience: “I would rather be ploughing in a field than to feel for the rest of my life that I had that man’s blood on my hands.”

Near midnight Frank was secretly transported to the Milledgeville Prison Farm. After word got out about Slaton’s decision, martial law had to be declared in Georgia. Demonstrations were held against Slaton, and his home was attacked three times. Although Slaton and his wife had always been popular in Atlanta they now had to leave the state of Georgia. Tom Watson was infuriated by the decision and urged the lynchings of both Frank and Slaton: “Our grand old Empire State HAS BEEN RAPED! ... Jew money has debased us, bought us, and sold us --- and laughs at us ... Hereafter, let no man reproach the South with Lynch law: let him remember the unendurable provocation; and let him say whether Lynch law *is not better than no law at all.*” Slaton and his wife left for New York and then an extended vacation in California, Alaska, and Hawaii. Although he had escaped lynching, by commuting Frank’s sentence, Governor Slaton had ended his political career.

The Jewish community also suffered after Slaton's decision. Their businesses were boycotted in several parts of Georgia, and Jewish parents kept their children away from downtown fearing that they might be hurt. The Marietta Vigilance Committee had posted notices on Jewish the doors of Jewish shops telling them to get out of town or suffer the consequences of the Committee.

Several weeks after Leo Frank's transfer to the prison farm in Milledgeville, a fellow inmate named William Creen, attacked him while he slept, yet due to the efforts of a fellow prisoner who was also a surgeon, Frank lived. In 1933, Creen would be given a full pardon by the governor of Georgia for his attempted murder of Leo Frank.

THE LYNCHING:

A group calling itself the Knights of Mary Phagan began organizing a plan to kidnap Frank from the state prison farm and take him 150 miles away to Marietta, to lynch him. The chief conspirators were:

- Joseph Brown, Marietta citizen and former governor of Georgia, who had called for lynching during the clemency hearings. He was also indebted to Watson. During his campaign for governor, the *Jeffersonian* pushed his campaign in exchange for money. Brown won by a small minority that had come from the *Jeffersonian* readers.
- Judge Newton (Newt) Morris, who concealed a period of his life in California during which he may have skipped bail on a murder charge.
- Eugene Herbert Clay, a popular figure, despite his involvement in many scandals (such as expulsion from the University of Georgia). Clay was the son a U.S. senator, and he had served as mayor of Marietta.
- John Tucker Dorsey, relative of Hugh Dorsey and a lawyer and state legislator. He had also served a sentence for killing a man in a drunken brawl.
- Fred Morris, a lawyer, serving his first term in the legislature.
- Bolan Glover Brumby, owner of a furniture factory and member of a well-known family.

The group also included a doctor, another lawyer, and the former sheriff of Cobb County, the man who would tie the noose. The organizers had no difficulty finding willing recruits—Tom Watson's writings had convinced them that Frank was a pervert and that he had escaped execution because he was Jewish. The lynching was something these men felt that they "had to do." The mayor of Marietta offered his car, and a local banker funded the scheme. The organizers similarly felt confident they would not have trouble from Governor Harris. Harris had failed to help out a Jewish businessman who had been threatened by a mob in Canton, Georgia (including the mayor and sheriff) and he was related to key mob leaders through marriage. Moreover, Harris had been elected with the help of Tom Watson in his 1914 campaign, and like former governor Brown, owed him a debt.

On August 17, the Knights of Mary Phagan kidnapped Frank from the prison farm. They forced their way into the prison and took Frank, who was wearing only a nightshirt, and drove him to Frey's Gin, two miles east of Marietta. The place belonged to conspirator William Frey, and a table had been set up in advance. The location also faced the home where Mary had grown up and where family members still lived. Before his hanging, Frank requested that they allow him to write a note to his wife and that they return his wedding ring to his wife. As legend goes, Frank's last words were, "I think more of my wife and my mother than I do of my own life." The mob members blindfolded Frank, tied his feet together, and placed a cloth around his exposed genitals, and lifted him onto the table and put the noose over his head. It was Judge Newt Morris who kicked over the table. Frank died slowly, struggling. The wound on his neck from the knifing bled down his shirt.



The Lynching, 1915

As the news got out, thousands of people came to the site of the lynching, including women and children. People took photographs. Men, women, and children snatched up pieces of the tree and the rope as souvenirs. For decades afterward, shops in Atlanta sold pieces of rope to commemorate the lynching. When Frank was cut down, Robert E. Lee Howell (a relative of General Lee and one of the men purposely excluded from the lynching plans) ground his heel into Frank's face. It was Judge Newt Morris, who stopped the crowd from doing more damage to Frank's body and personally delivered the body to an undertaker. While Morris told the crowd that these actions were necessary as the "man has a father and a mother... [who are] entitled to the body of their son," his actions were probably less altruistic than they appeared. Not only was Morris never implicated for his role in the lynching, but he was also celebrated, even in the Northern Press, as the lynching's sole hero who had rescued Frank's body from the mob.

Although the identities of many of the lynchers were well known, no one was ever convicted for their participation, neither was Watson for "obscenity," or what would today probably be considered "hate speech."

THE PARDON:

In 1983, Alonzo Mann, Leo Frank's former office boy, then 85 years-old, confessed that at around noon on Saturday, April 26, 1913, he had seen Jim Conley carrying Mary Phagan's dead or unconscious body across the lobby of the pencil factory. He claimed he was too scared to report this evidence because Conley had told him, "If you tell anything about this, I'll kill you," so Mann kept the secret from everybody but his mother, who urged him not to get involved. Mann insisted that Frank was innocent, and Conley was the killer. Mann was subjected to many tests, including a lie detector test, which he passed. Using Mann's statement as a foundation, the Anti-Defamation League and an Atlanta lawyer filed for an application posthumous pardon for Leo Frank. Although Mann's testimony confirmed the idea that Conley had lied about using the elevator shaft to move Mary's body, it did not necessarily prove that Conley had been the murderer and not the accomplice. What's more, all of the state's files on the case were somehow mysteriously gone. Therefore, the Board of Pardon and Paroles determined that it did not have enough evidence to overturn Frank's conviction. However, on March 11th, 1986, Leo Frank was issued a pardon by the state of Georgia. Although they could not clear him of the crime, the Board found that the state of Georgia had denied Frank his Constitutional rights by not ensuring his safety while he was imprisoned in Milledgeville prison.

AFTERMATH:

The Frank case led to the rebuilding of the Ku Klux Klan, which the federal government had basically destroyed during Reconstruction. The new Klan was inaugurated in 1915 at a mountaintop meeting, led by one of the original members, Williams J. Simmons, together with members of the Knights of Mary Phagan. The revitalized Klan, in addition to being anti-Black, had an anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, and anti-immigrant slant, which helped it gain members in the Midwestern United States. By 1923, the Klan's Imperial Wizard was living in a mansion and its members numbered over a million, including Georgia's new governor Cliff Walker.

In 1920, Tom Watson became a U.S. Senator until he died due to illness in September 1922. At his funeral the Klan sent an eight-foot cross made of red roses. In spring 1916, Hugh Dorsey played off his fame from the Frank trial and lingering anti-Jewish sentiments to become governor of Georgia. Dorsey remained definite about Frank's guilt. However, he proved to be Georgia's most progressive Governor of that era. He authored a study of racial injustice and proposed legal means to investigate lynchings. In the 1930s, Dorsey became a Fulton County Superior Court judge. When a nineteen-year-old African American was convicted of distributing communist literature, his lawyer, a Cornell graduate approached Dorsey, feeling this case was a means by which Dorsey could "pay his debt to society for what he'd done to Leo Frank." Dorsey ruled that the man had been denied his right to free speech.

Former Governor Slaton took a job with the Red Cross, and for the rest of World War I he and his wife lived in Romania.

Lucille Frank was 27 at the time of the lynching. Although still young, sorrow had aged her. Lucille left Atlanta in 1916 to live with family in Tennessee. Six years later, Lucille returned to her hometown. She took a job selling gloves, unaware that she often waited on the wives and daughters of the men who had lynched her husband. While she tried to live a normal life, Lucille was depressed and emotional. She never remarried. In the mid-1950s, she moved to one of Atlanta's first air-conditioned apartments. But she suffered from health problems and died in 1957 of heart disease. When her family members cleaned out her apartment, they found photographs of Leo Frank and his gravesite, the wedding ring he wore, and many letters she had written to her husband after his arrest. Her remains were secretly buried in an unmarked grave in the Jewish cemetery.

Jim Conley was arrested on November 1, 1915 for visiting a house of ill repute, but instead of being fined the Judge married him and one of the women from the house. The judge also contributed money for the license. Shortly after, Conley spent time in jail for wife beating. Later he was shot while trying to rob a drugstore. After being released from the hospital, Conley was convicted (he was also suspected of 31 previous incidents). By the time Alonzo Mann admitted having seen Conley carrying Mary's body, Conley's whereabouts were unknown; he hadn't been sighted since 1941, when he was arrested for public drunkenness and gambling. Although there is no death certificate, one of Conley's gambling friends reported that he had passed away in the 1970s.

Monteen Stover, who had testified against Frank at the trial, was indicted in 1921 for a scam in which she allegedly enticed married men into hotel rooms and then bribed them by threatening to expose them.

John Tucker Dorsey, ringleader of the lynching, received a full pardon from then Governor Hugh Dorsey for his earlier murder conviction. John Tucker Dorsey became the solicitor general for the Blue Ridge Circuit, ensuring that none of the lynchers would ever be indicted. He remained a respected figure throughout the rest of his life.

Mary Phagan's family continued to insist on Frank's guilt. However, they disassociated themselves from the use of Mary's murder to further the purposes of the Klan.

Many members of the Jewish community left Atlanta. Those who remained kept quiet about their Judaism and the Frank case. The Jewish community felt that the anti-Semitic flames in Georgia could not have burned had their not been a basis for the kindling. In other words, the Leo Frank did not so much cause anti-Semitism but had enflamed sentiments that had already existed. Yet, Frank's lynching also led to the founding of the Anti-Defamation League (or ADL), an organization founded by B'nai B'rith in the United States whose stated intention is "to stop, by appeals to reason and conscience and, if necessary, by appeals to law, the defamation of the Jewish people. Its ultimate purpose is to "secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike and to put an end forever to unjust and unfair discrimination against and ridicule of any sect or body of citizens."

BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS:

The Frank case was the first issue of national interest in which the concerns of blacks and Jews seemed in direct conflict. In choosing between Frank, a Jew, and Conley, an African-American, as the murderer, the national press attacked Conley, often in vicious ways. With the exception of the Frank case, there was little general hostility towards Jews by the Black leaders of the early twentieth century. Conley was not held up as a hero in the Black press, but they did believe that he had told the truth in court. The Black papers also did not desire to see Frank hanged by the State of Georgia, nor did they wish to see a miscarriage of justice, but they criticized newspapers like the *New York Times* whom they felt had blamed Conley for the murder because he was Black. Many African-Americans found it ironic that so much attention was focused on the Frank case when so many innocent African-Americans had been lynched in the South since reconstruction without any follow-up investigations.

Yet, if African-Americans and Jews were pitted against each other during the trial, they would be conjoined thereafter. On July 9th, 1915 Tom Watson wrote an angry article about Nathan Strauss, a Jew and chairman of Macy's. In it, he showed proof that Strauss, despite his claims, cannot be a Georgian because at the Macy's restaurant "negroes were being served at regular tables, and the white girls were compelled to wait on them ... I want the Southern people to know what kind of place Mr. Strauss is conducting." Frank's lynching also coincided with the release of the Klan film *The Birth of a Nation*. Many viewers saw a parallel between Mary Phagan and the film's Flora Cameron, who throws herself off of a cliff to escape from being raped by a Black man.

After 1915, the Jewish press focused on lynchings and race riots, as "they feared that anti-black violence carried with it the seeds of anti-Jewish activity." This fear was not unfounded since the teens and the 1920s also marked the revival of Ku Klux Klan. Thus, while Jews may have been genuinely concerned with Black victimization, they also realized that any attacks on the African-American community carried with it the threat of anti-Semitism. During the famous Scottsboro case on the 1930s, when nine Black teenagers were wrongly convicted for the rape of a White woman in Alabama, their defense lawyer was a Jewish man named Samuel Leibowitz, and the Jewish community supported the defense. In 1958, the synagogue in Atlanta was bombed. Although members of the Klan were arrested, they were acquitted. In the 1980s, after Alonzo Mann's confession, Jewish and African-American residents of Marietta gathered for presentations and prayers. One Jewish Marietta woman recalls the Klan marching right in front of the place where they were gathering.



KEY ISSUES FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND INVESTIGATION:

UNDERLYING CAUSES:

There are several factors that contributed the Leo Frank case, including class divisions, religious difference, prejudice, local politics, self interest, and the regional divide between the North and the South.

◆ What factors does the play emphasize? Why, for example, do you think that the play begins with a Confederate soldier preparing to fight for Georgia rather than beginning in 1913? Why in the trial scene does Dorsey emphasize that Mary's family had to leave the farm for a life in the factories?

◆ At one point in the play, Hugh Dorsey says that they don't need another Black man hanging in a tree. What does this mean?

During the actual trial, the prosecution took offense at Frank's lawyer's assertions about prejudice towards Jews, asking if they were prejudiced, then why would they have "passed up Jim Conley, a negro?" How did the prosecution's attitudes towards both African-Americans and Jews affect this case? Also, why did the police and Dorsey go after a Jewish man instead of an African-American at a time when lynchings of African-Americans were common?

One answer, of course, is that they felt Frank was guilty. Another possibility is that the Phagan murder had struck a chord with the people of Atlanta. Factory employees worked an average of sixty-six hours a week for low pay. Moreover, having to work since aged ten, Mary was among the vast number of Georgia's child laborers. In 1913, the Atlanta Georgian reported that "Georgia is the only state that allows children ten years old to labor eleven hours a day in the mills and factories." In this context, working-class resentment toward exploitative factory owners was understandable. Moreover, although Conley was African-American, he was a member of and familiar character in their community. Conley was street smart. He'd been in court before and knew how to handle himself, even against the ruthless lawyer Luther Rosser. Frank was seen as stoic and alien. Not only did his Jewishness evoke old stereotypes of the Jew as lecherous and as a money swindler (e.g. Shylock), but it also made him even more of an outsider. Although initially the Jewish community in Atlanta was predominately made up of German Jews who tried very hard to assimilate, following the waves of immigration from Eastern Europe beginning in the 1880s, Russian and Polish Jews had descended onto Atlanta. These Jews who did not want to give up their traditions and practices so readily, and because of their differences they did not blend in as well. Innocent or not, as a well educated Jew from the north, as well as a factory boss, Frank was a much more appealing target than Conley. Frank's conviction would also have been much more sensational.

✍ Write a diary entry about a time when you acted based on prejudice (This entry can be confidential—you do not have to share it with the class).

MEDIA SENSATIONALISM:

Consider the role the newspapers played in the Leo Frank case. Britt Craig, the character who sings “Big News” in *Parade*, in real life was the reporter for the *Atlanta Constitution*. By 6:30 am, the paper’s special edition was on the streets. Not only were Atlanta’s major newspapers trying to outsell their competitors (producing several “Extras” a day), but they were also not above embellishing, even fabricating information to draw headlines or to depict the man they believed to be innocent in a positive light. In 1926, reporter Herbert Asbury claimed that had the papers not inflamed the story, it probably would have “died a natural death.” The papers also offered large sums of money for information about the murder, which surely made the case more sensational, as many brought forth solutions to the crime. After Frank’s arrest, the *Georgian* printed a photo of Frank on the front page with the headline “Police Have the Strangler.” The Jewish community protested this coverage, claiming that the papers had called him guilty before his trial. And of course, Thomas Watson used his *Jeffersonian* magazine to attack Leo Frank, selling 87,000 copies per week just prior to the lynching (before Watson’s anti-Frank writings, The *Jeffersonian*’s circulation was about 25,000). Many Georgians saw the *Jeffersonian* as the “only paper in Georgia that protected our State from the slanders of the northern press.”



Political Cartoon

✂ Cut out articles from the newspaper or the Internet that you think are either examples of media sensationalism or bias. Share the articles as a class and discuss what makes the articles biased and what you think the role of the media should be.

ACTIVISM:

In the play, Lucille Frank grows increasingly confident and strong as her husband comes under attack. Although in real life Lucille was active in the campaign to save her husband, she did not act alone.

The Jews of Atlanta and the surrounding area were terrified by the trial of Leo Frank—they had experienced a great upsurge of anti-Semitism since the police investigation into Mary Phagan’s murder. The leaders of the Jewish community in America were in a difficult position: to campaign publicly for Frank meant risking further charges of Jews banding together to help a murder suspect, charges that had helped inflame Gentile hostilities. Yet, for organizations like the American Jewish Committee to do nothing would be to leave Frank without aid from groups whose very purpose was to fight anti-Semitism, giving the impression that Jews could be discriminated against without repercussions. Influential Jews in the North began giving money to support the defense’s appeal, as well as helping in pro-Frank publicity campaigns.

◆ What minority groups do you think are under suspicion today? Can you name some of the groups or people that try to protect them? Imagine that you were the leader of an organization trying to stop discrimination against a particular group. What are some of the things that you would do?

◆ Recall that even school children collected signatures for petitions to pardon Leo Frank. What concrete actions can students do to fight against what they believe to be injustice? Do you think that young people have a voice in today’s society? Why or why not?

⌘ As a class, imagine yourself in the position of Leo Frank, Lucille Frank, Governor Slaton, Jim Conley, or the people of Atlanta. Discuss what actions you would have taken if you were in their position. In the play, characters that might have given up persevere for their cause or do what they need to do to protect themselves. Break into pairs for 10 minutes. Share a time with your partner when you could have given up, but found yourself or someone you know persevering in the face of adversity or challenge.

✍ Interview members of your family. Ask them to describe a time that they stood up to discrimination or persevered in the face of adversity. Share your interview with the class or publish the interviews in a class book.

⌘ Using volunteers, devise and act out a scene in class in which one person is a bully, one person is an accomplice, one person is a victim, one person is a bystander, and one person learns about the incident. As a class, discuss what the participants, victim, and witnesses could have done differently. Try acting out the scene again, testing out these new scenarios.

THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE:

The pastor of Mary Phagan's Bible school, admitted that the "state of affairs reached a point that charged the very atmosphere of the courtroom with prejudice. An unbiased trial was impossible." Perhaps even more disturbing is the possibility that Hugh Dorsey and the police department suppressed evidence to build their case against Frank. On February 20, 1914, The *Atlanta Journal* reported that the strands of hair discovered on a National Pencil factory machine early on in the Phagan murder investigation had not come from the victim's head. Solicitor General Hugh Dorsey knew about this fact prior to Frank's trial but had withheld it from the defense. In 1922 a young Dutch reporter discovered Frank's dental records as well as photographs of Mary Phagan's body showing teeth marks where she had been bit on the shoulder before being strangled. The photos and Frank's dental records did not match. These records had been at the Fulton County Courthouse.

⌘ Place an object on the teacher's desk. Have a member of the class leave the room for two minutes. While this person is out, have one student steal the object. Ask the person outside (the inquirer) to return to the classroom. Asking only yes or no questions to specific classmates, the person must determine who stole it. Repeat the activity with different participants, but this time the classmates don't have to answer honestly. Discuss as a class what led the inquirer to determine the culprit.

🗣️ What percentage of people who are in prison or are on death row do you think are innocent? Are there problems with the justice system that cause innocent people to be convicted, and if you so, what are they? Does this case influence how you feel about the death penalty? Research current debate about the death penalty on the Internet (for example, the role of DNA evidence) and create a class debate in which some members of the class are for the death penalty, others are against it, and others judge the debate.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Alfred Uhry, an Atlanta native, rose to notoriety when he wrote a musical version of Eudora Welty's romantic novella, "The Robber Bribegroom." But in the mid-1980s he became frustrated while trying to write a musical about gangster Al Capone because he did not feel a connection to this story. Uhry then turned to stories from his own life, creating the Tony award-winning plays *Driving Miss Daisy*, about an elderly Southern woman (based on his grandmother) and her friendship with her African-American chauffeur, and *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, which depicted an elite Jewish family in the South in the 1930s. The musical *Parade* also stemmed from his background. Not only had his family been close to the Franks, but his great uncle was also a part owner of the Pencil Factory. Uhry recalled that his family wouldn't talk about Leo Frank "because it was so painful to remember." Writing the play was a way to finally confront the ghost that had haunted his hometown.

◆ How can art be used to heal old wounds? How is theatre an effective means to tell these stories?

PARADE PRODUCTION HISTORY:

Parade opened on Broadway at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre on December 17, 1998. Harold Prince directed the premiere. The show closed on February 28, 1999, after eighty-five performances.

Parade received nine Tony Award nominations and won two Tony Awards for Best Book of a Musical (Alfred Uhry) and Best Original Musical Score (Jason Robert Brown). The United Kingdom premiere ran from August 5th to August 28th at the Southside Theatre as part of the 2005 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It played to packed houses and standing ovations.

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All photos and further information on the Frank case can be found at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Frank

