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David E. Stannard. *Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow's Spectacular Last Case.* New York: Penguin Books, 2005. xi + 466. $16.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-14-303663-0.

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David E. Stannard's *Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow's Spectacular Last Case* is about a place, a time, and two criminal cases. The place was the Territory of Hawaii. The time was 1931 to 1932. And, the two criminal cases consisted of a very messy allegation of gang rape, made even messier by the different races of the alleged rapists and their victim, and the later revenge kidnapping and murder of one of the accused.

What became known as the "Massie Case" began on September 13, 1931, when Thalia Massie, the twenty-year old wife of a naval officer, reported her sexual assault by five native Hawaiian men to the Honolulu police department. Over time and with the assistance of the chief of detectives, Mrs. Massie's description of her assault, the assailants, and the license plate of their car would become more detailed. Ultimately, it would lead to the arrest, indictment, and trial of Horace Ida, David Takai, Henry Chang, Ben Ahakuelo, and Joseph Kahahawai, two of whom were Japanese, one Hawaiian-Chinese, and only two native Hawaiians.

Fueled by the city's anti-Asian and anti-Hawaiian press, the alleged attack galvanized the Islands' white elite and incensed naval authorities. The editor of the Honolulu *Advertiser* wrote that the city had become a place of absolute terror for women. "Even among the cannibals of New Guinea or the aboriginal blacks of North Australia, womanhood is safer than in this enlightened American territory" (p. 134). Describing the initial reaction of Adm. Yates Stirling, the commandant of the Fourteenth Naval District, to Mrs. Massie's allegations, Stannard writes that the Admiral believed that "for the sake of maintaining 'the prestige of the whites' … the response of the authorities had to be 'quick action … and adequate punishment"' (p. 105). (Ultimately, Stirling would propose a commission form of government for the Territory including representatives from the Army and Navy and a limited franchise excluding most if not all non-whites. He contended that Hawaii should not be governed like states on the mainland, but rather like ships of war on the high seas [p. 322].)

Despite such sentiments by a significant portion of the Territory's white minority, the mixed-race jury failed to reach a unanimous verdict. As a consequence, Edwin Irwin, the editor of the *Honolulu Times*, and Admiral Stirling took steps to assure a conviction in a retrial. Irwin mailed 3500 copies of an inflammatory issue of his paper to local naval personnel with a note urging them to send it to their families and hometown newspapers. Admiral Stirling cabled the Naval Department in Washington, D.C. erroneously stating that "forty cases of rape" had occurred in Hawaii in the past eleven months. The activities of the two men helped transform a sordid local incident into a national and international affair. By the end of 1932, the Massie case would be ranked as one of the ten most important stories of the year.

The next act began on January 8, 1932, when Tommie Massie, his wife's mother (Grace Fortescue), and two Navy enlisted men kidnapped and murdered Joseph Kahahawai in a bungled attempt to extort a confession. Arrested the same day, the four were eventually indicted for murder in the second degree.

The new trial attracted world-wide attention and, for an almost unheard of fee of $40,000, Clarence Darrow as lead attorney for the defense. Confessing that he had fired the fatal shot, Tommie Massie pled temporary insanity. However, Darrow's actual defense was built on the right of a husband to avenge the sullied honor of his wife. To the general surprise of the public, Darrow's eloquence failed. The jury found all four guilty. But, the story was not quite over. Under pressure from the local white elite as well as from the Hoover administration in Washington, the Territory's governor, Lawrence M. Judd, commuted the ten-year sentences of the four to sixty minutes each.

Honor Killing is both enlightening and entertaining. Even though detailed descriptions of the trials and the bizarre people that surrounded them take up more than three-fourths of the text, they are not David Stannard's

primary concern. He sees the Massie case as a catalyst. It provided a reason and a platform for Hawaii's non-whites to unite despite ethnic and racial differences. It was a spark that ignited a democratic revolution. It began with columns in the *Hawaii Hochi*, a Japanese-language newspaper, questioning Thalia Massie's rape allegation as well as the impartiality of the investigation by the police and the public prosecutor's office. Doubt infected Princess Abigail Kawananakoa, who provided funds for the accused men's lawyer. Doubt affected other members of the native Hawaiian upper class as well as ordinary members of the non-white majority, doubt that turned into conviction for the thousands of mourners that attended the ceremonies surrounding Joseph Kahahawai's funeral. Conviction and solidarity steadily led to the political overthrow of the white oligarchy that had ruled since annexation.

Honor Killing is a worthwhile read. But, Stannard's lively narrative and truly fascinating analysis are not a seamless fit. Somehow, the cruel frivolity of the Massie affair (with its echoes of the Scottsboro case) so dominate the text that analysis seems like an afterthought. Because of this, his book is a little less than it could have been.

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