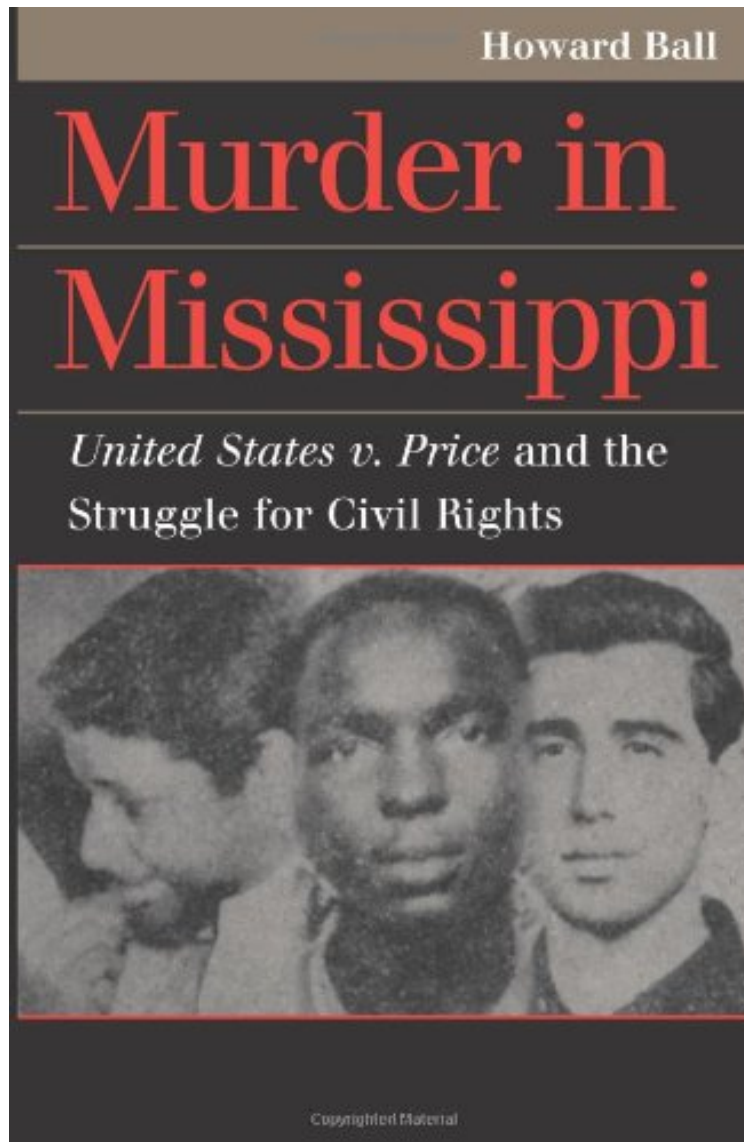


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Murder in Mississippi: United States v. Price and the Struggle for

Howard Ball

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Howard Ball : Murder in Mississippi: United States v. Price and the Struggle for before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Murder in Mississippi: United States v. Price and the Struggle for:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Quick Read, But Worth Your TimeBy Bill EmblomAuthor Howard Ball provides us with a detailed analysis of the June 1964 murders of three civil rights workers (James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner) in Philadelphia, Mississippi. The author effectively sets the

scene for what the volunteer workers can expect as they prepare to travel to Mississippi to register blacks to vote. Most Mississippians view them as interlopers who have no business upsetting their way of life. Michael Schwerner was the one the KKK targeted for elimination. The other two individuals just happened to be with him when the crime was committed. The racist judge meted out only perfunctory penalties considering the seriousness of the crime. The story is left undone because a mistrial was declared for the one who planned the crime, Edgar Ray "Preacher" Killen, because the one lone holdout was a woman who declared she "could never convict a preacher." In that case she should never have been on the jury in the first place. She has since said she "was sorry to let him go." This is a first rate book, and the author's follow up entitled "Justice in Mississippi" is about the June of 2005 murder conviction of Edgar Ray Killen.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well done
By William Gist
This is an interesting book that gives the real story of this infamous crime. The author paints a vivid picture of the clash of cultures that fanned the flames of bigotry in Mississippi. A must read if you liked the movie "Mississippi Burning"¹ of 1 people found the following review helpful. Frightening and shameful
By Farley X Wilbur
In this thoroughly researched book, we are given a grisly slice of Southern Klan mentality. I use the word Klan loosely to denote all such groups who ran roughshod over our black kindred for so long. It is even more pertinent now with the re-emergence of the Klan mentality in the South and Midwest. If we are ever to end this scourge, we must first understand it, and then rebel. The only way we can end this racism is to make it so unacceptable that despite freedom of speech, no one will dare dredge up racism as an excuse for anything. Peer-pressure and ostracism will help, and we certainly want no violence. Find out how ugly racism can be, and then work to end it. Read it.

Few episodes in the modern civil rights movement were more galvanizing or more memorialized than the brutal murders of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney. Idealists eager to protect and promote the rights of black Americans, even in the deep and very dangerous South. In films like *Mississippi Burning* and popular folk songs, these young men have been venerated as martyrs. Even so, the landmark legal dimensions of their murder case have until now remained largely lost. Howard Ball reminds us just how problematic the prosecution of the murderers actually was. When the State of Mississippi failed to indict them, the U.S. tried to prosecute the case in federal district court. The judge there, however, ruled that the federal government had no jurisdiction and so dismissed the case. When the U.S. appealed, the Supreme Court unanimously overturned the lower court decision, claiming that federal authorities did indeed have the power to police civil rights violations in any state. *United States v. Price* (1967) thus produced a landmark decision that signaled a seismic shift in American legal history and race relations, for it meant that local authorities could no longer shield racist lawbreakers. Ball weaves the tales of victims and perpetrators into a single compelling story in which the legal process becomes as much personal as political. Readers will learn how deputy sheriff Cecil Price and his accomplices planned the execution of the young freedom riders and how prosecutors and judges brought them to justice under conspiracy charges. Along the way, Ball introduces readers to a host of characters from the heyday of the civil rights era with the NAACP, CORE, and SNCC on one side, and the KKK and its fellow travelers on the other, and politicians sitting squarely on the fence. Although to this day the murderers have never faced murder charges, *United States v. Price* emphatically declared that the federal government would no longer tolerate the complicity of local and state authorities in the suppression of the constitutional rights of southern blacks. As we approach the fortieth anniversary of the murders in June 2004, *Murder in Mississippi* provides a timely and telling reminder of the vigilance democracy requires if its ideals are to be fully realized.

From Publishers Weekly
A former Mississippi State University professor delivers an impassioned chronicle of an infamous crime in this unevenly crafted, but serviceable, history. In 1964, after a Ku Klux Klan leader ordered the killing of Michael Schwerner, a white activist working on the Freedom Summer voter registration and education campaign, Schwerner and two of his co-workers, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman, were arrested, released and lynched near Philadelphia, Mississippi. The crime led to the landmark 1966 Supreme Court case *United States v. Price* in which justices ruled that 18 Klansmen could be charged with conspiracy to violate the three victims' civil rights. Eventually, seven of these defendants were found guilty in a federal district courtroom, producing Mississippi's first 20th-century civil rights convictions. Ball skillfully dissects the uphill fight faced by the FBI and the Justice Department during these trials, and he offers keen observations on the "feral prejudices" of the state organizations that encouraged terrorizing attacks on African Americans and their allies. Inexplicably, however, the Supreme Court case highlighted in the book's subtitle is neglected in favor of an indignant recounting of the subsequent trial in Mississippi. At times, the book feels like an avenging crusade designed to aid those who would like the state to try the remaining living Klansmen. Ball rebukes those who would prefer not to rekindle the ashes of the "Mississippi Burning" by levying new murder charges, declaring that "it is past time for a final accounting. There cannot be any peace or rest until justice is done." Though the book's descriptions can be somewhat repetitive, it nonetheless makes a good resource for anyone who wants a quick re-cap of all the facts of this complicated historic case. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
In June 1964 three civil rights activists--

Jim Chaney, Andy Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner--were killed in Mississippi by known parties who, to this day, have never been tried for murder. Eighteen Klansmen were tried, seven convicted of lesser civil rights violations, and the main conspirator let go under *United States v. Price*. Although the state has the right and the evidence to prosecute, it has not chosen to do so for the last 36 years. Ball recounts the legal obstacles that led to the unprecedented conviction of whites for violating the rights of blacks. He focuses on the summer of 1964, when civil rights organizations such as CORE, SNCC, and SCLC brought to Mississippi huge numbers of white college students to work with black college students and local activists on a voter registration drive. Although the legal landmark decision remains important, the murderous resistance by the Klan was a situation the nation could no longer ignore. This is a powerful look at the forces that forged the civil rights movement. Vernon Ford

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A Gothic journey into the racist nightmare of state-sponsored terrorism and murder, Balls definitive account also reveals the redemptive power of American democracy and the rule of law.

William Doyle, author of *An American Insurrection: The Battle of Oxford, Mississippi, 1962* A powerful evocation of a tragic time and place in our national history, Balls book captures the moment brilliantly and tells an important story.

Neil McMillen, winner of the Bancroft prize for *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* A superb account of mans inhumanity to man, Balls work has the insiders touch and makes gripping reading throughout.

Tinsley Yarbrough, author of *Race and Redistricting: The Shaw-Cromartie Cases*