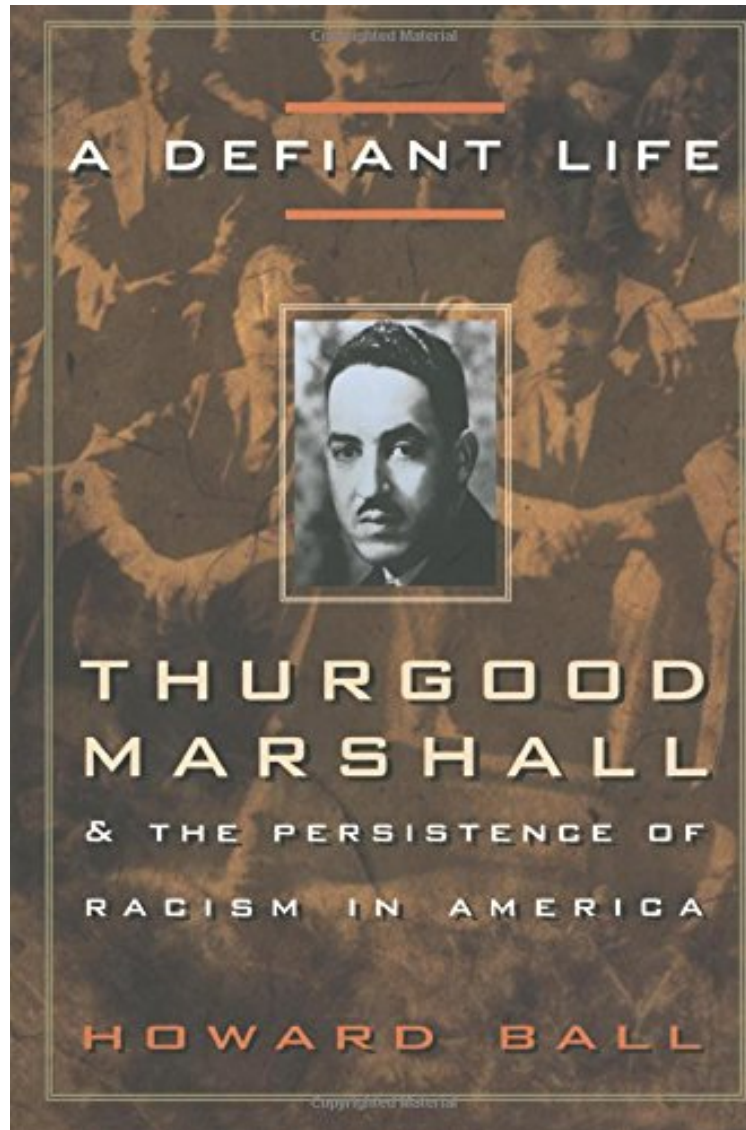


[Download free ebook] A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America

## A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America

Howard Ball

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#3407040 in Books Howard Ball 2001-04-17 2001-04-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, 1.53 #File Name: 067680666X464 pagesA Defiant Life Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America | File size: 56.Mb

**Howard Ball : A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America:

6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing in the extremeBy A CustomerFrom its rather droll

beginnings: "Thurgood Marshall was born in 1908," Howard Ball's biography, *A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America*, only goes downhill. His writing style is bland and the story line follows no distinguishable pattern, aimless flowing from point to point with few overarching themes. Unlike Juan Williams' *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (a truly great biography focusing on the personal as well as the legal issues of this American giant) or Mark Tushnet's *Making Civil Rights Law and Making Constitutional Law* (two books that provide an excellent legal analysis of Marshall's work), Ball's book repeats stories and facts that are already well-worn and understood. Most tragic, one gets little understanding about what drove Marshall to fight the brutal system of Jim Crow oppression and led him to become such a forceful advocate of individual rights on the bench. The personal and legal story of Marshall is much more interesting and deserves a much better biography. Best to skip this one.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Tells what he did  
By A Customer  
"A Defiant Life" presents the heroic life of Thurgood Marshall and his fight against racism in a compelling manner. The book does not tell a feel bad/feel angry/feel good story. There is little recourse to anecdotes, and hardly any moments for emotional release. Instead it tells what Marshall did as an advocate for the minorities - for example how he travelled many times to the South facing mortal danger to argue important cases. It also tells us of his opinions, and how they influenced his use of the legal system to help the oppressed. After reading this book, one comes away knowing that Marshall was one of the great men of 20th century America. And one comes away understanding the reasons for the far reaching implications of several Supreme Court cases.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. It's never only black or white  
By T.W.CURMIG  
Gut wrenching in its honesty, thought provoking in the truest sense of the word. It allowed me to take a step back from racial madness and see through another pair of eyes. No law can change people's attitudes, morality is judged by the majority, this book shows us. And yet it had a hopeful note beneath the surface. Initially I was put off by the inhuman, thesis sounding title.. do not make my mistake-read this book and absorb culture at its ugliest (and most honest).

Thurgood Marshall's extraordinary contribution to civil rights and overcoming racism is more topical than ever, as the national debate on race and the overturning of affirmative action policies make headlines nationwide. Howard Ball, author of eighteen books on the Supreme Court and the federal judiciary, has done copious research for this incisive biography to present an authoritative portrait of Marshall the jurist. Born to a middle-class black family in "Jim Crow" Baltimore at the turn of the century, Marshall's race informed his worldview from an early age. He was rejected by the University of Maryland Law School because of the color of his skin. He then attended Howard University's Law School, where his racial consciousness was awakened by the brilliant lawyer and activist Charlie Houston. Marshall suddenly knew what he wanted to be: a civil rights lawyer, one of Houston's "social engineers." As the chief attorney for the NAACP, he developed the strategy for the legal challenge to racial discrimination. His soaring achievements and his lasting impact on the nation's legal system--as the NAACP's advocate, as a federal appeals court judge, as President Lyndon Johnson's solicitor general, and finally as the first African American Supreme Court Justice--are symbolized by *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark case that ended legal segregation in public schools. Using race as the defining theme, Ball spotlights Marshall's genius in working within the legal system to further his lifelong commitment to racial equality. With the help of numerous, previously unpublished sources, Ball presents a lucid account of Marshall's illustrious career and his historic impact on American civil rights. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly  
Thurgood Marshall's long and influential life of challenging racism and championing affirmative action makes him prime biography material today. Ball, a political science professor at the University of Vermont and author of 16 previous books on the federal judiciary, expertly interweaves Marshall's life with the history of civil rights in America. From the rise of the NAACP, which coincided roughly with Marshall's 1908 birth in segregated Baltimore, to *Brown v. The Board of Education*, a case that Marshall argued before the Supreme Court in 1953, we see Marshall as a towering figure, an indefatigable adversary of the ruthless and endemic racial discrimination that surrounded him much of his life. As Ball's focus is on legal history, other civil rights leaders, such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., are barely mentioned. In contrast to Juan Williams in his recent biography, *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (Times Books), Ball skims over Marshall's personal life, either downplaying or omitting details of his heavy drinking, sexual misconduct, poor health, virulent anticommunism and general cantankerousness. Instead, Ball devotes nearly 200 absorbing pages to Marshall's Supreme Court tenure and casework, presenting detailed, but very clear, analyses of pivotal cases in which Marshall was involved, as a NAACP lawyer, as a U.S. Solicitor General and as the first black judge appointed to the Supreme Court. Those cases are Marshall's legacy, and Ball's fine biography places his subject's legal accomplishments squarely in the context of American history. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal  
On October 1, 1991, Thurgood Marshall retired from the Supreme Court, the last remaining liberal after Justice William Brennan stepped down in 1990. Marshall had sat on that distinguished bench for 24 years. Coming on the heels of Juan Williams's recent biography (*Thurgood Marshall*, LJ 9/1/98), this study of the late Supreme Court justice is basically a rehash. The books are similar in detail, tracing the rise of Jim Crow, the history of the NAACP, etc., and

focusing on public education and affirmative action battles, the Civil Rights movement and its key players, and Marshall's years as a jurist. One difference is that while Williams shows more of the personal side of the man, Ball (Hugo L. Black, LJ 6/1/96) concentrates on the legal aspects of Marshall's life. With the massive amount of attention given to the judicial system, this is primarily for lawyers and judges. Not a necessary purchase. Ann Burns, "Library Journal" Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sThe second major Marshall biography in recent months (after Juan Williams's Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary) stresses the late civil rights giant and Supreme Court justice's legal career more than his larger-than-life personality. Ball is no stranger to high-bench biography, having written 17 books on the federal judiciary, including *Of Power and Right: Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, and America's Constitutional Revolution* (with Phillip J. Cooper, 1991). Ball portrays Marshall's life as "the story of the persistence of racism in America" and examines in crushing detail his courtroom accomplishments. It's ironic that Marshall, who as chief litigator for the NAACP successfully argued the landmark desegregation case *Brown v. Board of Education* before the Supreme Court, spent most of his time as a justice dissenting against a conservative majority bent on reversing the gains he'd achieved--often at considerable personal risk--as a lawyer. Marshall "came to the Court too late," the last liberal appointed before a tide of Nixon appointees (led by nemesis William Rehnquist) tipped the balance of power rightward. Marginalized and frustrated, Marshall grew increasingly angered by his colleagues' rulings. These reflected, at their most benign, an ignorance of the plight of ordinary "Joe Doakeses" (whose courageousness Marshall credited for his courtroom success as "Mr. Civil Rights") and, at their most malignant, a narrow-minded racism and hostility toward individual rights. Ball's focus on the small legal print provides eye-opening insights into the machinations of the Court, where squabbling among justices became more common as the Rehnquist court practiced what Marshall called "power, not reason." However, Ball's approach often shortchanges Marshall the man, and the preoccupation with legal history, while compelling to constitutional scholars, will lose many general readers. Better as "further reading" than as an accessible general introduction, Ball's biography nevertheless stands as an extension of Marshall's own dissents--a clarion call for conscience in future Supreme Court deliberations. (16 pages bw photos) -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.