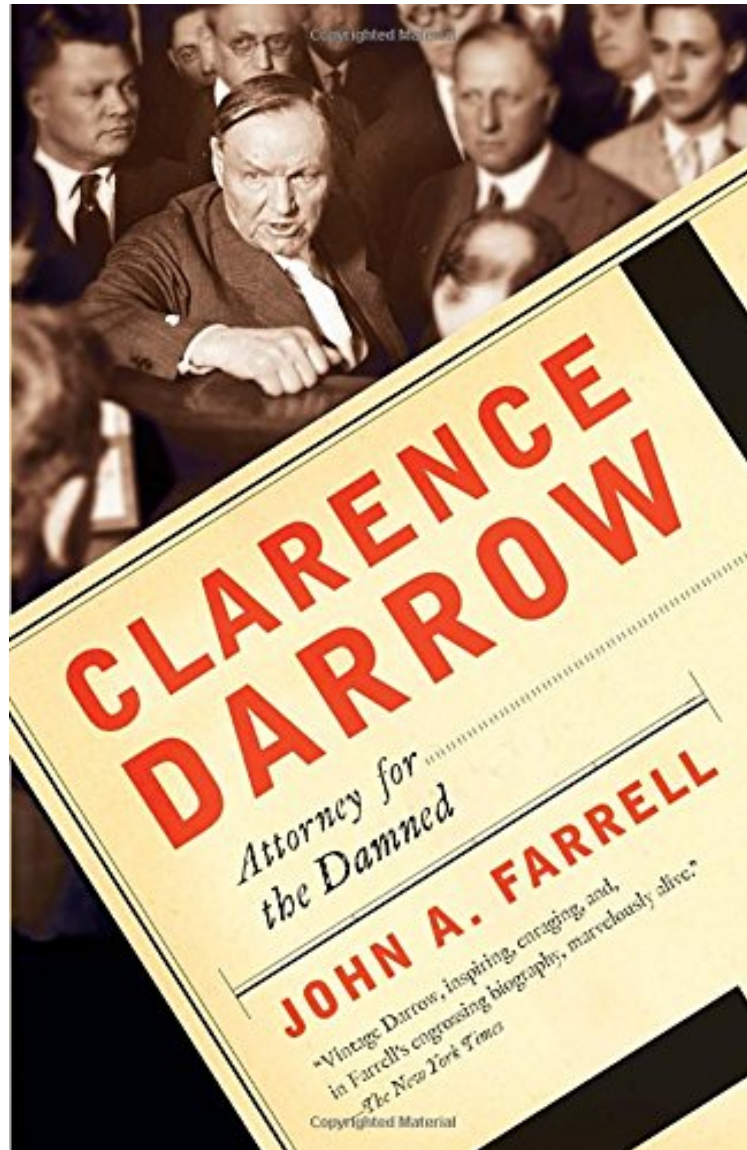


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## Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned

John A. Farrell

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**John A. Farrell : Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned:

48 of 49 people found the following review helpful. A First-Rate Biography of a Giant, Flaws and All By Peter Hillman After days of deliberation (i.e., engrossing reading), this reader is ready to return a verdict: Judgment for the Author! And it was by no means an easy case. Darrow would seem a daunting, perilous task for a biographer. He was born four years before the Civil War, lived into FDR's second term, and in between was a pervasive, dominant force in

almost every significant U.S. criminal case and legal issue (and plenty of other things that captured his boundless interest). Colorful, controversial, narcissistic, fearless, grandiose and thoroughly brilliant, he strode through the 1880-1930 legal landscape like a true Colossus, no-holds-barred, to give a powerful voice to those for whom society had already spoken, denounced and consigned to severe punishment. He was sensational newspaper fodder, in days when newspapers were rampant but often unreliable. He and his contemporaries (virtually every American figure of note crossed paths somehow with Darrow) left extensive correspondence and writings. Everyone knew of him and had an opinion. The Scopes trial was the first to be broadcast live nationally on radio. Leopold and Loeb captivated the country--and those are just two of Darrow's more famous cases. How to separate man from myth, fact from hyperbole, and articulate a workable understanding of what drove this remarkable figure? Enter Farrell--a prominent investigative journalist (suitably here, neither lawyer nor academic), who seemingly leaves no stone unturned in his painstaking search for the essence of Darrow. With a writing style that is concise, cogent and fluid, Farrell succeeds in making Darrow come alive. What emerges in this fresh and colorful account is a portrait of a man both blessed with gifts and riddled with flaws, for whom almost any means--even juror bribery--justified the ends of manacled perceived injustice. Farrell wisely lets Darrow speak his own great court arguments; the author also draws judiciously from reliable primary sources such as letters, diaries and observations by contemporaries. Farrell is respectful of earlier writers who have tackled Darrow's life in full, but points out where (and why) they missed a mark. This author also deftly weaves in outstanding secondary sources, such as treatments of specific cases. The net effect is a modest but knowing and confident author's tone--quite a feat considering the prodigious effort involved. The requisite source notes are here, although I would have preferred more separate entries, rather than frustrating "round up" notes. Fortunately, the Bibliography is a reader's dream. Alas, my Kindle version had only limited photograph images (the Darrow Wikipedia page alone was more enlightening in this respect). Also, I found the publisher's bally-hoo of new revelations and "Free Love" lifestyles to be, well, of relatively minor stir in the grander scheme of things. But these are minor criticisms. I hope other readers will experience the rare joy I had, of setting aside preconceptions/skepticisms about this icon, and letting Farrell completely take over the story-telling reins. It is a memorable and invigorating ride and one I highly recommend.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Inherit The Windbag By Franklin the Mouse A journalist Hutchins Hapwood described Clarence Darrow (1857-1938) as such, "He is radical, idealistic and practical at once... with a marvelous inconsistency of mind." No kidding about the "inconsistency of mind" thing. Man oh man, Mr. Darrow was a jumble of contradictions. Trying to figure out the cynical atheist was more difficult than nailing Jello to a wall. One day he's heroic and the next day contemptible. No question, the iconic attorney was whip-smart and his oratorical skills in the courtroom saved many people's backsides. But, Mr. Darrow also had no problem in using unethical means to win. His attitude that juries made their decisions based upon their feelings and less on facts is not only true, but also applicable to how people vote in elections. I know, I know. It's a very cynical perspective, but read the book and you'll see he pulled many a person's fat out of the fryer based upon his courtroom histrionics. Mr. Farrell does an excellent job of describing Mr. Darrow as well as the times he lived. Our current legal system still has many faults, but the level of corruption and skulduggery practiced during the late 1800s and early 1900s makes today's jurisprudence seem nearly utopian. Clarence Darrow was involved in many of the time period's high-profile cases. He represented the unfairly maligned Eugene Debs, many despicable criminals, Los Angeles union murderers, various odious corporate barons, the famous Leopold and Loeb, as well as tackled racism and, of course, the Scopes Monkey trial. The author gives a rationale for all the choices Darrow made in taking on a case. During his many years in Chicago, avarice and exploitation by corporations described in the book made my stomach turn. Sweatshops packed with immigrants, child labor abuse, the hellish meat packing industries, and executives hiring the police, politicians and thugs to assault or murder union members should make anyone with a conscience be grateful for unions. I found Mr. Darrow a most vexing person. I admired many of his heroic stances in representing the underdog as well as being an agnostic and feminist, but his monumental ego, numerous mistresses, and occasional unethical actions left a sour taste in my mouth. Like any good biography, Mr. Farrell shows the many facets of his subject matter and places the reader into the context of the times. I liked the book, but finished the work feeling less optimistic about society as a whole. In today's atmosphere, politicians still use religion as a tool for oppression, corporations steal and abuse workers, and, most depressing to me, the majority of people refute the theory of evolution because it threatens their God. I guess Darrow's cynical nature about humanity is right.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Fuller Insight into Darrow the Man By Andrew Rock Darrow was quite a complex mix of labor supporter and defend-anyone-for-pay defense attorney. And, he liked women too while not deserting his wife. I don't finish many books but this one provided compelling personal accounting of the man who made the Scopes Monkey Trial a memorable, if somewhat Disney-esk simplified play. This provides an early years to grave relatively fast paced accounting. Darrow moved in serious literary and political circles and stood up for some of the most famous and infamous defendants. Darrow encountered Mother Jones as well as other labor leaders and was always ready, often for gratis and always for pay, to be the spokesperson for the downtrodden.

Winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Biography The definitive biography of Clarence Darrow, the

brilliant, idiosyncratic lawyer who defended John Scopes in the Monkey Trial and gave voice to the populist masses at the turn of the twentieth century, thus changing American law forever. Amidst the tumult of the industrial age and the progressive era, Clarence Darrow became America's greatest defense attorney, successfully championing poor workers, blacks, and social and political outcasts, against big business, fundamentalist religion, Jim Crow, and the US government. His courtroom style a mixture of passion, improvisation, charm, and tactical genius won miraculous reprieves for men doomed to hang. In Farrell's hands, Darrow is a Byronic figure, a renegade whose commitment to liberty led him to heroic courtroom battles and legal trickery alike.

[This is] vintage Darrow, inspiring, enraging, and, in Farrell's engrossing biography, marvelously alive. The New York Times John A. Farrell, with access to previously unavailable materials, brings the 'grandest legal career in American history' to life again in a masterfully researched and elegantly written volume. The Boston Globe Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned is impeccably researched, beautifully written, and timely . . . Farrell gives us Darrow in all his brilliance, hypocrisy, and eccentricity. . . . As Farrell's riveting biography makes abundantly clear, there was no more powerful and incendiary thunderbolt than Clarence Darrow. San Francisco Chronicle A clear-sighted, empathetic biography. . . . [Farrell] knows that he has a protagonist of Shakespearean richness and complexity, and this well-written, vividly atmospheric portrait captures Clarence Darrow with his faults and contradictions intact. Los Angeles Times A comprehensive biography of the storied defense attorney. Making elaborate use of transcripts, observers accounts, correspondence and newspaper reports, Farrell chronicles Darrows most celebrated trials in detail. . . . These cases including two in which Darrow, almost surely guilty, was himself tried for jury tampering dominate the narrative, but Farrell neatly places them within the larger context of this complicated mans crowded life and practice. . . . Farrell unflinchingly addresses [Darrows] shortcomings, even as he underscores the genuine brilliance of a still-unmatched advocate for underdogs everywhere. Kirkus Starred Farrell offers excerpts from Darrows magnificent courtroom arguments as well as delicious details of his personal life (he was a hearty participant in the eras free love movement). [He] gleans from previously undisclosed material to offer a completely engaging portrait of a flawed man of noble ideals. Booklist Starred John A. Farrell, in Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned, goes farther into the archives and deeper into Darrows crags. New Yorker Masterful . . . a riveting piece of work and certain to be one of the most fascinating biographies of this or any other year. The Daily Beast Groundbreaking. . . . Attorney for the Damned is a well-balanced portrait of the private and public Darrow, giving the sweep of his life and times. The Washington Times "Farrell draws from previously unpublished correspondence to give fresh insight into Darrow's remarkable career. . . . A thoughtful overview of Darrow, his life, and his many accomplishments. The Seattle Times It is almost impossible to conceive how so much living could have come in just one life, and Jack Farrell's masterful new biography makes Clarence Darrow come alive. This is a wonderful, at times heart-pounding story, told with precision, sympathy, and insight. Ken Burns This book is a joy and a revelation. It is at once a rollicking tour through the mind of a legal genius and a spellbinding account of some of the most famous cases in American history. The chapter on Leopold and Loeb alone is worth waiting in line to get a seat in Jack Farrell's courtroom. David Maraniss, author of When Pride Still Mattered and They Marched into Sunlight John Farrell's Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned is a riveting historical drama filled with strange twists and turns. Every page is a triumph of scholarship. A marvelous biography! Douglas Brinkley, professor of history at Rice University and author of The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America People want heroes. But history demands truth. This gritty biography demystifies a deeply flawed legal hero, who 'almost assuredly' bribed jurors and witnesses in order to level the playing field against 'the rich and powerful.' Darrow was a giant of his corrupt times. His biography is a must-read for all Americans who care about both the means and ends of justice! Alan M. Dershowitz, author of The Trials of Zion Clarence Darrow confounded titles: he was a freethinker, hedonist, anarchist, populist, infidel, cynic, and master storyteller who became our greatest lawyer and a folk hero. Farrell's masterful, sweeping new biography not only does justice to all his roles but joyously satisfies even a Darrow addict like me. Roy Black, Esq., criminal defense attorney About the Author John Aloysius Farrell is the author of Richard Nixon: The Life, a biography of that most enigmatic 37th president of the United States. His previous books are Clarence Darrow: Attorney For The Damned, a biography of America's greatest defense attorney, and of Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century, the definitive account of House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. and his times. Farrell is an American journalist and author. He is a contributing editor to Politico Magazine, after a prize-winning career as a newspaperman, most notably at The Denver Post and The Boston Globe, where he worked as White House correspondent and served on the vaunted Spotlight team. His biography of Clarence Darrow was awarded the Los Angeles Times book prize for the best biography of 2011, and won critical praise from reviewers and fellow writers. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction: Jefferson's Heir Clarence Darrow, sitting at his desk in the law offices of the Chicago North Western Railway Company on an April morning in 1893, had much to be pleased about. In the six years since he arrived in Chicago, he had carved a fine niche. The mayor and governor asked his advice. The newspapers covered his speeches. He had taken a real estate dispute to the Illinois Supreme Court and won his client a \$500,000 award that, so large for its time, got front-page attention. He had a pleasant house, a proper wife, influential friends, and a son he

loved. As first assistant counsel to a mighty railroad, he had a salary and social standing to be envied by the city's glut of aspiring lawyers: dire, sepulchral figures, languishing in the courts, longing for the stroke of fortune that would land them such a choice position. Darrow had just turned thirty-six. He was a tall man for his time, with high cheekbones and a formidable brow that could give him the look of a young Lincoln: no disadvantage in Illinois. His eyes were a soft blue and his smile, a law partner would recall, was wreathed in good nature and irresistible charm. He had a kind of rough charisma that, he was discovering, charmed the pretty girls who attended his talks and lectures. Small-town Ohio could not hold him and so he had come to Chicago, to the flickering gaslight, the smoke and cinder, the clamor and hoot and honk of that most American city. He had applied himself, in the courts by day and by making the rounds of political clubs and debating societies in the evenings. And he had sought as mentors rich and famous men, and had prospered from their interest. If Darrow sought a template for success, he needed look no further than his boss and patron, the railroad's general counsel, whose office was next to his in the law department at Fifth Avenue and Lake Street, in downtown Chicago. William C. Goudy was a trailblazer in a new specialty of the industrial age: the corporation lawyer. With his bearded chin and stern demeanor, Goudy looked like an Amish elder, and though friends insisted that he had a warm heart, he was cold and direct in his professional affairs. He was said to be a millionaire, and Darrow knew him as ultra conservative. As a chieftain of the Illinois silk-stocking Democrats, Goudy served as an adviser to President Grover Cleveland, who had just been elected to a second term, and who shared his corporate sympathies. No harm shall come to any business interest as the result of administrative policy so long as I am President, Cleveland boasted. Goudy was a close friend, as well, of Chief Justice Melville Fuller, a Chicagoan who led the era's notoriously conservative Supreme Court, known for decisions shielding monopolies and trusts, outlawing the income tax, and, in the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson*, authorizing racial segregation. In the Gilded Age, when the interests of politicians and industrialists ran in tandem could be made to do so with a timely payoff, Goudy's political ties enhanced his appeal to the clients who secured his services. He represented the Vanderbilt railroad empire, the great Armour meatpacking firm, and other powerful interests in their wars against government regulation. It was said that Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act in part to counteract Goudy, who so ably promoted the rights of corporations and monopolists to run their affairs as they saw fit, without regard to the public interest. Goudy and the railroad were, this day, engaged in one such battle with the people of Chicago. That great midway between the crops and natural resources of the West and the markets and capital of the East was a wicker of railroad tracks. Five million engines and freight cars passed through Chicago each year, on 1,400 miles of rails. As the city's population leaped, so did the number of those killed and injured by trains traversing its roads and alleys at the thousands of street-level crossings. It was Darrow's duty to represent the railroad in court, fighting to limit the compensation sought by the victims or their families. The carnage was ghastly. A stranger's first impression of Chicago is that of the barbarous gridironed streets, a British visitor wrote, his second is that of the multitude of mutilated people . . . the mangled remnant of the massacre. In a single month that spring, there were forty-five deaths. One story suffices, that of the mother driving home, who froze at the roar of an approaching train. A passerby pulled her from the driver's bench, but her two young daughters were left behind to be shattered and tossed in the shards of the carriage as their wounded horse bellowed in pain. But the railroads were tough, and abetted by public officials who collected lavish bribery . . . year after year, the Chicago Times reported. When, finally, the city council voted to compel the railroads to raise their tracks, the companies went to court. There is no power on earth which can compel us to elevate our tracks, said a confident Marvin Hughitt, the president of the Chicago North Western. The opinions of the best lawyers in the country have been obtained. A test case was pending at the Supreme Court, and earlier that month Goudy had traveled to Washington to speak to the chief justice and visit with his allies at the White House. He returned to Chicago cheered about his company's prospects. Here, then, was a blueprint for Darrow's aspirations. He was no scion of a wealthy family like his liberal friends, the muckraker Henry Demarest Lloyd or the philanthropist Jane Addams, who used her inheritance to found the Hull House settlement for immigrants in Chicago's West Side ghetto. Darrow's parents, though educated, were moneyless. He tasted want and shame as a child, and I never have been able to get over the dread of being poor, and the fear of it, he would confide to a friend. Nor were there government programs in this laissez-faire era for a man to fall back on in hard times, illness, or old age. The only social safety net was the free lunch offered in workingmen's saloons, and a bit of floor space on which to sleep in municipal hallways during Chicago's bitter winters. Darrow had a deep interest in learning, and in literature, but he has been under the awful compulsion of the age, to make money, his friend Brand Whitlock would tell a confidant. Have you ever reflected that we of this time are kept so busy making a living that we never find time to live? Yet Darrow chafed in corporate harness. There was something missing in the Goudy model. If Darrow's cunning was a defining attribute, more so was his empathy. He was sensitiveness and egotism all twisted as the strands of a rope . . . a great character of wonderful sweetness, of profound intelligence, of Godlike patience and tenderness shot through with queer pettiness about money, about criticism, one of his lovers, Mary Field Parton, would confide to her diary. What saved him was his extraordinarily acute compassion, she concluded, the edges of his emotions sensitive as the antennae of insects. Darrow felt guilty working for a corporation, where his legal skills and his boss's clout were employed at union busting, or to limit the relief sought by the pitiful victims of the railway crossings. He longed for peace of mind. It seems to me, and for me, that I have no

right to save myself when the injustice is so great, he would tell Addams. Around him was injustice in abundance. The slaughter at Chicagos railway crossings was emblematic of conditions in the Gilded Age, when the United States grappled with economic and social transformations that many Americans feared, with some justification, might trigger revolution. Immigrants packed the tenements of the cities, where women took piecework in squalid, ill-lit flats, while men and children labored in the factories, mills, mines, and collieries for twelve hours a day, six or seven days a week, for cents. Unions were assailed; a political and corporate aristocracy employed the police, the state militia, and private armies of detectives to disperse or gun down striking workers. Blacks were condemned to lynch law. Congress, the judiciary, and the state legislatures were corrupted, and the criminal justice system was no such thing. The rich and powerful are seldom indicted and never tried, one of the city's leading lawyers, W. S. Forrest, told an audience in 1892. Manslaughter is committed by corporations with impunity. Men are convicted who are innocent. Even in ordinary trials, the forms of law are frequently set aside and the rules of evidence ignored. Chicago witnessed all the ills. Drenched in blood, bone-weary workers slaughtered the illimitable herds of hogs and cattle that clanked by them on the assembly lines of the stockyards. At McCormick Reaper and other storied industrial works, union organizers fighting for higher wages or an eight-hour day were locked out, harassed, and beaten by police. The houses of prostitution never closed in Little Cheyenne and the Levee, nor the predatory gambling and drinking dens. The city was divided along class lines and still seething that spring from the 1886 bombing that killed seven policemen at a workers rally in the Haymarket, and the subsequent public delirium that sent four guiltless anarchists to the gallows. The city's smokestacks cast a famous pall, to rival that of London, across the prairie sky, and the polluted water spurred outbreaks of cholera. A visitor from England, well versed in the miseries of the industrial age, was stunned. Chicago is a pocket edition of hell, he wrote, and if it is not, then hell is a pocket edition of Chicago. Darrow had delved into politics, joining the movement to assist the Haymarket defendants and employing his talents and political connections to persuade the Illinois legislature to pass a bill regulating sweatshops and child labor. More than a year before, he had written to Lloyd, confessing his shame at working for the railroad and praising a protest that his friend had led after a police raid on a union meeting. You dare to say what is true, Darrow told him. Your speech...made me feel that I am a hypocrite and a slave, and added to my resolution to make my term of servitude short. But he could not summon the will to act. The months passed, and his time of servitude dragged on. Darrow's conscience was still struggling with his comfort on the morning of Thursday, April 27, when, shortly after eleven a.m., Goudy finished dictating a letter, dismissed his secretary, and summoned his first visitor a retired Civil War hero, General John McArthur into his office. Darrow prepared to join them. Good morning, Judge, McArthur said, greeting his friend Goudy. Then: You don't look very well...are you ill? Goudy seemed stricken, and gasped. McArthur cried out in alarm, and Darrow rushed in, as Goudy collapsed at his desk. Darrow and McArthur carried the lawyer to a couch. Goudy stared up at Darrow with pleading eyes, said nothing, and died. The great man's heart attack was front-page news in Chicago. He lived only a few minutes, Darrow told the reporters. It all happened so suddenly that we can scarcely appreciate that Mr. Goudy is really dead. Darrow was a pallbearer at the funeral. He had lost his patron, and his paradigm. Goudy's death changed Darrow's life. That weekend, the newspapers carried the story: C. S. Darrow was leaving his position as lawyer for the railroad to go to work for Mayor Carter Harrison. No one then perceived that this was the birth of the grandest legal career in American history. In 1893, of Darrow's future clients, Eugene Debs was still an obscure labor leader with dreams of forming a national railway union. Patrick Prendergast was a mumbling paperboy, lost in delusions. Bill Haywood was a frontier ruffian. Nathan Leopold, Richard Loeb, Ossian Sweet, and John Scopes were not yet born. And yet, in little more than a year, Darrow would be battling to keep Debs and the other ringleaders of a turbulent workers uprising out of prison, and to save the demented Prendergast, by then an infamous assassin, from the hangman. He would be on his way to becoming an American icon, his name synonymous with a passionate, eloquent, and miraculous defense of the underdog. Journalist Lincoln Steffens would cite Darrow's departure from the railroad as the turning point in his friend's life. Darrow counted the cost; he seems always to have counted the cost, Steffens wrote, but he found himself off-side, and had to cross over to where he belonged. And so was born, said Steffens, the attorney for the damned."