

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST

LINDY LOU, JUROR NUMBER TWO

A film by Florent Vassault



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Hanna Lee, MLIS of First Regional Library in Batesville, MS, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Lindy Lou, Juror Number Two*.

For 20 years, Lindy has lived with an unbearable feeling of guilt. Committed to fulfilling her civic duty, Lindy sat with 11 other people on a jury that handed down the death penalty to a Mississippi man convicted of a double homicide. An overwhelming feeling of regret compels Lindy to track down her fellow jurors. A conservative, religious woman from the South, she manages to tackle this topic with humor, an open mind and sincere curiosity.

ADULT NONFICTION

Prejean, Helen. *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*. Penguin Random House, 1993.

In 1982, Sister Helen Prejean became the spiritual advisor to Patrick Sonnier, the convicted killer of two teenagers who was sentenced to die in the electric chair of Louisiana's Angola State Prison. In the months before Sonnier's death, the Roman Catholic nun came to know a man who was as terrified as he had once been terrifying. She also came to know the families of the victims and the men whose job it was to execute—men who often harbored doubts about the rightness of what they were doing. Out of that dreadful intimacy comes a profoundly moving spiritual journey through our system of capital punishment. Here Sister Helen confronts both the plight of the condemned and the rage of the bereaved, the fears of a society shattered by violence and the Christian imperative of love.

Elliott, Martha. *The Man in the Monster: An Intimate Portrait of a Serial Killer*. Penguin Random House, 2015.

Michael Ross was a serial killer who raped and murdered eight young women between 1981 and 1984. In 2005, the state of Connecticut put him to death by lethal injection. His crimes were horrific, and he paid the ultimate price for them. When journalist Martha Elliott first heard of Ross, she learned what the world knew of him—that he had been a master at hiding in plain sight. Elliott, a staunch critic of the death penalty, was drawn to the case when the Connecticut Supreme Court overturned Ross's six death sentences. Rather than fight for his life, Ross requested that he be executed because he didn't want the families of his victims to suffer through a new trial. Elliott was intrigued and sought an interview. The two began a weekly conversation—and developed an odd form of friendship—that lasted over a decade, until Ross's last moments of life.

Claiborne, Shane. *Executing Grace: How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us*. HarperOne, 2016.

A southern evangelical Christian draws on Scripture and statistics to argue against the death penalty. To illustrate his changing views on capital punishment, he compares the principles of restorative and punitive justice. What does the Bible have to say about sin, revenge and absolution? Claiborne, a popular speaker and champion of the new monastic movement, offers an impassioned argument against capital punishment rooted in his Christian faith.

Hammel, Andrew. *Ending the Death Penalty: The European Experience in Global Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Examining the successful movements to abolish capital punishment in the UK, France, and Germany, this book examines the similarities in the social structure and political strategies of abolition movements in all three countries. An in-depth comparative analysis with other countries assesses chances of success of abolition elsewhere.

Blecker, Robert. *The Death of Punishment: Searching for Justice Among the Worst of the Worst*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

The Death of Punishment challenges the reader to refine deeply held beliefs on life and death as punishment that flare up with every news story of a heinous crime. It argues that society must redesign life and death in prison to make the punishment more nearly fit the crime. It closes with the final irony: If we make prison the punishment it should be, we may well abolish the very death penalty justice now requires.

ADULT FICTION

Berry, Michelle. *The Prisoner and the Chaplain*. Buckrider Books, 2017.

What if prison was the only world that existed for you now and everything else was a story? What if you weren't sure if you were guilty but wanted forgiveness in any form? *The Prisoner and the Chaplain* is about two men: one man awaiting execution, the other man listening to his story. As the hours drain away, the chaplain must decide if the prisoner's story is an off-the-cuff confession or a last bid for salvation. As the chaplain listens he realizes a life has many stories, and he has his own story to tell.

Lloyd, Amy. *The Innocent Wife*. Hanover Square Press, 2018.

Twenty years ago, Dennis Danson was arrested and imprisoned for the brutal murder of a young girl. Now he's the subject of a true-crime documentary that's whipping up a frenzy online to uncover the truth and free a man who has been wrongly convicted. A thousand miles away in England, Samantha is obsessed with Dennis's case. She exchanges letters with him, and is quickly won over by his

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Crossan, Sarah. *Moonrise*. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2017.

Seventeen-year-old Joe hasn't seen his brother in ten years. Ed didn't walk out on the family, not exactly. It's something more brutal. Ed's locked up—on death row. Now his execution date has been set, and the clock is ticking. Joe is determined to spend those last weeks with his brother, no matter what other people think ... and no matter whether Ed committed the crime. But did he? And does it matter, in the end?

Dean, Carolee. *Take Me There*. Simon Pulse, 2010.

Seventeen-year-old Dylan Dawson, on the run from breaking parole, tries to figure out how his life has gone awry. He is determined to see his father before he is executed for killing a police officer 11 years earlier.

Gilbert, Kelly Loy. *Conviction*. Disney-Hyperion, 2015.

When his evangelical radio show host father is arrested for the murder of a police officer and faced with the death penalty, a sixteen-year-old boy must confront his own truths and convictions.

Wung-Sung, Jesper. *The Last Execution*. Translated by Lindy Falk van Rooyen. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2016.

This novel, based on the true story of the last execution in Denmark, is set in 1853 during the last hours before a fifteen-year-old peasant is sentenced to die for his conviction on charges of arson and murder. As the clock ticks down, the townsfolk ask themselves: does he have the right to live? Wung-Sung raises the age-old question surrounding the death penalty: who determines who has the right to live or die?

apparent charm and kindness to her. Soon she has left her old life behind to marry him and campaign for his release. When the campaign is successful and Dennis is freed, however, Sam begins to discover new details that suggest he may not be quite so innocent after all.

Mikulencak, Mandy. *The Last Suppers*. A John Scognamiglio Book, 2017.

Many children have grown up in the shadow of Louisiana's Greenmount State Penitentiary. Most of them—sons and daughters of corrections officers and staff—left the place as soon as they could. Yet Ginny Polk chose to come back to work as a prison cook. She knows the harsh reality of life within those walls—the cries of men being beaten, the lines of shuffling inmates chained together. Yet she has never seen them as monsters, not even the ones sentenced to execution. That's why, among her duties, Ginny has taken on a special responsibility: preparing their last meals.

Silver, Elizabeth L. *The Execution of Noa P. Singleton*. Crown Publishers, 2013.

Noa P. Singleton never spoke a word in her own defense throughout a brief trial that ended with a jury finding her guilty of first-degree murder. Ten years later, having accepted her fate, she sits on death row in a maximum-security penitentiary, just six months away from her execution date. Meanwhile, Marlene Dixon, a high-powered Philadelphia attorney who is also the mother of the woman Noa was imprisoned for killing. She claims to have changed her mind about the death penalty and will do everything in her considerable power to convince the governor to commute Noa's sentence to life in prison, in return for the one thing Noa can trade: her story.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Kuklin, Susan. *No Choirboy: Murder, Violence, and Teenagers on Death Row*. Henry Holt and Co., 2008.

No Choirboy takes readers inside America's prisons, and allows inmates sentenced to death as teenagers to speak for themselves. In their own voices—raw and uncensored—they talk about their lives in prison, and share their thoughts and feelings about how they ended up there. Susan Kuklin also gets inside the system, exploring capital punishment itself and the intricacies and inequities of criminal justice in the United States.

Manning, Jack. *Serving on a Jury*. Capstone Press, 2014.

Part of a series on the government, *Serving on a Jury* uses photos and informative text to give young readers an introduction to the judicial system and jury duty.

Watson, Stephanie. *Thinking Critically: The Death Penalty*. ReferencePoint Press Inc., 2017.

Part of a series on social issues, this book examines all aspects of the death penalty, raising questions about its impacts, implementation, and ethics.