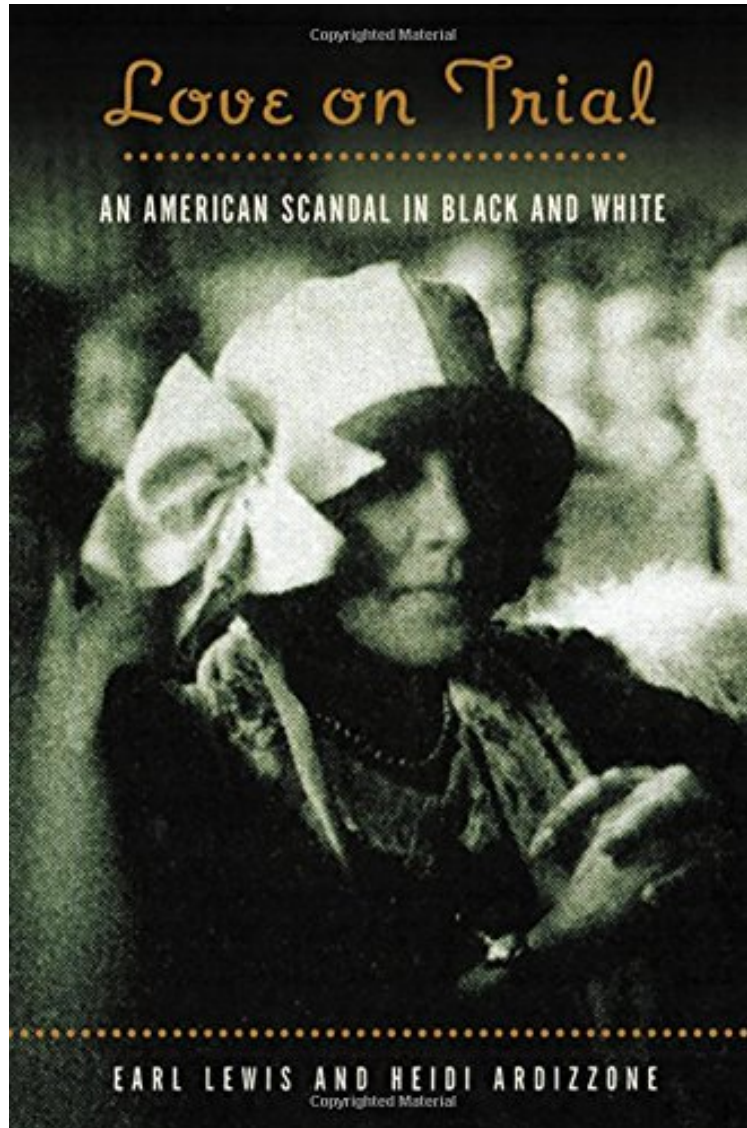


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Love on Trial: An American Scandal in Black and White

Heidi Ardizzone Ph.D., Earl Lewis Ph.D.
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Heidi Ardizzone Ph.D., Earl Lewis Ph.D. : **Love on Trial: An American Scandal in Black and White** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Love on Trial: An American Scandal in Black and White:

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God's Child This book is an excellent historical account of the Rhinelander case. I was not even aware of this case but this book brought it to life for me! It was an extremely interesting historical lesson. The authors' account of the trial was very well done. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Nancy Booker Incredible totally fascinating

"Too important to be ignored....A fascinating look at America's obsession with race, pride, and privilege." Essence
When Alice Jones, a former nanny, married Leonard Rhinelander in 1924, she became the first black woman to be listed in the Social Register as a member of one of New York's wealthiest families. Once news of the marriage became public, a scandal of race, class, and sex gripped the nation and forced the couple into an annulment trial. "A compelling read." Boston Globe "This is a great story....Earl Lewis and Heidi Ardizzone tell it very well." Chicago Tribune

From Publishers Weekly While modern readers may not be familiar with the notorious Rhinelander trial of 1924, Lewis (dean of graduate studies at the University of Michigan) and Ardizzone (visiting assistant professor at the University of Notre Dame) offer a detailed account of the various people and complex issues that made it sensational. Young, white and a member of New York society, Leonard Rhinelander spent some three years courting working-class Alice Jones. After the wedding and a few nights of marital bliss at Jones's parents' home, young Lenny sued to have his marriage annulled, claiming he didn't know Alice wasn't white. In fact, Alice's mother was white; her father was an Englishman the son of a white woman and an unidentified man who may have been Indian who never entertained the question of his race. While Alice's family never consciously tried to "pass" for white, they lived in a sort of racial limbo, letting their social status define them. It was left to an upstate New York judge and jury to determine whether Alice was "white," "colored" or "Negro" terms not clearly defined but certainly hotly debated in 1920s America. In addition to being a legal quagmire, the Rhinelander trial unleashed a Pandora's box of morality questions (in the end, it seems neither premarital sex or interracial sex was as scandalous as cross-class marriage). Although not graceful writers, Lewis and Ardizzone cleverly build their narrative on the progression of the trial, careful not to foreshadow the verdict. Small photo insets give a scrapbook-look to this dense but fascinating volume. (May) Forecast: If Norton's marketing effectively reaches the core academic audience for this book and jump-starts it through word of mouth, students of African-American and women's studies will find this an engrossing read as will historians of many stripes despite its clunky prose. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal First published as a scholarly article and later reorganized and rewritten, this work results from a collaboration between Lewis (history, African American studies, Univ. of Michigan) and Ardizzone, his former graduate student. The authors researched the events surrounding the 1925 annulment trial in a Westchester County courtroom involving Leonard Rhinelander, son of a privileged, aristocratic New York family, who married Alice Jones, a beautiful working-class woman of mixed-race ancestry. Pressured to end the marriage, young Rhinelander claimed that Jones had misrepresented her race. Using dozens of American newspapers as primary sources, the authors explore racial ambiguity during a period of stiffening segregation policy. At times, the text is repetitive or bloated with conjecture, dragging out the undoubtedly painful scandal like the newspaper coverage of the day. Those accounts described Jones as dusky, octoroon, quadroon, colored, Negro, mulatto, and black, distinctions that faded with the pursuit of palpable civil rights decades later. An intriguing story; recommended for public and academic libraries. Elaine Machleder, Bronx, NY Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Lewis and Ardizzone's compelling account of an interracial marriage scandal in the 1920s touches many current themes of racial anguish. Wealthy socialite Leonard Rhinelander married Alice Jones, a former nanny of mixed racial heritage, and set off a firestorm of legal and social examination of class, racial, and sexual issues. Pressed by his father to seek an annulment, Rhinelander filed suit against Jones, charging she had deceived him about her race. She and her family bravely fought subsequent scrutiny and the humiliation heaped on them as their racial heritage was dissected and their status decided. Drawing on court records and newspaper accounts, Lewis and Ardizzone re-create the trial and examine class and racial restrictions of the time. Both the black and the white press raised issues regarding interracial relationships and marriage and the nature of race. While astutely analyzing Jazz Age sensibilities, Lewis and Ardizzone relate them to today's racial and social climate, with its growing numbers of mixed-race marriages and children. Absorbing reading for those interested in social and racial issues. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved