



The Crime of the Century

Hal Higdon

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Among the criminal celebrities of Prohibition-era Chicago, not even Al Capone was more notorious than two well-educated and highly intelligent Jewish boys from wealthy South Side families. In a meticulously planned murder scheme disguised as a kidnapping, Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb chose fourteen-year-old Bobby Franks at random as their victim, abandoning his crumpled body in a culvert before his parents had a chance to respond to the ransom demand. Revealing secret testimony and raising questions that have gone unanswered for decades, Hal Higdon separates fact from myth as he unravels the crime, the investigation, and the trial, in which Leopold and Loeb were defended by the era's most famous attorney, Clarence Darrow. Higdon's razor sharp account of their chilling act, their celebrity, and their ultimate emergence as folk heroes resonates unnervingly in our own violent time. "The best book on this topic," says Pepperdine History and Law professor Edward J. Larson.

"Hal Higdon has done an outstanding job of putting the Leopold-Loeb case together and keeping the tension mounting. The case continues to mount in significance as the harbinger of the random murder syndrome of our century."

--MEYER LEVIN, author of *Compulsion*

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