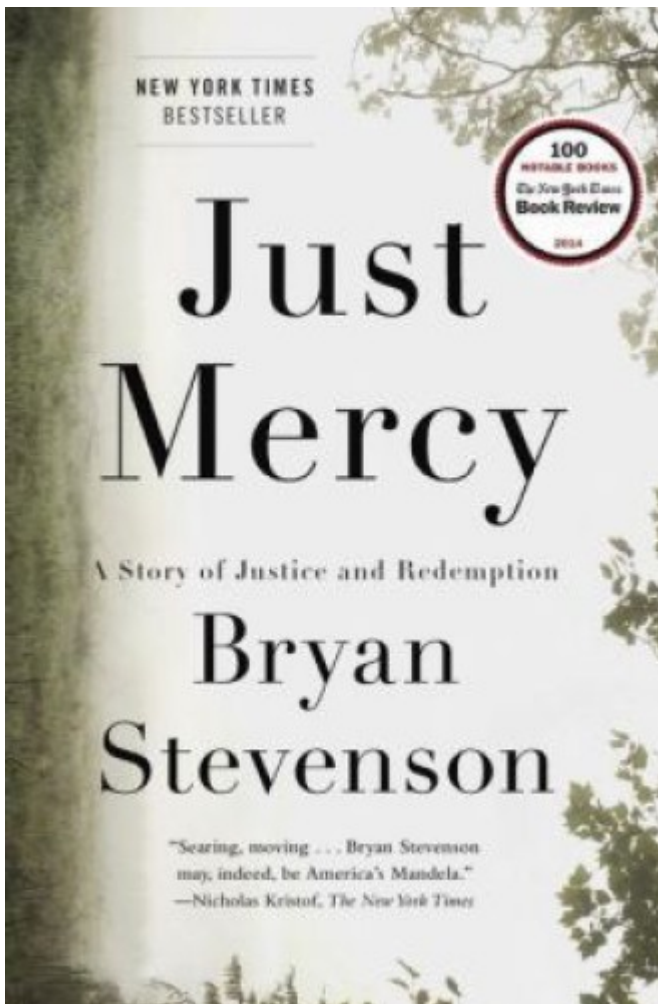


Balance the scales

by [Leah Gunning Francis](#) in the [October 12, 2016](#) issue

In Review



Just Mercy

by Bryan Stevenson
Spiegel and Grau

I urge officials to read Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* because we can no longer pretend that the scales of justice in America are fair and balanced. The data on incarceration show disparities along the lines of race and class. But *Just Mercy* is

more than a data report. It takes us into the lives of people unfairly treated at every stage of the criminal justice system. Stevenson issues a clarion call for us to do something about them.

The United States is having its largest prison boom ever. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Justice, more than 6 million people are jailed or on parole. This is sinful. We must take the profit margin out of prisons and put an end to the profiteering off selective human suffering. We need elected officials to pass legislation that upholds the constitutional rights of all of our citizens and corrects the disparities in terms of race and class. We must end the death penalty and its inhumane practices. These corrective actions open the door for the emergence of liberty and justice for all.

As this election season comes to a close, we are challenged to ask ourselves “What kind of country do we want to be?” and “What kind of world do we want to give our children?” The steps we take today can be toward justice and freedom—or they can be toward injustice and dehumanization.

Read all of the responses to "A book I'd like my elected officials to read" [here](#).