



# Summary Justice

A Lynching in College Town

## Pitch Deck

Historical Non-Fiction Feature

Doug Hunt & Joe Rufo



*In 1923, Columbia was the seat of higher education in Missouri, but after a white girl was raped, the town lost its mind and its morality when thousands of people took revenge and lynched an innocent black man before trial. Could the town regain its reputation by convicting the ringleaders?*

# Summary Justice

A Lynching in College Town

- “Rosewood” meets “Marshall”
- “North by Northwest” meets “To Kill a Mockingbird”
- “Mississippi Burning” meets “A Time to Kill”

Broadway. Columbia, Mo.



Historical Drama, 120 min

# James T. Scott

*James T. Scott was a newly re-married father of three children living very close to his mother in Columbia, Missouri in 1923. He was a veteran of WW I, employed as a janitor at Missouri University in Columbia, the owner of one of few cars in the town and a well-respected member of the segregated black community. His wife was employed as a school teacher.*

# ACT I

*Scott is incredulous when he is falsely accused – and indicted – for the rape of a young white girl. His pastor helps him find legal counsel. The local newspaper panders to the racially charged community and calls for “summary justice” in the name of saving taxpayers the cost of a trial. Some townspeople – led by a former city councilor, George Barkwell – take the newspaper’s cue and begin to plot an assault on the county jail in order to abduct Scott and kill him. The mayor is warned in advance, but does nothing.*

# ACT II

*George Vaughn from the NAACP arrives in Columbia to help in Scott's defense. Ollie Watson – jailed with Scott for a different rape – admits to Scott that he raped the young white girl. The Sheriff ignores warning signs and the mob stages an assault on the jail. Six armed lawmen back down and Scott is taken.*

*Scott is marched twelve blocks to Stewart Bridge. Hermann Almstedt – the rape victim's father – pleads with the mob to spare Scott's life. Ignoring him, Scott is lynched from the bridge. Scott's wife and mother are shocked. The mob leaders are jailed but immediately bailed out. The County Prosecutor discovers evidence that shows Scott may have been innocent. The rape victim identifies Ollie Watson as her attacker.*

# ACT III

*The Prosecutor apologizes to Scott's wife and mother and promises to convict the mob ringleaders. It takes days to find a jury that does not believe in mob law. George Barkwell's defense team puts Scott on trial. A newspaper reporter identifies Barkwell as the mob leader who killed Scott. The defense close cautions the jury not to throw stones unless they are without fault. It takes eleven minutes to find the defendant not guilty. Summaries of how key characters lived in the aftermath.*

# James T. Scott

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Age: 37

Gender: Male

Race: African American

Occupation: Janitor

- Married with custody of two of his three children
- Accused (by mistaken identity) and indicted for raping a young white girl
- Abducted from his jail cell by a mob of thousands
- Marched through the streets and lynched from Stewart Bridge

Scott has built a stable and happy life in Columbia, but all that is shattered when he is mis-identified by a white teenage girl as her rapist. Indicted and then vilified in the press, anger soars within the town's white community. Scott is now the target of a plot to abduct him from the county jail, then kill him. His cellmate confesses his involvement to Scott, but it's too late. Hours later Scott is lynched from Stewart Bridge, the victim of mistaken identity, irresponsible newspaper reporting and a frenzied mob hell-bent on revenge.

# Regina Almstedt

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Age: 14

Gender: Female

Race: Caucasian American

Occupation: High School Student

- Daughter of university German Professor
- Victim of rape by Ollie Watson on April 20, 1923
- Wrongfully identified James Scott resulting in his lynching
- Later identified Watson, but he was never charged

Almstedt's bucolic life in Columbia is shattered on sunny April afternoon in 1923. She is raped by a black man – perhaps the first one she has ever seen up close. Afterwards everything is a blur; the interview, the identification, the subsequent meetings. As events re-play over and over in her head, she becomes aware that her initial certainty in identifying Scott may have been wrong. Given another chance, she sets the record straight but realizes that her initial mis-identification had grave consequences.



# D.A. Ruby Hulen

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Age: 32

Gender: Male

Race: Caucasian American

Occupation: Boone County District Attorney

- Indicted James Scott for the rape of Regina Almstedt
- One of six armed men who did not act to prevent mob from abducting Scott
- Indicted and unsuccessfully tried George Barkwell for murdering Scott
- Committed suicide thirty years later

A passive, “weak stick” in the eyes of some within Columbia, Ruby Hulen is determined to be effective. He relies on Police Chief Rowland’s investigating techniques, trusting them more than his own. If Rowland says Scott is guilty, then he is. He’s not prepared to put his life on the line to defend a prisoner in the County’s custody, and as a result, Scott is murdered. He later determines that Scott was likely innocent – a faulty investigation that he approved. Now his only salvation is to convict George Barkwell for Scott’s murder.



# George Barkwell

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Age: 48

Gender: Male

Race: Caucasian American

Occupation: Civil Contractor

- Former Columbia City Councilman
- Leader of the mob that lynched James Scott
- Acted believing “men of sound judgement” wanted Scott lynched
- Tried and found not guilty of first-degree murder

George Barkwell is an alpha male. He runs his construction and coal & feed companies with an assist from his daughter. He misses his deceased wife and younger daughter. He knows how town government works and he has many friends throughout Columbia as well. He has their back and they have his. He considers the Tribune’s “Summary Justice” story as a call to action for white men to defend their women from the negro “brutes.” Without regard for consequences he organizes the mob then supervises Scott’s lynching.



# Theme: Racial Justice

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Summary Justice is grounded in prejudice. At every step the white people in power shortchanged the person of color when he needed their help the most:

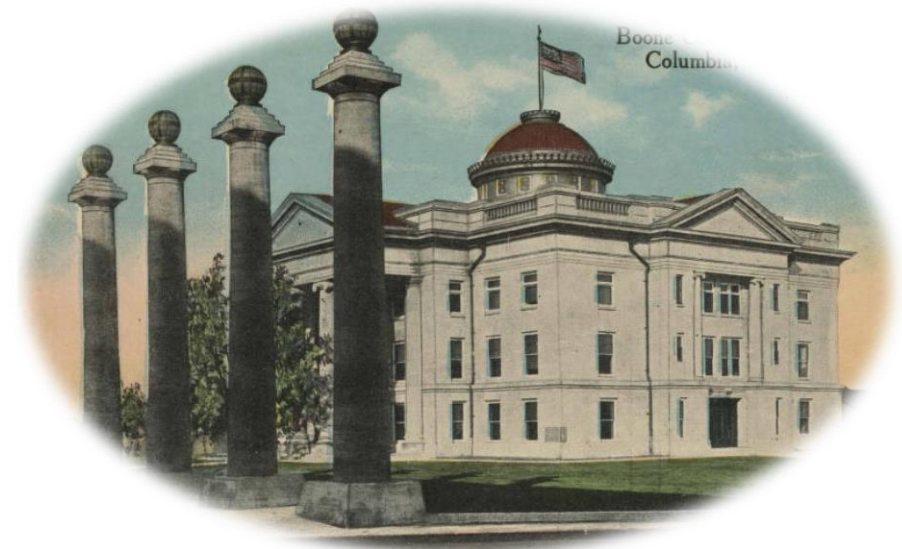
- The identification process was flawed, therefore
- The investigation was flawed, therefore
- The indictment was without merit
- The jail keepers were inept and uncaring
- The Sheriff was gullible and unprofessional
- Barkwell's judge allowed a poor jury to be seated
- D.A. Hulen did not seek a change of venue
- The jury was very obviously flawed



# Location: Columbia, MO

Much of the architecture from 1921 still exists in Columbia:

- Court Square still has the pillars and the courthouse
- The Baptist Church is still on Broadway and Fourth Streets
- The University has increased its footprint
- Cherry Street is still a cobblestone street
- Scott is buried in the shadow of the smokestack near where the Stewart Bridge was



# Look & Feel

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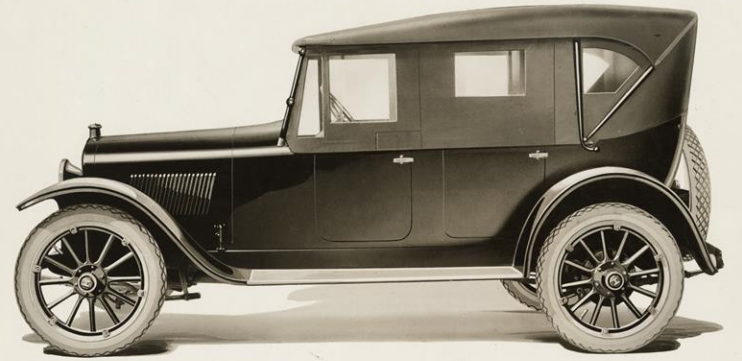


**Mizzou Parties in 1922 & 1923**



# Look & Feel

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# Look & Feel

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# Look & Feel



# Look & Feel

Busy day on Broadway, Columbia, Mo.

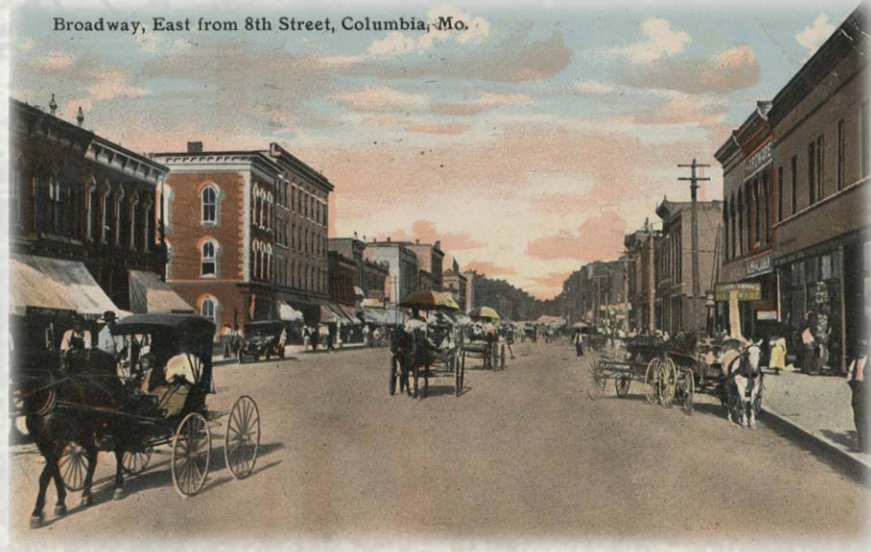


Spent the summer with  
Lester (Mrs. 1844) in Columbia  
July 30<sup>th</sup> 1909



BROADWAY COLUMBIA, MISSOURI.

Broadway, East from 8th Street, Columbia, Mo.



Broadway. Columbia, Mo.



# Contact

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***Thank You!***