No Matter How Loud I Shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court Study Guide

No Matter How Loud I Shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court by Edward Humes

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

No Matter How Loud I Shout, written by Pulitzer-Prize winner Edward Humes, concerns the state of the juvenile justice system in the United States, specifically in LA County, in the mid-1990s. Humes served as a counselor and writing teacher for a number of juvenile delinquents, seven of whom he tracks throughout one year in the justice system in Los Angeles, Inglewood and Pomona California.

What is more striking about the book is not merely the difficult lives and troubles of the seven kids that Humes tracks but the terrible combination of institutional failure and neglect and public overreaction that makes nothing better for public safety, for victims and for perpetrators. Throughout the book, Humes documents failure after failure, illustrated by particular cases of failure.

Humes is most involved in the juvenile court of Judge Roosevelt Dorn, whose controversial ideas about how to run juvenile cases cause serious conflicts between his court, the district attorney's office and the public defender's department. Many juveniles are sent directly to adult court rather than being tried as juveniles. However, Dorn resists this policy, instead de facto bringing back "status offenses" which allows him to remove high-risk children from their homes and put them into delinquent camps, juvenile detention facilities and group homes. Dorn's methods, however, are erratic and lead him to be "exiled" to adult court for a year.

Peggy Beckstrand, the deputy district attorney, is also a major part of the story. She represents a harsher perspective, seeking to get justice for victims and often believing that certain children are irredeemable. While Beckstrand and Dorn often butt heads, her opposite philosophically is Sister Janet, who never gives up on any child, no matter how vicious and guilty. The book also focuses on probation officer, Sharon Stegall, who is responsible for one of the seven juveniles, Carla James.

Political controversy surrounds all of the policies in the juvenile justice system. In the conservative resurgence of the mid-nineties, a number of "get-tough" laws and regulations are passed in California that send a number of juveniles to adult court that didn't deserve it. However, the laws were prompted in part by another one of the juveniles, Ronald Duncan, a sociopath who brutally murdered two of his co-workers and showed no remorse.

Because he was nine days shy of sixteen, he could not be tried in adult court and would leave the juvenile justice system at twenty-five, free as any other citizen. Duncan's case is covered in detail and Beckstrand struggles to convict him. The book also occurs against the backdrop of a widely publicized study that showed that the juvenile justice system seems to have been wholly ineffectively.

The juvenile justice system seems to have treated the seven kids, Carla James, George Trevino, Ronald Duncan, Geri Vance, John Sloan, Andre and Elias Elizando, completely

randomly. It saved three of them, failed to properly punish the one apparently nonredeemable kid, and failed the rest.

Intake, Prologue, Two Boys, Thirty Years, and Other Numbers

Intake, Prologue, Two Boys, Thirty Years, and Other Numbers Summary and Analysis

In the Old Wing of the Central Lockup in the Upper Sonoran Desert, officers at juvenile hall engage in their usual intakes of juvenile delinquents. The deposits occur at night and following a brief interview with staff, officers make recommendations for how certain infractions are to be treated. These officials have a great power to decide who is innocent and who is guilty, such as Geri Vance, a would-be motel robber who would probably spend life in prison without parole because he accompanied Ronald Duncan, who killed someone, who would receive no more than eight years in jail due to the juvenile court system.

Edward Humes, the author, has both Geri and Ronald in his group therapy session with other boys, one of whom is named Elias. Elias grew up in a rough neighborhood and committed crimes of increasing severity. In a poem, he notes that people are supposed to fear him and others like him. He delivered his lines stoically and began to resonate emotionally with the others. He noted that probation was a joke; he carried a gun and did drugs while on probation.

Even the boot camps had recruitment for gangs. Elias's best friend had died in his arms and he was separated from his baby girl and tried as an adult. He would probably be in jail his entire life. He tells Humes that nothing can change him from without; he can only change himself and he let himself be changed by his baby girl. God, though, had made him so that he could do terrible things.

Gerald Francis Gault found himself at the Gila Country Detention Center in the Upper Sonoran Desert in the mid-1960s. He had made a lewd phone call to a Mrs. Cook who had called the police. The sheriff hauled the fifteen year old to jail and he was declared a juvenile delinquent with no explanation of his rights, no evidence of his guilt and branded "habitually immoral" by the judge. He received a six year sentence with no attorney. Three years later, the Supreme Court ordered the creation of the juvenile court system because children shouldn't be convicted without evidence.

And so in 1967, Gerry Gault's case changed everything while courts were integrated with the system. Thirty years later the system has not recovered. Humes introduces the reader to Richard "Shorty" Perez, a sixteen year old boy, who finds himself in the same court thirty years later. He has committed a murder and can do nothing about it. Humes reviews the history of crimes he committed, growing in severity over time. He was being tried for murdering a kid eating a burrito.

Unbeknownst to Richard, a massive LA social project was monitoring his case along with 11,000 other children in juvenile hall. They found that 57% of those in the system go straight immediately, 27% get arrested a few more times and then straighten-up, but 16% commit four or more crimes and become chronic offenders. Shockingly, these were the same rates of recidivism that existed prior to the juvenile system and the student concluded the juvenile hall had no effect on crime.

The study rocked the system and created three groups—those who wanted to end the juvenile court system, those who wanted to reform it so that children could continue to be treated different, and a third group in power who only cared about preserving bureaucracy. Therefore, in 1994, the juvenile justice system was in turmoil and at war with itself.

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapters 1, January 1994 and Chapter 2, Home Girl

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapters 1, January 1994 and Chapter 2, Home Girl Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1 opens at LA County Superior Court, Juvenile Division in Inglewood, California. The deputy district attorney, Peggy Beckstrand, tells the author that the first thing to learn about the system in Inglewood is that nothing works. A court case is about to begin and the study showing that juvenile detention doesn't work is in the air. In many of these court cases it is hard to tell who wins, if anyone does. Inglewood is a poor community with a few wealth lawyers and businessmen. The town is very racially and economically segregated.

Fear is a huge part of the juvenile justice system, particularly given the huge increase in juvenile crime since the 1970s. Confusion is commonplace as well because of the huge number of cases and facilities inadequate to handle them. Even the building is dilapidated. A new judge had begun his tenure as the new supervising judge, Roosevelt Dorn. Beckstrand meets with him to assess what he will be like to work with. Dorn is a tough judge and serves as a minister on Sundays. He tries to intimidate the youth in his courtroom into giving up crime but Beckstrand doesn't think it works.

Beckstrand is eager to try the Ronald Duncan case. His murder is infamous and Beckstrand is disgusted with him. Kids like Ronald are entitled to unlimited delays in the juvenile justice system and Beckstrand can't find her start witness. Ronald, along with the other young delinquents, doesn't seem to care about anything.

Chapter 2 covers the sad case of Carla James, a smart young girl who gets good grades, and volunteers her time at school. Lately, however, she had been staying up late at night and her grades were slipping. In fact, she had a gun and another life and engaged in a drive-by shooting, shocking her family and her counselor. Carla's Parole Officer, Sharon Stegall, notes that more and more cases like Carla's are coming up, young girls from good families who have no excuse for lives of crime. Carla didn't hit anyone, though, so she may have another chance.

Carla started lying to her parents at thirteen. She was a daddy's girl but he had died when Carla was nine. Carla was withdrawn and resented her family for moving on, but his death was hardly an excuse because she didn't start to slip until four years after her father died. Her body stopped looking like a boy's and so it was harder to be "one of the guys" and her mother remarried and the second husband expected to be treated like a father.

Carla was experiencing more than mere teen angst, however. She went and got "jumped in" the Tepa gang and even fought boys to prove herself and win respect. She

quickly became a popular leader because she was smart and quick. She loved the sense of loyalty and the clarity of their moral code. So when a friend was shot, she took it upon herself to get revenge and do a drive-by. Carla found it thrilling.

Juvenile Hall reined kids like Carla in early in previous years through "Status offenses," or offenses that wouldn't qualify as crimes for adults but that indicated likely criminal behavior in the future for kids. Humes clearly seems to prefer this system. In Hume's day, parents couldn't get help for their children unless they have already become criminals. By then it is too late; the laws have become toothless.

Carla had been arrested several other times but had always gotten out of the system. She engaged in another drive-by but was a model inmate. While she was convicted of theft and assault and was threatened with a severe sentence, Judge Polinsky "saw potential" in her and gave her an easy year at Camp Resnick. At Camp Resnick, Carla used her charm to impress the staff. When she returned, she was handed over to her PO, Sharon Stegall. Carla tried to play Stegall and Stegall saw through it, giving her a week. However, Carla still surprised her, linking back up with her gang and coming up missing a week later.

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapters 3, Nine Days to Manhood, Chapter 4, Judge Dorn

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapters 3, Nine Days to Manhood, Chapter 4, Judge Dorn Summary and Analysis

Chapter 3 begins with Duncan walking free and in high spirits back with the other boys in juvenile detention. He is smiling, laughing and trying to impress the other boys by boasting. Geri thinks he's being stupid but Duncan says he can't be sent to prison. Geri can, however, and feels the injustice of it all. However, when Beckstrand saw Duncan, she was desperate to convict him. She had seen the carnage he had caused shooting two people who he said that he loved in the back of the head with a double-barreled shotgun.

Peggy sees Duncan lying to his parents and feels bad for them. She wonders what they will think when she pulls out the evidence and exposes his lies. Duncan was never abused or deprived; he had no excuse but because he committed a murder nine days before he turned sixteen, he couldn't be tried as an adult. It was arbitrary and Ronald had become a rallying cry for reform as a result. Peggy is furious that Duncan has all the legal tools available to him of any adult.

Peggy hates her job. She used to work sex crimes zealously and recalls a case of a boy named Peter who had been molested by his father. She had given him the strength to testify against his father who blew kisses at him during the trial. However, Peter's father got a new attorney who got him a new trial and the case was dismissed. Peter's father was free and Peter was shipped off into the child welfare system.

In another case, a young Korean boy, John Sloan, can be tried as an adult and this policy will lead Peggy to clash with Judge Dorn, a minister who tries to rescue kids.

In Chapter 4, Humes begins by explaining how Geri's parents had lived by ripping people off. They smokes weed and had sex in front of him. Geri Vance was bright, sixteen and had been ordered by his father to fondle a prostitute at age six. When his mother caught him playing with a gun and smoking marijuana like his father, she beat him until he bled. He also saw his mother try to kill his father for having sex with a prostitute in their bed.

The gun wasn't loaded and then Geri's father savagely beat his mother while the prostitute giggled. Geri and his mother left and Geri watched his younger brother Joachim. At eight or nine, Geri's mother went to jail and he had been in the system ever

sense. However, a black kid in Pomona won't get off due to that past. His lawyer told him he was screwed though he was pronounced unfit for trial and detained in jail. Geri mentions that he wishes he could have had Judge Dorn.

When Dorn arrived in the courthouse, he demanded that things change and displayed a tough image. He quickly settled into court ritual, though, running through thirty or so cases a day. Humes discusses some of the cases, noting that Gault had changed the juvenile hall system into a formal court of law focused on technicalities rather than child welfare and the protection of society. He notes that "Pipe Kid" who had beaten another kid who bullied him was a pipe and hit the teacher when he tried to restrain him. Pipe Kid, Humes predicts, will be shipped off into the system, become angry with it and commit crime. Time is his enemy.

Dorn combines compassion and harshness and is unpopular in different circles for both. His reputation for compassion led desperate parents from all over LA county to see him. He tried vigorously to prevent children from being sent to prison. Dorn was a teacher and a pastor at one of the oldest and largest black churches in LA. He was also a philanthropist who had grown up poor and highly valued education and determination. Dorn sees himself as a prophet for children and Peggy disagrees.

Returning to John Sloan, Peggy and Dorn will clash at his fitness hearing. All of Sloan's family showed up. The system pits the goal of fitness against the view it embodies that there are no "bad kids." Ultimately the law constrains the range of Dorn's leniency; Sloan will almost certainly be sent to prison because of it.

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapter 5, Punks, Chapter 6, Raised by the State

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapter 5, Punks, Chapter 6, Raised by the State Summary and Analysis

Luis Santos, known as "Cartoon" will be tried as an adult and left to fend for himself at sixteen with a bunch of grown men. Before he was hauled off, he read his story to Humes's group. One night, Cartoon was trying to express his feelings to a girl, Tiny, but his friend, Payaso, collected him to go on a robbery. When they broke into the house, the men got Cartoon's gun and beat him. They tried to kill him but the rifle wouldn't go off, so they called the police. Luis had been in a gang since he was eleven and now seventeen. He would be tried as an adult.

The evidence before Dorn is clear. John Sloan had met Richard to steal a car. They thought they had a good plan but things went wrong.

John's parents were traditional and self made, but they had to place John in a school with racial grouping. John joined a gang for protection and made good grades. Richard took him under his wing and they went to steal a car. When they opened his wallet and saw a badge they thought they were robbing a car and ran.

Dorn considered the evidence but bent the law to get John to be tried as a juvenile. Joseph Guitierrez, the victim, had chased the boys down with a gun and had the police pick them up in his safe neighborhood. His neighbors thought he was a hero but Dorn thought his action was inappropriate. The defense attorney played on Dorn's heartstrings and Dorn responded as expected. The prosecutor protests that Dorn isn't following the law but Dorn doesn't care.

Humes admits that Dorn's reasoning was sensible and compassionate but his opinions had been slapped down on appeal before. After ruling that Sloan would be tried as a juvenile, Dorn wouldn't look at Guitierrez. Beckstrand was furious and knew an appeal wouldn't go well. A war between the DA's office and the juvenile court system had begun.

Chapter 6 introduces George Trevino, a foster or "300" kid. He was a child of the state and it made him what he was. A smart, kind boy, he was abandoned by his mother and was shipped from house to house in the foster system. After many delays his aunt and uncle got a hold of him but not before the system could damage him.

And tragically, George's uncle was a drug dealer and an addict who eventually died of an overdose. This led the aunt to drugs and so George joined a gang for family. An older gang member helped him learn the ropes of the gang and took him on a robbery where George was the driver.

George went from a child in danger to a dangerous child and there are 3000 kids a year like him in the system. Life went downhill for George from there and his record as a 300 kid is kept confidential so everyone assumes he is just a bad kid. While on probation, George ran away and Kathy Reveles, a mother of his friend, took him in.

Kathy was kind and supportive but when a member of her household burglarized a home, a stolen VCR was found in George's room. The system decided Reveles was a bad influence—but she was all he had. George was sent to another group home, furious and hysterical. He hated it and ran away back to his old gang turf. He then went on another robbery as a driver. After the robbery went south, George was found at Kathy's house.

At the trial, George is shifting in his seat. No parents are there for him. He was a victim of the system and sobbed with Kathy. Commissioner Jones, the presiding judicial official, would have ordinarily let him be tried as a juvenile but she was tightly constrained by the law and prosecutors who had boxed her in to prevent her nature liberal tendencies to come out. Jewell Jones was force to take a hard line and George was tried as an adult.

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapter 7, War, Chapter 8, Juggling Act

Part 1, We're Drowning, Chapter 7, War, Chapter 8, Juggling Act Summary and Analysis

In the wake of the LA earthquake, the Mexican Mafia orders a truce with all the other gangs but they were busy assembling an army. Police patrols step up and they find Carla James under an alias, Sylvia Mercado. Sharon, her PO, nails her and after a few weeks, Humes catches up with her and talks to her. Carla is more honest and talks about the gang being tied to honor and loyalty. She denies that a drive-by is murder because you don't see what happens.

Dorn starts to conflict with Public Defenders more and more. He prepares to publicly announce a plan for reforming the juvenile justice system. Dorn starts to upbraid various attorneys for letting things slide, like not bringing defendants to trial.

Dorn thinks that because the juvenile system catches kids early that it is the most important part of the justice system and that the country has it priorities backward. In a public presentation, he dismisses the 16% study and wants to prevent making the juvenile system harsher. He wants to bring back status offenses in a pilot project to get kids early. Suddenly Dorn is all over the news. However, the juvenile DAs are already overburdened. Some serious criminals have their cases dismisses due to procedural errors and Dorn decides to focus his ire on Peggy Beckstrand.

In Chapter 8, Peggy is in trouble but she is too focused on preparing obsessively for the Ronald Duncan trial. Things are crazy in her office and disorganized. Peggy is stressed. She meets with Dorn but is able to defuse his anger. Her main witness against Duncan, Marvin, has decayed somewhat morally in the year since the murder.

Peggy almost quit and had to face a flood of paperwork because no one else would take care of it. When she sees a homeless man dying of hunger on the front steps of the courthouse, she breaks down in tears at the thought of him dying in a box on the street. She then looks at the crime scene photos to remind her of her sense of purpose and deleted her resignation letter.

The next day Peggy is nervous at the Duncan hearing, as she hadn't tried a case in awhile. Charles Scarlett, one of LA's top civil rights attorneys, was senior judge and resisted get-tough policies. Duncan's attorney, Jason Gueringer, was popular in the courthouse and could charm juries. Legal maneuvering was rare in the juvenile system, Humes notes. So the trial is expected to go by the books. A crowd forms in the courtroom and Duncan emerges, giggling and smiling, which chills Peggy. The mother and father look at Peggy with hatred; they think that Ronald is innocent and that the court is racism.

Next Peggy unpacks the evidence layer by layer, by the book; Humes reviews the steps one by one. She has a scene-setting witness, the attending officers, photos of the bodies on a poster board and afterward Scarlett couldn't look at Duncan. Others testify to the blood on Duncan's book bag, pants and so on.

Marvin, while dressed poorly, was still soft-spoken and was convincing on the stand. He testifies that Duncan confessed the crime to him which was devastating evidence and matched the physical evidence. Scarlett appeared disinterested nonetheless. Ronald's lawyer tried to show that Ronald was just boasting and Marvin was tricked into going along with it. At that point, Scarlett was interested.

Before the end of the day the matter of Duncan's confession is raised. Duncan's lawyer says it was coerced because the police mentioned that they would take the death penalty off the table if he confessed. On the tape, Ronald initially denied the killing but eventually confesses and it looked bad.

On the witness stand, Peggy showed that Ronald was a perpetual liar and Ronald became frustrated. Peggy caught Ronald saying the death penalty was only mentioned once on in the interview and that was mentioned on the tape, showing there was no coercion though Scarlett remained unconvinced. Peggy pushed, but the judge lost interest.

However, Scarlett is known for holding the police to a high standard and rules out the confession. At the recess, Peggy congratulates the defense and decides to give immunity to Jason, the getaway driver. The defense protests.

Jason is now key to Peggy's defense and had the relevant information needed to convict him. Jason had always stuck to his story. Peggy picked him up from the airport. That night, Jason called and wanted to talk.

The next morning, Jason admits that he was going to commit a robbery with Duncan but hadn't gone. He was in on it and was waiting for Duncan. Peggy felt awful; in her zeal to convict Duncan she gave an accomplice his freedom. She tried to comfort herself with the fact that Duncan was much worse, but she still hated her job and herself.

Part 2, Softening Up, Chapter 9, The Big Fix, Chapter 10, Sister Janet

Part 2, Softening Up, Chapter 9, The Big Fix, Chapter 10, Sister Janet Summary and Analysis

Andre, a gang kid, has found himself reformed by being compelled to help the mentally handicapped at the Rosewood School. Helping a handicapped girl named Miriam helped him to reform. Teachers in the area had put the program together all by themselves.

Everyone now wanted to be a reformer. First there was Judge Dorn, then the governor and finally DA Gil Garcetti, famous for the OJ trial, the Menendez boys and so on. He talked to many of the juveniles and realized they knew how to game the system. When he asked Peggy Beckstrand what he reform ideas were, she suggested lowering the fitness age, altering the burden of proof, and a two-tier system where murder is treated different.

Another attorney at the same meeting, Jim Hickey, argues that the office should address root problems as well. Beckstrand and others oppose him and Humes's comments that their disagreement crystallizes the debate over what to do with the juvenile justice system.

The Los Padrinos Branch of the LA Juvenile Court was different and less scary. There Hickey cries with parents and he still believes kids are salvageable, kids like Andre at Rosewood that he believes can be "softened up." The Rosewood school gets real results by imposing responsibilities on kids who never had them before. Though once the kids are placed in their old situations their bad behavior returns. For whatever reason, people won't replicate the model.

Roy Sukoda, a former probation officer, has tried to figure out how to predict who will be a member of the class of 16% of delinquents that so burden the juvenile justice system. He performed a study and concluded what everyone knew: the profile of the "16 percenter" was poor grades, a single-parent home, drugs and alcohol use, bad behavior and living in poverty.

However, Sukoda needed a foolproof method of identification and because the system would latch on to a disproportionate amount minorities it would appear un PC. And in any event, LA County was going broke and cut social programs and prevention programs.

In Chapter 10, Elias found himself in solitary after a fight broke out. A sixty-three-year-old nun, Sister Janet, visits him and other kids in solitary. Elias tells his story and broke

down into tears. He wanted to take a plea bargain but he couldn't confess to a murder he didn't commit in front of his family.

Sister Janet is passionate for his case. She even writes screen plays about the kids to get their message out. Janet pleads to not have Elias tried as an adult against the mother of the victim College Mansbridge, who later says she can't forgive Janet. When the kids are sentences, Janet often writes letters on their behalf if for no other reason than to know someone cares about them.

In 1994, Peter Wilson is the Republican running for governor and has decided to try to defeat his opponent, Kathleen Brown, by focusing on law and order issues. At a press conference, Wilson has several mothers of victims speak on behalf of making the juvenile system harsher and sending more kids to adult court. These women show why the Duncan case has raised so much anger but Humes knows that Wilson's program won't stop crime and will only put more fourteen-year-old boys in prison.

Sister Janet found her way to the conference and asked why Wilson wasn't talking more about prevention and one of the mothers agreed. Things became awkward and the governor ended the meeting.

Sister Janet got her start by being put in charge of some gang kids and then was able to draw attention to her cases with the help of a football star, Rosie Greer, who later became a minister. She felt called both to the church as a nun and as a film maker. Eventually she was put in charge of a foster home and learned to distinguish between gang members and criminals. She was determined to show these kids that at least one person in their lives cared about them.

When she found that George's poems had disappeared, she raised such a ruckus that eventually the poems were found. On Geri Vance's case, Janet was able to prod his until then indifferent and hopeless attorney to get him an offer for a reduced sentence. He succeeded with a bargain that would get George a twelve yet max sentence.

Part 2, Softening Up, Chapter 11, Hop, Chapter 12, Judge Dorn's Solution

Part 2, Softening Up, Chapter 11, Hop, Chapter 12, Judge Dorn's Solution Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 11, PO Sharon Stegall hears that one of her parolees, Dondi, has been shot by some Hoover Crips by mistake. She is distraught and in overreaction locks up one of her other parolees, Randy.

In fact, the probation offices in LA County are a mess and are struggling to handle budget cuts and catch rogue Pos. Reports are late as well, but Sharon finds small successes in her work. Some kdis come a long way. However, Dondi has been shot and Carla is in lock-up.

Sharon finds herself in court before Commissioner Polinsky, waiting for Carla's docket to come up. Before Carla comes out, Polinksy handles the case of "Doughnut" who had been involved in Dondi's shooting. The mother wouldn't believe that Doughnut had anything to do with it. Carla comes up next and the judge notes that she has come before the wrong judge that day.

There are four normal options for sentencing, including the harsh California Youth Authority (CYA) and the more moderate HOP. Carla is sent to CYA for 90 days for a psychological examination before final sentencing.

In fact, Geri, Elias and Carla are all at CYA for evaluations. Elias was sentenced to CYA for the first half of his sentence but he disobeyed orders in order to get sent to jail to kill the man who murdered his grandmother. When he told Sister Janet his disappointing story he realized that it was stupid to think he'd end up in the same prison as his grandmother's murderer. Geri, in contrast, gets good reviews and had mixed feelings about his time at CYA. He wants to go to Ventura, where he can get a college degree while in lock-up.

Carla impressed her evaluators at CYA but they sensed she wasn't sincere. Sharson agrees. But Carla was never intimidated at CYA. She is sentenced to the Dorothy Kirby Center, a secure compound where she will spend most of her time in group therapy. She resists Kirby initially but Shabazz, a male social worker, softens her up by showing her the lives of two of those who came through the Center, the successful Claudia and the failure Virginia, who continued gang-banging even after being blinded by bullets.

In Chapter 12, Geri reads more of his autobiography to the group, which enthralls and impresses them. Dorn is implementing his new status offense system. He is harsh to those who disobey and rewards those who obey. His program is initially met with skepticism but interests is startling. The proposal to expand the program was shot

down, however. Further, many were outraged because Dorn assumed arbitrary power that the DA wouldn't block in order to run the program.

Humes then explains two cases of Dorn's solution, one good and one bad. The good case is of a young schizophrenic named Keesha who tries to kill her family with a machete. She got on medication and Dorn sent her to Dorothy Kirby. Keesha is there the same time as Carla. The prosecutor had worked with Dorn and things had gone well.

The bad case came with Christopher Jones, who had been arrested on a minor charge before being transferred to the custody of his aunt and uncle. He was doing very well until he was stopped for a traffic violation and it was discovered that there was a long-standing warrant out for his arrest for running away from his group home the previous year.

Despite Chris's successes, Dorn decided to keep him in juvenile detention, which was improper because he was owed an investigation first. However, Chris's aunt couldn't find a PO in time and Dorn wouldn't release him. Eventually Chris's aunt finds a PO but Dorn still sends him to a short-term camp. Chris missed earning his diploma and will have to start all over academically.

Dorn sees himself as consistent but everyone else sees him as a wildcard. While some see Dorn as a savior, many resent his arbitrariness and some defense lawyers start feeding anecdotal evidence against him to more job-secure, civil-servant public defenders. Both the DA's office and the public defender's office want to challenge Dorn. Eventually, Beckstrand goes to her boss, Higgins, and Higgins has a meeting with Dorn in chambers which calms Dorn down for a time. When he erupts again, however, the public defender's office gets their chance and "papers him," starting a bureaucratic war.

Part 3, A Child's Disposition, Chapter 13, Thirty-One Flavors, Chapter 14, The Dorn Wars

Part 3, A Child's Disposition, Chapter 13, Thirty-One Flavors, Chapter 14, The Dorn Wars Summary and Analysis

Several boys, one with wild hair, commit several of the most brutal murders in LA county's history. The police basically declare martial law in Inglewood to find the killers, which slows the trial of Ronald Duncan. They catch a boy, Hugh, though he might be innocent.

Peggy puts in for a transfer; Duncan will be her last case. Jason gets on the stand with immunity despite being culpable. He tells his story, Cooper challenges him but it doesn't much matter. Jason seems not to care about the killing and Peggy feels as if she made and deal with the devil.

Hugh's family claims he was in Venture and Hugh was only tentatively IDed; the case looks weak and Peggy has to stop Hugh and the boy who accused him, Stuart, from interacting.

Most of the Duncan trial's evidence has finished. More cases come through and Scarlett again expresses his radical view that the court should remove children from dysfunctional homes. Duncan gets on the stand the next day and Cooper asks a legally improper general question that is eventually allowed. Ronald lies through his teeth but there is great distaste on Scarlett's face. Ronald is coming off badly and has no idea. His defense is, in short, that Marvin got it wrong, Jason was the killer and ignore the confession. Scarlett keeps backing away from Ronald.

Closing statements are given and Scarlett immediately agrees with the people that the evidence against Duncan is overwhelming. Peggy was not elated and Duncan was stunned. He is sentenced to the CYA and Scarlett later expresses horror at Duncan's lack of remorse. In any event, he will be free at twenty five. Initially Chuck and Ada's family is grateful to Peggy but after an article is published critical of the immunity agreement with Jason, the family is much less happy. Peggy has no sense of victory and it comes out that Scarlett would have convicted without Jason's testimony anyway.

Chapter 14 begins with the brief story of two kids, Cecil and Danny, sexually molesting a young, mentally handicapped and mildly autistic boy, Joshua. They even forced him to eat their feces and threatened to kill him if he told. However, the judge was forced to conclude that Joshua was an unreliable witness and Cecil and Danny went free.

The public defender's office continues to paper Dorn's office. He must file paper for every single case he sees; but Dorn will not back down and simply escalates the conflict. The head of the public defender's office, Lessem, fights Dorn for being outside of the legal mainstream and only increases the papering. Court becomes a farce, full of confusion and waiting.

Eventually the public defenders can't keep up with Dorn's counter papering of transfer papers. At that time, the DA goes after another judge, Sherill Luke of Pasadena, which temporarily brings down LA county juvenile hall's capacity by 20%. However, Sherill gives in, which takes pressure off the system and helps Dorn. Dorn slowly wins and the paper ends. Nothing is accomplished.

Part 3, Chapter 15, Lost Causes, Chapter 16, The Ins, Chapter 17, The Outs

Part 3, Chapter 15, Lost Causes, Chapter 16, The Ins, Chapter 17, The Outs Summary and Analysis

Chapter 15 opens with a somber writer class. A young new member, Rodrigo "Stranger" Becessar reads a poem before being taken away.

Humes complains that the juvenile justice system combines procedural excess with a lack of consequences. The system fluctuates from being too lax and being too hard. He then introduces Sherry Gold, a talented defense attorney who takes care of her young clients, tries to get them help. She performs her own investigations to help her clients. Humes talks about her case of Leon Jones, who was thought to be guilty until Gold's investigation made it clear he was not.

It becomes clear to Beckstrand that Hugh is not guilty either. He actually had a mental disorder and the witnesses against him were unreliable and later indicated that they doubted they saw him. It also turned out that Hugh's alibi was solid. The police ultimately admitted he wasn't the culprit and the case remains unsolved.

Gold has a young and probably innocent client, Shy Boy, a nice kid with a bad history who got caught up with a violent Hispanic gang, Venice 13. Shy Boy was a getaway driver desperate to please his gang. After a drive-by, the shooters escaped leaving Shy Boy behind. He refused to rat out his friends but Gold was still able to clear him.

Many innocent kids often go to prison and there is no uproar. Some guilty kids even get off without a sentence. Mark Lancaster came from a good home but stabbed a gas station worked while he was high on primo. He was sent to adult court due to get-tough laws but he received a short sentence because his crime was not considered severe there. Humes indicate that the get-tough laws had the opposite of their intended effect.

In Chapter 16, Humes notes that his writing classes changes in composition from time to time. The mood is dark because a probation counselor had been killed; this had never happened since the department was created in 1903. A new kid, Little Criminal, enters the class. Geri is quiet and doesn't read more of his chapters so Humes reads them for him.

At twelve years old, it turns out, Geri was a pretty conscienceless and chilling kid. Humes wonders whether the legal system should take a chance that the bad boy in Geri would return. It also turns out that Geri's little brother had just been killed. Geri's case goes poorly at the courthouse because his lawyer doesn't know of his case or his accomplishments. He is sent back to CYA and Humes figures out that his attorney could

have gotten him a reduced sentence. When confronted, the lawyer admits incompetence.

Over two million kids are arrested ever year in the United States. This "funnel" leads to many dropped cases, in the first stage dropping to 1.5 million. Half are dropped at the next stage of criminal justice and only one in a hundred go to adult court. Of those, 40% of cases are dismissed as too minor, and at the end 330,000 kids have cases that land them in probation, foster homes and detention. Only one in four will face real consequences. So when kids are arrested for violent crimes they only have a 25% chance of paying serious consequences, keeping them, in Humes's term, "on the Outs."

John Sloan's crime was significant but because of his family, private lawyer and Judge Dorn he'll stay out of trouble. In response to challenges, Dorn had streamlined courtroom procedure. He determines that Sloan will be tried as a juvenile. Angela Oh gets him a mild sentence but Dorn is determined to still reform the boy, placing him in a long-term camp that he can work his way out of. Gutierrez, his attempted victim, was shocked.

The chapter ends with Geroge being convicted of robbery. He is packed into the juvenile system and sent to CYA. His attorney never sought more witnesses, although there were many that could have helped George's case. The judge, as a result, got a bad picture of him. At the same time, George won an essay contest but couldn't accept the award because he was incarcerated. When he was sent to prison, while being housed at CYA, he didn't want to see family because he said it would be too hard on him, that it was easier to be alone.

In Chapter 17, Janet Reno comes to LA; Humes finds her an awkward yet awe-inspiring women. She wants more prevention and morality, though she says not all hardliners are wrong. However, locking everyone up isn't the solution.

Juan "Scrappy" Macias leaves the writing class and was conviced in adult court for murder. Another kid, Sniper, running stolen guns for the Asian Mob Assassins, brought about another conflict between the public defenders and Judge Dorn. Duncan has his sentencing deposition. He grinned at the hearing, lied and admitted perjury, but he would still get no serious sentence.

Carla James is at a new school at the South Bay Community Day Center which functions only to keep kids off the street. When Carla leaves she seems to have come a long way. She has changed the way she dressed and Mr. Shabazz sees success because Carla finally took responsibility for her actions and anger.

However, lots of young gangbangers admire her and she might get pulled back in. That said, she claims to have grown bored with risking death and she is only a month away from graduating. She plans to go to community college and study sociology. Sharon stays on her case to prevent her from living two lives again.

Part 4, Epilogue, Chapter 18, A Year Later, Another Day In Court

Part 4, Epilogue, Chapter 18, A Year Later, Another Day In Court Summary and Analysis

Chapter 18 begins a year later. Dorn is still on the bench pushing reform, though the court files of those who come through his court room get thicker every day. After being in adult court "exile" for a year, Dorn returns to a harder job with a shaken system though juvenile crime has leveled off. Fear of the future leads the people to pass laws to limit or eliminate juvenile court jurisdiction all over the country; they want to eliminate cases like Ronald Duncan.

However, Humes argues, no one will be satisfied with the results. Budgets are too small and the LA County Juvenile Courthouse can't even pay to repair its buildings. Many offenders are still being released and social programs aimed at the 16-percenters are being cut.

Peggy Beckstrand transfers to try adult cases, as do many of those who worked for her. She doesn't miss the job. Sharon Stegall is trying to start her own business and stop being a PO. Sherry Gold is looking for a job with an adult law firm because she thinks she can't help the kids anymore.

Sister Janet is not giving up, however. She is still trying to get Elias's case reopened and found a fourteen year old genius in lock-up. Sukoda is still working on his studies but Humes thinks no one will listen. Gil Garcetti got his law passed but the task force it set up probably can't do much. Dorn is still angering public defenders.

Elias has been in the writing class for a year but he will be sent to a state penitentiary and will receive no more school. Geri Vance, however, was accepted at Ventura and will finish his autobiography. Sloan graduated from probation camp and is currently in LA City College. George still has a ten year sentence. Humes gets him a rehearing but George's lawyer was unprepared and so nothing was changed. George is not as upbeat as Geri. And later he is identified as a culprit in a fight at CYA and is sent to adult prison for good.

Duncan will still get out of detention at twenty-five, his records sealed. He has still not taken responsibility. Andre left his gang behind and is in community college. He thinks people can change if they are willing to make the effort and is thinking about becoming a cop. Carla graduated and is in college full-time while holding down two jobs. She made sure her little brother would go to private school and avoid her past. Sharon recommended releasing her from the juvenile system.

Carla tells Humes that she decided to change and the system didn't change. Humes partly agrees but he thinks the juvenile system at its best can give kids time, the chance and the tools to consider making other life choices. Carla's mother thinks the juvenile system saved Carla's life.

Humes's profiled Elias, Geri, George, John, Duncan, Andre, and Carla over a year. They were from different social classes and races with different backgrounds. The juvenile system saved three, failed to punish a killer and gave up on the rest. Humes can see no reason the results diverged. He is heartbroken the system couldn't save them all, in wonder that the system saved anyone and finds it to be a scandal that so many are so neglected.

Characters

Judge Roosevelt Dorn

While No Matter How Loud I Shout has no one main character, Roosevelt Dorn probably receives the most attention over all. Born in 1935, Dorn was in the US Air Force from 1954 to 1958 and served as a bailiff in Superior Court between 1961 and 1969. Receiving his J. D. in 1969 and passing the California State Bar, Dorn served as an assistant to the City of Los Angeles as a city attorney until 1979. By 1980, Dorn was serving as a judge in the LA Country Superior Court. Dorn has several children and is an ordained minister.

In the book, Dorn was a widely controversial judge. Often seen as erratic, Dorn believed that he was key to reforming the LA County juvenile justice system and had his own plan for restructuring the system. Dorn argued that the juvenile court system should revive "status offenses" or arrestable offenses for minors that were not crimes for adults. The purpose of status offenses is to give the court system the opportunity to reach kids who were heading down the wrong path before they were too far along to help. Dorn argued that it was best for society to spend more resources on child criminals to prevent children from becoming criminals rather than imprisoning adults.

Dorn was always hesitant to send kids to adult court when they could be handled by the juvenile system. However, despite this merciful treatment, Dorn exercised powerful and arbitrary control over defendants fate afterward. He would often bend the law to tailor treatment to individual cases.

In the "Dorn Wars" the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office get so fed up with Dorn's erratic behavior that they both look for ways to bring him down. Ultimately the Public Defender's Office "papers him" but in the bureaucratic struggle, Dorn comes out on top.

Deputy District Attorney Peggy Beckstrand

Peggy Beckstrand served as deputy district attorney in Los Angeles County in No Matter How Loud I Shout and handled solely juvenile cases. Beckstrand represented victims and as such usually had a no nonsense and merciless attitude towards perpetrators on behalf of their victims. Beckstrand, however, was deeply stressed and frustrated by her job. Court procedures were often poorly organized, cases were quickly tried in unjust ways, criminal teenagers got away with major crimes and her office was routinely understaffed and deeply disorganized. At several points in the book, Beckstrand flirts with quitting and going back to adult court.

Beckstrand's primary role in the book is as the prosecutor of the Ronald Duncan murder case and as a sometimes opponent of Judge Dorn. Ronald Duncan's cases particularly enraged Peggy. The murders Duncan obviously committed were heinous and Duncan

never showed an ounce of remorse. Because Duncan was nine days shy of sixteen, he could only be tried in juvenile court and would, as a result, escape his crime at age twenty-five. Peggy was motivated to get Duncan the greatest possible sentence as a result. In fact, she was so nervous that Duncan would not be convicted that she over prepared for her case despite overwhelming evidence and gave a highly criticized immunity agreement to a boy that turned out to be an accomplice.

As an opponent of Judge Dorn, Peggy fought to secure tough sentences for juveniles who committed heinous crimes and was often the voice of victims who found Judge Dorn's method of dealing with juveniles too lenient.

Edward Humes

Pulitzer-Prize winning writer and author of How Loud I Shout, Humes primarily plays the role of observer in the book. He often records exactly what he sees but almost never records his interactions with others. Humes' often expresses his opinions in the book but rarely preaches. He runs a writing class for juveniles which led him to encounter the seven children he follows in 1994.

Probation Officer Sharon Stegall

Sharon Stegall is Carla James's Probation Officer who is not easily fooled by Carla's natural charm and intelligence.

Sister Janet

A compassionate sixty-three year old nun, Sister Janet helps juveniles alone in detention know that someone cares about them. She always seeks to bring out hidden talents in those she aids and is a fierce advocate for them in the justice system. Sister Janet serves as an upstart and sharp influence on the inner workings of the juvenile justice system in LA County. She is also a film maker.

Elias Elizondo

A verbally gifted kid, Elias grew up in an awful home and was quickly absorbed into gang life. His moving poems are printed throughout the book. Elias ultimately receives harsh treatment by the juvenile justice system and he ends up in the CYA. Sister Janet advocates for him as hard as she can but when a fight breaks out in the CYA and he is identified as a culprit, he is shipped off to an adult penitentiary for good. Elias is one Humes thinks the system failed.

Geri Vance

A young (unknowing) accomplice of Ronald Duncan's murders, Geri is thrust into the juvenile system. Like Elias, he shows great writing talent and spends much of the year writing his autobiography to help himself get on with his life. Geri has a particularly good attitude and Sister Janet's advocacy for him ultimately pays off. Geri was failed by the system but he may yet be saved.

George Trevino

Another talented poet, George was raised by the state due to a terrible home life. He was increasingly drawn into gang life in part for protection. When he ended up in the juvenile court system, he started writing poems that Sister Janet helped him hold onto. George had less hope for himself than Geri and he ultimately was sentenced ten years in prison for his crimes. Humes thinks that George was failed by the system.

Ronald Duncan

A sociopathic killer, Ronald Duncan causes controversy across LA County because the law prevents him from being tried as an adult since his crime was committed nine days before he turned sixteen. Duncan never shows any remorse and basically hangs himself in his court case. Peggy Beckstrand works hard to convict him and is ultimately successful, though not without cost. The system failed to get justice for Duncan's victims, in Humes's view.

Carla James

A charming, pretty young gangbanger, Carla had a good home life but was drawn into gangs because of the thrill of it. She often charmed her way out of trouble and made herself appear to judges as if she were on the cusp of reform. She always made good grades and could easily work herself out of any trouble she was in. However, she is ultimately sent to the Dorothy Kirby center and between the center and her PO, Sharon Stegall, Carla decides to go straight. Carla was saved by the system in Humes's view.

John Sloan

A young Korean boy from a good family, John was drawn into gang life to get protection in school. After committing a robbery, John runs through the juvenile court system and Judge Dorn deals with him harshly but the harsh treatment caused John to change his behavior. John was saved by the system and went to community college.

Andre

Andre is the least discussed of the seven kids, but he is the primary example of how the Rosewood School could help gangbanging kids reform. When he arrived, he was given the responsibility of helping a handicapped girl named Miriam, which finally got through to him. Andre was saved by the system and ultimately went to community college.

Roy Sukoda

The author of the 16-percenter study who spends years trying to develop a profile of the 16-percenter kid before he commits crimes.

Objects/Places

Los Angeles, California

The main city and setting of the book.

Inglewood, California

A small city and suburb of Los Angeles in LA County where a juvenile court is located.

LA County Juvenile Court

The location of juvenile cases in LA County and where much of the book takes place.

Judge Dorn's Courtroom

The room where Judge Dorn presided and where he implemented his controversial policies.

California Youth Authority

The most severe form of punishment for juveniles without going to adult court. A number of the seven kids Humes followed ended up there.

Gang Territory

The areas of LA county where a number of serious crimes are committed.

Juvenile Detention

The juvenile equivalent of adult prison.

Gang-Banging

The practice of engaging in dangerous gang activity.

Murder/Drive-Bys

Many of the kids are involved in murders. Some involved in the juvenile justice sentence wants all murder cases tried in adult court.

Adult Court

The courts that try either adults or juveniles that are assigned to adult court.

Status Offenses

Charges that apply to juveniles for crimes that are not crimes for adult. Status offenses are used to draw kids into the juvenile system before they commit serious crimes and are beyond the reach of the system.

The Writing Class

Humes runs a writing class which many of the seven kids are placed in. Some of the children blossom there and write excellent poems, stories and biographical material.

Geri's Autobiography

Geri spent the year composing his autobiography which he shared with the class. He said that when he was finished he could start life over.

George's Poetry

George was a seriously talented poetry writer whose poems were his prized possession. When he lost them in detention, Sister Janet found them for him. Many of the poems are reprinted in the book.

Papering

The practice of flooding a judge with paperwork to manipulate him into changing his behavior. The public defender's office papered Judge Dorn to get him to engage in less controversial behavior. Judge Dorn won the battle.

Themes

The Dysfunctional Juvenile Justice System

The entire point of No Matter How Loud I Shout is to show how dysfunctional the juvenile justice system is. The system is underfunded, buildings are dilapidated, and the offices of the public defenders, judges, and district attorneys are all understaffed. The number of juveniles is constantly increased in a system that isn't going to expand. There are not enough jails, not enough detention facilities, not enough police officers, group homes and foster families. Everyone has their own ideas about how to fix the system and they constantly clash. Unjust cases become public outrages, politicians take advantage of the unpopularity of the system, and then laws are passed that do no good and often make things worse.

Humes demonstrates a number of the key problems in the system through concrete examples. Killers like Ronald Duncan creates public outrage because the juvenile justice system must abide by an arbitrary sixteen years of age rule for trying juveniles as adults. Elias, George, and Geri are all imprisoned often because a judge's hand is forced by mandatory sentencing. Talented children who got off on the wrong foot and are forced to throw their lives away are crushed by the system on a regular basis.

Bureaucratic war breaks out in the book as well between Judge Dorn's office, the public defenders and the DA's office.

However, Hume's is impressed by the fact that the juvenile justice system saves anyone at all. Carla, John and Andre all make it through and all end up in college. In Humes's view, while the juvenile justice system can't change anyone, it can give them time, the tools and the resources to think their lives through and make their own choices.

Justice vs. Mercy

One important contrast in No Matter How Loud I Shout is between two key and motivating moral ideas, justice and mercy. First and foremost, those who commit crimes should be brought to justice. Victims deserve to be protected, the public must be protected, and those who do wrong punished.

For instance, Ronald Duncan committed two brutal murders and Peggy Beckstrand does her very best to bring justice to the families of those Duncan killed. He is protected by an arbitrary law that prevents children under sixteen from being charged, even if they are several days shy of the appropriate age, as Duncan was. In many cases, cases like Duncan create public outrages and, consequently, "get tough law are passed in the name of justice, though they rarely do any good.

Mercy works in the other direction. For instance, Sister Janet fights for juveniles no matter how bad they have been and always pursues their redemption. She is one who

believes that no child is beyond help. She fights for Geri and George as hard as she can, supporting their activities, and keeping the details of their improvement from being forgotten.

Judge Dorn represents an important though unstable mixture between justice and mercy. He is merciful in that he prevents juveniles from being tried in adult court as often as he can and gives extra chances to juveniles who show promise. On the other hand, he refuses to tolerate even basic crimes for kids who disobey his rulings.

The Choice to Change

Some of the kids in the juvenile justice system were irredeemable, or at least were considered irredeemable, kids like Ronald Duncan. But others changed, some before it was too late. Many of the kids opened up in Humes's writing class, like Elias, Geri and George. It is unclear to Humes why some changed and some didn't. And it is unclear that any one factor actually altered their behavior. Those who chose to straighten up were not necessarily the rich ones, the educated ones or the ones with good families.

Perhaps the most detailed and illustrative case was Carla Jones. Carla had a good family, though her father died when she was nine and she and her stepfather didn't get along. Carla made good grades and was clearly intelligent and charming. She was more than able to make a good life for herself. However, she still fell into gangs and in fact took significant risks engaging in the violence of day to day gang life. When she was finally caught for her crimes, she refused to reform. Instead, she used her natural charm and intelligence to make her time in detention bearable and to get special privileges.

However, in part through the help of Sharon Stegall, her probation officer, and Mr. Shabazz her social worker, she decided to reform and eventually ended up in community college. However, Carla claimed that she decided to change her behavior herself and that change had to come from within. In fact, she maintained, that no one could impose change on her heart. Humes partly agreed. Nothing changed Carla but Carla, but the juvenile justice system gave her the time, tools and resources to make a choice to change.

Style

Perspective

Edward Humes's perspective is clearly complicated. There are three sides to it, more or less. The first perspective is clear and unambiguous. He thinks that the juvenile justice system is a miserable failure. While Humes is impressed that the system saved anyone, he is in wonder at how awful it works generally, at the incompetence of many of the people in the system. The point of No Matter How Loud I Shout is to expose the problems with the juvenile justice system particularly in LA County.

However, when it comes to the moral issues at work in the book and in the juvenile justice system, Humes clearly sees both sides of the issues. On the one hand, he clearly understands the importance of getting justice for victims. He has no lack of sympathy for them and is clearly revolted at Duncan's crime. On the other hand, he clearly believes that the "get-tough" legislation passed by public outrage at brutal juvenile crimes is excessive and will do no good. In fact, he demonstrates how juveniles tried in adult court often get no sentence because their crimes are not taken seriously at the adult level.

Humes also clearly feels for his students and wants the best for them. He is largely on the side of mercy for juveniles. Humes has his only preference for reform but is not clearly sympathetic to Dorn's revival of status offenses. In fact, Humes is able to make sense of some part of all sides of the dispute and is not clearly hostile to any one point of view.

Tone

No Matter How Loud I Shout is a complex mixture of the emotions that the stories Humes relates arouse within him. He describes a sense of heartbreak, wonder and scandal all of which are manifested in the tone of the book throughout. The heartbreak comes through particularly strong when Humes describes the fates of the students in his writing class when they are sentenced in adult court for long terms for crimes they committed long ago. Often his kids grow and change such that he genuinely believes that they have changed and are not longer a danger to society.

The wonder in the tone of the book is expressed in two ways. First, Humes is amazed at the talent of his students and periodically printed the poems and writings of his students, particularly Geri and George. He is also amazed that the system could help anyone. Carla threw herself into any number of problems but she managed to work her way out of it with help. She made her own decision, in her view, but Humes believes that the system, somehow, gave her time. The tone manifests wonder and lights up when reviewing the success stories throughout the book, particularly in Carla's case.

Probably the most constant element in the tone, though, is scandal. Story after story shows Humes exasperated with what he endured throughout the year. The waiting, the tragedy, the shock at the widespread incompetence and self-interest in the system comes out on almost every page.

Structure

No Matter How Loud I Shout begins with a short introduction called "intake" that introduces a number of the main characters. Following this are four parts contains eighteen chapters in all. Part One, We're Drowning introduces all the main characters, sets all the major scenes, opens all the major conflicts and generally sets up a number of plot elements.

For instance, in Chapter 3, "Nine Days to Manhood," Humes explains the arbitrariness of Ronald Duncan being tried as a juvenile because he was only nine days from turning sixteen when he committed two brutal murders. Chapter 6, "Raised by the State," explains George Travino's difficult past and his struggles to survive the juvenile justice system. Chapter 7, "War" shows how the conflict between Judge Dorn and the public defender's office erupted.

Part Two, Softening Up, explains a number of redeeming elements in the book. Chapter 10, "Sister Janet" introduces one of the most sympathetic characters in the book, Sister Janet, who is a tireless advocate for George and Geri. Chapter 12, "Judge Dorn's Solution," shows Dorn implementing his controversial plan to revive status offenses, which Humes approaches with some optimism.

Part Three, A Child's Disposition brings many of the major story lines to a close. Chapter 14, "The Dorn Wars," shows how the attempt by the public defender's office to paper Judge Dorn failed. And Chapters 16 and 17, "The Ins" and "The Outs" respectively, show how the major cases that Humes discusses end up. Part Four, Epilogue, contains only one chapter, Chapter 18, "A Year Later, Another Day in Court" jumps forward a year to show how Humes's seven kids have fared.

Quotes

"We're the monsters they talk about on the news. We're the ones you're supposed to be afraid of." (Intake, 16)

"God made me so I could do terrible things. Why couldn't God help me learn how to be a father?" (Intake, 19)

"And so, on May 15th, 1967, Gerry Gault's adolescent prank had the extraordinary effect of bringing every juvenile court in every state of the Union to a grinding halt so that lawyers and court reporters and all the other trappings of real courtrooms could be put into place. When they started up again, the way in which society dealt with its troubled youth had forever changed." (Prologue, 25)

"The first thing you learn about this place is that nothing works." (Chapter 1, 31)

"I'm pretty sure I'll convict him. But I don't think anyone's going to win." (Chapter 2, 56)

"We have to live with this simply because someone, somewhere, decided decades ago, based on absolutely no scientific evidence, that only a sixteen-year-old can commit the crimes of an adult. And that someone who falls nine days short of the mark ought to remain in a system designed to reform wayward kids, not control and punish armed robbers and murderers. It makes no sense. It makes me sick." (Chapter 3, 64)

"You're charged with murder, you're over sixteen, you're a black kid with a gun, and this is Pomona—white, suburban, middle-class Pomona. The judge is going to take one look at you and you're gone." (Chapter 4, 73)

"Oh my God, we're robbing a cop." (Chapter 5, 92)

"He was a 300 kid, you know." (Chapter 6, 109)

"'If it wasn't murder, Carla, what would it be?' 'Justice.'" (Chapter 7, 123)

"There's only one way to interpret what he says at the end of the tape. I believe the minor ... Something was promised. Threats were made. The statement is excluded." (Chapter 8, 152)

"'Love isn't going to fix these kids. By the time we step in, it's too late for that. All we can do is protect the people who obey the rules. That's our obligation' 'I disagree. Sure, we need to look for the sociopaths, and put them away. That's got to be our role. But the rest, we're still talking about children. The rest, they're salvageable. That should be our role, too." (Chapter 9, 168)

"How can you do this, a Sister of God? I hope God can forgive you. I can't." (Chapter 10, 184)

"Sorry doesn't work where I live. You got to earn respect. Sorry is backing down when you need to stand tall." (Chapter 11, 223)

"You always think it's your fault. You always wonder if you could have been a better kid, then maybe it would never have happened—maybe they never would have taken you away. Hell, I still think that." (Chapter 12, 230)

"Break me off." (Chapter 13, 276)

"He doesn't want to be a judge. He wants to be a king." (Chapter 14, 286)

"I always wanted to write." (Chapter 15, 295)

"I'll just do my time. And I'll do my best." (Chapter 16, 323)

"I didn't have to do those things. But the system didn't have to make it so goddamn easy." (Chapter 16, 333)

"Locking everyone up is not the solution. It's just the symptom of the problem. It's the proof that we're doing something wrong." (Chapter 17, 337)

"It wore me down, fighting every day to make a dysfunctional system work. I don't miss it a bit." (Chapter 18, 361)

"Once it's written then I can start my life over. With a new beginning." (Chapter 18, 367)

"That is the heartbreak of Juvenile Court, the wonder of it and the scandal. Heartbreak, because every kid cannot be saved. Wonder, that this broken, battered, outgunned system saves even one child. Scandal, because it so seldom tries to do anything at all." (Chapter 18, 371)

Topics for Discussion

Pick two of the seven kids Humes follows that the system failed. Who were they? Why were they in trouble? How did the system fail them?

Pick two of the seven kids Humes believes the system saved. Who were they? Why were they in trouble? How did the system save them?

Explain Judge Dorn's philosophy of juvenile justice and his methods of reform. Do you agree with his philosophy? Do you agree with his approach? What would you have done differently?

No Matter How Loud I Shout often contrasts "get tough" strategies and "prevention" strategies for dealing with juvenile crimes. Which side are you closer to and why?

Are any children truly irredeemable? Why or why not? Do you think the juvenile justice system as described by Humes overestimates the number of irredeemable children or underestimates it? Why?

What is Humes's view about the juvenile justice system? Explain his critique in detail.

What do you make of the fact that there seems to be little connection between the seven kids' backgrounds and the results of their trials? What does that say about the juvenile justice system?

What ultimately turns juvenile delinquents around? Why? Explain in detail.