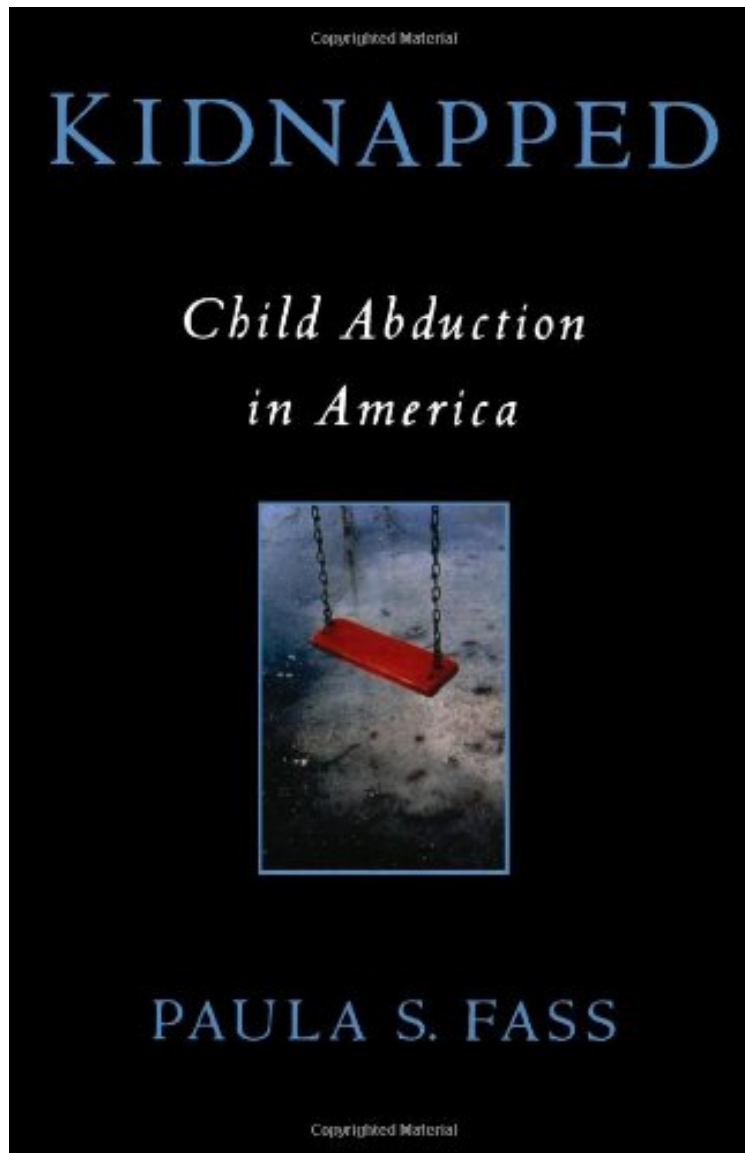


[Free download] Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America

Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America

Paula S. Fass

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#3892317 in Books Paula S Fass 2006-03-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x .82 x 6.00l, 1.10
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Paula S. Fass : Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Analysis of American AttitudeBy Verbena ReverbThis book is not really a collection of "kidnapping stories" as one would presume or as one would get from a Ramsland type author. Through the analysis of the time and place of each kidnapping the author delves into the attitude and

changing ideas of America toward kidnapping. Where once the assumption was that no one would kidnap anybody unless they expected a lucrative ransom, the assumption now is that no kidnapping takes place unless sexual abuse is the motive. How did we change? That's what this book is all about. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. One of the most informative books about child abduction

By Meaghan
If you're really interested in missing children and child kidnappings, like I am, this is definitely the book for you. It begins with the heartbreaking 1874 ransom abduction of Charley Ross from Pennsylvania. His father refused to pay the ransom, not because he didn't love his son, but because he thought kidnapers should not profit from their crime. Charley never returned home. The next chapter is about the Lindbergh baby, then Leopold and Loeb, and so on. It ends with modern kidnappings: Etan Patz, Kevin Collins and Polly Klaas. There's also a chapter on parental abduction. In other words, this book is very extensive. While it's a very "academic" book, it's not dull like a textbook. I found it very entertaining, with a nice centerfold of photographs. This book should definitely have a place on anybody's true crime shelf. 16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Dangerously Deceptive
By Richard K. Stephens
"Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America," by Professor Paula S. Fass is the only study yet available on the subject. The book is useful for the accurate information which it contains despite the fact that it also contains an abundance of inaccurate "facts," distortions, and willful omissions - all which support the author's ideological prejudices (which clearly lean heavily toward utopian/collectivist child-rearing by bureaucracies). The book's errors are legion; therefore only a small sample can be mentioned in a brief review. Fass claims the Philadelphia Charley Ross kidnapping of 1874 is America's first ransom kidnapping of a child (or the first "fully constructed" case, whatever is meant by that). In truth, the Pool case of 1819 qualifies as perhaps the first nationally known case (date of kidnapping: May 20, 1819, Baltimore, Md.). The Pool case does not, however, suit the author's ideological purposes. Nancy Gamble and Marie Thomas, the kidnapers of little 20-month-old Margaret Pool were females who physically abused their tiny victim. Throughout the book, Professor Fass makes broad claims that are not supported with a lick of evidence. One of these false claims is her generalization that women are seldom kidnapers for ransom, sadistic purposes, child labor purposes (prostitution, entertainment, servants). This is untrue. Deceptive rhetoric abounds in "Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America." In the book's introductory chapter, the "myth" of Gypsy kidnapping is compared to the Medieval "blood libel" against the Jews, allowing the reader to get the impression that the myth of Jewish kidnapers for child sacrifice and the myth of Gypsy child kidnapping are similar in type and origin. In truth, "blood libel" is based on prejudice, while the "myth" of Gypsy kidnapping is based on fact. Gypsies have long practiced child kidnapping and a great many documented cases exist -- throughout the 19th century well into the late middle 20th century. A number of the author's claims regarding the sub-category of child abduction, parental kidnapping, are outright fabrications: such as the assertions that parental kidnapping was not taken seriously in the early 20th century (utterly false) and further that during the 20s and 30s only cases involving rich and famous were reported by the press (utterly false. cases involving people of all classes were in the news constantly). The fact is that already in the early 1900s, parental kidnapping was the subject of long newspaper articles which treated the phenomenon as a serious social problem (see: "Love Proves Superior to Courts Decrees," nationally syndicated, including Marble Rock Press (Io.), Dec. 12, 1907; "Parental Love That Laughs at Court Decree," nationally syndicated, including Jun. 11, 1910, Evening Press (Sheboygen, Wi.)). One of the more egregious distortions to be found in "Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America," involves the 1874 Ross case. It deals with the fact that before a ransom demand had been made, police had begun searching for the missing Charlie in the Italian neighborhood. Fass tells her readers that the measure was taken based on "unsavory" stereotypes. The facts was that at the time Philadelphia was known to house a large population of "Padrones" who had left New York to escape prosecution there. Padrones were child slavers, who imported (kidnapped or purchased) children from Italy for the purpose of begging under the control of their masters. Many children were tortured and even mutilated (to make them more pitiful sights in order to attract alms). The scandal was so great that New York, in direct response to the Padrone racket, amended their kidnapping law to cover foreign-born victims. Fass, because of her predilection for applying present-day of moral preferences toward ethnic groups (ie: "politically correct" politics) ends up falsifying history and consequently cruelly diminishes the actual struggles of minority people. In the case of Italian-American child kidnapping of the later "Black Hand" period -- also ignored by Fass -- it was honest Italian immigrants who were preyed upon by Italian criminals. It was not unusual for poor parents to be victims of ransom demands of whatever sum was "appropriate" for the working class. The suffering of these innocent Italian victims was immense, involving a huge number of crimes over a period of decades. Professor Fass, by pretending that 1874 was the beginning of ransom kidnapping, the author manages to "historically cleanse" the rich and important history of child kidnapping of the 1830s-1860s, a period in which ransom child kidnapping gangs operated in Philadelphia, New York and elsewhere by erase inconvenient truths that violate her politically correct agenda. Likewise glossed over the issue of the kidnapping of the pre-Civil War children of free black parents -- despite the fact that the phenomenon was not absolutely separate from the other forms of child kidnapping that occurred concurrently. In the book's front material the author discloses that the book's writing was generously supported by a number of research grants, yet the final product proves that little research was actually done. The writing is quite good, but the scholarship is reprehensibly shoddy and its tendentiousness -- which fosters ignorance -- is dangerous. It is an alarming fact that of the several long academic

reviews of the book that have been published none even so much at hints that the "facts" that Fass reports in her book might need more looking into (let alone that her endnotes routinely fail to support her claims with evidence). Apart from some disagreements concerning the interpretive approach (rather than questioning the factual data per se), her colleagues swallow the falsehoods -- hook, line and sinker -- without even a whimper of dissent. The author states that the problem of child kidnapping is an overrated one which should not be considered as important as many people think it is. Her book is designed to obfuscate the historical past in order to make her opinion seem to be based on historical fact, giving the overall impression that the book ought to be "the last word" on the history of the subject. As such, its dishonesty causes it to fail as even a "first word." The book is a travesty and must, at some point, be replaced with a thorough, properly researched and honest work of scholarship. Until then, policy makers, academics and other readers will be subjected to a grossly propagandistic book whose publication can be best described as an act of "kidnapping memory."

Few crimes capture our imagination as completely as child kidnapping. We are both fascinated and revolted, seeing in each victim our own child, in each bereaved parent ourselves, and in each kidnapper a monster striking straight at the heart of the family and our society. Kidnapping is a modern morality play, the innocence of the child in stark contrast to the corruption of the criminal, all played out by a media industry eager to feed the worst fears of every parent. In this pathbreaking book, Paula S. Fass explores how our fear has evolved from its first chilling realization in 1874, when Americans were startled and horrified to discover that their children could be held for ransom, until today, when sexual predators seem to threaten our children at every turn. *Kidnapped* is a mesmerizing look at some of the great kidnapping cases in American history, the stories that have haunted parents over the past 125 years. Fass describes the kidnapping of Charley Ross in 1874, the first of a series of kidnappings to be called "the crime of the century"; the notorious case of Leopold and Loeb, two rich young men who murdered a younger cousin simply to see if they could get away with it; the abduction of Gloria Vanderbilt, the "poor little rich girl" taken by her own aunt at the start of a vicious custody battle; and the most famous case of all, the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby. More importantly, *Kidnapped* presents, in a series of brilliant narratives, a window into the American mind, providing us with new insights into parenting and the American family, the media and our fascination with celebrity, policing and law enforcement, gender and sexuality, mental health, and much more. She shows, for instance, how the Leopold and Loeb case revolutionized the insanity plea, how the abduction of Gloria Vanderbilt brought the problems of divorce and child custody into the public eye, how the case of Stephanie Bryan was shaped by the gender assumptions of the 1950s, and how the Lindbergh tragedy was defined by the ever-present media. Turning from these historic cases, she takes us back to crimes that have only recently fallen out of the headlines, such as the disappearance of Etan Patz in New York or Jacob Wetterling in Minnesota, and the growing industry revolving around missing children, from not-for-profit foundations publicizing missing children to for-profit businesses offering to insure children against kidnapping. In this sharp, vivid book, Fass skillfully illuminates our national obsession with child abduction in a society which both values and exploits its youngest members. The loss of each child is a unique and devastating tragedy. But how we respond as a community and as a nation to these crimes speaks volumes about who we are. In confronting how we have treated the children stolen from our lives, Fass shows, we confront ourselves.

From *Library Journal* Fass (history, Univ. of California, Berkeley) focuses on youth in this work. Fass traces the history of kidnapping in the United States from the abduction of four-year-old Charley Ross in 1874 to the 1979 disappearance of Etan Patz and more recently the abduction and murder of 12-year-old Polly Klaas. Fass offers well-researched highlights of known cases such as the Leopold and Loeb, Lindbergh, and Gloria Vanderbilt kidnappings; however, she fails to deliver behind-the-scenes revelations or speculations on why kidnapping crimes occur or why today they have become increasingly violent. Readers are left to speculate on what role the media play in this increasing crime against society and its vulnerable children. Nevertheless, this is a good starting point for further research or psychohistorical analysis. Recommended for larger public and academic libraries. Sandra Isaacson, U.S. EPA, Kansas City, Kan. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Kirkus* sFass (History/Univ. of Calif., Berkeley) focuses her grim study on the public's reaction to the horrific crime of kidnapping, from Charley Ross to Polly Klaas. The 1874 kidnapping of four-year-old Charley Ross, the first for ransom, captivated the public for years after, and Fass writes well of Charley's gradual transformation from lost child to holy innocent, celebrated in newspapers and in a bestselling book written by his father. The media frenzy that greeted Charley's disappearance--decades later, men still claimed to be the lost boy--turned into a frightful circus that was responsible for the loss of more than one victim as kidnappers panicked in the glare of publicity. Fass also profiles Betty Jean Benedicto, a baby-snatcher who gained weight to imitate pregnancy and starved herself to mimic Hanna Marcus, the depressed mother of the child she had stolen. Benedicto was released early by a sympathetic judge--and with the best wishes of the Marcuses, who felt Benedicto treated their baby kindly. She went on to steal another infant. Male kidnappers, unsurprisingly, are dealt with more severely by the public. In 1924, Leopold and Loeb, the University of Chicago prodigies who killed 14-year-old Bobby Franks, were viewed as homosexual devils. And Richard Hauptmann,

whether guilty or not of killing the Lindbergh baby in 1932, was executed for the crime. Modern kidnappings, like that of Etan Patz, are viewed as the work of a pedophile with a desire to exploit a child through pornography or prostitution. While most current kidnappings are more along the lines of a noncustodial parent stealing the child, and stranger kidnappings are still very rare, in the public's view, sexual predators lurk everywhere. Fass writes about organizations that provide "kidnap insurance," and the histrionic tactics used to make parents aware of purportedly rampant pedophilia in this country. Despite its academic tone, a sad book with compelling stories. (27 bw photos, not seen) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "A rare combination of riveting narrative and acute, provocative historical and cultural analysis."--Sissela Bok, Harvard University"Through incisive analysis of historical and contemporary cases, Fass highlights changes in social awareness and public response to kidnapping since its emergence into public consciousness at the time of the first known U.S. child ransom abduction in 1874...Fass has written extensively on issues of youth and culture and challenges those concerned with child welfare to examine the commercial portrayal of childhood, which sanctifies vulnerability and at the same time exploits it."--Booklist"More than a retelling of some of the most famous kidnapping cases of the past 120 years, [Kidnapped] places the crimes in an historical context, showing how each mirrors the social concerns of the times and, as a result, becomes a portrait of parental anxiety."--Susan May, California Monthly"In her riveting Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America,...Fass gives us a tour of the crime parents fear most, offering one terrifying detail after another. But Fass...provides more than a detailed guide to the horrors of child abduction. Her task here is to plot the way this crime has evolved and to look closely at how we as a society choose to regard it."--Penelope Rowlands, San Francisco Chronicle"This is a very scary book, and very important as the fear of this crime seems to escalate. In the end, Fass speaks as much from her heart as her head."--Jane Clifford, San Diego Union-Tribune"A heartfelt and disturbing book...Kidnapped is not only a convincing analysis of child abduction; it is a compelling example of how studies of the past can illuminate the present and suggest alternative futures."--The Journal of American History