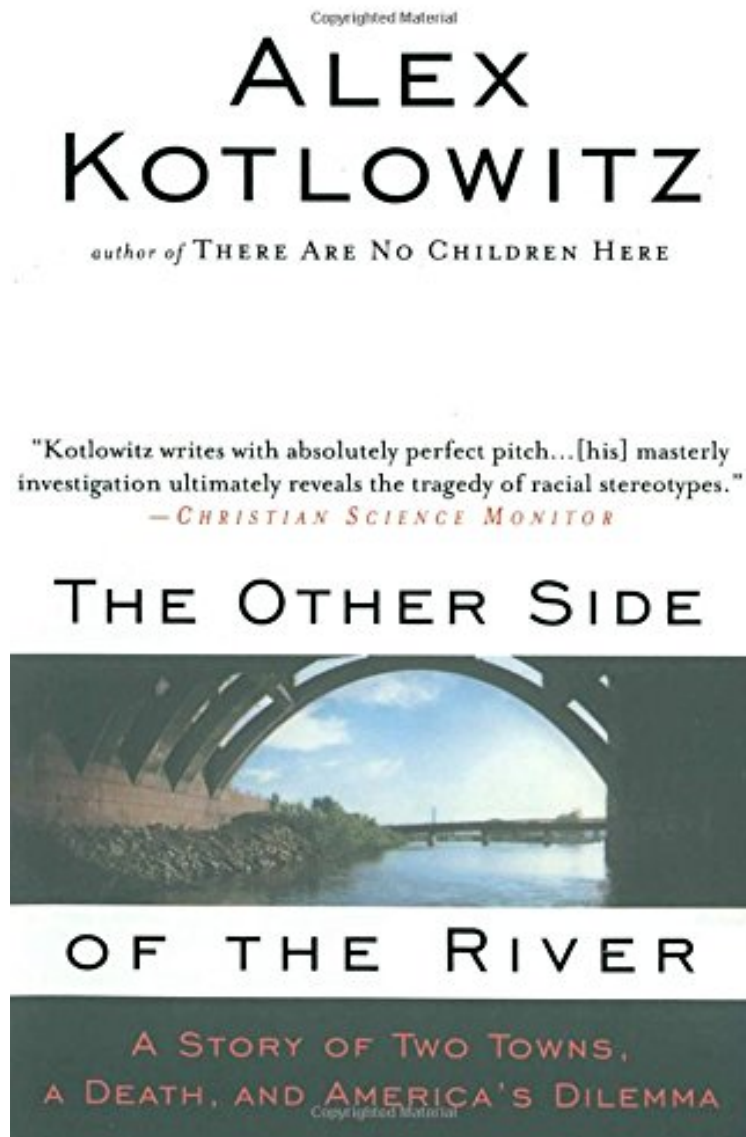


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The Other Side of the River: A Story of Two Towns, a Death, and America's Dilemma

Alex Kotlowitz

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Alex Kotlowitz : The Other Side of the River: A Story of Two Towns, a Death, and America's Dilemma before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Other Side of the River: A Story of Two Towns, a Death, and America's Dilemma:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Race Relations On Two Sides Of a DivideBy Patrick ClearyAlex Kotlowitz' book shines a light on race relations in America by focusing on an incident that happened to a young man found floating in a river between two towns, one predominantly white and one predominantly black. The mystery of what happened to Eric is never resolved, but the different ways in which each town interprets his death illustrate the different experience the two races have in America. Thought provoking and smart, this book can be frustrating to read, but is still worthwhile.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book with a really good storyBy D. BolbolanGreat book with a really good story. If you live in Southwest Michigan this book will hit home for you.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Thought provokingBy Gail SampsellVery good read, insightful and contemplative. Since I have family in the Benton Harbor area, I thought the book really put things in perspective, and unfortunately- I can still reflect on the book when I attend events in that area. The (dirty) politics of the area promote racism even in 2013.

Bestselling author Alex Kotlowitz is one of this country's foremost writers on the ever explosive issue of race. In this gripping and ultimately profound book, Kotlowitz takes us to two towns in southern Michigan, St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, separated by the St. Joseph River. Geographically close, but worlds apart, they are a living metaphor for America's racial divisions: St. Joseph is a prosperous lakeshore community and ninety-five percent white, while Benton Harbor is impoverished and ninety-two percent black. When the body of a black teenaged boy from Benton Harbor is found in the river, unhealed wounds and suspicions between the two towns' populations surface as well. The investigation into the young man's death becomes, inevitably, a screen on which each town projects their resentments and fears. *The Other Side of the River* sensitively portrays the lives and hopes of the towns' citizens as they wrestle with this mystery--and reveals the attitudes and misperceptions that undermine race relations throughout America.

.com The author of *There Are No Children Here* follows up that magnificent effort with the gripping story of a mysterious death in southwest Michigan. A black teenager surfaces in the St. Joseph River, drowned. How did he get there? The towns of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph, divided by both race and the river, grapple with the possibilities in this maddeningly difficult case. Alex Kotlowitz puts his sharp reporting skills to good work here, describing in detail everything that is known about Eric McGinnis's short life and untimely death. But the book is best at plumbing the racial psychology of these mutually suspicious communities. *The Other Side of the River* has that can't-put-it-down quality found in the best narrative nonfiction, and it speaks to issues affecting all of America.From School Library JournalYA-An engrossing story of an unsolved crime that YAs will find both readable and fascinating. Although a murder mystery, this is really an in-depth examination of American attitudes toward race. The story is set in two small lake towns in Michigan that are separated by a narrow river and a wide range of conflicting opinions, fears, and emotions. A black teenager, Eric McGinnis, was found floating in the St. Joseph River in May 1991. When last seen, he was running down a street in the predominantly white town of St. Joseph. He had crossed the river that evening from 95% black Benton Harbor to attend a teen club with friends. Whatever happened afterward caused endless speculation on both sides of the river and old fears and assumptions surfaced. Many in Benton Harbor thought he had been pushed to his death by whites angered because he was dating white girls. In St. Joseph, the Benton Harbor gangs were blamed. As the author investigated this multifaceted case, he looked at over 200 people and many different motives. The aspects of this baffling case are presented with sensitivity and impartiality, and while local atmosphere and nuances are accurate, these towns could be anywhere in America. A book that will make readers examine their own convictions about the troubling issue of race in our country.Catherine Noonan, Fairfax County Public Library, VACopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalKotlowitz (*There Are No Children Here*, LJ 4/1/91) has produced another exemplary piece of investigative reportage that reveals the chasm between blacks and whites, rich and poor, in America. Two Michigan towns?predominately white, prosperous St. Joseph and predominantly black, poverty-stricken Benton Harbor?are separated by a river and years of mistrust, suspicion, and vastly differing life experiences. When the death of a black teenage boy found floating in the river remains unsolved, the polarized perceptions of blacks and whites toward the justice system are exposed. Kotlowitz's Herculean efforts to unravel the mystery is unsuccessful, but the telling of his pursuit of the truth is a compelling and suspense-filled story. And in the absence of definitive answers, the myths and perceptions created from the distinct historical experiences of the two communities become the truth that ultimately matters. Highly recommended for all libraries.-Faye Powell, Portland State Univ. Lib., Ore.Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.