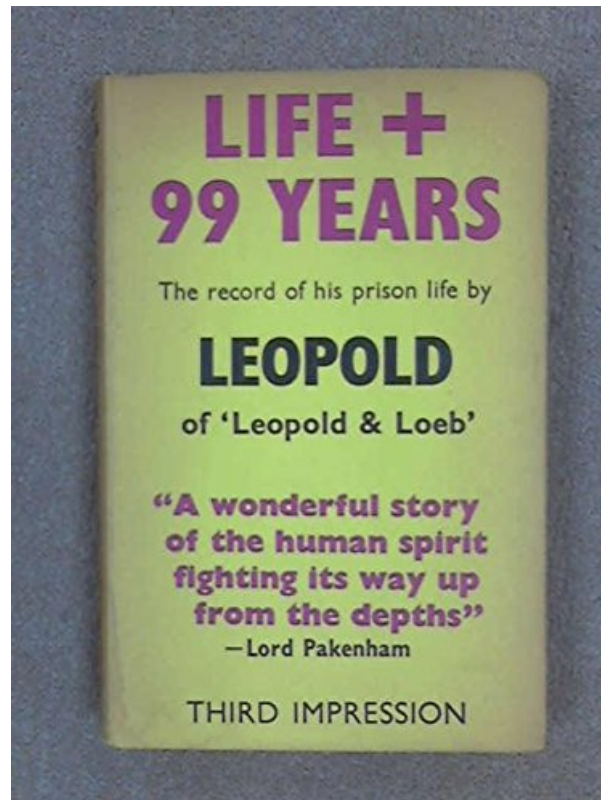
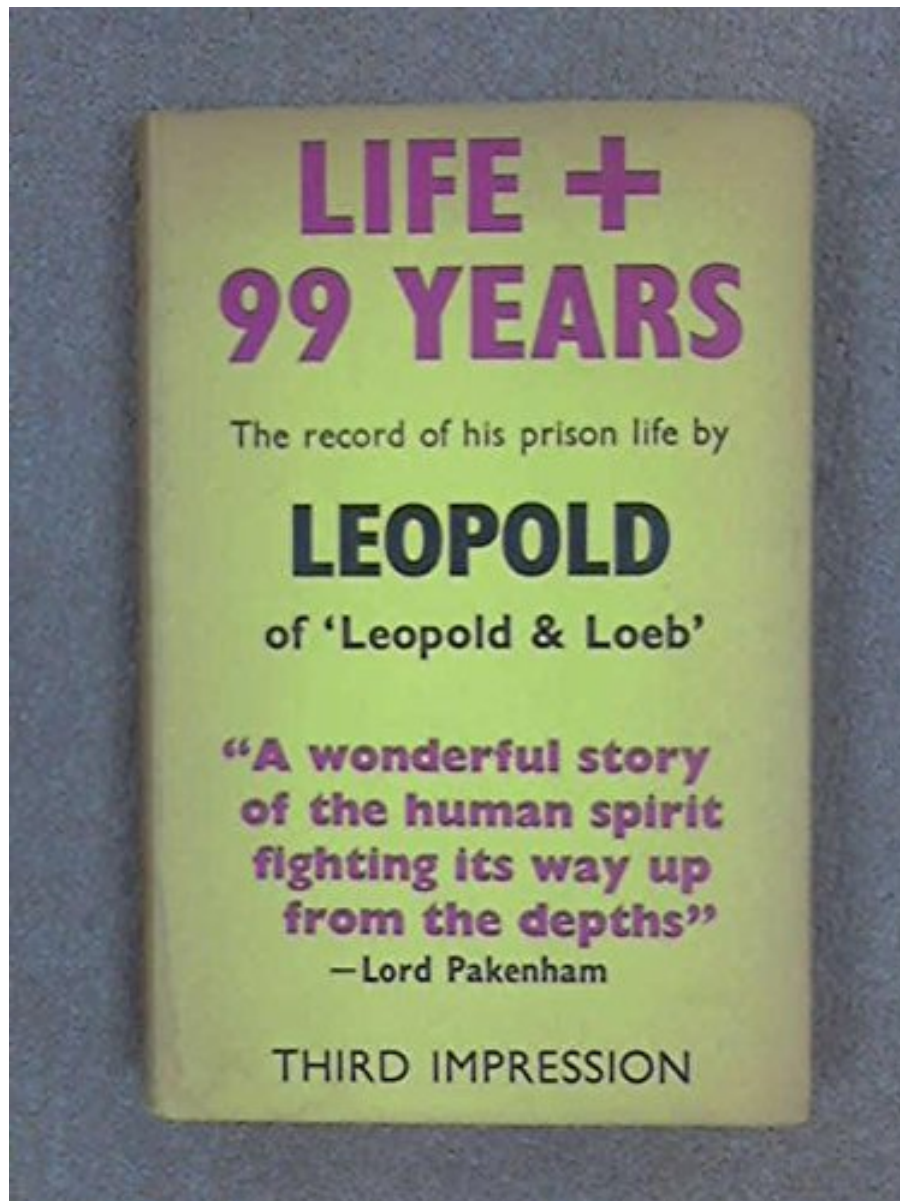


# LIFE PLUS 99 YEARS BY JR. NATHAN F. LEOPOLD



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# LIFE PLUS 99 YEARS BY JR. NATHAN F. LEOPOLD PDF

Nathan Leopold Jr. was half of the famed duo Leopold and Loeb, murderers of 14-year old Bobby Franks in 1924 on the south side of Chicago. Life Plus 99 Years is an autobiographical work which commences with the day after Leopold's sentencing, and which was designed to ingratiate the author with the parole board. As such it is a fascinating multi-layered work - the reader has to work at keeping in mind that the writer was the perpetrator of a heinous crime made all the more horrendous by the fact that its only motivation was the thrill of the idea. A must read for anyone interested in the workings and effects of our criminal justice system.

- Sales Rank: #199146 in Books
- Brand: Victor Gollancz Limited
- Published on: 1958
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Hardcover
- 381 pages

Most helpful customer reviews

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Exciting historical drama! Grabs your attention & doesn't let go!

By D. S. Rogers

The premise alone, that two young friends could plan and execute the perfect crime without being caught, seized my attention and did not let go. This non-fiction, historical drama is another example that sooner or later, regardless of who you are, truth trumps lies. Life Plus 99 is a story narrated by one of the pair who participated in the "perfect crime". The gist of the book is in common with things most of us have thought about or perhaps experienced - doing something without being caught. In Life Plus 99, a pair of upper echelon, too smart for their own good, cocky, high school senior boys plan the perfect murder, knowing they will not be caught. They sit back and watch the hub-bub going on and silently smirk and collectively concede how inept the public officials are, since they are stumped. However, unknown to the boys, a pair of eyeglasses belonging to one of them was found at the scene. It does not take a long time to read the prescription and determine whose glasses these belong to, or at least who wears an identical prescription. If you are wealthy, and money is no object, you spare no expense to hire the best there is to defend your child; such, is what we learn provides legal aid to the boys. The most prominent attorneys and judge of the era are shown at their peak, in a different context from the things we know about them. Without giving away too much of the story, the newspapers latched on to the murder mystery, parlaying their information to create a public frenzy!

You know what the boys are going to do. You know the boys do it. You know the boys get caught and are sentenced to prison for life plus 99 years. What you do not know, is what happened to the boys once they were incarcerated. This book answers the questions and provides a glimpse of their life before, during, and after time served behind bars. Eventually, their cockiness is replaced with meekness, pride with humility, and confidence with modesty.

The only regret I have is not knowing what happened "next" - and you will have to read to book to know

what "next" means. Life plus 99 is a good, swift, interesting read.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Read it with Leopold's agenda in mind.

By DoctorJoeE

I reluctantly recommend this book, as long as you keep in mind what Leopold was trying to accomplish when he wrote it. He had been incarcerated for 30 years, the confessed and widely reviled perpetrator of the "crime of the century". And on top of that, Meyer Levin had recently skewered him (under the pseudonym Judd Steiner) as a brilliant but deeply disturbed teenager, psychologically driven to kill because of his troubled childhood and an obsession with Loeb, in a novelized biography called "Compulsion". Leopold wrote this book, purportedly, to "set the record straight"; but he did no such thing.

He began with the immediate aftermath of the crime; in other words, he deliberately refused to recount his childhood, or to describe any details of the murder itself. This engendered widespread criticism, and justifiably so in my opinion; because if he really wanted to "set the record straight", he would have at least attempted to refute Levin's hypothesis. I suppose in avoiding the issue altogether he was basically saying that he had no excuses to offer; but some attempt at an explanation would seem to be a minimum requirement for an autobiography of this type.

So why did he write the book? To rehabilitate his public image, by emphasizing all his good works in prison, and completely ignoring the dark side of his past. And indirectly, he hoped to convince the parole board to let him out. He did get out, though it remains a matter of debate whether the book had anything to do with his successful parole application (after numerous failures) in 1958. So the book is worth reading, if you have any interest in the Leopold and Loeb case, and/or life in the rich neighborhoods of Chicago during the Roaring '20s. Just don't expect to learn any of Leopold's true motivations.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

His Life in Prison

By Acute Observer

Life Plus 99 Years

This 1958 book by Nathan Leopold Jr. does not have a Table of Contents for its 26 chapters or an Index to its 381 pages. The 'Introduction' was written by Erle Stanley Gardner, famous for his novels and creating "The Court of Last Resort" to free the innocent convicted. Leopold and Loeb killed a younger boy in the belief they were smart enough to get away with murder. Edmund Locard's principle that any criminal leaves behind and takes away trace evidence was true in this "Crime of the Century". Most murders are done for money, it is unusual for someone to kill without a motive. Some murders go unsolved (The Hall-Mills or the Borden murders). Gardner asks about the lack of "moral fiber" in this case. Whose fault was that? Parents, teachers, or the vague term of "society"? Gardner does not mention books, radio, or other entertainment.

Were Leopold and Loeb the first teenage murderers? If so, what had changed? Did the teaching of Nietzsche's "philosophy" affect them? They had wealth and intelligence, but not the low cunning needed to get away with murder ["Where's Jimmy?"] Richard Loeb volunteered to help the police. Police treatment of suspects was determined by status (p.13). [Is it different today?] Found eyeglasses provided a clue, then their alibi was found to be false. And Loeb confessed (did he want to be caught?). Gardner says environment has an effect. When most people lived on farms teenagers were busy in useful work. Low population density is a factor in crime today. Page 14 has some examples. What happens to "juvenile delinquents" when caught? Some are paroled to parents, others sent to a "youth camp". The average person has no knowledge of existence in prison, this book tells about prison life (p.17).

What has caused the alarming increase in vicious crimes committed by those under 18? Was it due to modern life (p.18)? Is it due to the parent's examples? Or a lack of discipline? [If its too much radio and television then the Corporate Media shares the blame.] What can rehabilitation do (p.19)? [There is no mention of "peer pressure" or background. Crime flourishes with poverty. There have been many juvenile murderers since Leopold and Loeb but they did not get the same publicity (p.20). Most of the men in prison are later released; what then? Will they try to "get even"? How can released prisoners be rehabilitated? [What about a WPA project to provide good jobs before anyone commits a crime? Is that too rational?] Gardner does not criticize or even mention corporate controlled entertainment or advertising. Are they blameless?

Leopold's book begins after the murder. Dick Loeb had a sunny and magnetic personality. [Like some movie stars or politicians?] People liked him, but he was amoral and without scruples. [What caused that?] The police followed all clues and questioned many. They found eyeglasses that were traced to Leopold (he was known to visit the murder scene for birdwatching), he was brought in for questioning. [Don't good detectives develop hunches from interviewing suspects?] Leopold's story didn't check out, then he continued to talk without a lawyer and was put in jail (Chapter 2). He mentioned Dick Loeb's name, who soon confessed. They confessed freely and corroborated them before witnesses. It was over except for the trial. Benjamin Bachrach and Clarence Darrow were hired as lawyers (Chapter 3). Darrow did not make a favorable impression (at first). [Was this an act to appear like an ordinary guy and appeal to the jury?]

There was a legal reason for the guilty plea. The foremost psychiatrists were hired by the defense (Chapter 4). Evidence of insanity could mitigate the sentence. Darrow read the textbooks to refute the state's psychiatrists. There was no sex motive (p.77). The judge chose life imprisonment as they were minors (p.78). They were sent to Joliet (Chapter 5). The next chapters tell of his experiences. Leopold volunteered to teach other prisoners (Chapter 7). The weekly routine is described (Chapter 8). He got appendicitis and was transferred to Stateville (Chapter 9). He was sent to the Hole for contraband (Chapter 10). The death of a Deputy exposed the sale of paroles (Chapter 11). A mistake sent him back to the old prison (Chapter 13). He became interested in sociology. He tells his observations on a "hereditary environment" (pp.196-198).

He tells about a riot (p.203). There was a riot in Stateville (Chapter 14). A grievance committee was started but didn't work out (p.215). Leopold reorganized the Library. A school was started to educate inmates (Chapter 15). He decided the best way to expiate his wrong was to help other people (Chapter 16). Loeb got along with everybody. Sociologists studied prisoners (Chapter 17). Loeb was attacked and died (Chapter 18). He says it was over money. Leopold was isolated for his protection. [He said his conviction as a murderer gave him status!] He said he was punished for an official's mistake (Chapter 19). He was transferred to the X-ray room then to the hospital (Chapter 20). Prisoners who volunteered were used to test a cure for malaria (Chapter 21). More soldiers were lost to malaria than to enemy bullets. The doctors found a cure.

Volunteers who served their minimum were paroled. His 99-year sentence was commuted to 85 years (Chapter 23). He developed diabetes. When television was allowed there were less mischief. He applied for parole (Chapter 24), and had prominent witnesses (Chapter 25). It was denied and he would have to serve another 12 years. The book "Compulsion" was half fiction, it didn't use real names (Chapter 26). He applied for a commutation of sentence. The 'Epilogue' tells what happened later. Leopold was the youngest in the family and a child when his mother died. Could the lack of care and attention have affected his personality? [William Henry Bonney had a similar experience.] This book describes life in prison. Are things different today?

There is a warning about eating fresh white bread as causing constipation. Does this explain the habit of toasting? Another reason to eat whole-grain bread, like pumpernickel (brown bread) or the rarer black bread of eastern Europe.

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