

SCOPES MONKEY TRIAL

The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes

What is the Scopes Monkey Trial?

A legal case in July 1925 in which a substitute high school teacher, John Scopes, was accused of violating Tennessee's Butler Act, which had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school. The trial was deliberately staged in order to attract publicity to the small town of Dayton, Tennessee, where it was held. Scopes was unsure whether he had ever actually taught evolution, but he purposely incriminated himself so that the case could have a defendant.



John Scopes



William Jennings Bryan



Clarence Darrow

Prosecutor: William Jennings Bryan

A three-time presidential candidate, running for the Democratic Party in 1896, 1900, and 1908. He served as Secretary of State (1913-1915) under President Woodrow Wilson. He considered Darwinism a major threat to US National Security and believed that it would cause degraded morality. This alarmed him because he believed that degraded morality had prevailed in Germany, contributing to WWI. Five days after the conclusion of the Scopes case, Bryan died in his sleep.

Defense Attorney: Clarence Darrow

A leading member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). He was a prominent attorney and civil libertarian, believing in the supremacy of individual rights and personal freedoms over state authority.

Verdict

Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100 (\$1395 in 2017), but the verdict was overturned on a technicality. The trial served its purpose of drawing intense national publicity, as national reporters flocked to Dayton to cover the big-name lawyers who had agreed to represent each side. The trial publicized the Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion, against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on whether "modern science" should be taught in schools.

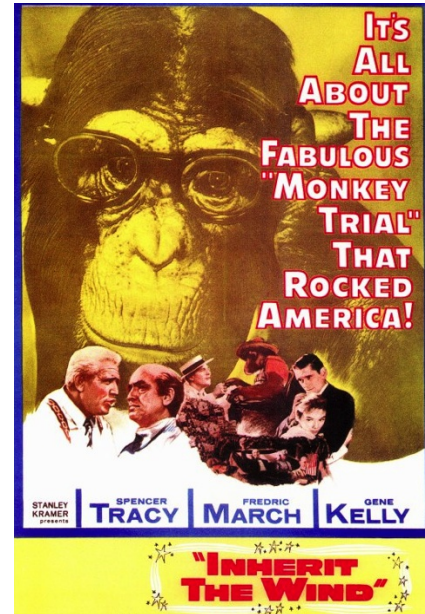
Sources

Wikipedia (Scopes Trial, William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Darrow, Inherit the Wind)
Amazon Reviews

INHERIT THE WIND

1960

Inherit the Wind is a fictional account of the Scopes Monkey Trial. It was not intended to be a realistic account of the trial, but instead a story that could be used to discuss McCarthyism (the practice of making accusations of subversion or treason without proper regard for evidence). The term McCarthyism refers to Senator Joe McCarthy, who from 1947 - 1956, led a witch hunt for Communists within the United States. This created a period of heightened political repression where people were afraid to be labeled as “reds.” *Inherit the Wind* is a response to the impact that McCarthyism had on intellectual discourse. The trial was not about science versus religion, it was about the ‘right to think.’



Names of characters have been changed from the original players in the Scopes Monkey Trial:

- Bertram T. Cates ~ John Scopes
- Matthew Harrison Brady ~ William Jennings Bryan
- Henry Drummond ~ Clarence Darrow

CREATIONIST RESPONSE

Inherit the Wind has been called “misleading” and “propaganda” by proponents of creationism and intelligent design. Some believe it promotes anti-Christian ideas, some believe that evolution is censoring creationist discussions, and some believe that it is an assault on Middle America. In response to *Inherit the Wind*, the movie *Alleged* was released in 2009. This movie, classified as a romance/drama, follows a reporter covering the Scopes Monkey Trial. It asserted that Darwinian thinking can be used to justify eugenics (which wasn't a part of the real trial) and that the media intentionally presented a skewed view to attack Christianity.



★★★★★ The antidote to "Inherit the Wind"

By [redacted] on November 16, 2011

Format: DVD | [Verified Purchase](#)

★☆☆☆☆ Christianity Shouldn't Need A Public Relations Campaign

By [redacted] on May 23, 2014

Format: Amazon Video | [Verified Purchase](#)

Sources

Wikipedia (Scopes Trial, William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Darrow, Inherit the Wind)
Amazon Reviews