

PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

Written By

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***Inspired by the compelling true story and author Sharon Davies' book,
Rising Road***

Logline: In 1920s Birmingham, Alabama, one man takes on the town, the Ku Klux Klan and a future Supreme Court Justice all for the cause of truth.

Synopsis: As the County Solicitor in 1920s Birmingham, Alabama, JOE TATE has prosecuted his share of cases, but when EDWIN STEPHENSON walks up a front porch in downtown Birmingham in broad daylight, raises his gun and fires – killing his intended target FATHER JAMES COYLE – everything changes. What looks like an open and shut case, is anything but – and it will lead Tate to confront the dark side of the city he knows and loves, while testing every value he's ever held.

When Stephenson claims self-defense, Tate's neighbors, friends, even those sharing his church pew on Sunday morning line up on Stephenson's side, even though his story is ever-changing. As Tate digs deeper, he uncovers the 'open secret' all these people share: they're all members of the Ku Klux Klan.

With the town watching his every move, Tate continues to probe, and discovers Stephenson's motive: Stephenson's daughter, RUTH, had become Catholic against her father's wishes; she married PEDRO GUSSMAN, another Catholic. Father Coyle, sympathetic to them, performed the ceremony. Stephenson, even though a Methodist minister, was driven by his hate and rage and fully embraced the KKK's stance of rabid anti-Catholicism driving him to his actions.

When a suspect Grand Jury drags its feet in bringing a charge against Stephenson, Joe Tate has the perfect opportunity to dismiss the case and avoid the looming conflict he knows could tear his entire life apart. He is well aware there are many men in positions of power who want the case to go away altogether. He is warned that prosecuting the case will cost him professionally. It may even put him (and his family) in danger. Tate's WIFE urges him to remove himself from the case. However, despite all, he pushes forward. Once at trial, he finds himself facing a jury packed with KKK members. The judge is rumored to be KKK. Three of the four defense attorneys are KKK, and the brilliant lead defense attorney, HUGO BLACK, will not only join the KKK, but ultimately will be named to the U.S. Supreme Court.

To add to Tate's personal drama, Black and Tate have crossed paths in the past and have bad blood between them. Black has held a grudge ever since Tate defeated him in a court trial and then took the County Solicitor position Black coveted. Black believes he has a personal score to settle.

Despite the long odds of winning the case and the personal and professional price the trial will most certainly cost Joe Tate – he follows the path that he has decided must guide him: the pursuit of justice.

Inspired by the true story that was Birmingham's trial of the century – and one still talked about 100 years later – PURSUIT OF JUSTICE is a riveting story of courage and standing up for what is right. Father Coyle and the man who pursued justice for him, Joe Tate, both did what they knew they had to do... they stood for truth no matter the cost.