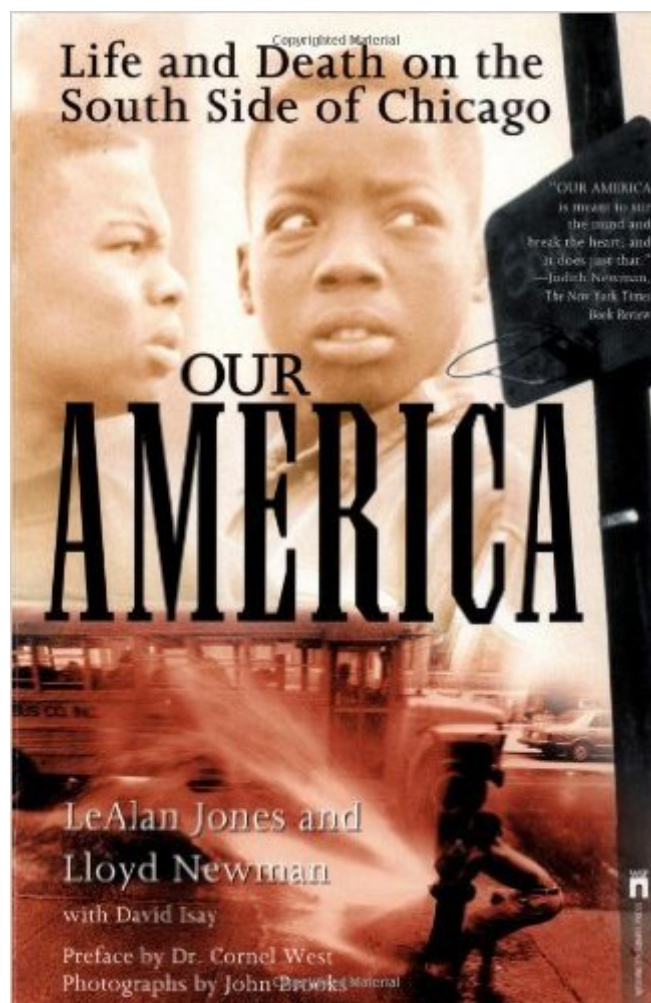


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# Our America: Life And Death On The South Side Of Chicago



## Synopsis

Through two award-winning National Public Radio documentaries, and now this powerful book, LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman have made it their mission to be loud voices from one of this country's darkest places, Chicago's Ida B. Wells housing project. Set against the stunning photographs of a talented young photographer from the projects, *Our America* evokes the unforgiving world of these two amazing young men, and their struggle to survive unrelenting tragedy. With a gift for clear-eyed journalism, they tell their own stories and others, including that of the death of Eric Morse, a five-year-old who was dropped to his death from the fourteenth floor of an Ida B. Wells apartment building by two other little boys. Sometimes funny, often painful, but always charged with their dream of *Our America*, LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman reach out to grab your attention and break your heart.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (43 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

*Our America*, a book by two young boys from a housing project on the South Side of Chicago, is raw and beautiful all at once. It tells the story of the authors, LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman, as they make their way in the Ida B. Well's housing project and tell the story of a five year-old's death from one of the buildings. The book, which was written by the boys in collaboration with author David Isay, is part journalism, part activism and part reflection. It takes a very factual look at the events of the child's death, there are transcriptions from interviews, and there are their own ramblings and editorializing about what's going on in their part of the country. The boys become

involved simply by bringing their notebooks, pens, tape recorders, cameras (and their instincts) to their own neighborhood. Interview subjects include teachers, young children, cousins, neighbors, the chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority, police officers and lawyers. Their approach is direct and simple - they ask the tough questions of the people in charge. For example, Lloyd asks the CHA chairman, "Would you want your kids growing up in these public houses?" With the help of David Isay, LeAlan and Lloyd become the chroniclers of their particular time and place. The book's readability level is low - at maximum, it's on a fifth grade level in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure. However, the themes and issues developed in the book are far more advanced. Students of any age level in high school should be able to grasp the content and then think critically about the issues it presents around racism, poverty, gang violence, family structure and public housing. It is a book aimed not only at young people but also the adults in power, the people who make the decisions that affect the poor.

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