



# SAINT IGNATIUS

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May 2022

Dear Honors English IV students,

This summer the English Department is requesting that you spend some time engaged in summer reading. Please read below for information relative to your assigned summer reading titles.

## Honors English IV

*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

*The True American: Murder and Mercy in Texas* by Anand Giridharadas

***Bryan Stevenson** was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Stevenson into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.*

***Just Mercy** is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.*

*Originally from Cleveland and a graduate of University School, **Anand Giridharadas** is a writer, on-air political analyst for NBC News and MSNBC, and a visiting scholar at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University. His book **The True American** tells the story of Raisuddin Bhuiyan, a Bangladesh Air Force officer who dreams of making a life in America. But days after 9/11, an avowed "American terrorist" named Mark Stroman, seeking revenge, walks into the Dallas minimart where Bhuiyan has found temporary work and shoots him, nearly killing him. *The True American* explores how these two men from opposite ends of the earth found their lives tragically linked on the day of the shooting, and it follows them as they attempt to rebuild shattered lives—one striving on Death Row to become a better man, the other to heal, forgive, and succeed in an unfamiliar country. Ranging from Texas's juvenile justice system to the swirling crowd of pilgrims in Mecca, from a biker bar to an immigrant mosque in Dallas, from a wealthy household of chicken importers in Karachi, Pakistan, to the sober residences of Brownwood, Texas, *The True American* tells a story about our love-hate relationship with immigrants, about the encounter of Islam and the West, about how—or whether—we choose what we become. [adapted from author website]*

## Assessment

Upon your return from the summer break you will need to be prepared to engage in conversation with your classmates and teacher about the books that you read. In addition, **you will compose an essay on the summer reading books that is due at the beginning of class on the first day of school.** Please see the attached materials for prompts, guidelines, and further information relating to this assignment.

### Availability

We plan to distribute copies of both texts to your son before this school year ends. Should this not be possible, and if obtaining copies of the assigned books is a financial challenge for your family, please contact me via email at [dbradesca@ignatius.edu](mailto:dbradesca@ignatius.edu)

Please be sure to have a copy of the text with you during the opening weeks of school. E-books are also acceptable.

- **Active Reading Strategies**

The English Department recommends that students keep a reading journal and/or that they annotate their personal copies of their assigned summer reading text. An effective active reading process may include:

- **Recording chapter summaries.** Take some time at the end of each chapter to write, in your own words, what the chapter was about.
- **Annotating while reading.** Make notes on important events, character developments, symbols, use of literary elements, and your own observations.
- **Asking critical thinking questions.** What questions do you have after reading your book? What are the issues, viewpoints, and themes of the book? How does the content of this book apply to your life or the lives of others?

We hope that the summer break provides you with some time to rest, reflect, and prepare for the new academic year at Saint Ignatius High School.

Sincerely,



Daniel F. Bradesca  
Honors English IV Instructor  
English Department

### **Honors English IV Summer Reading Essay 2022**

#### **Texts:**

- ***Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson***
- ***The True American: Murder and Mercy in Texas by Anand Giridharadas***

#### **Assignment:**

- **Choose (1) ONE of the following questions to answer in a well organized, grammatically correct essay.**
- **Be sure to cite specific evidence from both texts to support your answer using proper MLA format for all citations.**
- **Your essay will be due on the first day of class.**

(1) The theme of redemption is evident in Walter MacMillan's story when he is proven innocent. How is this theme also present in Stevenson's story? Explain how this theme is or is not present in *The True American*.

(2) A recurring question behind Giridharadas's *The True American* is, to put it simply: what makes us who we are? Are our actions determined by our upbringing and identity or by the decisions we make? Choose any person in *The True American* and any person in *Just Mercy* & describe the ways in which their backgrounds and choices influence what happens to them. As you start this new chapter in your life, consider what has influenced **you**. What will **you** embrace and what might **you** choose to discard?

(3) The theme of just and unjust punishment is a major theme of both books. As Catholics, we are called to uphold an ethic of life regardless of guilt or innocence. Is there any justifiable cause for a death penalty? Explain and support your answer with specific textual evidence from *Just Mercy* as well as *The True American*. Be sure to cite all references.

(4) Throughout *Just Mercy* & *The True American*, there are many examples of oppression (systemic racism, poverty, lack of mental health services, and others) How might the events have turned out differently for the individuals in both stories had they not faced such barriers? Choose one of the barriers and research to see if and/or how they have changed since *Just Mercy* & *The True American* were written.

## See below for information on organizing essays.

### Introduction:

- Begins with a general yet related hook or grabber sentence followed by focus sentences that narrow the topic to your thesis statement.
- Include the TITLE (capitalized and punctuated correctly) AUTHOR'S full name and the GENRE (*Both books are nonfiction NOT novels.*) in your focus sentences.
- Include transitional words and phrases to make your ideas flow more smoothly from one sentence to another.
- Thesis statement should give your SPECIFIC topic and general ideas (in a word or phrase) of what you will be covering in the essay.

### Body Paragraphs:

- Each point you are making about your topic should have its own paragraph or two.
- Remember a new idea needs a new paragraph, and the first sentence of a new paragraph is indented.
- Use transitional words and phrases to show the relationship between two sentences for better coherence.
- Include TEXTUAL EVIDENCE (specific quotations, events, etc.) to support your ideas.

### Conclusion:

- Wrap up your main idea without repeating the information from the body paragraphs.
- Start with a RESTATED thesis statement and write more general sentences after that.
- These can be comments on the criminal justice system in general, or a commentary on what you discovered.

**Common Transitional Words & Phrases** (always followed by a comma):

**Adding Ideas:** *In addition, Also, Furthermore, Moreover, etc.*

**Example:** *For example, For instance, ... (Avoid phrases like: Another example of this is when ...)*

**Time:** *Then, Next, Subsequently, After that, First, Second, Third, etc.*

**Conclusion:** *Finally, In conclusion*

**Contrast:** *However, In contrast, On the other hand,*

**Result:** *As a result, Therefore,*

