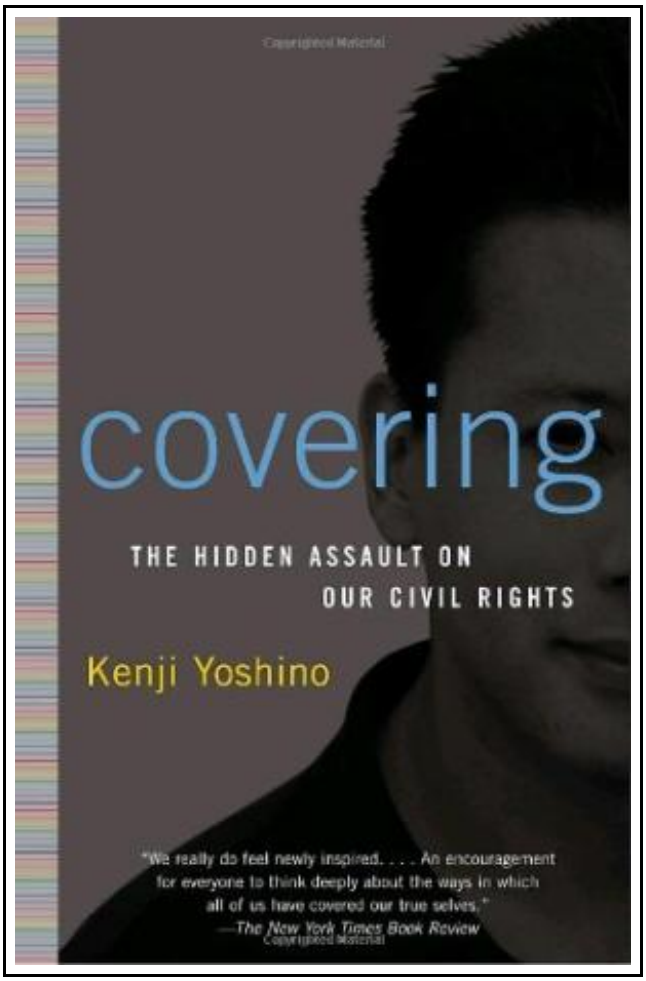
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Reviews

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(Mandy Larson)

COVERING: THE HIDDEN ASSAULT ON AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS (PAPERBACK)

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Random House USA Inc, United States, 2007. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Reprint. 198 x 132 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In this remarkable and elegant work, acclaimed Yale Law School professor Kenji Yoshino fuses legal manifesto and poetic memoir to call for a redefinition of civil rights in our law and culture. Everyone covers. To cover is to downplay a disfavored trait so as to blend into the mainstream. Because all of us possess stigmatized attributes, we all encounter pressure to cover in our daily lives. Given its pervasiveness, we may experience this pressure to be a simple fact of social life. Against conventional understanding, Kenji Yoshino argues that the demand to cover can pose a hidden threat to our civil rights. Though we have come to some consensus against penalizing people for differences based on race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, and disability, we still routinely deny equal treatment to people who refuse to downplay differences along these lines. Racial minorities are pressed to act white by changing their names, languages, or cultural practices. Women are told to play like men at work. Gays are asked not to engage in public displays of same-sex affection. The devout are instructed to minimize expressions of faith, and individuals with disabilities are urged to conceal the paraphernalia that permit them to function. In a wide-ranging analysis, Yoshino demonstrates that American civil rights law has generally ignored the threat posed by these covering demands. With passion and rigor, he shows that the work of civil rights will not be complete until it attends to the harms of coerced conformity. At the same time, Yoshino is responsive to the American exasperation with identity politics, which often seems like an endless parade of groups asking for state and social solicitude. He observes that the...

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