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Soggetti	Sex discrimination against women - Law and legislation - United States - History Female offenders - Legal status, laws, etc - United States - History Women - United States - Social conditions Femininity in popular culture - United States - History Femininity - Social aspects - United States - History Trials - United States - History
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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [173]-189) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Narrative intersections in popular trials -- Framing madness in the sanity trial of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard -- The mad doctors meet McNaughton : the battle for narrative supremacy in the trial of Mary Harris -- "True womanhood" and perfect madness : the sanity trial of Mary Todd Lincoln -- Womanhood as asset and liability : Lizzie Andrew Borden -- Bodies at the crossroads : the rise and fall of Madame Restell -- "You know it when you see it" : the rhetorical embodiment of race and gender in Rhinelander v. Rhinelander.
Sommario/riassunto	Carlson analyzes the situations of several women of varying historical stature, from the insanity trials of Mary Todd Lincoln and Lizzie Borden's trial for the brutal slaying of her father and stepmother, to lesser-known trials involving insanity, infidelity, murder, abortion, and interracial marriage. The insanity trial of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, the wife of a minister, resulted from her attempts to change her own religion, while a jury acquitted Mary Harris for killing her

married lover, suggesting that loss of virginity to an adulterous man was justifiable grounds for homicide. The popular conception of abortion as a "woman's crime" came to the fore in the case of Ann Loman (also known as Madame Restell), who performed abortions in New York both before and after it became a crime. Finally, Alice Rhinelander was sued for fraud by her new husband Leonard for "passing" as white, but the jury was more moved by the notion of Alice being betrayed as a woman by her litigious husband than by the supposed defrauding of Leonard as a white male. Alice won the case, but the image of womanhood as in need of sympathy and protection won out as well. At the heart of these cases, Carlson reveals clearly just how narrow was the line that women had to walk, since the same womanly virtues that were expected of them--passivity, frailty, and purity--could be turned against them at any time. These trials of popular status are especially significant because they reflect the attitudes of the broad audience, indicate which forms of knowledge are easily manipulated, and allow us to analyze how the verdict is argued outside the courtroom in the public and press. With gripping retellings and incisive analysis of these scandalous criminal and civil cases, this book will appeal to historians, rhetoricians, feminist researchers, and anyone who enjoys courtroom drama.
