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Barack Obama, in his acclaimed campaign speech discussing the troubling complexities of race in America today, quoted William Faulkner's famous remark "The past isn't dead and buried. In fact, it isn't even past." In Not Even Past, award-winning historian Thomas Sugrue examines the paradox of race in Obama's America and how President Obama intends to deal with it.

Obama's journey to the White House undoubtedly marks a watershed in the history of race in America. Yet even in what is being hailed as the post-civil rights era, racial divisions--particularly between blacks and whites--remain deeply entrenched in American life. Sugrue traces Obama's evolving understanding of race and racial inequality throughout his career, from his early days as a community organizer in Chicago, to his time as an attorney and scholar, to his spectacular rise to power as a charismatic and savvy politician, to his dramatic presidential campaign. Sugrue looks at Obama's place in the contested history of the civil rights struggle; his views about the root causes of black poverty in America; and the incredible challenges confronting his historic presidency.

Does Obama's presidency signal the end of race in American life? In Not Even Past, a leading historian of civil rights, race, and urban America offers a revealing and unflinchingly honest assessment of the culture and politics of race in the age of Obama, and of our prospects for a postracial America.

Thomas J. Sugrue is the David Boies Professor of History and Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. His books include Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North and The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (Princeton).