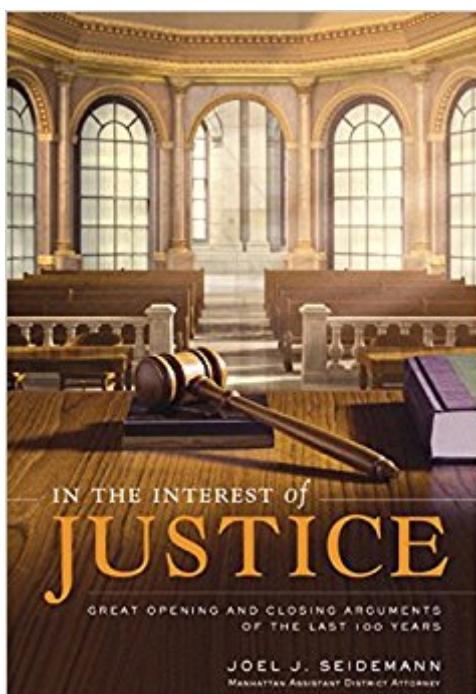


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In The Interest Of Justice: Great Opening And Closing Arguments Of The Last 100 Years



Synopsis

Drawing from some of the most well-known courtroom cases of our time, this rich and rewarding volume collects more than two dozen of the most memorable opening and closing arguments made by top prosecutors and defense attorneys in the last 100 years. Carefully selected to explore every major aspect and challenge of the legal process, the speeches showcased here highlight the tactics and strategies, colorful language, and stirring rhetoric that lawyers use to win judge and jury to their side. With a shrewd eye for courtroom stratagems and a keen understanding of the social currents that shape them, Manhattan assistant district attorney Joel Seidemann introduces and illuminates each speech from an insider's perspective. From an Israeli prosecutor's heart-wrenching speech against Adolf Eichmann to the chilling reenactment of Timothy McVeigh's meticulous planning of the Oklahoma City bombing, we witness the power of an impassioned presentation to tip the scales toward the fulfillment of justice. Arguments from other landmark trials are included to reveal the smartest tricks of the trial lawyer's trade. Why did O.J. win the criminal case and lose the civil one? Why did the jury acquit the cops who shot Amadou Diallo, even though they fired forty-one shots at an unarmed man? Why was Sean "Puffy" Combs acquitted of all charges after that mysterious shootout in a NYC nightclub? In the Interest of Justice sheds light on such questions and celebrates the fascinating art of courtroom persuasion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Despite what the subtitle says, most of the high-profile cases that draw Seidemann's focus are from the last quarter-century (a much shorter span than that covered in another volume of closing

arguments, And the Walls Came Tumbling Down by Michael Lief and Mitchell Caldwell. The usual suspects (so to speak) are here: Johnnie Cochran's summation in O.J. Simpson's criminal trial, the prosecutors' opening statements in the cases of Adolf Eichmann and Timothy McVeigh. Seidemann, an assistant DA in New York City for over two decades, also offers three cases in which defendants represented themselves, including accused al-Qaeda conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui, though these and other cases (Martha Stewart, Marv Albert) seem included more for their notoriety than for the quality of the prose or legal arguments. But then there is William Jennings Bryan's eloquent, if debatable summation in the Scopes trial, proclaiming the amorality, if not the immorality, of science. Seidemann does achieve his two goals: to entertain the reader with legal drama and to remind the reader of some important details— that O.J., for instance, won his criminal case but lost in the civil suit. Seidemann's greatest service is to provide brief but thorough annotations of the cases, in which he considers some of the reasons behind an argument's success or failure. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Joel J. Seidemann has been assistant district attorney for New York County since May 1982, and since 1989 has been senior trial counsel responsible for trying murder cases and other serious and complex crimes. He has been adjunct professor of trial advocacy at Pace University School of Law since 1995, and was named Pace's Outstanding Adjunct Professor of the Year in 1999.

Good choices of opening statements and closing arguments, but the author offers very little in regards to explaining why each opening or closing was actually chosen. It seemed from the description that the author would "illuminates each speech from an insider's perspective," but this hardly happens.

Excellent book. All litigators should read this

great read

It's a very nice book. I highly recommend it to all legal enthusiasts especially trial lawyers like me.

The book is a good, quick, enjoyable read. It's highly recommended for law students, litigators, laymen alike. Practical exercises are plus-points.

On the positive, this book contains legible copies of speeches that great attorneys gave in various trials. However, to read them, you will also have to wade through the intense bias of the author, a district attorney. Not only is he dismissive and insulting to defense counsel, he makes it abundantly clear that he does not believe in or support the Constitution. His worldview is that of law enforcement, modern law enforcement, the warrior cop and heroic DA who are hamstrung by "rules" like "the presumption of innocence." His utter inability to recognize the truth of what defense counsel argues in cases such as the People v. OJ Simpson is infuriating. Had I known of his views, I would never have purchased this book. Be warned.

With the rapid growth of sensationalist legal coverage on TV news and primetime courtroom drama a la "The Practice", it can be difficult to understand fully the merits of a good trial lawyer's rhetorical virtuoso aside from the twists, turns, and socio-political backdrop which typically capture Americans' attention. With few exceptions, (e.g. Scopes trial, O.J. Simpson trial) the lawyer, that civic advocate and protector of justice, rarely receives deserved recognition. We sit collectively on the edge of our seats with eyes and ears peeled for damning witness testimonies and blood-stained clothes. Evidence is rarely that clear, Seidemann informs us, and most real life cases turn on the efficacy of the lawyer. This book renews our appreciation for a profession derided so often for its dishonesty that we have forgotten the sad and dangerous implications behind the humor. Within these pages of heart-wrenching tragedies and controversies that rocked our nation, you will surely re-experience memories of the incidents as the opening/closing statements verify or challenge what you believe. Seidemann reminds us that we have conferred upon lawyers the great responsibility of juridical guardianship, in order to shake us out of complacency and reaffirm our right to demand rectitude and loyalty to their oath. For Generation Y and the Millennials, "In the Interest of Justice" should be required reading for the oft neglected legal aspect of cultural literacy. Direct accounts of the gruesome atrocities perpetuated by Adolph Eichmann and the SS, Johnny Cochran's convoluted deconstruction of the Simpson evidence, the Bernard Goetz incident, and the unmitigated hatred of Zacharias Moussaoui in his own words far exceed detached summaries of these pivotal moments in the collective American psyche. Though older generations may have lived through and internalized these events, imperceptibly they seem to hold less and less power as time goes by and younger leaders step up to the fore. Hopefully, this book will spur other writers to popularize equally important judicial landmarks with the same care to the preservation of the primary evidence and with equally astute explanations. These are more than exciting cases and history lessons. Seidemann

compels us to consider personally the merits and risks of the sometimes flawed but inviolable bedrock of American freedom and security: its criminal justice system.

Seidemann has chosen excerpts of opening and closing arguments from some of the most important and famous cases of the last century. But the cases were not chosen merely because they are famous; the arguments are often extremely eloquent and moving. Reading these lawyers' arguments trying sway the jury conveys more emotion and makes these cases more immediate and real than any documentary could. It gives a sense of what it must have been like to be in the jury box deciding these cases. It is interesting to see the different styles the lawyers use. The prosecutors' somber, reverential tone in his opening argument in the trial against Adolph Eichmann contrasts sharply with Gerry Spence's homespun approach in his summation in the Karen Silkwood case, but both lawyers seem to hit the perfect note. In his commentary, Seidemann, a prosecutor in Manhattan, sets the stage for each case and highlights the strategies and techniques employed. His explanations provide an excellent insight into the lawyer's craft. Surprisingly, this book reads like a novel, but it also provides a unique opportunity to get inside the courtroom and learn 20th century history through these cases.

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