



Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases

By Roy Black

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Roy Black is one of America's toughest and shrewdest criminal defense lawyers. Whether defending a wealthy celebrity or an indigent death row inmate, Black sees his job as doing whatever it takes to get his clients fair trials. In "Black's Law," he takes us behind the scenes of four difficult and dangerous cases to reveal the legal strategies, no-holds-barred tactics and courtroom psychology he used to make sure his clients received every protection promised by the law. Black's cases illustrate the life-and-death struggles that occur every day in our criminal courts. In "Alvarez," Black has to convince a jury to put aside poisonous pre-trial publicity, the threat of a race riot and almost universal pressure for a conviction in order to keep a young Hispanic police officer out of jail for killing a young black hoodlum in the line of duty. In "Knight," Black must contend with issues of class and race as he wages a four-year struggle to persuade federal appeals court judges to overturn the death sentence imposed on an insane, brutal killer because of the incompetence of his first lawyers. In "Hicks," Black has to prove the innocence of a client who is his own worst enemy by convincing a jury that the police conducted a sloppy murder investigation. And in "De La Mata," Black must persuade jurors to disregard the damaging testimony of admitted drug dealers who have plea-bargained for lesser sentences in order to save a former bank president caught in the crosshairs of a federal prosecutor waging his own relentless war on drugs. At a time when the public and its elected officials are giving prosecutors and judges more power to put criminals behind bars, defense lawyers are often seen as being on the side of the bad guys. But Roy Black believes that when we chip away at the rights of the accused, we diminish our own rights as well. In our adversarial system, all too often the only person standing between a defendant and jail -- or the death penalty -- is the criminal defense lawyer. In these accounts, Black demonstrates in riveting detail how a defense attorney must investigate criminal cases by sifting through evidence and preparing for trial. (It's like preparing for a war.) He shows us how the principles of law, cross-examination and evidence -- as well as careful jury selection and skillful use of expert witnesses -- can level the playing field to counter the enormous resources that state and federal prosecutors have at their disposal. "Black's Law" reveals what really goes on in our criminal courts and makes resoundingly clear the crucial role that criminal defense lawyers play in

safeguarding the basic right to a fair trial for all.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The title of criminal defense lawyer Roy Black's first book alludes to the renowned legal dictionary, and the reference is appropriate: Black is beyond a reasonable doubt the definitive defense attorney. Considered among the best advocates for the accused in the United States, he has had clients that included William Kennedy Smith and Marv Albert. But in *Black's Law*, the former public defender and law professor recounts the strategies and tactics he employed to safeguard the freedom of four lesser-known clients: Luis Alvarez, Thomas Knight, Steve Hicks, and Fred De La Mata.

In "Alvarez" (Black refers to each of his four examples by case name), a Miami cop is put on trial for shooting an African American suspect with no previous criminal record, pitting Black against the office of Dade County state attorney Janet Reno, who desperately needed a conviction to avert widespread race riots. In "Knight," Black must convince a federal appeals court that an insane multiple killer was condemned to death row by the bad lawyering of his first four attorneys. In "Hicks," a young bartender finds himself charged with murder after his girlfriend dies of an accidental gunshot wound; Black defends him against incriminating circumstantial evidence and the cluster-bungling efforts of police investigators. And in "De La Mata," Black takes a break from the murder trials to work on a money-laundering case.

The aforementioned *Black's Law Dictionary* defines a defense attorney as "a [l]awyer who files appearance in behalf of defendant and represents such in civil or criminal case," but Roy Black's account underscores how such technical definitions fail to convey the essential role defense attorneys play in our adversarial system of justice. *Black's Law* is not just about four individual defendants, it's about the rights to which *all* defendants are entitled--and for which people like Roy Black fight--in a court of law. --*Tim Hogan*

From Publishers Weekly

Best known for representing headline-grabbers such as Marv Albert and William Kennedy Smith, defense attorney Black has spent 28 "raw, bizarre" years in the criminal courts. Here he recounts his successful defense strategies in four apparently hopeless cases, only one of which made the national news: the 1982 murder trial of Luis Alvarez, a young police officer whose shooting of a black teenager set off three days of rioting in Miami. Black shows how he selected, and then seduced, the Alvarez jury, how he designed his client's appearance ("single-breasted suits, in muted hues, with non-designer ties") and how he showed up the prosecution's big-bucks case with low-tech tactics ("Never underestimate the power of a piece of chalk"). But for Black the most lethal weapon is cross-examination, the fascinating transcripts of which he quotes at length. Black tends to downplay his own rare mistakes even as he exudes contempt for prosecutorial, and sometimes judicial, incompetence. He's very good, and he knows it. On the other hand, he justifies his law-is-hell cockiness with convincing reminders of the high stakes involved: in the case of Thomas Knight, for example, all that saved the insane, indigent murderer from Florida's electric chair was Black's deft exposure of the previous attorneys' gross ineptitude. Practitioners may find many of Black's revelations unsurprising, but no one will dispute Black's in-court performance, which this book powerfully captures. BOMC alternate; author tour.

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From [Booklist](#)

Defense counsel to the celebrities, Black offers a surprise: his four clients whose plights are profiled here are not celebrities. Out of their ordinariness grows Black's belief in his role as a last-ditch bulwark against the

prosecution's greater resources. All four cases hail from south Florida; the first concerns a cop who became a lightning rod for urban grievances. Officer Alvarez shot and killed a man who the policeman said was going for a gun. Miami's Overtown riot of 1982 ensued. The anxiety of a further acquittal riot seeped into the courtroom, which Black tried to inoculate into the jury selection. After voir dire, his cross-examination strategems become Black's main weapons, and his description (however self-flattering) briskly propels the prose toward the verdict. Ditto another case, a murder charge in which Black outsmarts the maladroit prosecutor, though his telling borders on gloating. A death-penalty appeal and a drug-money laundering case complete Black's docket, to which lawyers aspirant and actual will be attracted. *Gilbert Taylor*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Orlando Hernandez:

Here thing why this kind of Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all studying a book is good nevertheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as delightful as food or not. Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no book that similar with Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases. It gives you thrill reading journey, its open up your personal eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in park, café, or even in your approach home by train. When you are having difficulties in bringing the imprinted book maybe the form of Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases in e-book can be your alternative.

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The feeling that you get from Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases is the more deep you searching the information that hide in the words the more you get considering reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to understand but Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood through anyone who read that because the author of this book is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this kind of Black's Law: A Criminal Lawyer Reveals his Defense Strategies in Four Cliffhanger Cases instantly.

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