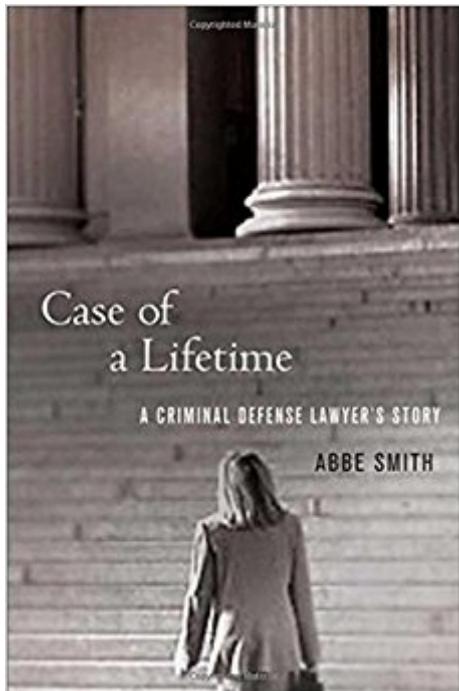


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# Case Of A Lifetime: A Criminal Defense Lawyer's Story



## **Synopsis**

A recent study estimates that thousands of innocent people are wrongfully imprisoned each year in the United States. Some are exonerated through DNA evidence, but many more languish in prison because their convictions were based on faulty eyewitness accounts and no DNA is available. Prominent criminal lawyer and law professor Abbe Smith weaves together real life cases to show what it is like to champion the rights of the accused. Smith describes the moral and ethical dilemmas of representing the guilty and the weighty burden of fighting for the innocent, including the victorious story of how she helped free a woman wrongly imprisoned for nearly three decades. For fans of Law and Order and investigative news programs like 20/20, Case of a Lifetime is a chilling look at what really determines a person's innocence.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

If a potential reader believes that only guilty people are in jail and that our court system is fair, they should read this book. It does a good narrative job of laying that myth to rest. Would give it more stars on that point. As a piece of narrative, I found it less satisfying, once we got past the actual facts of the injustice. I believed that this child, then woman, then old woman, was an innocent who was in the wrong place at the wrong time, with the wrong associates. I learned entirely too much about Ms. Smith's feeling of guilt, although I did think that it was a good thing that she hung in all those years in a quest for relief for an innocent person. As a narrative, the book would have worked at about half the length. Would have liked the author to explicate how subtle, and not so subtle, prejudices

operate in the criminal justice system, and to expand Kelly's plight to all the folks in our society who are viewed as "other" by our system. In Kelly's case, the prejudices included that she was poor and that she was gay and that she was tried alongside an already convicted associate. An upper middle class woman, with family sitting behind her, and expensive representation, would likely have been treated very differently. On the legal points, I would have liked to learn more about whether there was a legal way to sever her from Billy, or to appeal that her case was not severed. I thought it unfair to offer diffuse criticism of Kelly's original attorney, particularly with respect to Kelly's gayness. He appears to have believed that volunteering it would have hurt her, but it apparently was nevertheless introduced. The recounting was unclear on whether Kelly was truthful on this issue.

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