



Justice in Plain Sight: How a Small-Town Newspaper and Its Unlikely Lawyer Opened America's Courtrooms

Dan Bernstein

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With the importance of a free press and the rule of law rightly in the national conversation, Dan Bernstein's *Justice in Plain Sight* is a timely release, detailing a California paper's Supreme Court battles over the press and public's access to court proceedings.

Based in Riverside, California, the *Press-Enterprise* was a Pulitzer-awarded daily paper that twice sued when courts tried to limit its ability to cover high-profile cases. The first time, in 1980, the paper was blocked from covering jury selections in the death-penalty trial of Albert Greenwood Brown, who raped and murdered a teenage girl on her way to school. The next year, it was prevented from covering pre-trial hearings for Robert Rubane Diaz, a nurse who killed a series of patients under his care. In both instances, the Supreme Court ultimately needed to balance the public's right to a transparent justice system against defendants' claims that such coverage would interfere with a fair trial.

Bernstein's book is laser focused on these two landmark cases and provides no shortage of valuable context. Members of the *Press-Enterprise's* leadership and the paper's legal team become compelling characters, from colorful editors to Jim Ward, a career business lawyer who found himself arguing important constitutional cases at the highest level. Bernstein profiles each of the Supreme Court justices hearing the cases and their experiences to that point, while including numerous excerpts from the legal briefs and partial transcripts of the arguments before the Court.

The considerable research, numerous interviews, and primary documentation combine to make *Justice in Plain Sight* a comprehensive look at two landmark cases and the underdog newspaper that ensured that the justice process can't operate in secret.

JEFF FLEISCHER (January/February 2019)

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