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Self-Help

Juvenile Court: A Judge's Guide for Young Adults and Their Parents
Leora Krygier
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“I feel bad because I let my parents down. I’ve seen a lot of people on the street because of drugs. They ask for money to buy food, or even pick up food from the trash. I don’t want to end up like them,” laments one of the thousands of youthful offenders who have appeared in the Los Angeles County Juvenile Court.

For fifteen years, Judge Leora Krygier has watched wayward youth become enmeshed in the criminal justice system, charged with offenses ranging from seatbelt citations and loud music violations to carjackings and drive-by shootings. She has seen every imaginable type of teenager, from a boy who got into a fight at school while receiving chemotherapy treatments to fourteen-year-olds who come to court with their own infants. Some are remorseful, others are defiant; all are in trouble, and this book offers help to those who need guidance when they suddenly find themselves in “Juvie” court.

The juvenile criminal justice system can be bewildering to minors and their caregivers; most people have little or no experience with the court system and can be overwhelmed by the frightening and complicated process. This guidebook does not replace the advice and counsel of an experienced lawyer, but it can help ease the anxiety of teens and their parents.

Krygier provides an overview of the entire juvenile criminal justice process, from the initial police detainment through court appearances and sentencing. She gives specific advice on how to best make one’s case to the court. For example, bringing certain documents to your hearing, such as character references, can help the judge be favorably disposed. The book even features a glossary of legal terms and an appendix of the types of documents the reader can expect to encounter in the juvenile court process. Tips on preparing for court hearings and eye-opening excerpts from actual letters written to the court by teens about their personal experiences in the system are invaluable. Presented in a straightforward and crisp manner, this is a cru-cial reference guide; but it can also serve to warn youths, and their parents, about the

consequences of breaking the law.