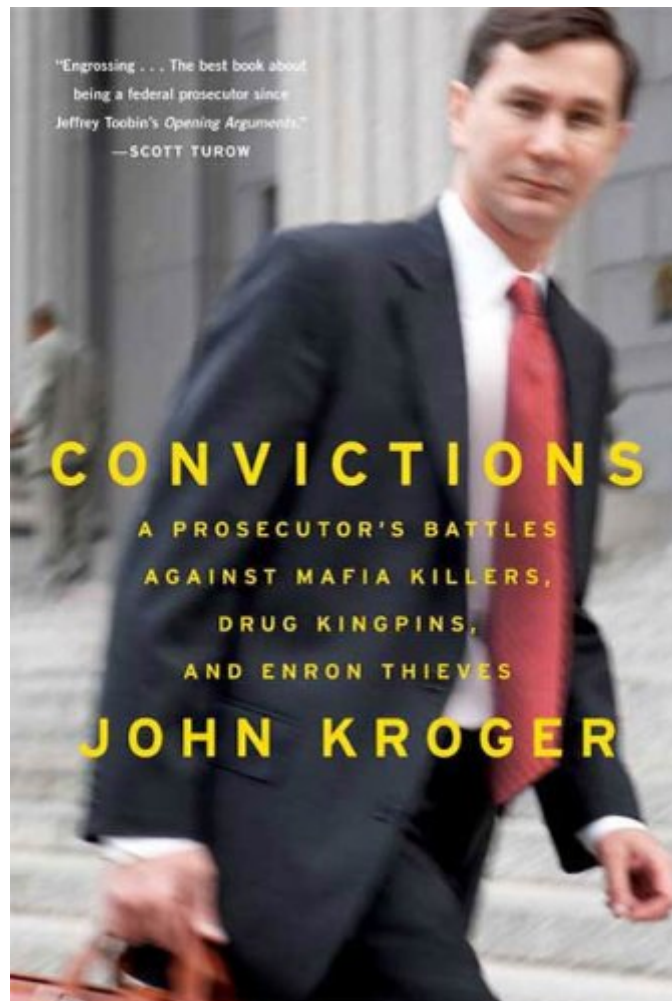


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Convictions: A Prosecutor's Battles Against Mafia Killers, Drug Kingpins, And Enron Thieves



Synopsis

Convictions is a spellbinding story from the front lines of the fight against crime. Most Americans know little about the work of assistant United States attorneys, the federal prosecutors who possess sweeping authority to investigate and prosecute the nation's most dangerous criminals. John Kroger pursued high-profile cases against Mafia killers, drug kingpins, and Enron executives. Starting from his time as a green recruit and ending at the peak of his career, he steers us through the complexities of life as a prosecutor, where the battle in the courtroom is only the culmination of long and intricate investigative work. He reveals how to flip a perp, how to conduct a cross, how to work an informant, how to placate a hostile judge. Kroger relates it all with a novelist's eye for detail and a powerful sense of the ethical conflicts he faces. Often dissatisfied with the system, he explains why our law enforcement policies frequently fail in critical areas like drug enforcement and white-collar crime. He proposes new ways in which we can fight crime more effectively, empowering citizens to pressure their lawmakers to adopt more productive policies. This is an unflinching portrait of a crucial but little-understood part of our justice system, and Kroger is an eloquent guide.

Book Information

File Size: 1234 KB

Print Length: 488 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (April 29, 2008)

Publication Date: April 29, 2008

Sold by:Â Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B004SPL0XY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #172,457 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #5 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Law > Administrative Law > Public #10 inÂ Books > Law > Administrative Law > Public #31 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Lawyers & Judges

Customer Reviews

JOHN KROGER FOR THE UNITED STATES by Hansen Alexander It was my first run in with the hot tempered Governor of Arkansas in 1992. There were smudges on the policy papers I was responsible for photocopying and he had just noticed them when visiting the Little Rock headquarters. Policy was still operated in the Washington Campaign Headquarters on this winter morning, the writing mostly done by two Yale grads, Bruce Reed and John Kroger. The Governor was furious and the building was shaking. The only calm presence was Kroger, a former Marine. Bill Clinton's overworked campaign plane was burning through most of our cash and we did not have the funds to replace our photocopy machine. "Go downstairs," Kroger calmly told me, "and ask one of the law firms if you can borrow their copy machines to do the policy papers." I did so, going from floor to floor until a cooperative young female attorney copied the papers for me--at her personal expense. John Kroger, soon to be moved to Little Rock, was not only the calmest person in the Washington office but was also one of the nicest. He was quiet but respectful of everybody. Like George Stephanopoulos, he was a good guy in the office who proved too pleasant to last long in the back stabbing world of presidential politics. Kroger left Washington in 1993 to go to law school after only a few months of exile at the Treasury Department, where he had been sent after speaking his mind during the transition period. Kroger became one of the best federal prosecutors of the late 1990s and early 21rst century, helping to send hard to convict godfathers, drug dealers, and Enron executives to prison. Convictions is his story. It is the best book about fighting crime since James B.

Not surprisingly, books on the practice and theory of America's legal system frequently center on the nitty-gritty of what's expected from the practitioners of law and also on how those individuals perform or fail to perform their duties. CONVICTIONS pretty much adheres to that approach, with the author's own career in the law as a fascinating illustration of both those aspects. He does include an important and often neglected element, however, namely the philosophy of law. Kroger's own academic background in the field of philosophy spurred him on to question not only his devotion to the law but to his responsibility to the larger society in which that law exists. As a result, the problem of legal ethics plays a significant part in this carefully and amply documented analysis of his career as a federal prosecutor. If there is a flaw in this work, it's because Kroger tended to look at the cases he prosecuted chiefly from the viewpoint of what he expected to be the direct results of his efforts. To use one example, he considered his stint in the prosecution of drug cases to be productive; in that successful interdiction of drug trafficking would inevitably lead to higher drug prices on the street. That would then decrease illegal drug usage and its accompanying addiction. Leaving aside whether or not that is an accurate estimate of what does or could result, such a view

ignores the indirect consequences of higher drug prices. Inevitably, the higher the price, the greater becomes the incentive for the drug user to find the money to pay for his addiction, one way or another, and all too frequently to the detriment of the larger society.

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