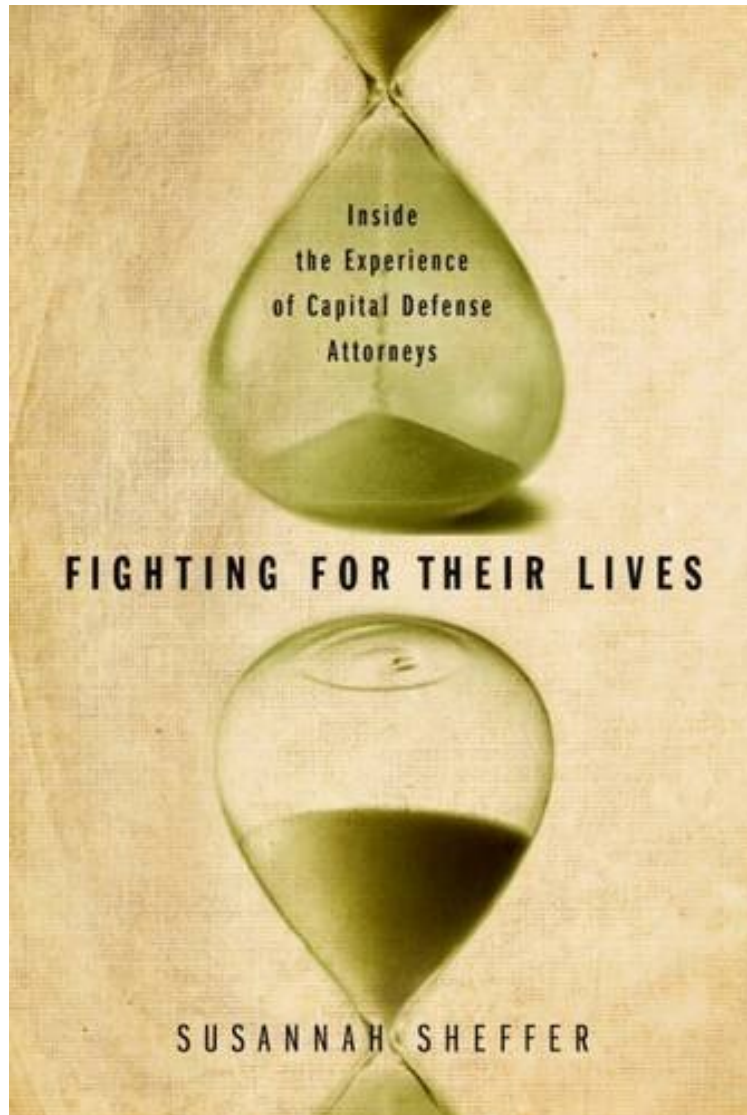


[Free read ebook] Fighting for Their Lives: Inside the Experience of Capital Defense Attorneys

Fighting for Their Lives: Inside the Experience of Capital Defense Attorneys

Susannah Sheffer

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Susannah Sheffer : Fighting for Their Lives: Inside the Experience of Capital Defense Attorneys before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fighting for Their Lives: Inside the Experience of Capital Defense Attorneys:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Last Chance LawyersBy Joy Gaines-FriedlerBeautifully written. Such a smooth writing style by an author who obviously cares deeply for the Capital Defense lawyers she so

intelligently interviewed. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Read By Phyllis Rukeyser Wonderful in depth exploration of a timely American problem that is a continuing debate in society today. This book is especially interesting to defense lawyers and psychologists. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fighting for Their Lives by Susannah Sheffer - Book Review By Ted Lehmann The death penalty is the ultimate sanction our legal system can provide to those who commit crimes of violence and cruelty beyond our capacity to bear them. These people are seen as so beyond redemption that only their legal murder within our system can exact the appropriate toll. Yet there is a legal practice of attorneys devoted to post death penalty advocacy fighting tooth and nail, body and spirit to stave off the executions and keep these social outcasts alive. Many people ask, "How can anyone seek to halt these executions?" In answer to this question and many others like it, Susannah Sheffer has written a heart rending and soul wrenching account of a series of interviews with twenty attorneys who have taken on the responsibility of defending these clients and answering these questions. In *Fighting for Their Lives: Inside the Experience of Capital Defense Attorneys* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2013, 224 Pages, \$27.95) Sheffer explores through a series of interviews the motivations, costs, rewards, grief, and loss experienced by twenty representative attorneys willing to look deep inside themselves to examine why they do what they do, what it costs them, and how they can keep doing it. Read the rest of this review on my blog. Search "Bluegrass Ted"

How do attorneys who represent clients facing the death penalty cope with the stress and trauma of their work? Through conversations with twenty of the most experienced and dedicated post-conviction capital defenders in the United States, *Fighting for Their Lives* explores this emotional territory for the first time. What is it like for these capital defenders in their last visits or phone calls with clients who are about to be taken to the execution chamber? Or the next mornings, in their lives with their families, in their dreams and flashbacks and moments alone in the car? What is it like to do this work year after year? (These attorneys had, on average, spent nineteen years doing capital defense.) Through vivid interviews amplified by the author's responses and commentary, these attorneys reveal aspects of their internal experience that they have never talked about until now. How do capital defenders manage the weight of the responsibility they carry? To what extent do they experience symptoms of trauma in the aftermath of losing a client to execution or as a result of the cumulative effects of engaging in capital defense work? What motivates them, and what do they draw upon, in order to keep engaging in such emotionally demanding work? Have they considered practicing other types of law? What can we learn from capital defenders not only about the deep and long-term effects of the death penalty but also about broader human questions of hope, effectiveness, success, failure, strength, fragility, and perseverance?

"*Fighting for Their Lives* shines a light on the overlooked personal price paid by lawyers who have the courage to represent death row prisoners: Few ever experience a victory as meaningful, and none will experience a loss as devastating." --California Lawyer
On its own terms, the book succeeds, highlighting emotional dimensions of lawyers work that are often overlooked in legal scholarship and education." --H-Law, H-Net
Sheffer takes readers beyond the courtroom and execution chambers to explore how capital defense attorneys cope when they can't save a client. ... The book is unexpectedly moving, as when an inmate consoles an attorney who has run out of options, and the author is especially adept at uncovering the ethical and professional nuances of these cases. ... sobering and intimate ... --Publishers Weekly
Sheffer's insightful book will be of interest to all capital defense attorneys and others working in the judicial system, as well as to those who work on death penalty issues in other contexts, including politicians, journalists, and advocates." --Foreword
[Sheffer] is also a lucid and lyrical writer. The resulting conversations, woven into a compelling narrative, are searching and thought-provoking. They provide insights into the emotional aspects of lawyering that I have found nowhere else." --JOTWELL
A searing account of rights and laws, crime and punishment." --Kirkus
"This is an important book. The death penalty's impact is so much broader than we realize, and these attorneys are affected in ways that even I had not imagined. I am grateful to Susannah Sheffer for bringing these stories to light." --Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and *The Death of Innocents*
"Susannah Sheffer is a gifted and deeply compassionate interviewer and she has written a beautiful, heartbreaking, and above all uplifting story that makes an essential contribution to literature on the death penalty." --Richard Burr, death penalty defense attorney
"This is a book I could have wished into existence. It offers a rare look at the emotionally rich questions surrounding capital defense lawyering, and its conversational format opens up a vein of insight that even memoir would not. Fascinating and entirely engaging!" --Susan A. Bandes, Professor of Law, DePaul University
"At long last someone pierces the veil of insult, ignominy, and infamy that surrounds the capital defender, exposing the human being inside. In these pages Susannah Sheffer helps us see why educated, intelligent professionals willingly suffer the grinding horror of attempting to stop the dance of death; why caring people dedicate themselves to the defense of those deemed disposable." --Mike Farrell, President of Death Penalty Focus
"In her beautifully written book, Susannah Sheffer takes us into the world of capital defense attorneys who seek answers to some of the most basic and profound of human questions: what makes people who they are? What leads some people to commit terrible acts? Capital defense attorneys, often at great cost to themselves, engage in a moral struggle against an entire system, and in their

commitment to fight to the very end, they demonstrate the power of relationship and restoration of human dignity. I couldn't put this book down." --Sandra L. Bloom, M.D., author of *Creating Sanctuary: Toward the Evolution of Sane Societies*, and Past-President of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
From the Inside Flap
Intimate conversations with the dedicated lawyers who try, but too often fail, to prevent executions
About the Author
Susannah Sheffer, author of three previous books, is Project Director at Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights.