

Part II of T&C's directory to the nation's top lawyers includes general trial lawyers, specialists in estates and trusts, tax and criminal law, plus the 100 largest law firms.

THE BEST LAWYERS IN THE U.S.

PART II

By Stephanie Bernardo Johns

GENERAL TRIAL LAWYERS

Louis Nizer, libel lawyer par excellence, said it best: "The difference between an office lawyer and a trial lawyer is as great as between an internist and a surgeon. Both require high talents, but the specialized skills and tools are so different that they

may as well be in different professions."

A good trial lawyer is by nature a showman and by experience adept at playing straight into the hearts of the jury. No matter how he sounds, like a soap box preacher or a trained orator, his verbal abilities will be finely honed. Above all, he will be able to convince those twelve important men and women of the logic of his arguments. A good trial lawyer need not be a celebrity. But dramatic attorneys in highly publicized cases have managed to make a name for themselves. Clarence Darrow made his name by defending John T. Scopes in the famous "monkey" evolution trial. Melvin Belli earned his reputation defending the glitterati of Hollywood, as well as some of

America's most famous criminals, such as Jack Ruby, the assassin of alleged presidential assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

Whether you choose a celebrity trial lawyer or a highly recommended unknown, don't bank on reputation alone. Take the time to observe him in the courtroom. Has he done his homework; does he sound prepared? Are his arguments logical, convincing? Does he have the self-confidence and aura of a "winner"? What is his track record in cases similar to yours? Once you have all the facts about the lawyer you intend to hire, sit back and ask yourself that all-important question: would you be willing to bet your reputation, your assets or your freedom on his ability?

CRIMINAL LAWYERS

In the real world of criminal justice," says Professor Alan M. Dershowitz. "there are plenty of villains but not many heroes." Dershowitz recognized a long time ago that he was not going to become a real-life Perry Mason—the fictional lawyer who always saves his innocent client's neck. Dershowitz came to the realization that most of his clients were *guilty*.

Therein lies the paradox of a "good" criminal lawyer. He is legally bound to do his best to represent his client, regardless of his client's guilt or innocence. Some of the lawyers on our list specialize in white collar, victimless crimes; others have defended clients who have been charged with heinous offenses. Yet all of them manage to sleep at night and none feel their work is a detriment to society at large. Says Joseph J. Balliro, "I don't know of any society in the world that went down the drain because of defense lawyers standing up for their clients."

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