



The Life of the Law: The People and Cases that Have Shaped Our Society, from King Alfred to Rodney King

Alfred H. Knight

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Law is intended to apply to common life and should be comprehensible to ordinary folk, but increasingly, it is not. The meaning of the law is becoming inaccessible, not only to the public but to the bar itself. In *The Life of the Law*, Alfred H. Knight outlines how some of the main contours of American law came to be as he recounts twenty-one stories beginning with Alfred the Great in the late ninth century and ending with the Rodney King trials in 1993. Knight gives us a veritable "biography" of our legal tradition by focusing on the key individuals, and the pivotal cases that have helped to mold the law as we know it today. *The Life of the Law* finds a riveting story behind each historic decision and recounts the tales with both narrative flair and ironic wit. The law is a living organism, constantly changing as new cases are decided, building on and modifying decisions that went before. Every case, no matter how lofty the principles involved, represents a human drama, a clash of competing desires. Alfred Knight's reflections on how twenty-one of these cases have left their mark on our society will inform and fascinate anyone interested in the law.

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