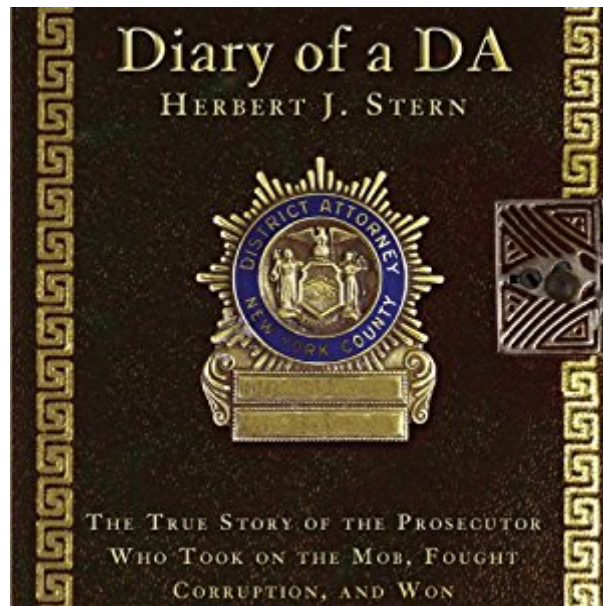


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# Diary Of A DA: The True Story Of The Prosecutor Who Took On The Mob, Fought Corruption, And Won



## Synopsis

A gripping inside account of the mechanisms of law and order. In 1961, 25-year-old Herbert Jay Stern, fresh from reserve duty, stood in his green army uniform in a New York County courtroom to be sworn in as an attorney. He could only guess what his life as a prosecuting lawyer would be. A dozen years later, in the wake of the national scandal of Watergate, Stern, draped in black robes now, would take the oath of office as a federal judge. In the years between, the idealistic young Stern would sharpen his skills in the realities of the criminal courts of New York City, to emerge as the lead trial attorney for the Justice Department, charged with breaking the back of organized crime in New Jersey. Stern's highly charged account of his outright war against powerful state government officials and the mafia takes us deep inside the mechanisms of law and order during a time when assassinations came fast and loose, cities were burning in race riots, and racketeering and graft were so prevalent in the Garden State that its own senator called it a "stench in the nostrils and an offense to the vision of the world". Before Stern and his equally dedicated colleagues on the "strike force" out of Washington, D.C., are finished, they will have successfully prosecuted the mayors of Jersey City, Newark, and Atlantic City for being on the take; a congressman for conspiracy, tax violations, and perjury; and blackened the eye of organized crime.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'd very much enjoyed Stern's remarkable account of the trial of the East Berlin skyjackers in Judgment in Berlin and had looked forward to reading this memoir, which recounts his experiences

in the NY DA's office, then the excitement and difficulty of fighting corruption as the US attorney in New Jersey during the 60's and 70's when everyone's hand was in the till. Stern's prose is clear, precise and informative. It makes for an exciting and quick read not only for attorneys, but for those who are unfamiliar with the legal world. Learn how investigations, indictments, grand juries, trial preparation and the trials and appeals work from the inside as told by a professional deeply involved in investigating and uprooting the political corruption and mafia criminality that was the daily diet of NJ citizens for 60 years. Also learn about the nasty problems caused by bureaucrats within state and federal offices and by state and federal officials protecting their turf, degrading law enforcement along the way. You will be shocked about the revelations of infamy and deceit at the highest levels of our government. It is also a story of the steadfast dedication of one prosecutor and his team representing the people of the United States in protecting them from the evils of corrupt politicians, low-life mob and complicit corporations. Although this book recounts Stern's experiences in the 1960's and 1970's, ending when he is elevated to the federal judiciary, the opinions he expresses about the way our legal system deals with gambling, free speech, obscenity, drugs and capital punishment is as relevant today as ever.

I cannot recommend more strongly "Diary of a DA" by Henry J. Stern. It is a great read. It shows the corruption that for decades existed up and down New Jersey. It is filled with humor and great stories about how the corruption was fought. Stern also shows how novice lawyers become excellent trial attorneys. The book also shows what great public servants like Frederick Lacey and his many AUSAs could do with determination and skill. It also reminds what great Republicans were really like in the late Senator Clifford Case.

Quick read. Good to put the time period in perspective and get an insiders take on the prosecution of political graft and the mob in New Jersey. Fills in a much better understanding of Political kingdoms in NJ. The sad part is you start to understand how corrupt NJ was and still is.

I was shocked to discover I couldn't put it down. This is not usually my genre but the book had been highly recommended to me by a colleague and once I picked it up, I loved it. The book reads more like a great work of fiction than the memoir of a DA... Herb Stern is terrific at setting up suspense, foreshadowing, conflict, drama and interesting narration. As a reader, you can't help but like the "good guy" characters and their brilliant tactics. It's also more fun than watching a courtroom drama on t.v.-- I loved following the real-life drama through Stern's eyes and seeing what he and his

colleagues said to judges and juries. Most of all, it was inspiring to see Stern and his colleagues stand up to powerful and dangerous forces in the mob and the government-- and do it in an ethical, entertaining manner.

The stories that Herb Stern tells in this book are the sort that a fiction editor or movie producer would reject as too impossible to be true--including the story of young prosecutors without the experience or knowledge to know that they couldn't do what they proceeded to do--move from county to county or city to city, cleaning up corruption that had existed for generations, and was fueled by money from multinational corporations and crime syndicates. Stern tells the story compellingly. The story is made more interesting to those who know of Stern's later career, first as a federal trial judge and then as the nation's leading trial advocacy teacher.

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