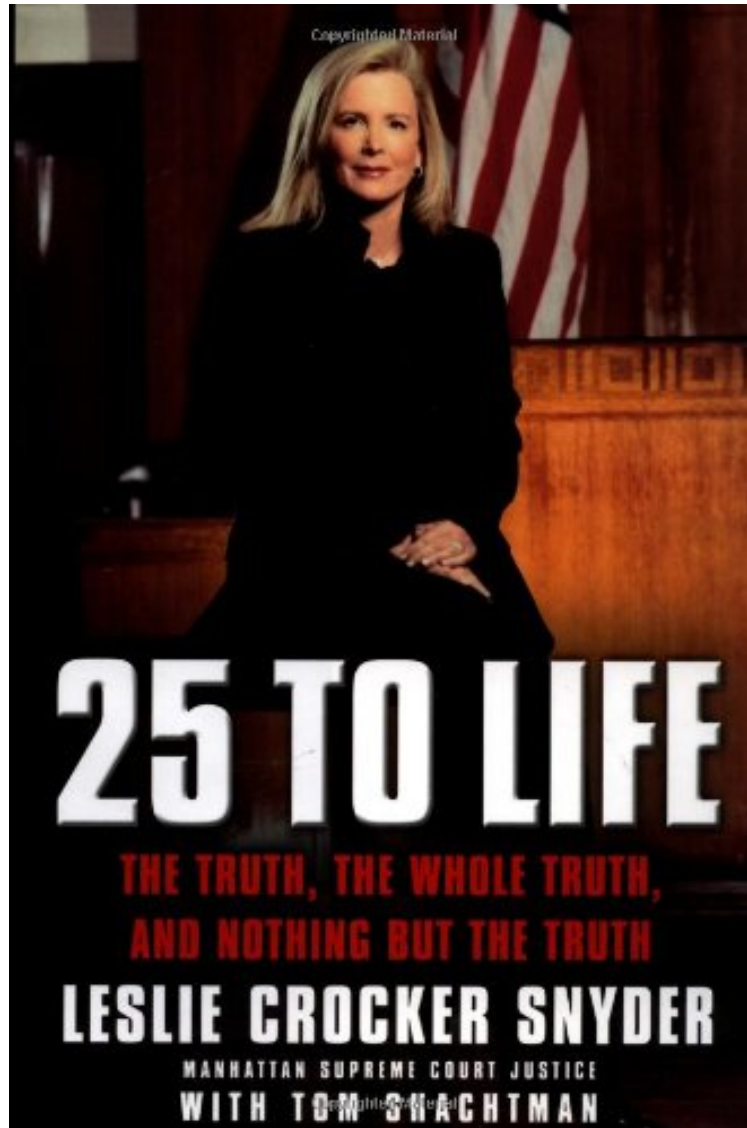


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## 25 to Life: The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth

*Leslie Crocker Snyder, Manhattan Supreme Court Justice, Tom Shachtman*

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**Leslie Crocker Snyder, Manhattan Supreme Court Justice, Tom Shachtman : 25 to Life: The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 25 to Life: The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth:

3 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Bell-RingerBy A CustomerThis is such an incredible story, I could not put the book down... how could any one person take on the mob, the druggies, and some of the most vicious murderers ever seen in New York City? And while, much of the time, under death threat to her self and family by these creeps who had been getting away with their murders for years... To label her just a Conservative is ridiculous --

she is also liberal, feminist, family, but above all, AMERICAN. New York City and State, and America, owe her a tremendous debt. However, as I neared the end of her incredible odyssey, I wondered why she did not give a solution for the overall "War on Drugs," obviously a losing proposition. But she does! There are hidden powers in high places that should be doing everything possible to save America from this Drug Hell that has engulfed the nation. Time to wake up, folks...6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. This is a "must read"By JurassicnarcIt's too bad that the title "In the Belly of the Beast" was already taken because that would have been an appropriate tag for this page turner. Having spent 25 years as a narcotics agent in New York City, I am humbled by the personal danger encountered by Judge Snyder.Courage and intellect such as hers are very rare commodities in this city.The insight that this book provides into the NYC criminal justice system has been previously kept as a dark secret. She is one of the reasons that one can feel safe walking the streets of Manhattan at midnight and we all owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude. Unfortunately, many New Yorkers forget the graffiti ridden days of the 70's and 80's when the judiciary was rife with "Cut em loose Bruces". Watch a re-run of New Jack City to refresh your recollection!8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Great book for law students but not much to interest othersBy BookreporterBy almost anyone's standards, Leslie Crocker Snyder has a lousy job.Snyder is a Manhattan Supreme Court Justice, handling criminal cases. (The "Supreme Court" in New York is not the highest appeals court, as it is in some states; there's a not-particularly-helpful diagram of the structure of the New York state court system in the book for those who are interested.) She routinely draws the toughest cases around; multi-defendant trials of drug gangs, complex cases involving Mafia dons, and courtrooms with spine-chilling murderers. She earns less than a first-year attorney at a white-shoe Wall Street law firm. She has to deal with death threats on a routine basis. She has to battle the dark forces of sexism, and persuade state legislators towards reforming the penal code. Worse, she has to work every day with "attorneys," and you know what "they're" like.The underlying question in 25 TO LIFE, Judge Snyder's story about her legal career, is why she, or anyone else, would voluntarily choose such a profession, voluntarily put themselves on the front lines in New York City's continual struggle against crime. Snyder makes it sound simple; she was bored. She was working in the consumer fraud unit of the Manhattan district attorney's office, and she hated it, and wanted to do something else, and ended up working rape and homicide cases. Along the way, she helped change the legal requirements for proving a rape case, and earned an appointment to the bench. There, she developed a reputation for harsh (although sometimes innovative) sentencing and became a figure of dread among the defense bar.It's clearly a rotten job, but one that Snyder enjoys. Despite its grisly detailing of drug deals and homicides and Mafia extortion, 25 TO LIFE is something of a love letter. Judge Snyder writes enthusiastically, almost passionately, about her profession and the men and women in the criminal justice system she works with. If 25 TO LIFE does nothing else, it shows how rewarding, how vital, how necessary a career in public service can be. It should be required reading for law students.Casual readers, though, won't find much to interest them in 25 TO LIFE. Unlike many lawyers, Snyder has a direct, conversational style, but even her style can't get the reader through the occasional impenetrable maze of legal technicalities. Her manifold encounters with criminal defendants seem to run into each other after awhile. And the book is marred here and there by unseemly bits of self-congratulation, as Snyder pats herself on the back in recounting her exploits. (She is particularly proud that a picture of a stern judge in her likeness appears on heroin bags with the caption, 25 TO LIFE hence the book's title.)However, Judge Snyder isn't a writer by trade (the book was written with author Tom Shachtman), but a jurist, for which New Yorkers can be grateful and appreciative. 25 TO LIFE appropriately shows the dangers and the glories of a life on the bench in the riskiest of situations. It should remind all of us that our safety is largely due to the hard, unacknowledged work of the police and attorneys and judges who work in the criminal justice system, and that we owe them a debt of honor that we cannot easily repay. --- Reviewed by Curtis Edmonds ...

She has presided over some of America's most complex and violent cases ranging from narcotics to sex crimes to headline-making murder and mob trials. Her toughness in court is legendary and she is known for frequently imposing maximum sentences (120 years each for five young drug lords). As a result, she must have round-the-clock security as her life has been marked with repeated threats from criminals she put behind bars. Now, Judge Leslie Crocker Snyder has written a riveting account of her years on the bench taking readers behind the scenes and into a courtroom whose trials and rulings have placed a permanent stamp on our legal system. Her true story will inspire and influence many more.

From Publishers WeeklySnyder recalls that, shortly after she began working as an assistant prosecutor in Manhattan, "I began to understand that there was, indeed, pure evil in this world." Although she now serves as a trial court judge, that early insight continues to temper her approach to her work. As she matter-of-factly puts it, criminals and their attorneys should be prepared for her to mete out tough sentences when circumstances demand it and in most of the cases recounted here, they do. Snyder's 30-year career highlights how criminal law, and women's role in it, have evolved. As a prosecutor, Snyder was disheartened by the legal obstacles to proving rape; she and others successfully lobbied for revisions to the rape statute that eliminated these hurdles. Snyder also recounts her more colorful

experiences presiding over drug, mob and murder trials. She can't be accused of sentimentalizing defendants: readers will look in vain for a story about an innocent man caught up in the justice system. By her own admission, her heart lies with the prosecution, and the rulings that she recounts (e.g., one to allow suppression hearings outside the presence of defense counsel) reflect that. This is not a law review article, though, but a book of legal "war stories," ("Judge, there's a hit team on the way from Los Angeles to kill you," the court officer announced one day) recounted vividly by a judge who has been at the center of Manhattan's criminal justice system for many years. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

New York Judge Snyder, known among criminal defendants in New York City as the "Ice Princess," "Princess of Darkness," and "25 to Life" for her long sentences in drug cases, has written a blunt, fascinating account of her work as a prosecutor, defense lawyer, and judge. The extremely bright Snyder entered Radcliffe College at 16, earned a law degree in Cleveland, and became a lawyer with a top New York firm. Bored, she quit civil practice and became a Manhattan prosecutor. Here, she recounts in detail her cases and achievements as the first female homicide prosecutor and the originator of the Manhattan District Attorney's Sex Crimes Division. Judge Snyder does an excellent job of describing the work of prosecutors and gives her unvarnished opinions of weak judges, shifty defense lawyers, and evil criminals. In her concluding chapter, she opposes the legalization of drugs, promotes more drug education for children, and advises readers to commit time to public service. A forthright and provocative book; recommended for all collections. Harry Charles, Attorney at Law, St. Louis

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Having been one of only two women in her law school in 1963, Leslie Crocker was already accustomed to going against the grain. Her career began at a prestigious Manhattan law firm, but craving criminal law, she moved to the state DA's office under the legendary Frank Hogan. Leslie climbed through the ranks in her division and proved her mettle as a skilled litigator. She knew early on she wanted to become a judge, so when Mayor Koch began appointing judges rather than having them be elected--a bold move toward creating an independent judiciary--Leslie found her opportunity and in 1983 assumed the bench for the first time. Though this history of one woman's ascent within the esteemed ranks of the law is a gripping story, the real tale to be told is of the perilous position a criminal judge puts herself in, as threats to herself and her family become an uncomfortably common occurrence. Written with unerring candor and plenty of riveting courtroom tales. Mary Frances Wilkens

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