



A Sword for the Convicted: Representing Indigent Defendants on Appeal (Contributions in Women's Studies)

David Wasserman

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Using New York City as a research model, this study explores the organizational, tactical, and ethical challenges of providing zealous advocacy for every convicted indigent wishing to appeal. David Wasserman, a former staff attorney with New York's Legal Aid Society, examines the unique form of representation that has emerged since the Supreme Court recognized the right to free appellate counsel, and details the conflict between the role of assigned appellate counsel and the demands of an overcrowded and underfunded criminal justice system. As the first study of indigent criminal appellate representation in the United States, this work brings a neglected form of legal service into the mainstream of criminal justice policy analysis.

The book is divided into three parts. Through the use of existing research and commentary, Part I analyzes the impact of the Supreme Court's *Douglas v. California* decision on the appellate courts and representation and on the organization of defense services. Part II offers an empirical study of criminal appeals in New York City, addressing such issues as the quality and impact of appellate defenders and the division of the indigent caseload. In Part III, Wasserman discusses the implications of this research in relation to the analysis of indigent defense developed in Part I, and considers measures for improving the quality of assigned appellate counsel. The work concludes with an appendix listing suggestions for further reading. This study, which provides the only available information on criminal appellate dispositions in New York City, will be an important resource for courses in law and social science, criminal justice, and appellate or trial practice. It will also be useful to the criminal justice community, particularly to public defender and legal aid groups, and appellate judges and their staffs.

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