



# **In Chambers: Interesting things about courts, judges, cases, and lawyers**

*Mr. William J. Schafer III*

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## **In Chambers: Interesting things about courts, judges, cases, and lawyers** Mr. William J. Schafer III

In this book are things I've collected in 32 years as a prosecutor and 11 years as a judge. Sir Melvin, the Lord of Farnsworth, an old curmudgeon, summoned his prospective heirs to his massive estate. He was bothered by the huge inheritance tax each would have to pay when he died and he told them he and his lawyer devised a scheme to avoid it. Would it work? The Miranda U.S. Supreme Court opinion shocked me and my office. We couldn't imagine what was next. To ease some of the pain I wrote a fake and ridiculous U.S. Supreme Court opinion and circulated it in the office as a joke. But no one saw it that way; they believed it. One night in 1872 a neighbor shot and killed Charles Burden's beloved dog, Old Drum, and Mr. Burden sued the shooter for 100 dollars. He won but very few remember anything about the trial. All they remember is his attorney's closing argument to the jury. Treetop Turner spent 11 years in prison. He was convicted of the same murder five times and sentenced to death four times and life once. On October 11, 1957, he was released - a final ending in one Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice called a "search for the priceless jewel of truth." Simplicio Torrez stole a horse and killed the town Marshall of Williams, Arizona, as he was being arrested. He had a feeble insanity defense and was convicted and given a death sentence. His attorney filed an appeal - or did he? Occasionally after a burglary the victim will tell the police that something was stolen that wasn't. He's planning to collect insurance. I had a case like that years ago with a surprise ending. Eva Dugan arrived in Tucson by train with no plans or money. She quickly hooked up with a farmer and a hired hand. Soon she ran off with the hand and stole the farmer's money and car. After she left, the farmer could not be found. She was sent to prison for stealing his car and later when they found his body she was tried for his murder, convicted and hanged. People do not remember much about the trial; it's the execution they remember. In 1934 John Dillinger was a nationally known thug whose bank robberies established a template for robbery and who became that's where he was captured by a back-water dinky police department without firing a shot. Rules of Department for my Superior Court.

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