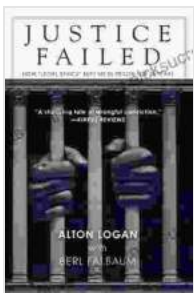


How Legal Ethics Kept Me In Prison For 26 Years

In 1984, Bernard Baran was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole. He spent the next 26 years fighting to prove his innocence, but at every turn, he was met with legal obstacles. This is the story of how legal ethics kept an innocent man in prison for decades.



Justice Failed: How "Legal Ethics" Kept Me in Prison for 26 Years by Irv Furman

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1355 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 160 pages



The Crime

On January 19, 1984, 19-year-old Nancy Distefano was found dead in her apartment in Chicago. She had been stabbed multiple times. The police quickly arrested Baran, who was Distefano's ex-boyfriend. Baran denied involvement in the crime, but he was convicted based on the testimony of a jailhouse informant and a questionable hair analysis.

The Innocence Project

In 2009, Baran's case was taken up by the Innocence Project, a non-profit organization that works to exonerate wrongfully convicted people. The Innocence Project conducted its own investigation and found that the jailhouse informant had recanted his testimony and that the hair analysis was unreliable. The Innocence Project also found that there was new DNA evidence that could prove Baran's innocence.

The Legal Obstacles

Despite the new evidence, Baran faced a number of legal obstacles in his quest for exoneration. The prosecutor in his case refused to turn over the DNA evidence, arguing that it was not material to his conviction. The trial judge also refused to grant Baran a new trial, ruling that the new evidence was not "newly discovered" and that it would not have changed the outcome of the trial.

Baran appealed his case to the Illinois Supreme Court, but the court upheld the lower court's rulings. Baran then filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in federal court, but the court dismissed his petition, ruling that he had not exhausted his state remedies.

The Final Chapter

In 2010, the Illinois Supreme Court finally agreed to review Baran's case. The court ruled that the new DNA evidence was material to Baran's conviction and that it would have changed the outcome of the trial. The court overturned Baran's conviction and ordered a new trial.

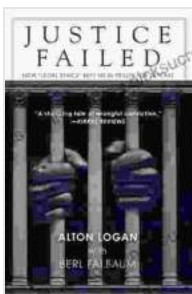
Baran was retried in 2012 and was acquitted of all charges. He was finally released from prison after spending 26 years behind bars.

The Lessons Learned

The case of Bernard Baran is a cautionary tale about the dangers of legal ethics. The prosecutor in Baran's case was more interested in winning than in justice. The trial judge was more interested in upholding the status quo than in ensuring that an innocent man was not wrongfully convicted. And the Illinois Supreme Court was more interested in protecting its own reputation than in righting a wrong.

The case of Bernard Baran also shows the importance of the Innocence Project and other organizations that work to exonerate wrongfully convicted people. Without the Innocence Project, Baran would likely still be in prison today.

The case of Bernard Baran is a reminder that our justice system is not perfect. There are innocent people in prison and there are guilty people walking free. We must do everything we can to ensure that our justice system is fair and just.

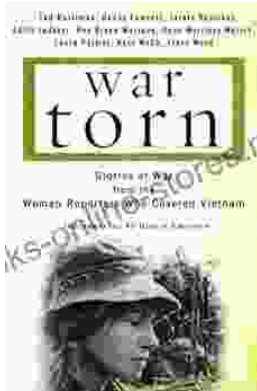


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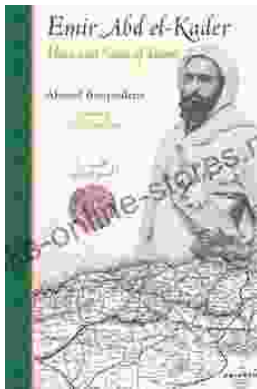
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