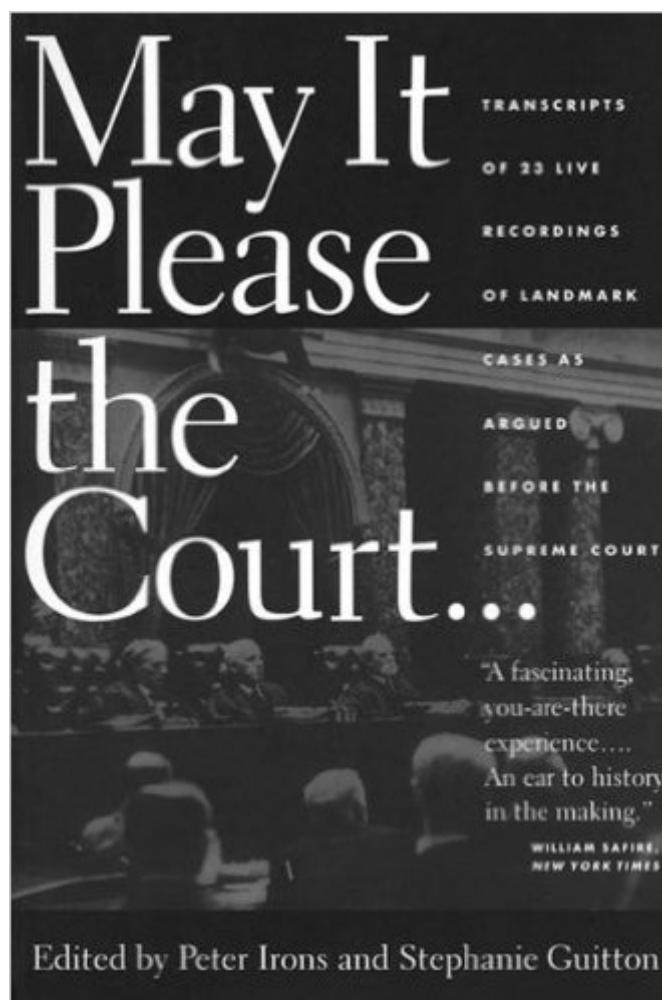


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# May It Please The Court: The Most Significant Oral Arguments Made Before The Supreme Court Since 1955



Edited by Peter Irons and Stephanie Guitton



## Synopsis

Until The New Press first published *May It Please the Court* in 1993, few Americans knew that every case argued before the Supreme Court since 1955 had been recorded. The original book-and-tape set was a revelation to readers and reviewers, quickly becoming a bestseller and garnering praise across the nation. *May It Please the Court* includes both live recordings and transcripts of oral arguments in twenty-three of the most significant cases argued before the Supreme Court in the second half of the twentieth century. This edition makes the recordings available on an MP3 audio CD. Through the voices of some of the nation's most important lawyers and justices, including Thurgood Marshall, Archibald Cox, and Earl Warren, it offers a chance to hear firsthand our justice system at work, in the highest court of the land. Cases included: *Gideon v. Wainwright* (right to counsel) *Abington School District v. Schempp* (school prayer) *Miranda v. Arizona* (the right to remain silent) • *Roe v. Wade* (abortion rights) *Edwards v. Aguillard* (teaching creationism) • *Regents v. Bakke* (reverse discrimination) *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (compulsory schooling for the Amish) *Tinker v. Des Moines* (Vietnam protest in schools) *Texas v. Johnson* (flag burning) *New York Times v. United States* (Pentagon Papers) *Cox v. Louisiana* (civil rights demonstrations) *Communist Party v. Subversive Activities Control Board* (freedom of association) *Terry v. Ohio* (stop and frisk) • by police) *Gregg v. Georgia* (capital punishment) *Cooper v. Aaron* (Little Rock school desegregation) *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* (public accommodations) *Palmer v. Thompson* (swimming pool integration) *Loving v. Virginia* (interracial marriage) *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* (equal funding for public schools) *Bowers v. Hardwick* (homosexual rights) *Baker v. Carr* (one person, one vote) • *United States v. Nixon* (Watergate tapes) *DeShaney v. Winnebago County* (child abuse)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book contains edited and slightly commented oral arguments for a number of cases brought before the Supreme Court of the United States since Earl Warren ordered that oral arguments be recorded. Few know that it is possible to attend oral arguments at the court (highly recommended if you ever visit Washington D.C.), and even fewer know the recordings exist. This is a set of six tapes with edited and commented (by Peter Irons) cases, together with a book which transcribes the tapes and includes highlights of the opinions in the case. There is also a brief introduction to the Court in the first tape. The cases touch on a number of issues, ranging from the highly controversial (Roe v. Wade and abortion rights, Edwards v. Aguillard and teaching of creationism in school, Johnson v. Texas and flag burning) to issues which perhaps aren't so controversial anymore (such as the 'one person, one vote' rule). They are, nonetheless, very interesting to listen to. I have very few regrets about the book, but they should perhaps be mentioned. First, there is no doubt that there is a somewhat liberal slant to the presentation and comments by Peter Irons in the tapes; I don't find it too problematical since they tend to agree with my own feelings on the subject, but others may find it annoying. Second, I cannot but be somewhat disappointed that these are ->edited

I fully enjoyed this series and own each set. The first series has additional charm because of the nice packaging, which decreased in charm as later sets came out. The plastic display holder and hard cover companion book, including a transcript of each tape, is a nice touch. The sets does have a liberal slant, though not excessive, which reflects the author. [Justice Marshall gets some play a lot, but then again, his questions often tend to be entertaining.] This doesn't hurt too much, since the commentary is relatively brief, and centers largely on the facts of the case. And, the cases are generally landmark, not leaning one way or the other *per se*. Anyway, the first tape's "introduction to the Supreme Court" is well done. I don't find it too troubling that the book doesn't have the whole opinion. The book uses a typical "casebook" approach and prints important excerpts. The book would be much larger if the full opinions were printed. Nor do the excerpt style hurt too much, again it would take much more space to do so. For those interested, Jerry Goldman has a CD-ROM with complete orals of some cases. Or, the Oyez.com website. I must, however, note that Irons et. al. provided some sloppy editing, which he admitted to some degree later on. He has the "Reagan

Administration" involved in a case before Reagan came to office. He has "Justice Marshall" asking a question in a case before he came to the Court. And, some substantive facts and explanations contain some errors. I'm not sure how some of these things were missed in editing.[I'd add that Edward Lazarus has been particularly critical of this series, including how the comments and editing slants the cases. He has a point, but it is probably exaggerated.

When I purchased this compilation, I held a wide range of very high hopes. Here I thought I would find numerous High Court appeals characterized by forceful and powerfully persuasive argument, a balanced selection of cases demonstrating the scope of issues addressed by our nation's highest judicial body, and neutral yet informative commentary. Well, one out of three ain't bad.Irons does a fine job choosing and editing the most intriguing parts of the oral arguments. Leaving in gaffes such as the assistant State Attorney General in the Gideon case seriously (but rather unwisely) suggesting to the Court that any lay person be permitted to represent criminal defendants makes one think deeply about the need for timely and effective responses to questions from the bench. The lack of preparation on the part of Sarah Weddington (attorney for Roe) is so painfully evident during the first iteration of Roe v. Wade, even the listener is embarrassed. The Court's public lambasting of the state's attorney in Brown can only bring to mind visions of Thurgood Marshall grinning with satisfaction.However, my satisfaction beyond this point was somewhat diminished.Irons deifies Chief Justice Warren far too many times for my taste (e.g., Warren broke the justice's code of silence by insisting on taping, Warren provided the Court with inimitable guidance in selecting only the cases of the greatest import, Warren's judicial foresight changed the nation, etc.) Also, the tone of the cases (Miranda v. Arizona, United States v. Nixon, Roe v. Wade, etc.) is unambiguously liberal - an irritating characteristic found on all six tapes. Further, Iron's commentary is somewhat strained when attempting, yet ultimately failing, to maintain a balanced perspective.

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