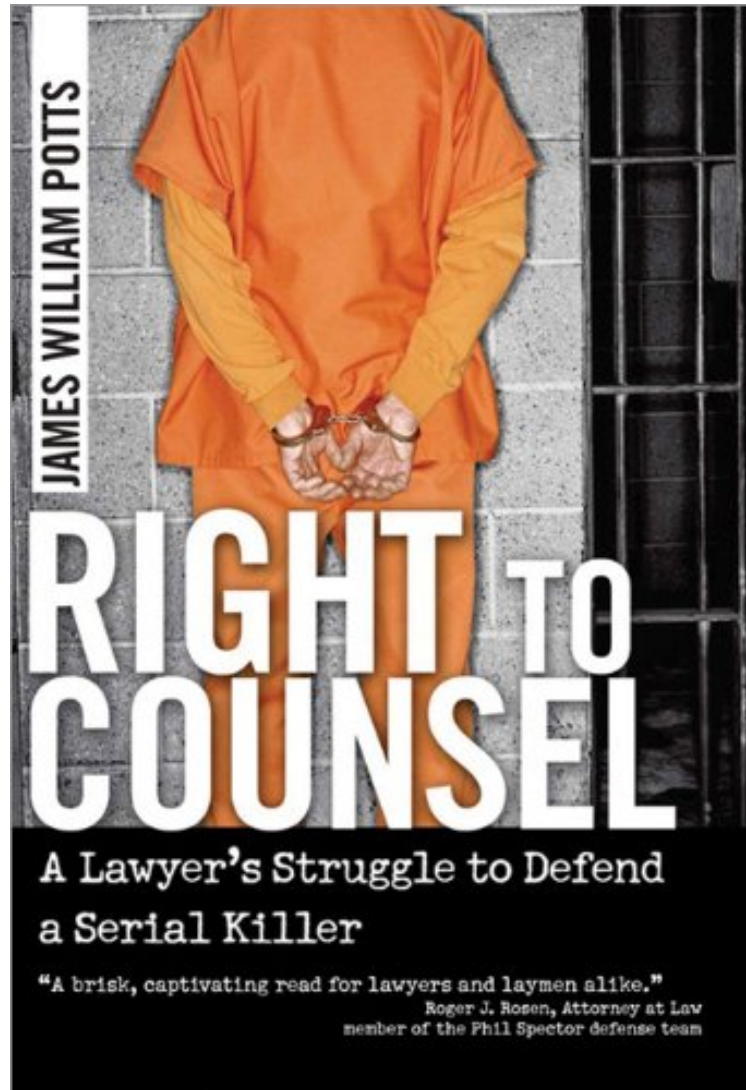


Right to Counsel: A Lawyer's Struggle to Defend a Serial Killer

James William Potts

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James William Potts : Right to Counsel: A Lawyer's Struggle to Defend a Serial Killer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Right to Counsel: A Lawyer's Struggle to Defend a Serial Killer:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Incredible Story Put in Layman's Terms By David FI loved this book. In his easy-to-read style, Mr. Potts brings to focus one of the most perplexing questions people have with today's attorneys: How can a lawyer's conscious allow him or her to defend a known and confessed murderer? Potts discovers evidence that could put a deranged psychopath back on the streets certainly to repeat his heinous crime, and Potts asks himself what he should do with this evidence? In this book, Potts takes you through his full range of inner conflict. He

discusses his upbringing in a wholesome family and his crowing achievement of reaching Eagle Scout as a tribute to his strong morals and dedication to always do what's right. He discusses his struggle with his own conscious, himself having a younger sister who was the victim of rape. He discusses his struggle with his pregnant wife who could not fathom how he could possibly consider defending a man he knew had kidnapped, raped, sodomized and murdered several little girls, as they prepared to bring into the world a child. And he discusses how he found the strength to face his own ethics and overlay it against the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of rights afforded to any person who is brought before a court of law. Mr. Potts provides insight into a lawyer's conscience like no other book I have read. This book is an eye-opening piece of work. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Terri Austin Great service item!! Thank you!! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Behind the Scenes Struggle of the Making of a Great Lawyer By Ronald S. Smith If you ever wondered how a lawyer can defend a person a guilty person, then read this book and see the real story.

"Potts has captured the personal conflicts and shared commitment to the rule of law in a precedent-setting trial of a stone cold serial killer, revealing many insightful details I never knew existed. And it was my case!" - Pat Dingle, Homicide Detective, Ret. North Las Vegas Police Department In the late 1970s, a crime wave swept California. Several young girls were kidnapped, brutally raped, and murdered. Michael Dee Mattson, a drug addict with severe emotional problems, was convicted of these crimes and sentenced to be executed in California's gas chamber. James Potts, an aspiring young attorney still coming to terms with the rape of his own younger sister, is asked to find a way to get Mattson's conviction overturned. After making a discovery that could potentially set Mattson free to rape and kill again, Potts struggles with his own moral dilemma: Use this information to free Mattson or let him languish on death row.

About the Author James W. Potts received his law degree from the University of West Los Angeles Law School. He is the founder and CEO of Potts Associates, located in Pasadena, California, which specializes in representing businesses to assure their compliance with state and federal employment laws. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Excerpt from Chapter 1: The Crimes It was July of 1978 in Los Angeles—a time for picnics, treks to amusement parks, couples exchanging marital vows, and, unfortunately for some families, a summer that ultimately brought the type of pain that no parent should ever have to endure. Unbeknownst to my wife Betty and me, it was a summer we would never be able to forget. We were expecting our second child. We found the prospect of adding to our family exciting, but it was overshadowed by a complicated pregnancy that kept Betty confined to the house. Adding to her discomfort was a very hot summer and a husband working fulltime while attending law school five nights a week, year-round. Unfortunately, my schedule left very little time for Betty and me to be together. Between my schedule and the emotions of pregnancy, she constantly admonished me to spend more time with her. The pressure was enormous for a 27-year-old man—working a full-time job; trying to get an education that ultimately might create a lifestyle most people dream about, but that also required endless hours of study; a complicated pregnancy; Saturdays at the library; and, a wife making demands that felt somewhat unrealistic under the circumstances. Unbeknownst to us that summer, Michael Dee Mattson—a name that would become too familiar to us in time—was on parole from an Oregon state prison. The reason for his stint in prison: On August 1, 1971, while hitchhiking, Mattson was picked up by a teenage girl, Jeanette Kors, and her brother Joe. He pulled a knife on the pair, ordered Joe out of the vehicle while they were parked on the side of the road, and kidnapped, raped, and robbed Jeanette off the main highway. Later that same day, Mattson was captured while driving Jeanette's car. At the time, he was just shy of his 18th birthday. Following his conviction and subsequent two-year incarceration, apparently already planning on committing more crimes, Mattson vowed he would kill all his future victims to prevent any of them from testifying against him. By 1978 Mattson had returned to Southern California and taken up residence in nearby La Mirada. One late Saturday afternoon that summer, after spending another eight-hour day at the library, I cut my study time short and headed home, hoping to spend some time with my wife. I found Betty, a small-framed woman with dark-brown hair, glasses, and a light-skinned complexion that denoted her Louisiana heritage, in the bedroom, and I could see that she was upset. On the screen of our fifteen-inch television was a newscaster reporting on a 9-year-old girl who had gone missing from a local pool. While I wondered what kind of human being would kidnap a 9-year-old girl, I felt lucky that it did not affect us personally. Unfortunately, I did not realize the effect this kidnapping would have on our lives after all. Michael Dee Mattson's first victim after his release from prison was 9-year-old Cheryl Kristy Gutierrez, who disappeared at approximately 4:00 p.m. on August 11, 1978, from the parking lot of Santa Fe Springs High School. Cheryl had been swimming in a public pool with her sisters, 12-year-old Sylvia and 5-year-old Toni. The girls were only one mile from their home. Cheryl and Sylvia had an argument over what time they should finish swimming. Cheryl wanted to go home earlier than Sylvia, so she left the pool area, angry and upset. Sylvia, thinking Cheryl had gone to call their mother from the pay phone outside the pool to pick her up, was not concerned. The last time her sisters saw her, Cheryl was wearing only a two-piece, floral bathing suit, a pair of flip-flops, and was carrying a white beach towel. Approximately thirty minutes later, their mother, Esther Gutierrez, arrived to pick them up at the

prearranged time. She had never received a phone call from Cheryl. After a brief conversation with her oldest daughter, Esther and Sylvia looked for Cheryl for two anguished hours, without success. One witness, Robert Stumpf, the foreman in charge of the buildings and maintenance of the high school, remembered seeing a young Hispanic girl waiting near the parking lot entrance when he left to go home around 3:30 that afternoon. He later recalled also seeing a young man with long dark hair and a beard sitting in a yellow car with large black tires, a black top, and a lot of mud on the passenger side door. The vehicle was parked within just a few yards of the young girl. Growing even more concerned that they could not find Cheryl, the Gutierrez family called the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Norwalk station to report that Cheryl was missing. A description of Cheryl-four feet tall, sixty-five pounds, with long black hair, and wearing the clothes described-was immediately dispatched over the radio to all local law enforcement agencies. A search party-consisting of twelve sheriff's deputies, fifteen Explorer Scouts, and a helicopter equipped with a bullhorn repeatedly announcing the search for Cheryl-was immediately dispatched. By the following day, the search party expanded into a wider area. The clock was ticking and hope that Cheryl would be found alive was quickly running out. Sergeant Tim McGraw of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department supervised the search from the front yard of the Gutierrez family home. McGraw had the search parties going door-to-door, to empty lots, neighborhood buildings, and any other place he could think of where a child might be found. Every volunteer was hoping for the best but thinking the worst as time began to take its emotional toll. At approximately 6:30 that evening, picnickers at Legg Lake in Whittier Narrows Recreation Area off the 605 Freeway discovered the body of a young girl. The location of the corpse was approximately seven miles north-northeast of where Cheryl was last seen alive. Deputy Ronald Riordan and his partner, Deputy Stewart Reed, were dispatched to the location. Under the overgrown shrubbery lay the naked body of a small girl splayed facedown in the bushes. The top of a two-piece floral swimming suit was wrapped tightly around her neck, along with a piece of monofilament fishing line and a handy wipe. Every hope for a rescue faded quickly, and the harsh reality set firmly in place. A person or persons unknown took Cheryl's young life. The sheriff's department quickly ruled out any connection with the Hillside Strangler, another case that was being investigated at the same time that involved the murders of thirteen young girls and women in the Los Angeles area between September 1977 and February 1978.