



The Great Justices, 1941-54: Black, Douglas, Frankfurter, and Jackson in Chambers

William Domnarski

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The Great Justices offers a revealing glimpse of a judicial universe in which titanic egos often clash, and comes as close as any book ever has to getting inside the minds of Supreme Court jurists.

This is rare and little-examined territory: in the public consciousness the Supreme Court is usually seen as an establishment whose main actors, the justices, remain above emotion, vitriol, and gossip, the better to interpret our nation of laws. Yet the Court's work is always an interchange of ideas and individuals, and the men and women who make up the Court, despite or because of their best intentions, are as human as the rest of us. Appreciating that human dimension helps us to discover some of the Court's secrets, and a new way to understand the Court and its role.

Comparing four brilliant but very different jurists of the Roosevelt Court-Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, Felix Frankfurter, and Robert Jackson-William Domnarski paints a startling picture of the often deeply ambiguous relationship between ideas and reality, between the law and the justices who interpret and create it. By pulling aside the veil of decorous tradition, Domnarski brings to light the personalities that shaped one of the greatest Courts of our time-one whose decisions continue to affect judicial thinking today.

William Domnarski is the author of *In the Opinion of the Court* (1996), a study of the history and nature of federal court judicial opinions. He holds a J.D. from the University of Connecticut and a Ph.D. in English from the University of California. Domnarski currently practices law in California, where he is also working on a forthcoming biography of legendary Hollywood lawyer Bert Fields.

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