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We Live in Trying Times

Cleveland lawyer Terry Gilbert looks back on a career that was forged during similarly trying times—the social upheaval of the 1970s.

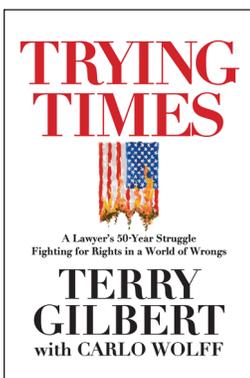
Trying Times, published in 2021 by Act 3, recounts Gilbert’s 50-year struggle as a people’s lawyer. Dedicating his life to pursuing justice for the disenfranchised, Gilbert puts his cases in historical context and demonstrates that even losing a case can move public opinion in the direction of equity. It was Gilbert who, in the 1970s, filed one of the first lawsuits against the Cleveland Indians to stop their stereotyping of indigenous people.

Written with Carlo Wolff, Gilbert’s memoir attests to the two Americas that we inhabit: one for the wealthy and powerful and the other for minorities and the poor. From his work with legendary radical lawyer William Kunstler defending native Americans at Wounded Knee to his advocacy on behalf of Sam Reese Sheppard seeking to clear the name of his father, Dr. Sam Sheppard, Gilbert wields the law as both sword and shield.

Attorney Barry Scheck, co-founder of the Innocence Project, writes, “Terry’s efforts to represent victims of police misconduct and to highlight the toll of mass incarceration exemplify his drive to overcome deep flaws in the U.S. criminal justice system. *Trying Times* is the inspirational journey of a man dedicated to bettering the lives of the ignored and the marginalized.”

Trying Times follows Gilbert’s life from his upbringing in a traditional Jewish family in suburban Cleveland through the patience and passion that made him a role model for liberal advocacy. Gilbert believes that the law is a tool to use against injustice and in support of the highest ideals of America. Activism and diligence, he says, are the only means to advance the causes of liberty, equal justice and human rights.

Gilbert’s generation was shaped by Vietnam, the civil rights movement and the emerging movements of people who were shut out of the American dream—women, indigenous Americans and people of color. Today’s generation faces many of the same struggles. *Trying Times* is the hopeful story of how one lawyer continues to fight for rights in a world of wrongs.



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