

The Man to See

By Evan Thomas

This bestselling biography of legendary trial lawyer Edward Bennett Williams is "a skillful and lively portrait of a larger-than-life lawyer" (*Kirkus Reviews*).

Legendary attorney Edward Bennet Williams was arguably the best trial lawyer ever to practice. Now, for the first time, bestselling author Evan Thomas takes us into the courtrooms of Williams's greatest performances as he defends "Godfather" Frank Costello, Jimmy Hoffa, Frank Sinatra, *The Washington Post*, and others, as well as behind the scenes where the witnesses are coached, the traps set, and the deals cut.

In addition to being a lawyer of unprecedented influence, Williams was also an important Washington insider, privy to the secrets of America's most powerful men. Thomas tells the truth behind the stories that made Williams one of the most talked about public figures of his time, including Williams's role in the publication of the Pentagon Papers and the possibility that Williams may have been Watergate's Deep Throat. Based on Thomas's exclusive access to Williams's papers, *The Man to See* is an unprecedented look at the strategies and influence of this exceptional man.

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The Man to See Summary Details

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pdetail:

- Sales Rank: #322227 in eBooks
- Published on: 2012-12-04
- Released on: 2012-12-04
- Format: Kindle eBook

editorial:

From Publishers Weekly

Famed capital trial lawyer Williams provided legal, political, business and personal counsel to government leaders, including U.S. presidents. Superbly capturing his subject's complex, often contradictory personality, Thomas, Newsweek's Washington, D.C. bureau chief, interviewed hundreds of people who knew the controversial attorney from the 1940s until his death at 68 in 1988. A practicing, Jesuit-educated Catholic, a womanizing hard-drinker devoted to his family, the magnetic Williams made headlines representing Sen. Joseph McCarthy and Mafia don Frank Costello. He challenged abuses perpetrated by the FBI and pressed the Washington Post to publish the Pentagon Papers. Shortly before losing his 10-year battle against cancer, William rejected an offer to head the CIA. Photos not seen by PW. Major ad/promo; author tour.

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From Library Journal

This action-packed biography of one of America's best-known trial lawyers moves from case to case with a list of clients that reads like a who's who among dignitaries, Hollywood stars, underworld figures, and self-made millionaires. Famous clients included Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Hoffa, Hugh Hefner, and Joe McCarthy. Williams's strategies, from how he chose jurors to his unique theatrics, made him a courtroom winner. At an hourly rate of \$1000, he was the highest-paid lawyer in America! Besides portraying Williams the lawyer, Thomas also exposes the man, who was addicted to fame, power, and wealth. He was intolerant of mistakes, hated vacations, and was often preoccupied with work. But he had a soft, kind side and was always available to help a friend in need. Because of the importance and complexity of Williams's cases, this book is very informative about politics, the legal system, and recent historical events. Recommended for public and academic libraries.

- *Teresa Brady, Holy Family Coll., Philadelphia*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Engagingly, Newsweek Washington bureau-chief Thomas tells the colorful story of the controversial criminal lawyer who defended spies, mobsters, demagogues, and even industrialists from legal punishment, but who left moral judgments to the "majestic vengeance of God." In many ways, Williams's career was unique. He was a respectable Washington insider whose access to the secrets of the powerful gave him a reputation as a "fixer" of legal difficulties, yet he was a criminal lawyer who willingly defended thugs, Mafia dons, and pornographers and lived a fast life among athletes and other celebrities in bars and nightclubs. Although a devout Catholic who attended mass daily, Williams emerges in Thomas's account as an amiable, morally ambivalent rogue who thrived on power. Thomas portrays Williams as an aggressive

competitor at the game of litigation who would defend anyone ``as long as they gave him total control of the case and paid up front," and for whom defeat was unacceptable. The author shows that Williams was genuinely brilliant as a lawyer--for instance, his successful defense of Jimmy Hoffa, in what initially seemed an unwinnable case, was a stunning display of legal virtuosity. Gradually, Williams's clients became wealthier, and Williams became one of the first, and most celebrated, specialists in ``white collar" crime. Armand Hammer, Marvin Mandel, John Connally, and Robert Strauss numbered among his clients. Williams became so wealthy from his practice that, among other investments, he eventually became owner of the Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Orioles. Liver cancer, which struck in January 1987 and eventually killed him, prevented him from accepting an offer from President Reagan to helm the CIA. A skillful and lively portrait of a larger-than-life lawyer. (Sixteen pages of b&w photographs--not seen.) -- *Copyright* ©1991, *Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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