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Preface, Symposium: Criminal Defense in the Age of Terrorism

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PREFACE

The New York Law School Center for Professional Values and Practice is proud to sponsor this symposium devoted to criminal defense in the age of terrorism. The Center's mission is to explore the many roles that lawyers play in American society. Through course offerings, lectures, and symposia, the Center encourages students to engage in "reflective professionalism" and aims to contribute regularly to ongoing public and scholarly debate about lawyers and the system of justice.

No lawyers are under greater pressure than criminal defense attorneys charged with representing accused terrorists. The federal government is a formidable foe in run-of-the-mill criminal cases; it is a truly awesome opponent in terrorism prosecutions because of the fervor, ingenuity, and resources it brings to these cases. With national security an omnipresent concern, defense lawyers are hampered by severe restrictions on access to evidence. Even access to their clients has been curtailed and sometimes denied. Attorneys representing accused terrorists also face deep hostility from a public whose foremost priority is winning the war on terrorism. The courage, determination and resourcefulness demanded of these lawyers, who are trying to effectuate constitutional guarantees for the accused, all too often go unnoticed.

Criminal defense in the age of terrorism is a vital lawyering role. It is also at the heart of the ongoing debate about how to maintain a proper balance between security and freedom in the post-September 11 world. We hope this timely compendium of writings by practitioners and scholars will make an important contribution to that debate.

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