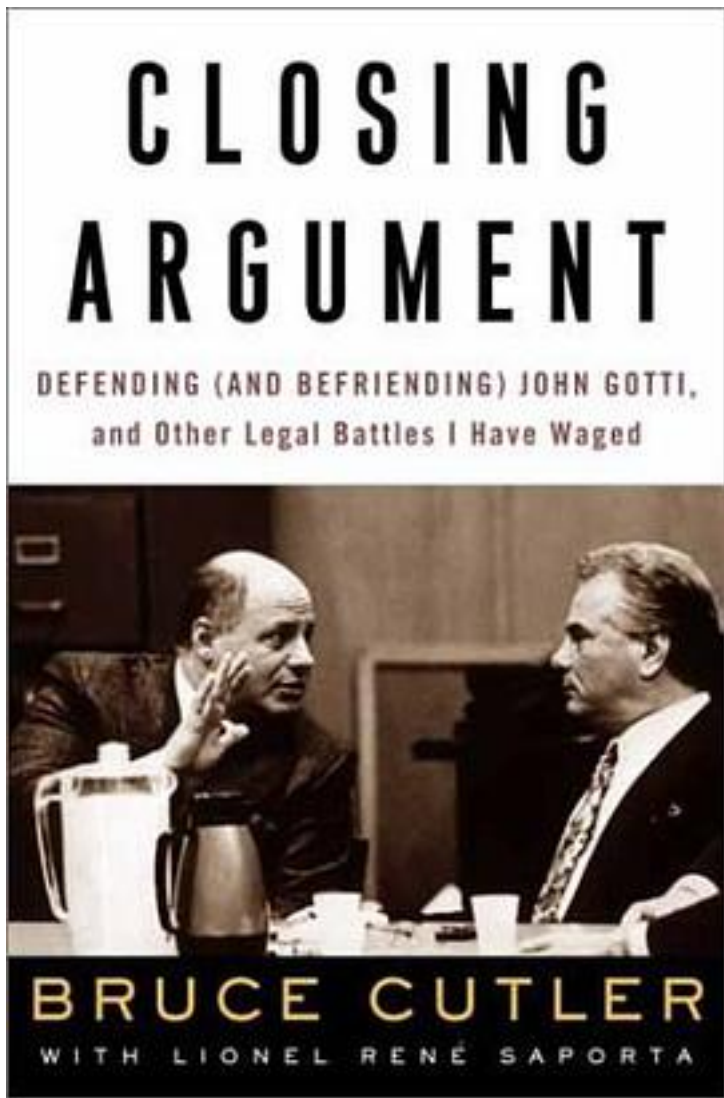


Closing Argument



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Bruce Cutler, one of the most famous lawyers in America, has never told his story—until now. Best known for his tenacious and highly publicized defense of John Gotti in the 1980s and early 1990s, Cutler personified a confidence, passion, and legal thoroughness that repeatedly defied a government determined to bring Gotti to his knees. A ubiquitous presence at Gotti's side in and out of the courtroom—and on the front pages of newspapers around the country—Cutler became almost as infamous as his client. And, as John Gotti became a lightning rod for every prosecutor seeking glory, reputation, or promotion, Cutler too became a lightning rod for controversy. According to the feds, Bruce Cutler may have gotten too close, and they made sure that both he and his client paid the price.

Cutler, the son of a detective turned lawyer, resolved his choice of profession early in life and plunged headlong into the tumultuous and at times surreal world of the New York legal system. In *Closing Argument*, Cutler recounts his time as an aggressive, tireless assistant D.A. in Brooklyn; how he switched sides and became a fiercely dedicated defense attorney working with Barry Slotnick, one of New York's

premier criminal attorneys; and the path that led him to John Gotti's side in court. It was March 28, 1985,

to be precise: He was thirty-six years old, and it was a moment that would change both men's lives forever.

Closing Argument is the inside story of how Bruce Cutler and John Gotti frustrated the feds so much

that they finally had to break the rules themselves to convict the so-called Teflon Don. The years Cutler and Gotti spent together were a kind of golden age of criminal (and in particular organized crime) litigation, and both lawyer and client were at the red-hot center of it all. What neither man may have realized then is that the famous trials were mostly about the government's wanting to put an end to a certain way of life, one that John Gotti and his like embodied. The conviction of Gotti, and his subsequent death in 2002 while serving a life sentence in solitary confinement, marked the end of an era. *Closing Argument* is a glimpse into the world of John Gotti: the talk around the table at the notorious Ravenite social club; the murder of Paul Castellano; Gotti's feelings about the treachery of Sammy "The Bull" Gravano and the alleged betrayal by Wilfred "Willie Boy" Johnson; and what it took to make it in a world with its own set of unbreakable rules.

This fascinating document makes clear that Gotti and Cutler were perfectly matched. Their inability to compromise, their full-throttle approach to their defense, and the charisma that made them the favorites of the press, were their strengths and, ironically, what made them such inviting targets to a host of prosecutors.

Bruce Cutler, in typical style, pulls no punches in *Closing Argument*. It is very rare for a practicing lawyer to talk with the kind of candor he does here, and it is rarer for any lawyer to ever become as passionate

and emotionally involved as he did with his client, John Gotti.

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