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Strangers to the Law: Gay People on Trial (Law, Meaning, and Violence)

Lisa Melinda Keen, Suzanne Beth Goldberg

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In 1992, the voters of Colorado passed a ballot initiative amending the state constitution to prevent the state or any local government from adopting any law or policy that protected a person with a homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation from discrimination. This amendment was immediately challenged in the courts as a denial of equal protection of the laws under the United States Constitution. This litigation ultimately led to a landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court invalidating the Colorado ballot initiative. Suzanne Goldberg, an attorney involved in the case from the beginning on behalf of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Lisa Keen, a journalist who covered the initiative campaign and litigation, tell the story of this case, providing an inside view of this complex and important litigation.
Starting with the background of the initiative, the authors tell us about the debates over strategy, the court proceedings, and the impact of each stage of the litigation on the parties involved. The authors explore the meaning of legal protection for gay people and the arguments for and against the Colorado initiative.
This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the development of civil rights protections for gay people and the evolution of what it means to be gay in contemporary American society and politics. In addition, it is a rich story well told, and will be of interest to the general reader and scholars working on issues of civil rights, majority-minority relations, and the meaning of equal rights in a democratic society.
Suzanne Goldberg is an attorney with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Lisa Keen is Senior Editor at the *Washington Blade* newspaper.

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Gerald Reed:

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