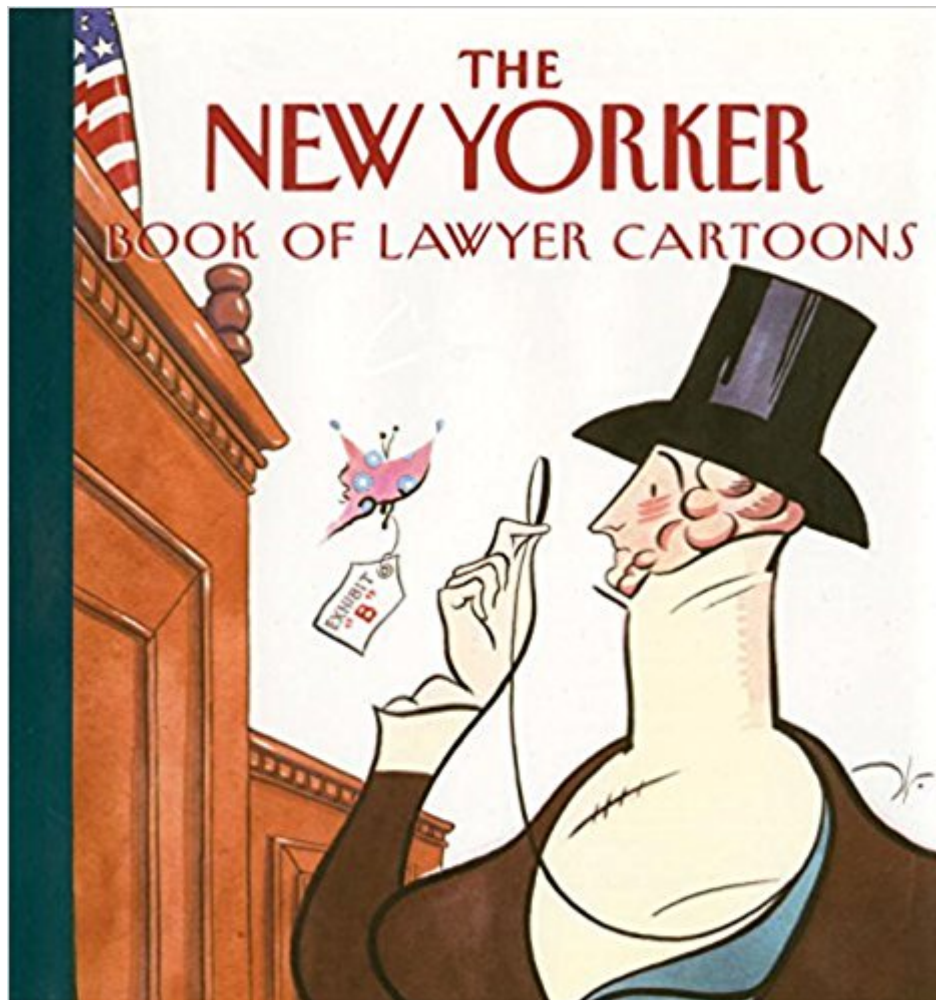


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The New Yorker Book Of Lawyer Cartoons



Synopsis

In the grand tradition of The New Yorker Book of Cat Cartoons comes 96 cartoons that have appeared in The New Yorker from 1925 to the present about the profession we love to hate. Includes works by cartoonists Shanahan, Arno, Steig, Addams, and Leo Cullum. 85 illustrations.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (52 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I first discovered The New Yorker when I was a teenager. When I saw how many people subscribed to the magazine, I started asking people why they did. Inevitably, the answer was, "For the cartoons." Since then, I have come to realize that The New Yorker is like the hall of fame for cartoonists. I recently read The New Yorker Book of Money Cartoons, which encouraged me to read this book. Unfortunately, that book made this one seem a bit inadequate (hence the four star rating). First, there is no witty essay in this one to introduce the subject, unlike Christopher Buckley's outstanding one in the money book. Second, the lawyer humor seems a bit forced to me, compared to the money humor in that book. While I think this book will appeal to many lawyers and their families, I think that few defendants and plaintiffs will be amused because the humor is often about how lawyers prosper at the client's expense. It's hard to convey a sense of these cartoons without showing one. Unlike the money cartoons that usually work as quips, these cartoons almost always need visuals to work. Many of them involve lawyers circling like sharks surrounding a potential client, or invoke other old chestnuts of lawyer humor. The privileged position of the lawyer compared to the client comes through clearly. "I've just about resigned myself to your getting twenty years." "Lawyers are expensive, as is the legal system." "You have a pretty good case Mr. Pitkin. How

much justice can you afford?"The humor works best when it is fresh. My favorite was "May I ask you, Miss Howre, what made you select a homeopathic attorney?"

I'm surprised at how small this collection is. Attorneys are such an inviting target for comedic attacks that it amazes me that as long as the New Yorker has been around, it only found about 85 attorney cartoons worthy of collection into this 1993 edition and that it hasn't found enough worthy cartoons since then to fill out a second edition. Originality isn't a feature point of this New Yorker collection of cartoons, but talent is. The 85 attorney cartoons largely revolve around two themes. One is surrealistic art which makes attorneys look as uncharacteristically undignified as possible (many of which are variations on the old "shark" joke that shows attorneys in the open water with fins and teeth). The other is animated commentary on the ubiquitousness of attorneys in everyday life, a ubiquitousness that deprives each attorney of his individuality ("Would everyone check to see if they have an attorney?" asks a meeting-organizer. "I seem to have ended up with two.") As I say though, the talent of the cartoonists is great enough that the same joke can be replayed several times and still retain a certain amount of freshness each time. Still, the funniest cartoons are those which break the mold and display some actual knowledge about the profession such as the courtroom setting on the moon, in which judge, jury, and counsel are dutifully wearing spacesuits. The spaceships that transported them there are displayed in the background. "Not ANOTHER change of venue, counselor," the judge protests to one forceful advocate. But as for the garden-variety attorney jokes, to my mind as a member of the bar myself, the joke is always on the jokester.

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