

Trying Cases in the Media

The Underlying Facts

Mary Jones is the former Chief of Staff to the late Congressman Alan Ruston, of the fourteenth congressional district of Freedonia. She stands accused of murdering Congressman Ruston, in a high-profile case filled with swirling accusations of sexual harassment, rape, and corruption. No one disputes one essential fact. Mary Jones shot and killed Alan Ruston in the parking lot of the federal building in downtown Freedonia City.

The federal prosecution is being brought by the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Freedonia, **John Douglass**, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1114, making it a federal crime to murder any officer or employee of the United States during the performance of that officer's duties or on account of the performance of those duties. Attorney **Gerald Zerkin**, an experienced and highly regarded Freedonia criminal defense lawyer, has been retained by Jones to defend her in the prosecution.

Steve Nash is an enterprising and hard-hitting investigative journalist who both writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column and who appears regularly as a broadcast journalist on national news magazine program.

Judge Margaret P. Spencer is the federal judge to whom the matter has been assigned.

Craig Thomas Merritt is a media attorney who will represent Mr. Nash. **J. Joshua Wheeler** is a First Amendment attorney who will represent Gerald Zerkin.

Paul D. Carrington will be Chief Justice of the United States. **C. Thomas Dienes, John E. Nowak, Molly Delea, Kate Murray, Thomas Queen,** and **Courtney Sydnor** will be Associate Justices of the United States Supreme Court.

Trying Cases in the Media: Legal Ethics, Fair Trials and Free Press

Section 1: Participant Biographies

Section 2: Supporting Case Material

Section 3: "Trial Participants in the Newsgathering Process" by
C. Thomas Dienes
(The final version of this essay will appear in the *University
of Richmond Law Review*, Symposium Issue.)