

# College Book Report Outline

## **In Contempt Book Report**

Book Written by Chris Darden

This report is based upon the book *In Contempt*, written by Christopher A. Darden with Jess Walter. This book is published by Regan Books an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers and is copyrighted 1996 by Christopher A. Darden.

### **Introduction of the Author**

The book *In Contempt* was written by Christopher A. Darden. Chris Darden is famous for being one of the prosecuting attorneys in the court case *The People vs. Simpson*. He has worked hard his whole life to reach the status he has now achieved. He proved to America that even though he wasn't a high-priced private lawyer that he could present a well-thought out and planned case under the tremendous pressure he and the other prosecutors had to endure during the Simpson case.

### **Summary**

I found this book to be very well thought out and well written. Most people would assume that this book was written with the intentions of making a quick-buck off the misfortune of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. I, however, do not believe this to be true. The way that the author speaks of the victims in the book and the way he spoke of them before and after the trial shows that he really cared about the lives of these people that he didn't even know. He even went as far as to say in the book that this was the first case that affected him personally and emotionally.

As one may expect, the majority of this book is taken up with the Simpson case. Chapters two through six detail his life from birth, his childhood in a working class district of Richmond, California and his becoming a district attorney of Los Angeles in 1981. Chapters two and three mostly consist of stories of him and his brother, Michael, stealing from local stores or his brothers' drug deals. When Michael hit his mid-teens he started selling marijuana off the front porch of the house and Chris was his lookout. In return, he was told that he would be cut in on the action but never was. No matter what, Michael always told Chris never to use drugs. Throughout the book Chris Darden refers to his brother as a good role model for him no matter what he did.

I feel the purpose of Chris Darden writing this book is to try to show the hardships he had to go through as a black man trying to become a lawyer. Also I feel that he is trying to reveal the truth behind what was happening in the Simpson case.

### **Body of the Review**

This book is funny and at other times the mood is more serious. The few chapters in the beginning were the funny ones. In these chapters he writes about his childhood and works his

way forward to when he starts to work in the District Attorney's Office. Specifically he tells about how he was caught stealing a Hostess Fruit pie at the corner store, sneaking crackers from his house pantry, and being teased about having false teeth as a child. As he writes and talks about when he gets older the mood changes and gets more serious.

He writes a lot about his brother who was a big influence on him when he was young. Darden retells stories of how he and his brother, Michael, would salvage old, broken radios from the trash and repair them and then sit on Saturday nights listening to the local R and B station. His brother would always comment on how the Temptations were the best band ever. Also, he tells of the time when his brother was smoking a joint in their bedroom when their father came bursting into the room. Thinking quickly, Chris' brother swallowed the still lit joint. His father smelled the marijuana but never found any evidence of the joint.

As he tells about his childhood, he remembers how his grandmother would ask him what he wanted to be when he grew up and as far back as he could remember he would say that he wanted to be a lawyer. Christopher Darden grew up like a lot of black families of that time period, poor. They did have enough money to buy a 30,000 house and they always had a pantry full of food. Not many people from his neighborhood ever made much of themselves but he always believed in himself and his grandmother always believed that he could do anything that he put his mind to. She was the only person that believed he could be a lawyer and always introduced him as a future lawyer.

In high school Chris followed in his brother's footsteps and joined the track team. This would be his ticket to a scholarship at Berkeley University, and the start to his law career. After completing college, he applied for a job in the District Attorney's Office, and surprisingly got the job at the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office in 1981. Through the years, he worked his way up through the ranks of the D. A. s' Office and became a very prominent lawyer. He worked for 14 years before the Simpson case was brought before him. He never expected to work the case but sometimes strange things happen. He worked hard to prove that Simpson was guilty but justice was never found.

Out of the 20 murder cases that Darden had worked, the Simpson case was the only one he lost. After he lost, he vowed never to work in law again.

### **Conclusion**

I didn't find this book particularly useful, but it was a very good book to read and it gave me more insight as to what has happened in Chris Darden's life and what he went through during the Simpson case. When I got the book I approached it like most students do when they have a book report to write. I didn't want to read the book but had to in order to get a good grade. As I started to read the first chapter, which was about the Simpson case I realized that the book wasn't just the boring drivel you would expect from a lawyer. It was intelligently written and had amusing stories from his childhood and fraternity days. Although I didn't want to read it' it wasn't as bad as I had expected, and I found it to be enjoyable and informative.