



Special Circumstances

Sheldon Siegel

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SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES is BOOK 1 of 7 in the legal thriller series featuring Mike Daley & Rosie Fernandez.

Debut author Sheldon Siegel bursts into the legal thriller arena with a riveting courtroom drama, exposing the world of big-time law firms and lawyers in a fresh, sharp-witted, wonderfully sardonic page-turner.

Meet Mike Daley. Ex-priest. Ex-public defender. And as of yesterday, ex-partner in one of San Francisco's most prominent law firms. Today he's out on his own, setting up practice on the wrong side of town. Then his best friend and former colleague is charged with a brutal double murder, and Daley is instantly catapulted into a high-profile investigation involving the prestigious law firm that just booted him.

As he prepares his case, Daley uncovers the firm's dirtiest secrets. It doesn't take long for him to discover that in this trial, ambition, friendship, greed, and long-standing grudges will play just as important a role as truth and justice.

Brilliantly paced, crackling with energy and suspense, *Special Circumstances* reminds us why we love to hate lawyers — but can't get enough of courtroom drama when it's done this well.

Special Circumstances Details

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Author : Sheldon Siegel

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From Reader Review Special Circumstances for online ebook

Jool says

Fantastic legal thriller. Starts out fast and is a page turner all the way. I will definitely read this whole series. It is equal to or better than John Grisham, so I heartily recommend these books by Sheldon Siegel.

Michele says

This is the best legal thriller I've read in a while - I got it as an audiobook and just couldn't stop listening. Mike Daley and Rosie Fernandez, once married but now functioning much better as legal partners, are well drawn characters, putting together the legal defense of a lawyer and former firm associate accused of two brutal murders. The story and writing are reminiscent of the best of Grisham and Turow. I look forward to reading more books in this series.

Bonnie says

First time reading a book by this author and I must say it was awesome from start to finish! I felt like I was in Mike Daley's head and actually thinking like him as he was defending Joel. This is also a very educational book. You will learn a lot about the law reading it-and it's not boring!and from what critics have written it's very accurate. All of the characters are interesting and some sleazy for sure but it's the best legal thriller I've ever read and I think Sheldon Siegel is by far better than John Grisham. This first in a 7 book series will grab you right from the beginning. And once you get to the start of jury selection and Joel's trial you won't be able to put it down. I'm about to order the boxed sets to read the entire series. Thank you Mr. Siegel for giving me something awesome to read this summer!

Patricia Ibarra says

Mike Daley, a former public defender, was fired from one of the most important law firms for failing to meet his quota of clients. He has decided to rent a room to start his individual practice from Rosie, his ex-wife and currently best friend. He would have never imagined that his first client in his new practice would be his best friend and work colleague in the law firm, unexpectedly accused of double murder. He is now his defense attorney, having as his opponent the law firm that just fired him. In his investigation, he discovers some very dirty secrets of the people he used to work with. The trial is very interesting, full of surprises, making it difficult to know whether his friend, Joel, will be acquitted or condemned.

Kimberly Hicks says

I know I may have said this a thousand times, but I have to say, outside of my favorite attorney-author, Pamela Samuels Young, Sheldon Siegel runs a very close race. This legal thriller is just what it suggests—a

thrill that will keep you on the edge of your damn seat!

I absolutely loved this book. There were so many elements to this story, it's hard to say where to begin.

Michael Daley is such a believable character. Mike is someone you feel you know personally, and after learning more about his character, you warm up to him instantly. He's an ex-priest and an ex-public defender trying to decide what he would like to do next in his career. Unfortunately, his partners at Simpson and Gates make this decision easy—they decide to vote their partner out because he wasn't bringing in the money the way they initially thought he would. Unfortunately, that's standard practice for larger firms. After giving the firm five years of his life, they dismissed him like yesterday's garbage.

But, no worries, Mike has a plan. He's going to start his own law firm out of the most unlikely places—his ex-wife's office building. Luckily for him, he and Rosie are still good friends even though their marriage didn't last. Besides, he has a five-year old daughter, Grace, with Rosie, so something great came out of their marriage. This will give him more time to spend with her as well. Life was looking up for Mike, until his best friend has an unexpected visitor at his home. The police arrive to arrest him for the double homicides of Robert Holmes and Diana Kennedy, Joel's and Mike's former colleagues. Joel Friedman and Mike have been friends for years, so when Mike learns that Bob and Diana were murdered at an office party at his newly departed law firm, he's shocked to say the least. Unfortunately, what was more shocking was finding out that Joel was the police number one suspect. Joel Friedman was a family man, an outstanding citizen in his community, a hard worker, husband and father. There wasn't any way Joel could have committed this heinous crime. Or, has Joel got everyone fooled?

Mike hadn't even gotten his new office organized, when Joel and his family seek out his help. Mike didn't want to be involved since he was so close to Joel, but it was the act of some of his former colleagues that helped push him over the edge to take on Joel's case for murder. Not only was his old law firm seeking to destroy Joel's life—they wanted something more—special circumstances, which in this case was asking for the death penalty.

When Mike begins the grueling task of investigating what actually happened to Bob and Diana, the reader will be left in awe. You may think you know who the killer is, but Sheldon is a great writer because he got me. I was half right on some of the legal aspects of this story, but when I got to the end, I was stunned! I had no idea the story was going to go down like that! WOOOOW! The ending will make you question everything about the story and what would drive a person to commit one of the most horrific acts a human can make? When you discover the answer, it will give you pause. I was totally and completely blown away with this story. I could not get enough! When I would retire for the evening, I saw the entire story unfold like I was witnessing a private movie made only for me.

There are some stories that stick with you for a lifetime, and I have quite a few books that I can recall with great detail due to the fact I enjoyed them that much, and I have to say this is definitely one such story. Brilliantly crafted and intelligently written. Sheldon is definitely a new attorney on the scene to watch. He draws you in and never lets you go. So my advice to any legal suspense seekers out there, hold on tight with this one because I guarantee you, you will not see the ending coming. This is an outstandingly smart read. If you love the law, this is damn sure the book for you! I hated that it ended, but the good news is, this is the first in a series of Mike Daley stories. I've already started downloading the rest. I can't wait to get back to Mike and see how his life unfolds with his ex-wife Rosie and their new law practice. Mike is definitely famous now and will have plenty of innocent clients in need of his assistance.

Mello & June gives Special Circumstances a gazillion stars! I urge you to please put this book on your shelf

and make sure you have plenty of time to read because you will NOT want to put this book down— ‘cause it’s that damn good! I’m a fan, Sheldon! You had me at the first paragraph!

Judy Churchill says

For anyone who likes legal thrillers this author is good. I just ordered the second book in this series. The plot was believable, the characters were real, and the story moved right along. This is my escape genre.

Holly says

I actually finished reading this one last night. It's a fairly fast and easy read and keeps you hooked in really well. The story is interesting and moves quickly. The author stays true to the law, and even explains it well enough for anyone to understand. Two of the biggest disappointments about the book: (1) his past life as a priest has relatively little, if nothing, to do with the plot or even to the character himself. He is definitely not written as an ex-priest and there is almost no mention of it. (2) There was NO WAY you could have ever guessed the ending. WARNING (small spoiler coming):

The killer plays a minor role and the twist at the end, while interesting and pretty sick and twisted, was completely out of left field. I always find that to be frustrating.

So I will definitely read another of his books, I hope future books include more on the interesting elements of his protagonists characters and hopefully don't pull too many twists from way out in left field.

Jodi Daynard says

This author has an excellent sense of humor, and I like his attorney duo Mike & Rosie. Ending feels a bit convoluted--in fact, I finished this a few days ago and already have forgotten whodunit. It didn't seem to matter, really. That said, I bought the next one in the series, since I like these characters.

JBradford says

Back to legal thrillers, again (which seems to be a phase I am going through), I made the mistake of picking up this book the a few days ago as something to have in my bag in case I had to waste some time waiting for someone ... and a couple nights later had to stay up until an ungodly hour in order to finish it.

Sheldon Siegel is/was a California attorney in private practice, specializing in corporate and securities law. Back in the late 1990s he joined a writing club, and this 2001 novel was his first book. Despite my dislike for first-person things, I'm giving it four stars, as it is eminently readable with engaging characters in a complex situation. The protagonist is Mike Daley, an attorney in a large San Francisco law firm, who starts off the

novel attending a couple of company events on his next-to-last day of work, as his partners have invited him to leave the firm because of a general lack of productivity. Mike is okay with that, although a bit of bitterness shows through his thoughts; he is going to rent some office space from his ex-wife, Rosita (they still love each other and happily engage in “guilt sex” frequently, but they cannot stand living with each other), where he will set up business as a defense attorney (having served for many years as a public defender before joining the firm, and having been a priest prior to that). His first case is a minor legal thing for his former secretary, and his second is a good friend and former associate who gets accused of a double murder in what has the appearances of a murder/suicide situation--compounded by the fact that another of his partners, who left the firm on the same day after being elected the new District Attorney, sees this case as a chance to make a name for himself.

The plot is intricate and well thought out, the writing is very well done, and the author presents interesting slices of realistic characters’ lives in an engrossing story that winds to a solid conclusion--and then turns that conclusion on its head. What’s not to like?

The book has 546 pages; somewhere around Page 400 I came to the conclusion that I knew who the real killer was, but it was based more on emotions than clues. It’s still a good book--a real page-turner, just as the cover declares.

Thomas says

This is a very good legal murder mystery. A top earning lawyer, Bob Holmes, is found dead, apparent suicide, along with another lawyer, Diana Kennedy, making it look like murder suicide. But then the new District Attorney, Prentice Marshall Gates III, formerly a lawyer with the same law firm, and the police find evidence suggesting that one of the firm's other lawyers has murdered both people. They arrest Joel Mark Friedman.

He hires Michael Daley, who has been forced to leave the firm.

Daley starts a new law firm with his ex wife, Rosita Carmela Fernandez. He and his ex are very good at trying cases, but lousy at marriage.

There are a lot of twists and turns in the plot. The courtroom scenes are excellent.

The author bio states that he is a corporate lawyer and author of seven books in this series. I give it a solid 4 stars out of 5.

Jim says

This one hooked me on the very first page. This is first book in author Sheldon Siegel's, Mike Daley/Rosie Fernandez series, "Special Circumstances". Mike Daley is the protagonist along with his ex-wife Rosie Fernandez becoming a co-protagonist.. The book opens set at one of the largest and most successful law firms in San Francisco, Lawyer Michael Daley is given his walking papers at year's end. Daley's five year run with the firm didn't generate enough business for him to continue as a partner in the firm. Daley has decided to open his own office and go it alone. If it were only that easy. On Daley's last day, two members of the firm are found shot dead in an office. At first glance it looks like a murder-suicide. Partner Bob Hughes, and associate Diane Kennedy are found dead. When police come to investigate, it seems Daley's co-worker

and good friend Joel Friedman has picked up the gun and emptied out the bullets. Hughes and Kennedy had been working on a large multi million dollar deal that has seemed to disappear. Before long police arrest Friedman for the double killing, throwing out murder-suicide angle. The newly elected San Francisco D.A. is Prentice "Skipper" Gates. Up until that day was controlling partner in law firm Daley and Friedman worked for. All of Joel's statements fall apart one by one. With every word out of his mouth Joel keeps digging deeper. Daley has a monumental job of saving his friend. Just an incredible story from start to finish. It was so darn hard to put down at times. The story really flowed like an excellent who done it. The incredible dialog really pumped life into all of the characters. I had to admit I was rooting for Joel throughout ! Although I thought he really did the deed I was stunned by the conclusion. Had no idea it would end like it did. This is one rare book where I don't figure out the killer until author reveals it. I had to stop and just stare at the page Daley confronts the "bad guy". I was positive Joel had had been the bad guy. Just an excellent read from start to finish. I'd highly recommend this one to anyone who loves a good mystery. Without a doubt 5 stars out of 5 possible stars. I can't wait to find the second book in this series. This is a book not to be missed.

Hilary says

I had no idea I'd even read this before, so discovering a rating from 8+ years ago was a little disconcerting, especially as I apparently enjoyed it as much then as now!

This is law practised from the other side, where resources are stretched and money is not limitless as Mike tries desperately to defend his friend and former colleague from a charge of double murder. As they investigate, new layers of secrets and lies are revealed, which may lead to questions that they dare not ask.

Alan Marston says

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES is BOOK 1 of 7 in the legal thriller series featuring Mike Daley & Rosie Fernandez.

Debut author Sheldon Siegel bursts into the legal thriller arena with a riveting courtroom drama, exposing the world of big-time law firms and lawyers in a fresh, sharp-witted, wonderfully sardonic page-turner. Mike Daley is the lawyer who has just left the large firm for which he was working, only to find himself involved in defending one of his former colleagues accused of the double murder of two others from the same firm. Whilst the evidence that exists points to his friend being the murderer, it is mainly circumstantial and therefore worth defending. The firm's dirtiest secrets are gradually revealed and it becomes very clear that ambition, friendship, greed and long standing grudges are all players in this tense courtroom drama. I found it to be engrossing, set mainly in and around the court case and involving a great deal of clever questioning and investigation. I was both enthralled and interested in the proceedings, and I enjoyed all the revelations and indeed surprises, as they were revealed.

The trial scenes are excellent, there is good characterisation and the plot is of a high order.

Is justice served at the end? Indeed it is with another very interesting surprise still to follow the conclusion of the trial. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and look forward to renewing acquaintance with Daley and Fernandez in the future.

Debbie Oxier says

This was extremely well written. Riveting. I didn't want to put it down. It pulled me in almost immediately and just refused to let go. Mike Daley has lost his job at the prestigious law firm where he worked. It wasn't his performance that got him fired, it was the fact he simply wasn't pulling in the numbers, increasing their cash flow, finding the right kind of client who would be willing to drop a bunch of cash in their laps to cause their profit margin to rise.

Instead, Mike found a little place and went out on his own. His former co-worker, Joel Friedman, has been arrested for the deaths of Bob Holmes and Diana Kennedy, partners at the firm Mike once called his home away from home. Joel wants Mike to represent him. Mike learns that the two murder victims may have been involved with one another, that they were trying to close a huge deal that night and not everybody agreed to the terms of the deal and wanted it to fail. Voices got heated to the point it spilled out in public where several of their colleagues witnessed what happened as well.

It appears the prosecution has enough to convince a jury of Joel's guilt. The man produces a great deal of evidence pointing at Joel. For instance, Joel's fingerprints were on the gun, he's admitted to being in the building that night, had even gone to dinner with the female victim where a witness heard them arguing with one another. In addition the prosecution has Joel in an argument with Bob over not making partner, and so on. All of the evidence indicates Joel is the guilty party. But Mike has a few wild cards up his sleeves. He's got Pete on the tail of an important witness who left the country under suspicious circumstances, and Joel, who finally admits he'd been getting it on with one of the victims but didn't want to kill her even though she dumped him and got back with Bob!

Can Mike make sense out of everything before the jury gets the case? If not they're doomed. But Mike is tenacious in giving Joel the best defense he can no matter what the stakes. Which makes for a very wild ride from start to finish. I highly recommend this one, for the plot itself, the court expertise the author calls on to write the book, which makes it much more interesting, and of course, the characters themselves. If you like legal thrillers you can't go wrong with this one.

Heather says

This was my first book by Sheldon Siegel and it was good. I have read legal thrillers before but this time, I knew the author! He works in my building and he autographed one of his books for me. Siegel's Mike Daley series takes place in my hometown, San Francisco! It was so cool to read and actually know where the places mentioned are. The story itself was very good and it had be guessing right up to the very end. I liked Mike, now on his own after his firm fired him, he takes a case defending his best friend on two counts of 1st degree murder. Mike use to be a priest and an ex-public defender. The plot moved along at a nice pace and there were some funny moments. I thought it would be dry and hard to follow but I was totally wrong. Can't wait to read more of Mike Daley and the cases he will take..
