

## Confidential source

### Local lawyer has become best-selling author of guides for students

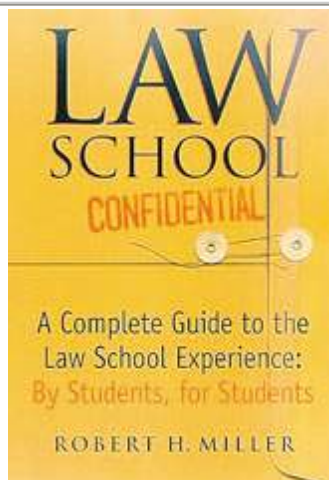
By REBECCA T. DICKSON  
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He graduated from Manchester's Central High School, then Yale, and traveled the country studying the affects of television's Barney, the purple dinosaur, on toddlers. The next year, he lived on Martha's Vineyard and wrote a screenplay about a deadlocked electoral college. Not exactly the kind of guy you might expect to author a best-selling book about the inside secrets of law school.



KEN WILLIAMS / Monitor staff  
Robert Miller used his experiences while a student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School as inspiration for his first guide.



It's been five years since the first edition of Law School Confidential: A Complete Guide to the Law School Experience hit bookstores nationwide. Author Robert Miller, of Hopkinton, seems as surprised as anyone that its 393 pages have been such a smashing success. The book has earned him speaking engagements at law schools and, most recently, a spot in a documentary about the law school experience. People can also log onto Web chat rooms or BLOGs to debate the merits of the methods Miller introduced in the book.

Miller, 34, said he wrote the book to change the law school experience for students. For him, at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, it was "always a fire drill," he said. His book is filled with tips from a dozen mentors from law schools around the

country, all aimed at giving readers some insight.

"It's so mysterious and scary to people on the outside," he said. "The book teaches you to be proactive rather than reactive. It's a blueprint, so you know what's coming before it ambushes you."

The chapters follow every step of the law school experience, from how to figure out if law school is right for you to finding summer jobs, judicial clerkships and permanent employment.

So how do you know if the legal profession is for you?

"Can you sit still and read for four hours straight at night without getting bored or restless?" Miller said. "Can you work alone a lot? Sometimes I get notes from people who changed their minds (about law school) after reading the book. It saved them thousands of dollars. That's a pretty effective use of \$17.95."

When the book first came out, Miller was nervous that it might incense law schools because it reveals insider secrets. But now, he said, several send copies to their first-year students.

A decade ago, Miller put his screenplay back in a drawer and attended law school. After graduation he clerked for a federal judge for a year, then took a job at Sheehan, Phinney, Bass and Green in Manchester. He made partner last October.

But it was Miller's notes on law school, taken while he was in the thick of it, that turned into the book, and now a series. Three others have followed: Business School Confidential, co-written with his sister-in-law and recently translated into Chinese;

Medical School Confidential, co-written with an Oregon doctor, and Campus Confidential, the latter two are due out next spring.

The notes that created Law School Confidential started during Miller's second semester at law school, he said. After he was clerking, he realized he had amassed enough for a book.

Last month, Heath Morgan, a producer and director, spent a day filming Miller in Manchester for his documentary, The Trials of Law School. The film follows several students as they use Miller's book to navigate classes and cases. It also features interviews with Miller and top legal professionals from across the country.

Vastly different from watching Barney with 3- to 5-year-olds, which is what Miller did after earning a degree in psychology at Yale. But his application to law school changed everything.

Miller said he'll finish Campus Confidential by the end of September, marking his fourth book in five years. Then he plans a two-year hiatus from writing, in part to spend more time with his wife and son. "Maybe I'll start thinking about a couple of different fiction projects," he said.

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