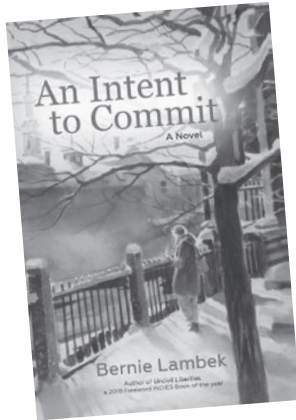


# BOOK REVIEW



## "An Intent to Commit"

by Bernie Lambek

Reviewed by Jennifer Emens-Butler, Esq.

Montpelier attorney Bernie Lambek has released his second novel, *An Intent to Commit*, and I was fortunate (and overjoyed), once again, to be given an advanced reader copy. His second novel focuses on the daughter of the main character from *Uncivil Liberties*, rather than the attorney Sam himself, and more surprisingly brings back the client, Ricky, from the prior novel.

Readers of *Uncivil Liberties* will remember Ricky whose rigid intolerance and faith-based homophobia demonstrated how

being true to free speech and protecting freedoms can have unpopular consequences. His evolved character, who came to realize before the start of the second novel that justice for some, rather than for all, is an impossibility, is woven perfectly into the novel's exploration of fairness, equal treatment and freedom of speech. And while *An Intent to Commit* appears to lean more politically to one side than *Uncivil Liberties*, Ricky himself exemplifies the spectrum of experiences and beliefs along the endless rocky road to actual equality.

Being a true legal thriller, Bernie sets the stage with a kidnapping, whose criminal intrigue and temporal grounding gives readers a welcome periodic regrouping between in-depth explorations of finer points of free speech litigation and case law. The central character is Sarah who is steeped in racial justice causes but was not expecting to be quite so steeped as a kidnapping victim. The central legal issue surrounds the raising of a Black Lives Matter flag at a local high school and the protests and court cases stemming therefrom. Public forums; free expression; second amendment rights; threats with the intent to commit; financial motivation; and inclusivity discussions all permeate this courtroom drama.

And just as I described Bernie's first novel as "cozy and familiar," *An Intent to Com-*

*mit* is even cozier and more familiar with more plays on local names and places, but also some unaltered places and facts as the novel weaves in stories from Vermont's own flag-raising cases. Fellow attorneys will appreciate being brought right into realistic settlement discussions and litigation strategy, feeling like we are truly at the Vermont table for those heated negotiations. The novel seamlessly transitions the reader from action to local Vermont legal practice, to nationally significant hot topics, to personal relationships and to textbook constitutional analysis at an enjoyable pace. It serves as a quick and entertaining read with a healthy dose of first amendment case law without being too heady. The central flag issue of local significance in Vermonters' recent memory segues beautifully into today's continuing national discussions about civil rights, freedom, race, and the ensuing polarizing political discourse.

An engaging novel, perfectly balanced between the expected fast-paced action and character development of a well-written legal thriller and the higher-level exploration of first amendment issues meant to satisfy the legal scholar in all of us. Local attorney Bernie Lambek has done it again! You can find your copy at Bear Pond Books or go to [www.bernielambek.com](http://www.bernielambek.com).



# IN MEMORIAM

## John L. Primmer

**John L. Primmer**, of South Ryegate, Vermont, passed away, August 29, 2021. John was born February 21, 1941, in Iowa and attended University of Oklahoma, Morningside University, and Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dallas, TX. In 1966, he received his BA from SMU and law degree from Southern Methodist University School of Law, where he also was editor-in-chief of *SMU Law Review*, 1965-66. Upon graduation from law school, John practiced corporate law at Dewey, Ballantine, Bushby, Palmer & Wood, New York City from 1966-1971. John then joined the law firm of Yandell, Page & Archer, Burlington, VT 1971. He was recruited by Downs, Rachlin & Martin, served as corporate attorney, managing partner, and developed the captive insurance industry in state of Vermont. In 1982 he was a founding partner of Primmer & Piper in St. Johnsbury, VT. This firm lat-

er evolved into Primmer, Piper Eggleston & Cramer PC, with offices in 3 states and with more than 40 attorneys. In the 1990s John and his wife Donna owned and operated the South Peacham Store. He sang in the North Country chorus and recorded radio jingles during college. He enjoyed his family, cooking and being outdoors, fishing, camping, golfing, and travelling. John loved his dogs—Roy, Merle, and countless dogs before them. John is survived by his first wife and his two sons and grandchildren and his 2 siblings. John was predeceased by his wife and his brother.

## Karl W. Neuse

**Karl W. Neuse**, born on July 27, 1941, in Middlebury, died at home surrounded by his loving family, on September 14, 2021. A man who prided himself on "not getting very far," he spent his life in Middlebury, leaving only to attend Northfield-Mount

Hermon, Williams College and Georgetown University (JD, 1966). Karl was a law clerk in Underwood and Lynch before opening his own practice in 1972, serving as a public defender. Karl served on the selectboard for nine years, as chair for 2, and was the Town Attorney for Middlebury from 1988 until his retirement in 2016. He was on the Board of the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, served as President of the Middlebury Rotary Club, incorporator and organizer of the United Way of Addison County and Middlebury Volunteer Ambulance Association. Karl was co-founder, Director, and President of the Middlebury Land Trust and delegate for Middlebury on the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. He was a Little League coach and President and fundraiser for Friends of Hockey. In addition to practicing law and community service, Karl served in the Vermont Army National Guard from 1966-2001, retiring with the rank of Colonel. His favorite activities included fanta-