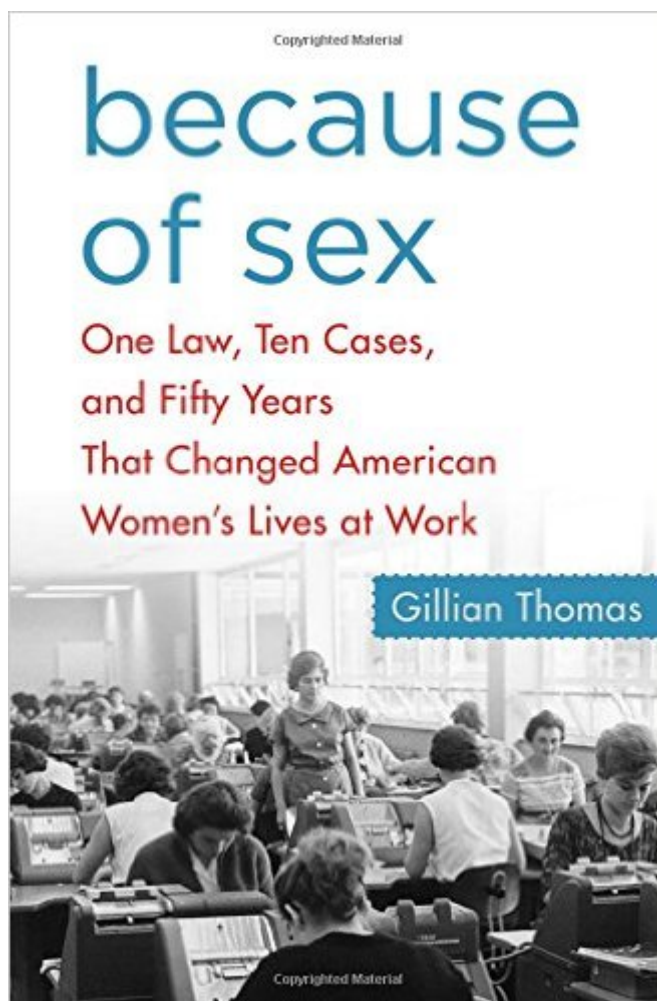


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# Because Of Sex: One Law, Ten Cases, And Fifty Years That Changed American Women's Lives At Work



## Synopsis

â€œMeticulously researched and rewarding to readâ€ [Thomas is a gifted storyteller.â€ • â€ •The New York Times Book ReviewBest known as a monumental achievement of the civil rights movement, the 1964 Civil Rights Act also revolutionized the lives of Americaâ€™s working women. Title VII of the law made it illegal to discriminate â€œbecause of sex.â€ • But that simple phrase didnâ€™t mean much until ordinary women began using the law to get justice on the jobâ€ •and some took their fights all the way to the Supreme Court. Among them were Ida Phillips, denied an assembly line job because she had a preschool-age child; Kim Rawlinson, who fought to become a prison guardâ€ •a â€œmanâ€™s jobâ€ •; Mechelle Vinson, who brought a lawsuit for sexual abuse before â€œsexual harassmentâ€ • even had a name; Ann Hopkins, denied partnership at a Big Eight accounting firm because the men in charge thought she needed "a course at charm schoolâ€ •; and most recently, Peggy Young, UPS truck driver, forced to take an unpaid leave while pregnant because she asked for a temporary reprieve from heavy lifting. These unsung heroinesâ€™ victories, and those of the other women profiled in Gillian Thomas' *Because of Sex*, dismantled a â€œMad Menâ€ • world where women could only hope to play supporting roles; where sexual harassment was â€œjust the way things areâ€ •; and where pregnancy meant getting a pink slip. Through first-person accounts and vivid narrative, *Because of Sex* tells the story of how one law, our highest court, and a few tenacious women changed the American workplace forever.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Really enjoyed this story of how the court slowly awarded women equal rights -- and even thought I

had watched this happen real-time as I was growing older, it still came as a shock to see how recently some of these gains were made. I don't think most young women these days do not realize how different things were when their mothers and grandmothers were young.

This overview of the cases related to gender based discrimination was entertaining and informative. With each chapter focusing on one case - the flow is easy to stick with - and avoiding the repetition common in other books of this type.

Thomas explores the nuances in these cases without losing the reader, carefully explaining legal terms and strategy without a hint of condescension and without disrupting the narrative. I initially picked up a copy from the local library, but ordered my own copy after reading the first case because I know I'll want to revisit this one.

One of my favorite genres is nonfiction that reads like fiction, and this book is a great example. Vivid, jargon-free narrative brings the cases to life and makes you mad all over again about the discrimination and indignities and bullsh\*t working woman faced -- and sadly are still facing. Buy it for yourself (at your local independent bookstore, of course) and be sure to get extra copies for the women in your life - mom, aunt, sister, daughter, grandma, babysitter, letter carrier, CPA, barrista, etc. They will thank you!

As much as I enjoyed the book, I can't help but wonder if this election cycle will put women's rights back a half century or maybe to the stone age. Thomas did an excellent job in selecting the ten cases and blending the legal facts with personal insights into the clients and their lawyers. Kudos to him and all the clients and lawyers involved. L Anchors

This book, while deeply researched and rigorous, is the opposite of legalese. Thomas's vivid, thoughtful, witty storytelling reveals the real (and courageous) people behind the cases that made employment discrimination law what it is today. It shows not just the impact of law on people, but the impact of people on law. These women's struggles (and those of the advocates at their side) are both infuriating and inspiring. (That was me on the subway yelling at the book, alternating between "WHAT THE HELL?!" and "YOU GO, IDA!") Read it on the train, read it on the beach; just read it. I have a zillion friends with spring birthdays, not to mention my mom (who came of working age during this gender-siloed Mad-Men-tastic era) and I'm buying it for every single one.

I loved this book! Gillian Thomas does a fabulous job of explaining how sex discrimination law has developed over the past fifty years. Based on in-depth interviews with the women who brought these cases and their lawyers, as well as meticulous research, the book offers a unique behind-the-scenes look at ten famous Supreme Court cases. These women are truly unsung heroes -- and everyone who has benefited from their courage (which is to say, all working women) owe them a debt of gratitude.

Because of Sex is a fantastic book. The editor Charlie Peters used to say that journalists are good at covering laws when they're being passed but not about the impact of those laws once they're in effect. Because of Sex delivers the goods. It uses a series of court cases to tell us what the 1964 Civil Rights Act has meant for women's equality. It's not only original, well-researched history but also a compelling read.

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