



# TO THE BAG

## REVEALING THE HIDDEN BALL

To the *Bag*:

Your publication of a portion of the short contracts treatise by Harvard Dean Christopher Columbus Langdell provided your readers with an important bit of law school history.

Dean Langdell invented the case book method of law school instruction. For Blackstone's black letter he substituted the study of individual court opinions. It is to him we owe the intense scrutiny of odd cases that make good hypotheticals. That method of study now dominates American legal education.

But Langdell hesitated. Perhaps fearing that a pure case book was too radical a change, he added at its end the treatise from which you have quoted.

For better or worse, subsequent case book authors eschewed this spoon-feeding. Its absence created the elusive "hidden ball" for which law students have searched for the past 100 years.

If the example you have provided us should prompt future casebook authors to return to this original model, generations of law students would be grateful and dozens of outline publishers would be bankrupt.

But law school would be a lot less fun.

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