

CONFLICT OF LAWS

CASES—COMMENTS—QUESTIONS

Roger C. Cramton
David P. Currie

American Casebook Series



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By

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and

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AMERICAN CASEBOOK SERIES

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who first opened our minds to these problems

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LAW SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS — Continued

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PREFACE

The world is divided into an inordinate number of neat geographical boxes: Arkansas, Liechtenstein, the island of China. Each makes its own laws to govern its own affairs, and each has a system for adjudicating its own disputes. But people, especially within a federal nation, pay little attention to political boundaries. The California hiker orders boots from L. L. Bean in Freeport, Maine. The French tourist is murdered by a man from Hoboken, New Jersey, on a Greek ship in Tokyo harbor. The Pakistani brings two wives to live with him while he goes to college in Brooklyn. Deciding whose business is the resolution of disputes arising out of such transactions is the problem we call conflict of laws.

Within this problem lie three interrelated areas of study: choice of law, jurisdiction, and foreign judgments. What law determines whether our Californian must pay for the boots? If it comes to a lawsuit, where can the case be heard? If a judgment against Bean is rendered in California, will Maine enforce it? This book is principally concerned with these three problems as issues of the distribution of powers in the American federal system. They arise on two levels: conflicts among the states and conflicts between national and local authority.

Conflict of laws is not what it used to be. Not too long ago personal jurisdiction depended largely upon the presence of the defendant or his property; and choice of law upon where certain events, deemed significant, had taken place. It is common knowledge that the past twenty-five years have produced a lot of new law in both fields, but many current treatments of conflicts underemphasize the extent of the change by retaining the traditional organization and tacking on the new learning as an addendum. This book is based upon the view that the basic principles of jurisdiction are found in *International Shoe*, not in *Pennoyer v. Neff*; that there exists a deep split of judicial opinion concerning the most fundamental issues underlying choice of law; and that a substantial core of common considerations underlie jurisdiction, choice of law, and judgments, on both federal and state levels.

The first two chapters are the heart of the book, presenting a comparison of the principal competing theories underlying American choice of law. The traditional subdivision of the subject into tort, contract, and other pigeonholes is avoided as irrelevant and misleading, except to illustrate the operation of the first Restatement. The last section of Chapter 2 explores the choice-of-law analysis with which we are most sympathetic, attempting to expose its weaknesses

PREFACE

and to work out so far as possible rational solutions to cases of true conflict. It seems premature, however, to abandon the teaching of traditional theories; quite apart from jurisprudential considerations, judicial acceptance of the new learning is by no means unanimous, and the careful lawyer should be prepared to argue various theories in support of his case. Chapter 3 is concerned with constitutional limits of choice of law, raising for the first time the question whether federal authority can serve to resolve disputes of this nature that the states have not satisfactorily settled.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with jurisdiction and with foreign judgments, respectively. *Res judicata*, in the domestic sense, presumably has been covered in first-year procedure courses, and, very likely, so has jurisdiction. To study jurisdiction in a conflicts course before considering choice of law would be simply repetitive; our notion is that a review of the subject in the light of a choice-of-law background adds useful new insights to familiar problems. Similarly, the chapter on judgments considers the impact of *res judicata* policy upon the principles underlying jurisdiction and choice of law. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with two subjects that have received extraordinary judicial treatment in conflict of laws: divorce and the administration of estates. The divorce cases afford an excellent opportunity for re-examining and correlating the three kin concepts of jurisdiction, choice of law, and respect for judgments; the estate cases focus upon a peculiar affectation of the courts that has lingered too long from a bygone day. The final chapter centers upon the myriad conflicts between federal and state authority, once again bringing to bear the familiar analytical implements developed in the earlier chapters in order to demonstrate, for example, that such problems as preemption of state law by the Commerce Clause have a great deal in common with the choice of law between states.

The format of this book is that championed by Hart and Wechsler: Illustrative principal cases combined with extensive notes containing additional cases, statutes, academic commentary, and plenty of rhetorical questions. The sampling of law-review articles and books is especially liberal because academic circles have provided an unusually large proportion of the significant thinking about conflict of laws. It is true that the instructor can appear uncommonly brilliant if he gives his students nothing but bare cases and springs his additional learning on them only in the classroom; but this seems an insufficient justification for depriving students of the opportunity to educate themselves before class in order to challenge his ideas.

The book is designed for use in courses of three semester-hours or four quarter-hours. It may be adapted for shorter or longer courses, although we would be hard pressed, considering other pressures on the curriculum, to justify devoting more time to the subject. No at-

PREFACE

tempt has been made to pad the book by including several cases where one would suffice. Transitional cases in choice of law (those purporting to accept the traditional approach but in fact manipulating it) have been used sparingly since they have limited utility in illuminating the past or in preparing for the future. Many of them, however, provide useful fact situations for testing various approaches to choice of law, and for this reason are included in summary form. Economies of space, easing the amount the student must read, have been obtained by selecting cases in Chapter 1 and in the earlier portions of Chapter 2 that provide useful situations for discussion later on in Chapter 2 and throughout the remainder of the book. We have practiced this spatial economy not in order to be easy on the student but in order to leave him time to think about the more difficult problems developed in the notes.

The editorial practices followed in this book require brief explanation. In general, we have reprinted cases rather fully in a desire to provide class material that retains the texture and diversity of the originals. We have not carried this approach so far, however, as to preserve passages that are repetitious or irrelevant. Authorities cited in principal cases have been ruthlessly pruned; only those citations that build an understanding of the course as a whole or that a curious student might want to examine have been preserved. The notes are intended as a guide to thinking and discussion. Since exhaustive citation to the cases or the literature would interfere with that primary function, the notes do not attempt to double in brass as a text. For the student who, like Linus, needs a security blanket, there are several recent texts available (Ehrenzweig (1962); Goodrich (Scoles ed. 1964); Leflar (1959); and Stumberg (1962)); and we need not apologize for our refusal to encumber the note material with superfluous references to cases or articles. We have discussed and cited all of the materials that we think a careful instructor or curious student might want to examine for class purposes.

Omissions from principal cases or quoted material are indicated in all instances. Three periods (. . .) signal the omission of words within a sentence or of sentences at the start of a paragraph. Four periods (. . . .) indicate the omission of a sentence or more within or at the end of a single paragraph. Five periods (.) mark the omission of longer passages: consecutive sentences from two paragraphs or one or more full paragraphs.

The omission of citations (cases or other authorities) is indicated by three asterisks (* * *). Asterisks are not used when words containing substantive content have been omitted, whether or not a citation is contained in the omitted passage.

Footnotes in principal cases and quoted material usually have been discarded, and we have attempted to avoid them in our own note

PREFACE

material. Those footnotes which have been included retain their original number; our own infrequent footnotes may be readily distinguished as they are marked with a single asterisk (*).

For assistance in completing the manuscript and preparing it for the printer, we are particularly indebted to Miss Susan Sakada of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Carl von Ende of the class of 1968, Michigan.

R.C.C.

D.P.C.

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In other instances, in which the author is deceased, we are grateful for permission granted by the copyright owner: Harvard University Press (Cook, *The Logical and Legal Bases of Conflicts of Laws*); The University of Chicago Law Review (B. Currie, Full Faith and Credit to Foreign Land Decrees, 21 U.Chi.L.Rev. 620; B. Currie, The Constitution and the Choice of Law, 26 U.Chi.L.Rev. 9; B. Currie & Schreter, Unconstitutional Discrimination in the Conflict of Laws: Equal Protection); Duke University Press (B. Currie, *Selected Essays on the Conflict of Laws*); Columbia Law Review (Jackson, Full Faith and Credit—The Lawyer's Clause, 45 Colum.L.Rev. 1); Yale Law Journal Co. (B. Currie and Schreter, Unconstitutional Discrimination in the Conflict of Laws: Privileges and Immunities, 69 Yale L.J. 1323); Yale University Press (Lorenzen, *Selected Articles on the Conflict of Laws*); Harvard Law Review (Morgan, Choice of Law Governing Proof, 58 Harv.L.Rev. 153); Foundation Press (Stumberg, *Conflict of Laws*).

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TABLE OF CASES

The principal cases are in *italic type*. The cases appearing in the authors' notes are in Roman type. References are to pages.

- ABC-Paramount Records, Inc. v. Topps
Record Distrib. Co., 786
- Abrams, *In re*, 713
- Adam v. Saenger, 509
- Adams v. Adams, 638
- Adams v. Knickerbocker Nature Society, Inc. (An Imaginary Case)*, 225, 258
- Adams v. Knickerbocker Nature Study Society, Inc. (Another Imaginary Case)*, 265
- Adams v. Lindsell, 24
- Addison v. Addison*, 429, 436, 437, 439
- Alaska Packers Ass'n v. Industrial Acc. Comm'n, 368, 423, 807
- Allen v. Superior Court, 502
- Allgeyer v. Louisiana, 350
- Allstate Ins. Co. v. Charneski, 798
- Alton v. Alton*, 12, 721, 729, 730, 731
- American Dredging Co. v. Operating Engineers Union, 874, 876
- American Surety Co. v. Baldwin, 604
- Anderson v. French, 69
- Angel v. Bullington, 619, 782, 784, 797, 809
- Anglo-American Provision Co. v. Davis Provision Co., 636, 637, 649
- Annesley, *In re*, 66
- Armstrong v. Armstrong, 687
- Arp v. Maryland Cas. Co., 845
- Arrowsmith v. United Press International, 793, 796, 797, 798
- A. S. Rampell, Inc. v. Hyster Co., 160
- Atkinson v. Superior Court*, 536, 546, 740, 760, 876
- Atlantic Coast Line R. R. v. Burnette, 865
- Atlas Iron Co. v. Hessler, 845
- Atwood v. Walker, 85
- Auten v. Auten*, 193, 201, 203, 258, 333, 374
- Avco Corp. v. Aero Lodge No., 735, 875, 876
- Avery v. Bender, 528
- Babcock v. Jackson*, 236, 253, 254, 256, 258, 259, 290, 333
- Baffin Land Corp. v. Monticello Motor Inn, 203
- Baker v. Baker, Eccles & Co., 759
- Baldwin v. Iowa State Traveling Men's Ass'n, 604, 708
- Balts v. Balts, 257
- Banco de Brasil, S. A. v. A. C. Israel Commodity Co., 138
- Bangs v. Inhabitants of Brewster, 41
- Bank of America v. Parnell*, 813, 821
- Bank of Augusta v. Earle, 452, 637, 740
- Bankers Trust Co. v. Equitable Life Assur. Soc., 527
- Barber v. Barber, 631, 658
- Barrack, Van Dusen v.*, 443, 802, 809, 810, 811, 876
- Barrie's Estate, In re*, 25, 30, 31, 181
- Bashkin v. Industrial Acc. Comm'n, 844
- Batchelor v. Fulcher, 591, 687
- Bauer, Matter of, 171, 259
- Beacon Theatres, Inc. v. Westover, 785
- Belmont, United States v., 829
- Bergner & Engel Brewing Co. v. Dreyfus, 43
- Bernhardt v. Polygraphic Co., 772, 784, 797, 852, 875
- Bernkrant v. Fowler*, 257, 302, 305, 307, 308, 309, 332, 671, 797
- Bernstein v. National Broadcasting Co., 17
- Bethlehem Steel Corp. v. Moores, 844
- Bibb v. Navajo Freight Lines, Inc., 827
- Blackmer v. United States, 501
- Blackstone v. Miller, 759
- Blaine v. Murphy, 42
- Blake v. McClung*, 412, 422, 427, 749, 809
- Bodenhagen v. Farmers Mut. Ins. Co., 83
- Bohenek v. Niedzwiecki, 82
- Bournias v. Atlantic Maritime Co., Ltd.*, 112, 401
- Boutillier v. Wesinger, 809
- Bowman v. Curt G. Joa, Inc., 795
- Boxer v. Boxer, 709
- Boyle v. Kempkin, 87

TABLE OF CASES

- Brady v. Southern Ry., 866
 Brewster v. Boston Herald-Traveler Corp., 17
Broderick v. Rosner, 372, 381, 399, 400, 594
 Broderick's Will, Case of, 557
 Brown v. Allen, 592
 Brown v. Gerdes, 863
 Brown v. Western Ry., 867
 Buchanan v. Rucker, 442
 Buckeye v. Buckeye, 82
Buckley v. New York Post Corp., 488, 494
 Burnett v. New York Central R. R., 865
 Burnley v. Stevenson, 622
 Burns Mte. Co. v. Fried, 781
 Burr v. Beckler, 84, 89, 217
Byrd v. Blue Ridge Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., 777, 782, 784, 785, 786, 792, 798, 807, 866

 Cable Vision, Inc. v. KUTV, Inc., 827
 Calbeck v. Travelers Ins. Co., 844
 Caldarola v. Eckert, 843
 Caldwell v. Caldwell, 720
 Caldwell v. Gore, 69
 Calzavara v. Biehl & Co., 512
 Cammell v. Sewell, 31
 Canadian No. Ry. Co. v. Eggen, 192
 Carbulon v. Carbulon, 713
Carroll, Alabama Great So. R. Co. v., 8, 69
 Carroll v. Lanza, 369, 370
 Carson, United States v., 822
 Casey v. Manson Const. & Eng'r Co., 307
 Central Contracting Co. v. Maryland Casualty Co., 512
 Central Vermont Ry. v. White, 866
 Chamberlain v. Chamberlain, 619
 Charles Dowd Box Co. v. Courtney, 862, 874, 876
 Cherokee Laboratories, Inc. v. Rogers, 258
 Chicot County Drainage District v. Baxter State Bank, 606, 607, 608, 709
 Christmas v. Russell, 593
 Ciprari v. Servicos Aereos Cruzeiro, 297
 City of. See under name of city
 Clapper, Bradford Elec. Light Co. v., 146, 347, 348, 349, 368, 369, 370, 398-99, 638
 Clark v. Clark, 256
 Clark Distilling Co. v. Western Md. Ry., 843
Clarke v. Clarke, 610, 617, 619, 620, 621

Clay v. Sun Insurance Office, Ltd., 366, 400, 402, 436, 468
Clearfield Trust Co. v. United States, 811, 818, 820, 821
 Coe v. Coe, 606, 709
 Cohen v. Beneficial Loan Corp., 784, 797, 809
 Colby v. Colby, 709, 710, 712
 Cole v. Cunningham, 411
 Colgate v. Harvey, 437
 Combs v. Combs, 645
 Compco Corp. v. Day-Brite Lighting, Inc., 826, 827
Conn v. Whitmore, 485, 486, 487, 488
 Connecticut Gen. Life Ins. Co. v. Johnson, 427-28
 Conner v. Elliott, 422
 Conner v. Spencer, 189
Converse v. Hamilton, 757, 759
 Cook v. Cook, 711
 Cooper v. American Airlines, 773
 Corfield v. Coryell, 422
 Coster v. Coster, 82
 Cotton v. United States, 823
 Covey v. Town of Somers, 557
 Cowans v. Ticonderoga Pulp & Paper Co., 655
 Crandall v. Nevada, 438
 Crichton, In re Estate of, 254, 257
 Crichton, Matter of, 260
Cridder v. Zurich Insurance Co., 404, 410, 798, 848
 Crosby, United States v., 30, 85
 Crowder v. Gordon Transports, 797
 Curtis Pub. Co. v. Birdsong, 496
 Curtis Pub. Co. v. Golino, 495
 Curtiss-Wright Export Corp., United States v., 820
Cutts v. Najdrowski, 85, 86, 87
 Czaplicki v. The Hoegh Silvercloud, 832

 Dale Systems, Inc. v. Time, Inc., 17, 334, 495
 Dalip Singh Bir's Estate, In re, 45, 277
 Damato, In re, 87
Daniels' U-Drive Auto Renting Co., Levy v., 71, 90, 224, 333, 372
Dater, University of Chicago v., 60, 84, 325, 326
 Davenport v. Webb, 111, 259
 Davis v. Davis, 605, 709
 Davis v. Department of Labor, 844
 Davis v. St. Paul-Mercury Indemnity Co., 486
 Dawson v. Dawson, 82, 845
De Lano's Estate, In re, 750, 758, 759

TABLE OF CASES

- Debs, In re, 769
 Delta & Pine Land Co., Hartford Acc. & Indem. Co. v., 349, 368, 370, 372, 402
 Depas v. Mayo, 437
 DeSylva v. Ballentine, 829, 830
 Detroit, City of v. Gould, 137
 Detroit, City of v. Proctor, 136
 Dice v. Akron, Canton & Youngstown R. R., 858, 866, 867
 Dick, Home Ins. Co. v., 340, 346, 370, 371, 402, 468, 530, 729, 771
 Diederich v. American News Co., 786
 Dimon v. Dimon, 295
 Dodge, New York Life Ins. Co. v., 335, 346
 Doggrell, Paper Products Co. v., 125
 Dorr-Oliver, Inc. v. Willett Associates, 529
 Douglas v. New York, N. H. & H. R. R., 423, 864
 Dow v. Larrabee, 314
 Downs v. American Mut. Liab. Ins. Co., 259
 Duckwall v. Lease, 70, 619
 Duggan v. Bay State Street Ry., 96
 Duke, Durfee v., 596, 603, 604, 605, 608, 619, 622
 Dunlevy, New York Life Ins. Co. v., 534, 689
 Dupasseur v. Rochereau, 570
 Duplex Printing Press Co. v. Deering, 873.
 Dym v. Gordon, 242, 253, 254, 260, 263, 324

 Eck v. United Arab Airlines, 794
 Edwards v. California, 438
 Edwards v. St. Louis, S. F. R. R., 794
 E. Gerl & Co. v. Cunard S. S. Co., 161
 Egley v. T. B. Bennett & Co., 510, 511
 Eldridge v. Don Beachcomber, Inc., 16
 Eli Lilly & Co. v. Sav-On Drugs, Inc., 371
 Ellis v. Garwood, 596
 Emery v. Burbank, 255, 309
 Engel v. Davenport, 110, 865
 Erie R. R. Co. v. Tompkins, 375, 401, 655, 761, 770, 781, 783, 786, 792, 794, 798, 808, 810, 844, 866
 Erlanger Mills, Inc. v. Cohoes Fibre Mills, Inc., 482, 485, 486, 488
 Esenwein v. Pennsylvania ex rel. Esenwein, 686
 Estin v. Estin, 545, 671, 686, 688, 689, 712
 Everitt v. Everitt, 510

 Fabricius v. Horgen, 257
 Fall v. Eastin, 612, 621, 623, 625
 Farber v. Smolack, 112
 Fauntleroy v. Lum, 570, 588, 592, 593, 594, 619, 622, 633, 636, 638, 645, 670, 708
 Fay v. Noia, 592, 603
 Feathers v. McLucas, 479, 480
 Ferguson v. Skrupa, 370
 Ferry, Michigan Trust Co. v., 547
 Ferry v. Spokane P. & S. Ry., 422
 Fetter, Hughes v., 12, 378, 398, 399, 400, 410, 428, 595, 619-20, 637, 729, 742, 750, 866
 Fidelity Union Trust Co. v. Field, 772
 First National City Bank, United States v., 532
 Fisher v. Home Indem. Co., 146
 Fitzgerald v. United States Lines, 785
 Fitzpatrick v. International Ry. Co., 98
 Flexner v. Farson, 453
 Ford v. Ford, 591
 Forgan v. Bainbridge, 295
 Frasier v. Public Service Interstate Transp. Co., 110
 Free v. Bland, 831
 Frey & Horgan Corp. v. Superior Court, 513
 Fricke v. Isbrandtsen Co., 159
 Friday v. Smoot, 257, 258

 Gallagher v. Gallagher, 42
 Garner v. Teamsters Union, 826, 874
 Garrett v. Moore-McCormack Co., 844, 866
 Gasch v. Britton, 595
 George v. Douglas Aircraft Co., 190, 410
 George, Tennessee Coal, Iron & R. Co. v., 402, 444, 595, 620, 729, 862
 Georgia P. S. C., United States v., 825
 German-American Coffee Co. v. Diehl, 290
 Ghilain v. Couture, 110, 743, 748, 809
 Giampalo v. Taylor, 740
 Giddens v. Isbrandtsen Co., 834, 848
 Gilbert v. Burnstine, 513
 Gillespie v. United States Steel Corp., 850
 Gilmer v. Spitalny, 640, 642, 643
 Goett v. Union Carbide Corp., 849
 Golden, Intercontinental Hotels Corp. v., 145, 259
 Goodwine v. Superior Court, 443
 Gore v. Northeast Airlines, 111, 289, 308
 Grace v. MacArthur, 500
 Graham v. Wilkins, 75