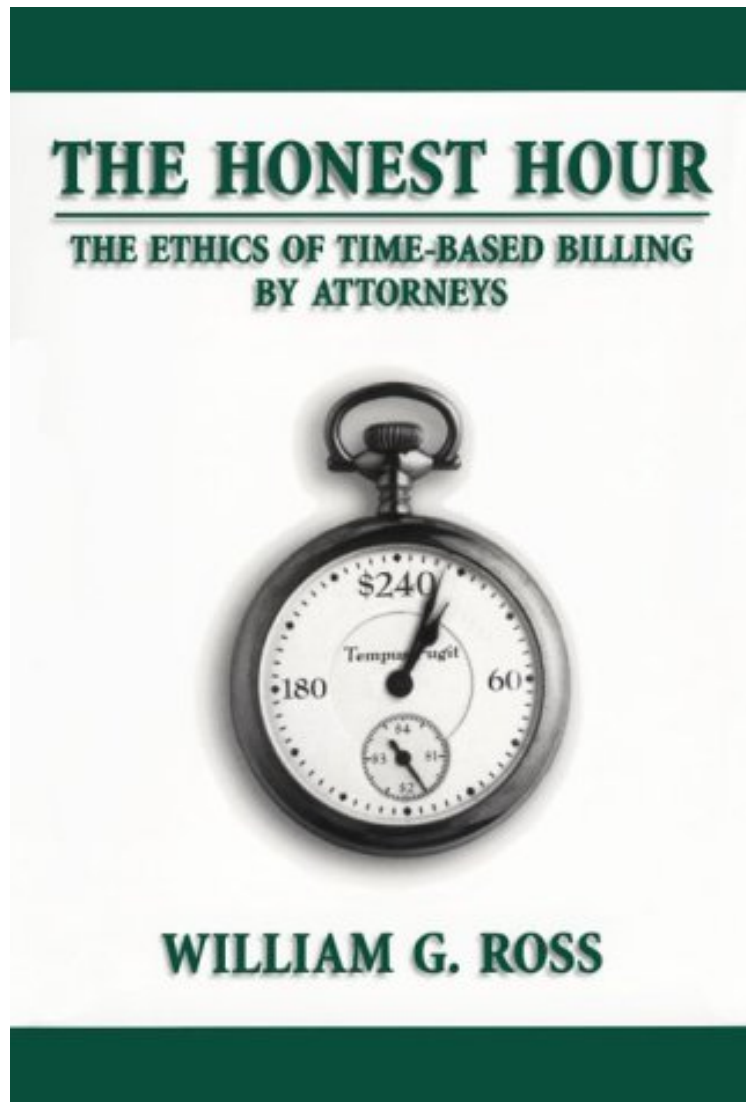


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## The Honest Hour: The Ethics of Time-Based Billing by Attorneys

*William G. Ross*

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**William G. Ross : The Honest Hour: The Ethics of Time-Based Billing by Attorneys** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Honest Hour: The Ethics of Time-Based Billing by Attorneys:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Dry; Plodding; SoberingBy Ruth EdlundThis book has the look, feel, and tone of an extended law review article. The author is a professor at a law school in Alabama with numerous law review articles to his credit, so the tone is not surprising.Before he entered academe, however, the author spent nine years practicing law in New York City and is clearly wise to the ways of the big firm world periodically

lampooned in places like *The American Lawyer*. This book is largely descriptive and not prescriptive, and at times has an ingenuously horrified tone at the sharp billing practices chronicled through the use of an impressive variety of resources. Nonetheless, most professionals who log their time and use it for billing will find something to make them squirm. Unfortunately the conclusions were only three pages of a 264-page book, and a number of other conclusions were scattered throughout the preceding chapters. More unified conclusions would have been helpful. Worth struggling through if you want to take a cold hard look at how you do your timesheets.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent  
By W. B. Anderson  
This is a resource book for me. I use it and refer to it mentally and physically daily. Well indexed. Very well written. It is the most deep in this specific topic of hourly fee billing evaluation.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The definitive academic work on the billable hour  
By JGD  
Professor William R. Ross is a leading scholar on the ethics of attorney billing, and this is the definitive academic work on the subject. Professor Ross takes on a subject that, he acknowledges, was "taboo" until not so long ago -- the highly questionable ethics of the billing practices that now dominate the practice of law. Written in 1996, the book remains as relevant today as when it came out -- sadly, its message has not dated. This is a comprehensive work, with citations to numerous sources, both academic and from the "real world" of the practice of law. Professor Ross also draws on surveys he has carried out in which lawyers answer pointed questions about actual billing practices. The results of his most recent survey -- published in 2007 -- post-date the book, but can be found on his Web site ([...] "*The Honest Hour*" is an excellent work for a law school class on ethics and professional responsibility. But I also strongly recommend it for practicing lawyers -- especially those who mentor others on billing practices or who are influential in law practice management. As with all books on the subject, the problem is that the lawyers who need it most are probably those who are least likely to read it. But the more who do read it, and who encourage others to do the same, the better the profession will be. The title of the book -- "*The Honest Hour*" -- shows that the underlying message of the book is a positive one, namely that there is a better way.

John Derrick  
Practicing attorney and author of: *Boo to Billable Hours*

In *The Honest Hour*, Ross explains how to formulate ethical standards for time-based billing. Tapping a broad range of sources, including judicial opinions, rules of professional conduct, the recent ABA opinion on hourly billing, fee agreements, bar journals, law reviews, personal interviews, and nationwide surveys of hundreds of private practitioners, and an inside counsel that he conducted in 1991 and from 1994 to 1995, Ross shows how members of the business and legal communities view the propriety of various billing practices. Ross also evaluates the magnitude of unethical billing, drawing on his surveys, the experiences of legal audit firms, and anecdotes. Although he concludes that overbilling is widespread, he contends that most attorneys try to bill their clients ethically and that much overbilling is the result of excessive zeal rather than fraud. He also explains how clarification and reform of billing practices could help to improve the public image of attorneys and stimulate greater public service by lawyers. *The Honest Hour* discusses how attorneys and their clients can work together to develop fee agreements that will permit attorneys to spend enough time to produce quality work, while guarding against practices that exploit clients. The book also covers the merits and disadvantages of various alternatives of hourly billing and the reactions of clients and lawyers to their experiences with such alternatives.