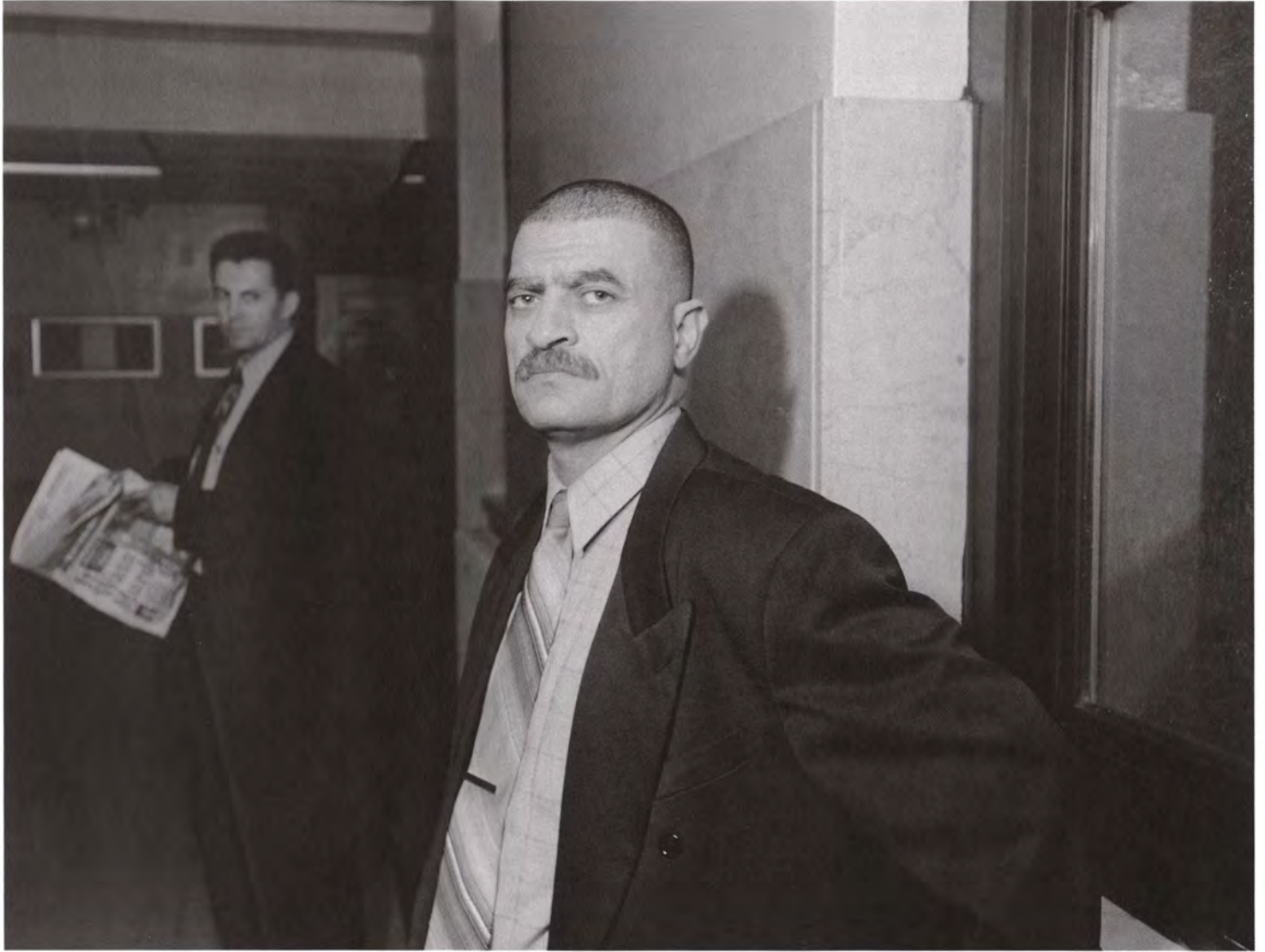


ENDURING JUSTICE PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS ROMA



THERE'S SOMETHING OPPRESSIVE about being in the Brooklyn Criminal Court Building. You feel it as soon as you walk in, and you see it everywhere you look: no one really wants to be there.

The halls are filled with girlfriends, boyfriends, lawyers, undercover cops, the latecomers, the lost, and the people who drift out of the courtrooms to take a break from the monotony. It's also where the overworked court-appointed lawyers meet with their clients, often for the first time. The clients mostly listen: they've al-

ready told their story, and now it's time to see how far it will take them. Often a painful decision has to be made right then and there.

Beginning in December 1997, I spent two to four days a week for fourteen months meeting and photographing people in the hallways. In a time often filled with hope and dread, I tried to create a moment between the waiting and the outcome to make a portrait. When departing, instead of saying "Good-bye," we'd usually say "Good luck." —T. R.



