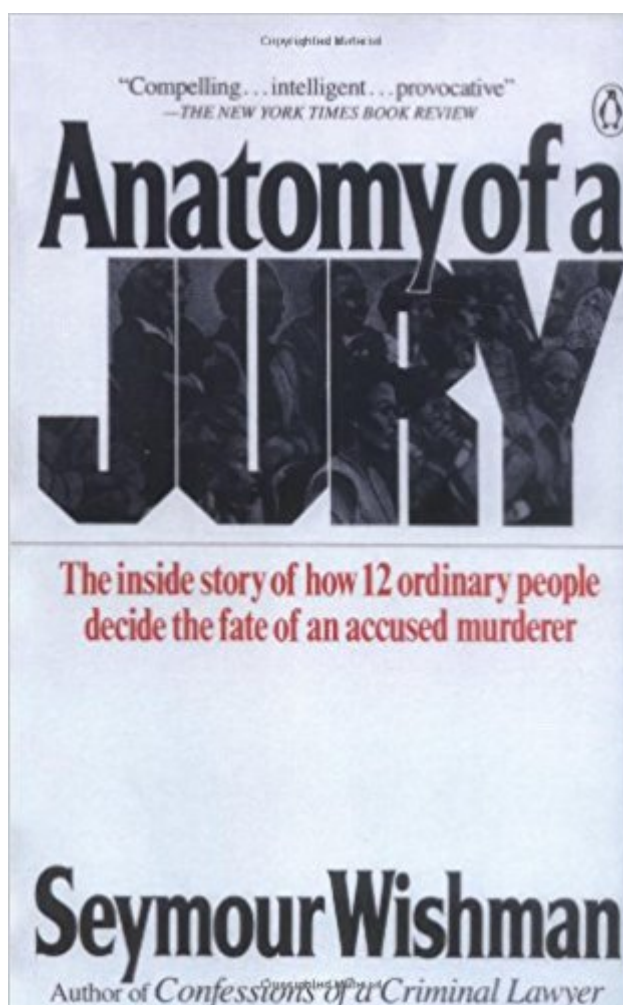


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Anatomy Of A Jury: The Inside Story Of How 12 Ordinary People Decide The Fate Of An Accused Murderer



Synopsis

"A rousing endorsement of the jury and a superb description of how the system really operates" --
"A beautiful woman has been murdered. A young black handyman -- the woman's lover -- has been accused of the crime. In this dramatic account of the trial, Seymour Wishman, a former criminal lawyer, shows how the jury system really works, from the selection of the jurors, through their deliberations, to the final verdict. Using information gleaned from many studies of the behavior of juries, and basing his book on an actual case, Wishman offers an extraordinary portrait of American justice in action." "Should find its way into mystery lovers' libraries and law students' satchels alike." --
Psychology Today

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Based on various studies and Wishman's own observations as a trial lawyer, this book centers on a mock murder case, from commission of the crime through trial verdict. PW found the trial dynamics and jurors' reactions to the evidence highly educational. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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This is a well written novel that explores the jury system as it works in the UNITED STATES. The book brilliantly weaves the analysis of the jury system and a story of a murder trial by a jury. It is difficult to put the book aside once you have started reading it. This is a must read for all study and

practice law.

Anatomy of a Jury, Seymour Wishman

Seymour Wishman practiced criminal law for both the prosecution and the defense, and wrote other books and articles. This book tells how Justice is administered, how we judge others, and how others judge us. A jury is composed of twelve citizens who apply their experience (or common sense) to decide between opposing claims. The jury system replaced "trial by ordeal" many centuries ago. Some claim a jury is composed of "prejudiced, gullible dolts incapable of understanding the evidence or law involved in a case" (Preface). This book is not a dissertation on the law or taken from past experiences. It uses a real trial as a case study. A criminal trial is inherently dramatic, a series of acts leading to an important decision. The basic legal principles and procedures are the same. A murder case is a typical case with complex questions for a jury. This book has a composite case to illustrate the workings of the jury system. It has eleven chapters, an Appendix, Notes, and Index in its 336 pages. Chapter 1 begins on the quiet streets of wealthy Glen Ridge NJ in Sept 1982. A police car received a call, a married woman was found butchered in her kitchen. Her husband named a suspect, a handyman who was convicted of armed robbery. He was arrested and asked for a lawyer. The suspect's room had been searched (without a warrant) but no murder weapon was found. Citizens are being polled for jury service. A Public Defender meets his client and hears his story. "I didn't do it." He was indicted. The jury selection begins in Chapter 3. Scientific jury selection can help a lawyer, but it is not exact (p.110). "Legal ethics obligate an attorney to represent his client zealously within the bounds of the law" (p.115). Part III tells about the trial. The witnesses testify, the author comments on the events (and what didn't happen). While a "Perry Mason" TV show has a dramatic confession, that "simply never happens" in real life (p.200). Part IV has the 'Judgments'. We hear the jury's discussions (Chapter 9). After a long time the jury reached a decision (Chapter 10). Is the identification valid if the sun was in his eyes (p.242)? The 'Appendix' tells how fictional juries are not found in real cases (p.255). In 1955 the Ford Foundation financed a study of the American jury (p.257). But tape recording a jury's deliberations was attacked (p.259). It became a Federal crime and illegal in "some thirty states" (p.261). Further studies led to "The American Jury" in 1966. Sociologists and psychologists conducted experiments and surveys to gain knowledge about jury functions (p.262). [If you liked the "Perry Mason" novels and other courtroom dramas you should enjoy reading this book.] The 'Notes' provide valuable background material. You may read this first for its historical background (there are other books on legal history). There are different kinds of juries: coroner's juries, sheriff's juries, grand juries, even a jury of matrons to determine if a condemned woman was with child - to avoid

killing the innocent (p.263). Ancient Greece used a jury of 500 to try Socrates for his political crimes. The Romans used 51 to 75 jurors. Trial by Jury was unknown before William the Conqueror (p.264) but was the established method by Henry VI (p.265). It was only in the 18th century when jurors without knowledge of the facts or parties were accepted. Plea bargaining is the principal means of settling criminal cases since the mid-19th century (p.280). In 1968 the Supreme Court ruled the Sixth Amendment was binding on all states (p.283). The petit jury must be selected from a representative cross section of the community. The jury system prevents local judges from controlling certain groups with injunctions, contempt sentences, and long probationary sentences (p.286). Why does a petit jury use twelve jurors? The answer is lost to history (p.309). No one knows why the agreement must be unanimous. [If only twelve are needed for a verdict then they won't need twenty-four jurors as with a Grand Jury.]

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