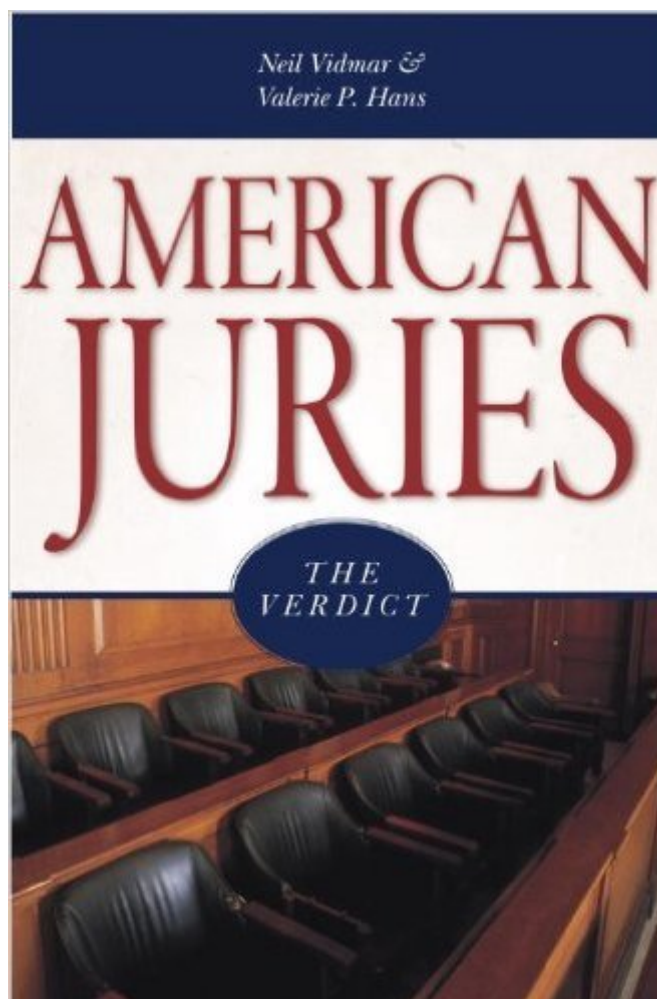


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# American Juries: The Verdict



## Synopsis

Although the right to trial by jury is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, in recent years both criminal and civil juries have been criticized as incompetent, biased, and irresponsible. For example, the O.J. Simpson criminal jury's verdict produced a racial divide in opinions about that trial. And many Americans still hold strong views about the jury that awarded millions of dollars to a woman who spilled a cup of McDonald's coffee on herself. It's said that there are "judicial hellholes" where local juries provide "jackpot justice" in medical malpractice and product liability cases with corporate defendants. Are these claims valid? This monumental and comprehensive volume reviews over fifty years of empirical research on civil and criminal juries and returns a verdict that strongly supports the jury system. Rather than relying on anecdotes, Vidmar and Hans' renowned scholars of the jury system place the jury system in its historical and contemporary context, giving the stories behind important trials while providing fact-based answers to critical questions. How do juries make decisions and how do their verdicts compare to those of trial judges and technical experts? What roles do jury consultants play in influencing trial outcomes? Can juries understand complex expert testimony? Under which circumstances do capital juries decide to sentence a defendant to die? Are juries biased against doctors and big business? Should juries be allowed to give punitive damages? How do juries respond to the insanity defense? Do jurors ignore the law? Finally, the authors consider various suggestions for improving the way that juries are asked to carry out their duties. After briefly comparing the American jury to its counterparts in other nations, they conclude that our jury system, despite occasional problems, is, on balance, fair and democratic, and should remain an indispensable component of the judicial process for the foreseeable future.

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## Customer Reviews

Are you interested in the jury? Want to know more? Then you must read this book. Seriously. Not optional. It covers every nook-and-cranny of the world of research on the subject, and its authors are bona fide experts in the field. This book is really an update of their earlier book, *Judging the Jury*, which has been cited by the Supreme Court on many occasions when commenting on the functioning of the jury. Yeah, you know you're important when your social science is being cited by the U.S. Supreme Court. Besides being a compelling argument for respecting the intelligence of juries, the authors also show the jury system's vulnerabilities, how new reforms are reshaping it, and where it comes from historically and culturally. Again, it's a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the jury system.

While the right to a trial by jury of peers is a basic American freedom, in reality civil juries have been found to be biased, irresponsible and incompetent. This volume reviews some fifty years of civil and criminal juries and considers arguments pro and con about the civil jury system. The verdict is a surprising support for the jury system process, comes from scholars of the jury system, and provides both background history and modern perspective, analyzing the key facts central to the jury's decision-making process. This is a key title for any high school to college-level collection strong in American social and political history and civil rights, or basic law.

Came as described, required for class so not much else to add about it. Some pages were slightly damaged by water but that was in the description, I think. Reads just fine.

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