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Book Review

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*Reviewed by Mort L. Kaplan**

THE VERDICTS WERE JUST: EIGHT FAMOUS ATTORNEYS PRESENT THEIR MOST MEMORABLE CASES, Albert Averbach and Charles Price, Eds. Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Co., New York, N. Y. (1966), 277 pp. \$6.95.

In the common view, the law is oftentimes irritating and incomprehensible in its concern with seemingly meaningless detail and fine distinctions. Yet, it can generate great interest when matters which stir the public fancy are involved. Thus, accounts of a bizarre murder or of an astronomical jury verdict are avidly read and discussed throughout the nation. The book here being reviewed offers that unusual blend of provocative subject matter and developmental detail which can be of interest to both attorney and layman.

Eight cases are offered. Each is unique and affords an opportunity for the editors to present some insight into the frustration of injustice, the reparation of injury, or the nature of the legal process.

The legal aftermath of an airplane crash and the painstaking courtroom reconstruction of those last desperate airborne moments are recounted by attorney Harry Gair as he seeks redress for the widow of a passenger in the plane. Traumatic neurosis is an innovation in the law of torts; David I. Sindell and William F. X. Geoghan successfully seek compensation for their clients' injuries which, though not as patent as the mangled limb or lifeless corpse, are fully as tragic. Chief Justice Musmanno of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court depicts the horror of a genocidal maniac in his account of international law and Adolph Eichmann. The case of injustice and capital punishment is related by George T. Davis in his lost struggle to save Caryl Chessman from death at the hands of the law. Melvin Belli inimitably represents himself and his clients in relating his successful litigation of a breach of warranty in polio cases arising from administration of Salk vaccine. A train, a railroad crossing and three human beings meet one day, and then again in the courtroom several years later as Truman Rucker approaches the problem of investigating, preparing and litigating a personal injury suit.

The reader will not emerge from between the covers of this book with anything approaching a legal education. He will, however, have acquired some tolerance, insight and perspective in assessing the courtroom, the legal process and associated legal problems. In any case, several enjoyable hours will have been spent in informative reading.

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