



# We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy

*By Jeffrey Abramson*

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In a new preface to this foundational book on the American jury, Abramson responds to his critics, defends his views on the jury as an embodiment of deliberative democracy in action, and reflects on recent jury trials and reforms.

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## **We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy By Jeffrey Abramson Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Abramson, a former prosecutor who teaches politics at Brandeis University, here offers an interesting complement to Stephen Adler's *The Jury* (Nonfiction Forecasts, July 11), with less-detailed case studies and proposals for reform but a deeper look at the jury's history and function in a democratic society.

Concentrating on criminal cases, the author argues for a conception of the jury as a body that will "transcend starting loyalties" to a common justice, rather than as a representative body "where jurors act as spokespersons for competing group interests." He describes how juries evolved from the local knowledge model to an emphasis on impartiality, how the notion of jury diversity moved from "different walks of life" to questions of race and sex, and how "scientific jury selection" fosters cynicism about the impartiality of juries. Among Abramson's recommendations aimed at fostering jury deliberation: abolish peremptory challenges that let lawyers remove jurors, and allow potential jurors who have been exposed to pretrial publicity (i.e., those who try to be informed) to be empaneled.

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From Library Journal

A former assistant district attorney, Abramson (politics, Brandeis) believes in the American jury system and in democracy. Here he discusses historical and contemporary court cases that exemplify or nullify a democratic model of consensus through deliberation. He also examines the new mandatory cross-section representation for juries, scientific jury selection, legitimization of state power through juries, and a common justice above social divisions. As does Stephen Adler in *The Jury* (LJ 8/94), Abramson presents various reform proposals, including the elimination of the peremptory challenge and the honest use of jury nullification. He also advocates mandatory unanimous verdicts, abolishing jury service exemptions for professionals, and revising the impartial, or "empty mind," criteria for juror selection. This title continues the author's concern for democracy expressed in his *Electronic Commonwealth* (LJ 9/15/88) and provides depth and range to the debate over jury trials. For academic and larger popular legal collections.

*Janice Dunham, John Jay Coll. Lib., New York*

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From [Booklist](#)

Abramson, a former prosecutor and corporate attorney who is now a Brandeis University professor of politics (and married to African American historian Jacqueline Jones), views the jury as a defining institution that represents both the best and the worst of democracy. Identifying two conflicting ideals for jury operation--the deliberative and the representative--Abramson organizes his study around changing attitudes toward three issues: the presumption that ordinary citizens have knowledge that enables them to render accurate verdicts; the shift, beginning in 1968, from selecting jurors from an "elite" segment of a community to drawing jurors from a representative cross section of the community; and the "demanding [expectation that] jurors [will] put aside narrow group allegiances in favor of spying common ground." Gracefully using the past to shed light on the present (and vice versa), *We, the Jury* establishes a social and historical context for current public policy issues, including jury nullification, the demand for "ignorant" jurors in highly publicized cases, "scientific jury selection," the trend away from requiring unanimous verdicts, and the impact of race on the imposition of the death penalty. The reforms Abramson urges should stimulate healthy debate, and the remarkable history he traces will fascinate fans of Grisham, Trower, and Court TV as well as academic readers *Mary Carroll*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Lucille Roller:**

The book We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You may use to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big problem with the subject. If you can make reading a book We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy being your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your own personal capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. You can know everything if you like available and read a book We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science guide or encyclopedia or other folks. So , how do you think about this e-book?

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#### **Filiberto Dacosta:**

We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy can be one of your basic books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing We, the Jury: The Jury System and the Ideal of Democracy however doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest

along with based confirm resource information that maybe you can be among it. This great information may drawn you into fresh stage of crucial thinking.

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