Lerner

The Jury

A Very Short Introduction

From ancient Athens to modern Asia, cultures have wanted ordinary people involved in making legal decisions. This Very Short Introduction charts juries from antiquity through the English-speaking world and beyond to Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Today, juries have become a symbol of democracy and popular legitimacy. But in English-speaking countries, jury trials are declining. Civil juries have been virtually abolished everywhere except the United States, and plea bargaining is taking the place of criminal jury trials. In this book, Renée Lettow Lerner describes the benefits and challenges of using juries, including jury nullification. She considers how innovations from non-English-speaking countries may be key to the survival of citizen participation in the legal system. Along the way, the book tells how a small German state invented a way of using jurors that is now found around the world. And it reveals why some defendants preferred to be crushed to death by weights rather than convicted by a jury.

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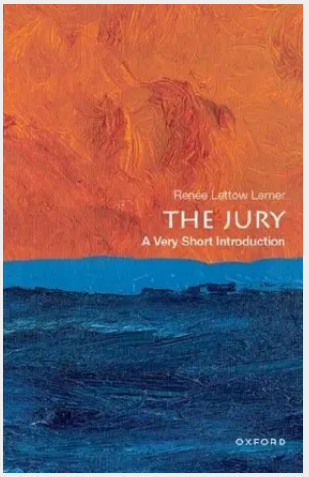

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