



The O. J. Simpson Trials: Rhetoric, Media, and the Law

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The O. J. Simpson case captured the attention of the public like no other event in media history, and the Simpson criminal trial is arguably the most notable example of the media's ability to transform litigation. This collection of original essays provides a critical analysis of the Simpson criminal and civil trials. Edited by communications professor Janice Schuetz and professional trial consultant Lin S. Lilley, the book focuses on telelitigation, the media's transformation of sensational trials, with celebrity defendants and victims, into telemediated forms.

The contributors—Ann Burnett, Patricia M. Ganer, Ann M. Gill, Diane Furno-Lamude, Lin S. Lilley, and Janice Schuetz—describe media spectacles, analyze the opening statements of trial attorneys in both cases, investigate the testimony of Mark Fuhrman in the criminal trial and O. J. Simpson in the civil trial, analyze the summations of trial attorneys in both cases, look at the processes of jury decision making, and identify the unique legal and social outcomes of the trials.

The discussions focus on five "hot button" legal issues sparked by the Simpson trials: the perceived unfairness of the jury system; unprecedented calls for jury reform in both civil and criminal arenas; the fairness issues of jury nullification, wherein a jury disregards the law in a criminal case in favor of leniency; wealth and the question of "buying" justice; and ethical questions about the ways the Simpson trials were conducted, in particular the ways in which Simpson attorney Johnnie Cochran and the "Dream Team" repeatedly nudged and occasionally crossed the ethical line.

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