



A Trial By Jury

D. Graham Burnett

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Jury duty happens to everyone. When the call came to Graham Burnett—a young historian and literary journalist—he had a shock in store. *A Trial by Jury* is his startling account of how performing this familiar civic duty turned into one of the most harrowing experiences of his life.

Burnett begins the story of the trial: a body with multiple stab wounds found in a New York apartment, intimations of cross-dressing, male prostitution, mistake identity. And then, the unexpected drama: Burnett finds himself appointed the foreman, with the responsibility of leading the increasingly frenetic deliberations within the black box of the jury room. Soon he is sequestered—which is to say marooned—with 11 others, among them a vacuum-cleaner repairman cum urban missionary, a young actress, and a man apparently floundering in a borderline between real life and daytime television. Steering the contentious politics of their temporary no-exit society toward the verdict, he discovers for himself the terrifying ultimate power of the state and the agonizing truth of the legal system: law and justice are not the same thing.

Part true crime, part political treatise, part contemplation of right, wrong, and the power of words, *A Trial by Jury* is a mesmerizing narrative of one man's encounter with crime and punishment, American style. It profoundly affects one's sense of the privileges—and the perils!—of citizenship.

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