



The Press on Trial: Crimes and Trials as Media Events (Contributions to the Study of Mass Media and Communications)

By Lloyd E. Chiasson

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Perhaps no drama catches the interest of the American public more than a spectacular trial. Even though the reporting of a crime may quickly diminish in news value, the trial lingers while drama builds. Although this has become seemingly more pronounced in recent years with the popularity of televised trials, public interest in criminal trials was just as high in 1735 when John Peter Zenger defended his right to free speech, or in 1893 when Lizzie Borden was tried for the murder of her father and stepmother. This book tells the stories of sixteen significant trials in American history and their media coverage, from the Zenger trial in 1735 to the O. J. Simpson trial in 1995. Each chapter relates the history of events leading up to the trial, the people involved, and how the crimes and subsequent trials were reported.

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Review

"Readers in search of diversion will find concise accounts of arresting cases. Some chapters might jump-start undergraduate papers about trials and alert students to "trials of the century" that involved defendants who played neither football nor the saxophone. The average college student could learn about the Scottsboro Boys, Alger Hiss, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the Chicago Seven, or the Haymarket Riot. Each case has inspired a substantial literature to which the capsules in this volume might direct students....The greatest virtue of this assortment may be its journalistic bent."-The Law and Politics Book Review

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About the Author

LLOYD CHIASSON JR. is Professor of Mass Communications at Nicholls State University. He is editor of *The Press in Times of Crisis* (Greenwood, 1995).

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