

Course work on roles

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



12 Angry Men

12 Angry Men, made in the year 1957 is a well acclaimed American drama giving new ideas about the workings of Jury and the psychology of jury members. Due to some constrictions imposed by American Judicial system it becomes an easier said than done task for Jury members to make a decision, their one decision can make a big effect if all the pros and cons are not probed of a case. The film has many salient features which inspired other film makers from across the world to make several movies and plays taking this idea. Several methods of consent structure and convincing in odd conditions are exemplary. The story of the movie belongs to an eighteen year old boy who is on trial for killing his own father. Jury of 12 men is constituted to decide the fate of that boy with a special note that there is a provision of compulsory death punishment once the accused is found guilty.

Juror # 8 Henry Fonda: Most important character is the role of Juror 8 played by Henry Fonda who took the intrepid step to vote not guilty while all other jurors voted the boy guilty. An architect, Very calm, soft spoken, logical man, unlike other jurors tried hard to find the truth from the facts and circumstances and convinced other members of the jury to not vote guilty.

Juror # 9 Joseph Sweeny: eldest among the jurors and the first Juror who changed his mind and supported the views of Henry Fonda. A soft spoken and observant man believed in the arguments and logic of Juror 8 and decided to give him at least a chance to discuss the case once again.

Juror # 5 Jack Klugman: insecure and frightened man and just voted guilty initially because by doing so he would be able to keep himself aloof from his past. Arguments of Juror 8 made him to change his mind and since Juror 5

himself was grown up in slums, added some new arguments in support of Juror 8 and voted the boy not guilty.

Juror # 11 George Voskovec: Juror 11 is a watchmaker; a polite man, who has immense respect for American democracy, added some more arguments supporting the view of Juror 8.

Juror # 2 John Fiedler: a bank clerk with the shrill voice, easily convinced, confused, hesitant, have a tendency to go with the majority. He added crucial logical points in support of Juror 8.

Juror # 6 Edward Bins: hesitate to apply his own mind, a follower but respectful to older juror and always ready to support his words with physical power.

Juror # 7 Jack Warden: impatient extroverted salesman who loves baseball than anything else is eager to finish the jury proceedings just because he has a baseball match to watch after few hours. He is obsessed with baseball, uses metaphors all the time, goes with the majority.

Juror # 12 Robert Webber: soft spoken business man, superficial, indecisive and business oriented, not much concerned about system, justice or government.

Juror # 1 Martin Balsam: A school assistant coach, in role of foreman tried to keep the proceedings calm and going. A sensitive man with no leadership qualities, not fit for the job of foreman.

Juror # 10 Ed Begley: A garage owner, very bitter and angry man, not well educated or well aware of system, a racist and a sharp reactionary old man.

Juror # 4 E. G. Marshall: a wealthy stockbroker, well educated, methodical,

very calm and soft spoken gentleman who believes in being logical, has a Positive approach towards any situation.

Juror # 3 Lee J. Cobb: owner of a messenger service, very rude and biased man. Absolutely intolerant, vengeful and suffers from pre decidedness, the antagonist.

Norms: While hearing a Case some norms are expected to be followed by the members of jury.

Impartiality is the one rule which should be followed very strictly and in any case the jury should not violate this rule. In the present case all the members were impartial though there were some prejudices in the mind of members but they were pacified later on.

Reasonable doubt is another factor that should be considered seriously because in absence of reasonability either conviction or acquittal both of these is not in the interest of justice.

Proper application of judicial mind is an important rule that should be taken care of while deciding a case. If proper time and proceedings are not done or done in haste, it would be inappropriate deciding a case.

Meeting of minds is also an important rule that should be considered, in case of differences in opinions among jury members; they should try to make a consensus peacefully and avoid any kind of disputes.

All the jury members should respect the foreman and his instructions, should avoid any disputed behavior and respect opinions of other members. There are certain implied rules related to discipline, these should be strictly followed by each member of jury.

Status: In Jury status is not an issue and who has what status does not matter in deciding the case, it may though affect other jury members if one member is super rich or sometimes one's background matters but ultimately all the members enjoy equal rights and have one vote. Normally while hearing a case, every member of Jury concentrates on his own job and tries to apply his mind in deciding the case after considering legal, social and other issues related to the case. In 12 angry men status of any member had no effect and a common member's view was finally endorsed by all members of jury though there were some rich and influential members in jury.

Power: Some powers are given to the foreman of jury to regulate the proceedings and to make sure that motive of the jury is fulfilled. Sometimes it is imperative to remind the members of their duty and watch their behavior while the proceedings go on in a jury. Since the members of a jury are not from any particular institution or any government agency so they need to be instructed sometimes regarding the proceedings and their conduct.

Leadership: in the movie there are two existing leaderships, first one we find in the behavior of foreman, he was designated leader, performed his duties in that way. He believed in listening other members in stead of taking leads. Foreman is not a natural leader and lacked leadership qualities throughout the Jury hearing. On the other hand we see Henry Fonda as a natural leader. During the first voting he was alone to vote not guilty while rest all 11 members voted guilty but it was his arguments, behavior and leadership qualities that convinced every member of Jury and finally everybody voted not guilty.

Outcome: The decision made by the members of Jury in this case was a high quality decision because A thorough discussion on the every angle and each issue related to the case was done and when every member of jury was completely satisfied that there was a reasonable doubt in favor of the accused, a unanimous decision was made. Finally the jury arrived at a conclusion where the boy was declared not guilty. It was such a wise and prudent decision of jury that saved the life of an innocent boy. If the juror 8 would not have taken the step this kind of high quality decision would not have been made probably. Every member of the jury had his own opinion and when every doubt related to the case was pacified, Jury made a high quality decision. This was the exemplary trial and decision made by the members of jury. It created awareness and a good impact about the jury in the society and gave several messages in respect of judicial system.

Reference

Lumet, S. (Director). (1957). 12 Angry Men [Motion Picture].