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Are 'Tainted' Jury Pools a Historic Problem?

How Do You Get a Fair Trial by Your Peers?

Back in April, the largest legal case of the year wrapped up with a police officer receiving multiple convictions after his actions resulted in the death of a civilian. Heavily publicized from beginning to end, the trial highlighted the difficulties the internet era exacerbates with information, bias, and trial in the court of public opinion. Attorneys had trouble finding appropriate jurors in a pool tainted by media coverage and preconceived notions. But was this really a new dilemma or merely the newest spin on a very old tale?

The American justice system is founded on the concept of offering people fair trials by their peers; this usually means the jury will consist of a reasonably diverse assortment of people representative of the community. Of course, that could mean different things, and attorneys are given leeway in selecting jurors for that reason.

The media has often run antithetical to this principle, so we've never really had an American jury formed outside of media influence. After all, a 1995 examination of jury bias by sociologists Brian Breheny and Elizabeth Kelly of St. John's University points out that the same men who drafted the Constitution also ran the largest newspapers at the time. Media bias has always been part of the mix.

It became even more pronounced in the live-coverage TV era, as the murder trial of O.J. Simpson exemplified. Just as people had strong opinions going in, they had strong opinions coming out, and not much has changed in the 25 years since — including people's opinions on the guilt or innocence of the party on trial.

But one thing *can* change: the beliefs of a juror, even one who comes in with preconceived notions. It can be easy to think we know everything the jury does, but following a case in the headlines as we go about our week isn't the same thing as being in court all day, day after day, going through the nitty-gritty details of a crime with professional, experienced attorneys. The general public just doesn't have all the information despite what the media provides.

Prejudiced or not, if jurors come in wanting to serve justice, then they can be up to the task if they are willing to focus on the facts and evidence at hand. That's ultimately what Breheny and Kelly found back in 1995 — and despite the advent of the internet, there's no reason to think jurors can't do the same today.

Fourth of July Memories

And the Special Significance of That Day for My Family

Historically, the Fourth of July has been an important date for my family in more ways than one. In fact, you could say that without the Fourth of July, I wouldn't even be here. That's because July 4 is my maternal grandparents' wedding anniversary, and we used to celebrate the Fourth of July with them in their hometown every year when I was growing up.

My grandparents got married on July 4, 1944. My grandfather was serving in the military during WWII, and he was on leave that weekend. He passed away shortly before my wife and I got married in 1994 — just shy of his 50th anniversary with my grandmother. I'm blessed to carry a special reminder of him everywhere I go: my wedding ring, which is the same wedding ring he got on his wedding day nearly 80 years ago.

When we were growing up, my grandparents lived in Belton, just about an hour and a half north of Austin. My grandfather was the mayor of Belton for a time when I was younger, and every Fourth of July, we would make that hour and a half drive to experience the festivities that my grandparents both had a hand in putting on. The Fourth was always a pretty big deal. There was a rodeo, a carnival, a parade, and any other trappings of a small town Independence Day celebration you can think of.

Looking back, it's kind of strange to me, not that they spent their wedding anniversary celebrating the Fourth of July, but that

"You could say that without the Fourth of July, I wouldn't even be here."

they celebrated that day like they did. Both of my grandparents were from Chicago, and when they were younger, they played in jazz bands together, my grandfather on saxophone, and my grandmother on piano. I don't know why, but I find the contrast between that couple and my grandparents who spent every Fourth of July at a rodeo kind of funny.

On one particularly memorable Fourth of July, my grandfather helped commemorate the end of the renovations made to the county courthouse. In order to do so, organizers brought some soldiers over from the nearby Fort Hood to fire off a 21-gun salute. Ironically, the sound from the guns reverberated off the brand-new glass windows, breaking many of them. It was probably really frustrating and terrible at the time, but looking back, it's the kind of Fourth of July memory that's now just kind of funny to share!

Since my wife and I have had kids, our Fourth of July celebrations have stayed in Austin. We typically spent time with friends and neighbors at the neighborhood parade and party. At night, to avoid the traffic downtown, we'd usually make our way to O'Henry Middle School to watch the Austin fireworks show. For the past couple of years though, our kids have outgrown those traditions, and we're currently searching for new ones.

We're not really sure how we'll be celebrating this year, but I'm sure we'll find something exciting and patriotic to do. I hope that you have a fun, safe Fourth of July this year as well!

-C. Brooks Schuelke

3 Business Tricks That Will Improve Your Personal Life

When you're constantly in the "zone" at work, you're not always thinking about what's best for your personal life. While many business owners prioritize balance, what will truly benefit both your home and work life? Check out these three tricks.

1: Start your day with a plan.
We know what you're thinking: *Writing out your plan is more work than just doing it.* The key is to plan whenever you can. If you jot down things you want to accomplish the following day as they come up, all you'll need to do is spend a few minutes organizing your list the next morning.

Pro Tip: Remember to include time to unwind and relax!

2: Develop new and improved processes.
While certain activities can't be replaced with shortcuts (like spending time with family), consider ways to make your current processes more efficient and beneficial. For example, you can't lose weight if you don't change your diet and exercise.

Adjusting your habits might seem difficult, but there's actually a straightforward method. According to "Atomic Habits" by James Clear, every new habit has a simple formula behind it: motivation, ability, and prompt.

Whether your reminder is an alarm at the same time every day or even another habit ("I'll exercise before I take my morning shower"), make sure it's part of any new process you implement.

3: Remember, work is flexible — your personal life isn't.
Bryan G. Dyson, CEO of The Coca-Cola Company, once told his staff, "Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in the air. You name them — work, family, health, friends, and spirit — and you are keeping all of these in the air."

In his metaphor, work is a rubber ball. "If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same."

We hope these tips help you protect the "glass balls" in your life!

Poor Safety Meets Molten Enamel

Nothing Cold About These Refrigerators

If you don't know what enamel is, you've probably seen it around: It's the colorful, protective coating that covers tiles and all kinds of fancy cookware. But how does it *get* on to things? For that, you need heat — enough to melt enamel into a workable, molten-hot liquid. It's dangerous stuff to work with, which means facilities need to provide extensive training, personal protective equipment, and proper maintenance.

The Grand Rapids Refrigerator Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, had not met its duty in any of those three areas when Harry Adams, an employee, was working for them in the early 1900s. The company used enamel to line the inside of its refrigerators in a process that involved introducing molten enamel to water, a hardening reaction that had a high potential for disaster.

And disaster struck in November 1906 when, in the course of Adams' normal duties, the holding tank full of molten enamel exploded while he operated it at close distance — at the instruction of his foreman who was overseeing the operation.

It's a miracle that Adams wasn't killed, although he lived in severe pain for the rest of his life. His employer attempted to dodge all responsibility, and Adams was forced into the courts to get some kind of justice. As you can imagine, the judicial system took note of the incident and, after examining everything in detail, came to some groundbreaking conclusions, at least for the day.

The chief one was that Adams' injury could not have been foreseen by an average person, because although he had experience, he lacked understanding of the materials he was working with — an understanding that his employer had not provided.

Molten enamel has similar properties to lava, and an exploding tank full of the stuff is not a hazard anyone should have to deal with in the workplace. The shockwaves of Adams' near-fatal injury have reverberated for over a century now and provide valuable precedence when it comes to the duty employers have to their employees, whether that person has experience or not, which is why even today, when we attend ongoing, yearly safety training, we benefit from the hard lessons learned in *Adams v. Grand Rapids Refrigerator*.

TAKE A BREAK

Inspired by AllRecipes.com

Impress guests at your next barbecue with this perfectly smoked brisket. Plus, you'll have plenty of leftovers!

Ingredients

- Wood chips
- 1/4 cup paprika
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup ground cumin
- 1/4 cup cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup garlic powder
- 1/4 cup onion powder
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup pepper
- 10 lbs brisket

Directions

1. In a bowl, soak wood chips in water overnight.
2. In a large bowl, mix paprika, white sugar, cumin, cayenne pepper, brown sugar, chili powder, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Rub spice mixture on the brisket and refrigerate for 24 hours.
4. Preheat smoker to 230 F. Drain wood chips and place them in the smoker.
5. Smoke brisket until it has an internal temperature of 165 F.
6. Remove brisket and wrap it in aluminum foil.
7. Smoke brisket further until it reaches an internal temperature of 185 F.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF WORK?

IN-PERSON, REMOTE, OR HYBRID WORKPLACES

After more than a year of working remotely, the initial excitement of being able to work in your sweats probably wore off long ago. But this stint of remote work has shown many upsides: Productivity has increased. Eliminating the daily commute has been good for the environment, and workers are spending more time with their families, pursuing hobbies, or exercising. Having a more flexible work schedule has also meant there's a better work-life balance for many working parents.

But for all the benefits, there are plenty of downsides, too. Many have struggled to set boundaries as the line between work and home has blurred, leading to overwork and burnout. Others complain about myriad distractions they face while working from home, especially those who don't have a dedicated workspace and are also trying to help their children with virtual schooling. That's not to mention potential tech issues, loneliness or alienation from coworkers, and increased barriers to effective collaboration.

Yet, nearly half of those currently working remotely say they want to continue to do so 1–4 days per week even once it's safe to fully return to the office. That's led many employers to consider a hybrid model that incorporates remote and in-person work options. Publications like The New York Times and Forbes are touting a hybrid model as the way of the future. But what exactly would this look like?

A productive hybrid work model wouldn't simply mean workers come into the office a few set days a week. The smart approach, says Forbes writer Anna Convery-Pelletier, is to have employees come into the office for collaborative tasks and stay at home to work independently on tasks that require sustained focus and deep thinking. In-person meetings are especially good for "brainstorming sessions, introducing new projects, or team-building exercises," Convery-Pelletier says.

This focus on in-person collaboration may also mean that the office will look different when you return. Some businesses are opting to redesign their physical space to accommodate this kind of collaborative in-person work and eliminate costly individual work spaces now replicated at home.

Whatever the future of work holds, many workers will be happy to safely return to their workplaces and see their coworkers in person again, whether full time or just a handful of days a month.