

***The Humanity of Justice: Lighting Even the Darkest Path Toward Justice
(Volume 1)***

Burke E. Strunsky
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Reviewed by Joseph Yurt for Reader Views (7/12)

Burke E. Strunsky loves the law. He is passionate about justice and relentless in the pursuit of it with regard to those whom he prosecutes. Strunsky is a senior deputy district attorney in California and in his new book, "The Humanity of Justice," he takes readers on a moving, insightful journey behind the scenes of the American justice system and inside the courtroom for the stories of some of the most unsettling criminal cases in the state and the nation. I believe it's a journey that many readers will find memorable.

Dale Carnegie extolled the virtues of enthusiasm and passion and Burke E. Strunsky leverages both attributes in his writing of this stirring book. Strunsky's style is part journalist, part everyman, with just a dash of lawyer, and the result makes his discussion of the law approachable and the law itself simply a matter of common sense. But one of the revelations Strunsky hits hard on in his stories is the often absurd lack of common sense inherent in our legal procedures. It is such eye-openers as this that make the book's accounts of each case engaging, and in many cases, enraging. I believe for most readers, the significance of the book's title, and the humanity to which the author refers, will not be lost.

The perspective of the case studies in "The Humanity of Justice" is clearly established by the first chapter, 'Smoking Out the Smoking Gun.' For most readers, this chapter will make it apparent that what they thought they knew about basic criminal law matters such as hard versus circumstantial evidence, is not valid and what they simply did not know was even more shocking. Simply put, chapter one left me feeling hoodwinked by TV crime programs, and mad at myself for my own obviously deficient efforts to acquire a self-taught knowledge of the law. I was hooked!

In each of the ensuing chapters, the author further debunked many of my perceived realities about criminal law. I was especially intrigued by the discussion in chapter five of the role language plays in the entire process, and the flaws in our laws and trial procedures relating to physical and sexual child abuse in chapters six and seven. By the time I finished the book, I was already beginning to consider what a more effective juror I would be if I ever had the opportunity to serve, and how much more intelligently I could follow significant national and local criminal cases.

For me, on one level, reading "The Humanity of Justice," by Burke E. Strunsky, turned out to be like watching a DVD of the complete first season of my new favorite crime program, only better, because I could easily pour over all the details of each story. But the book was much more than that on another level. It challenged my perceptions and made me want to become more knowledgeable about criminal law. It made me think how I could help victims and help make change happen that would matter and make the law and our procedures better. And for me, "The Humanity of Justice" is a book that can make a difference.