

BOOK REVIEW: COURTROOM WIT AND WISDOM: TRUE & ANECDOTAL

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“The Author of the Book has given us a chance in a million to recollect our sweet/old memories, which may have happened in our life. The book has been tuned with both judicial and artistic language for aesthetic and phonetic pleasure.”¹

INTRODUCTION

The Courtroom is a dynamic setting where drama, wit and wisdom converge, yielding unforgettable moments. This captivating narrative skillfully adheres to the factual route, drawing from the author’s personal experiences and memories to breathe life into the characters. The book seamlessly blends artistic and judicial language, providing an engaging and sensory experience as readers immerse themselves in the emotional cauldron that defines the courtroom. Through his work, the author invites readers to witness the captivating interplay of wit, wisdom, and the pursuit of justice, making for a compelling and insightful read that is both aesthetically and semantically pleasing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Legal Research and Juridical Sciences

N Vijayaraghavan² is a proficient litigator who has practised at the Madras High Court for more than thirty years. He was born in 1958, became an advocate in 1983, and started publishing books in 1989. Renowned in the insurance field, he is the author of multiple books on marine and auto insurance, including the Motor Vehicle Laws series. Together with Justice K. Kannan³, he co-wrote, “Motor Vehicles Laws-16th edition”⁴, and penned the “Constitution and its Working”⁵. He has also been a resource person with the TNJA⁶ and the NJA⁷. The author is also a journalist by training and apart from writing in law journals is a frequent contributor to the Deccan Chronicle, on varied subjects with a legal tweak.

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¹ Justice S Vaidyanathan, *Courtroom Wit and Wisdom* (Oakbridge Publishing Pvt. Ltd. 2022)

² N Vijayaraghavan, *Courtroom Wit and Wisdom* (Oakbridge Publishing Pvt. Ltd. 2022)

³ Justice K Kannan, *Courtroom Wit and Wisdom* (Oakbridge Publishing Pvt. Ltd. 2022)

⁴ Kannan and Vijayaraghavan, *Motor Vehicles Laws* (16th edn, Oakbridge Publishing Pvt. Ltd. 2022)

⁵ N Vijayaraghavan, *Constitution and its Working* (Oakbridge Publishing Pvt. Ltd. 2021)

⁶ Tamil Nadu Judicial Academy

⁷ National Judicial Academy

SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK

The Court is considered a citadel for law and the court halls are under the enthusiasm of heated arguments, witty acts and despair. This book broadly discusses that courts are considered to be a lifeless burial ground in the absence of wit and humour. The courtroom is an open field for the litigators to get stuck in a nerve-wracking state of affairs with no room for escape and abrade the plethora of questions the Judges pose. This book henceforth is a narrative of whimsical incidents that occasionally take place in the court halls.

The author through discrete cases expresses his escapades in the court hall. The book begins with the chapter emphasizing the farce in courtrooms. The author stresses an instance that was not fiction but sensational stuff of unimaginable proportion. The author inferred from the same that even the court could be deceived as they trust the records as the true reflection of reality. But on the contrary are taken on a royal ride by the litigators and clients representing fake stories to fix facts for their convenience. Further, the author also has written about the monkey business which takes place in fabricated and false insurance claims. The legal jargon used in such contracts is onerous for even the ordinary mortals to bore down to the depth of the same. In continuation of his experiences, he presents a stark dissension in opinions of two Judges in the race of Truth prevailing over proof and vice versa. The first opinion was that the pursuit of justice often involves seeking evidence rather than absolute truth. This evidence in turn serves as a foundation for delivering justice, as it provides the necessary proof to support the pursuit of truth. In essence, the quest for truth is fueled by the discovery of evidence which further leads to the administration of justice. Whereas on the contrary opinion, the legal system is not a perfect arbiter of truth, also emphasized the importance of approaching cases with a critical mindset and not accepting claims at face value. He put forth the aforementioned with an anecdote where a widow never took her advocate into confidence in the fast one and she pulled off cunningly.

The author in his following chapter based on admission as dismissal derived that Judges and those in authority must demonstrate empathy, not just sympathy towards the vulnerable. This statement is explained with an illustration of the law lord's public commitment to impartiality and strict adherence to the law, his leniency was primarily shown to his family. This cannot be classified as genuine empathy. The author also articulates his encounter with a profound act of

generosity that he experienced firsthand. Thus, he concluded this chapter with the need to balance strict adherence to the law with compassion and fairness. Encouraging junior lawyers to present themselves before the court can have a lasting impact on their careers. He takes the example of Daphtry, who was known for his witty repartees and sharp intellect, encouraging his juniors to represent the cause before the court themselves. The concept of corruption being entrenched in the legal system is also discussed in the book. Being a prevalent issue it can be elucidated in detail with an instance. The story highlights how a group of bill collectors successfully challenged a court order that threatened their established collection duties. Through the keys of personal rapport with the judge and strategically built arguments, they secured interim orders that led to the withdrawal of the contested directive, preserving their existing roles and promotional prospects. The judge's unexpected support demonstrated the nuanced dynamics of legal proceedings and their practical applications.

This book was published post the dreadful era of the pandemic that had proved to be detrimental to the entire system. In his further chapters, the author also discusses the negatives of the smartphone and social media for the mass-level demonstration of fake news. The author also mentions a litigator whom he describes as, his pen dripped with acerbic humour, and his speeches were seasoned with precise shooting terms. However, one principal remained steadfast that although he might recount his experiences but vowed never to disclose his confidences. He ended this chapter by posing a very sceptical question about whether morals, ethics, law and scruples could fall in the same line and co-exist or not. The book has a devoted chapter pondering upon the perforated walls of the criminal justice system. It is merely broken and not only that but shattered into tatters. The issues of the system too have been kept by the judiciary in its bin and does not see any urgency to dust it and introduce any essential reforms and mandates.

The text also talks about a very interesting concept of unfreedom of expression. It encapsulates the theme of how legal and professional constraints limit the open critique of judicial authority and decisions. The flow of the chapters emphasizes the importance of consistency in the practice of law. It also reveals a harsh and rude lesson in law that this profession is a wrong place for people who joined it with the only ambition of making money in loads. Knowledge is considered an end in itself but in a profession like law, the litigator doesn't only require the skill of knowledge but also the additional traits of communication and ways of making strategic submissions with a muse on one's own experience. It is implicit to have a great presence of

mind and the skill of thinking on the feet. Facets of Influential Justice, where the judgements are being fixed, procured and influenced, as well as belated justice have been described. The book comes to an end delving into the concept of contempt in the court and the need for maintaining the cool and command over conduct.

ANALYSIS

The book is a thought-provoking exploration of the legal system, delving into the complexities and challenges faced by lawyers and judges. The author's personal experiences and anecdotes add a layer of authenticity to the narrative, making it engaging and relatable. The themes of deception, corruption and the importance of empathy and fairness are well explored, providing a nuanced understanding of the legal profession. The book's strength lies in its ability to balance the technical aspects of law with the personal experiences of the author. The narrative is well structured with each chapter building upon the previous one to create a cohesive and engaging story. The author's use of humour and wit adds the otherwise touch to the serious subject matter, making the book an enjoyable read for both legal professionals and non-experts alike.

CONCLUSION

After a thorough read of the book, as a law student, I too built an opinion. I consider that it is true when litigators claim that law is an art, law is science and law is an ass. But according to the insight that I developed after reading this beautiful piece of literature unlike the other heavy law books, I feel that law is a language. It is a great experience to see litigators and professionals who read law as in literature and also philosophy, and in the process weave justice through it. After reading and delving deep between the lines I concluded that it is incorrect to assume that a person "knows the law". A proficient lawyer is not defined merely by knowledge of good law but rather by their adeptness in locating and applying it judiciously. This is a crucial lesson to uphold in the diligent service of enduring client relationships.