

Reviews

***"Proof Evident"* a John Dicke Novel**

Reviewed by Kristina Patton for Reader Views (6/06)

Think Law & Order with a twist of Mission: Impossible.

John Dicke's novel "Proof Evident" reads like the next summer blockbuster movie. As a psychologist with a law degree, Dicke holds all the knowledge and tools that he needs to make a fantastic hit. And, indeed, he did.

Avery Jackson has everything. He has a law degree, a position on the judge's bench, a license to teach at the university, a wife and two children. How does a normal, community-friendly man such as that go from everything to absolutely nothing. In a matter of an hour or so, none of which he can remember, Mr. Jackson destroys his entire life. Or did he?

In a trial, it is the District Attorney's job to prove his case beyond a reasonable doubt. In "Proof Evident", as in a trial, we understand the who, what, where, when, why and how of the entire case. From beginning to end we know every single move. We see the criminal in the act, the police officer's making the arrest, the attorneys making the case, and the jury deciding the outcome. Nothing is left out, not even the corruption, danger, drugs, or bribery.

Author John Dicke is extremely thorough in, not only the storyline, but his research as well. I never once had a question that wasn't answered at some point. Dicke's writing style is not just thorough, but extremely intriguing. I found myself wanting to hurry to get to the end out of fascination, but also found myself wanting to take my time out of extreme interest. If I would have skimmed one line, I would have missed something. Dicke didn't need any fillers, because each sentence had a meaning whether it connected to something beforehand or connected to something later on. Absolutely fantastic and highly intriguing are the only words I can use to describe this novel.....the rest of you Law & Order buffs will have to read it yourself.

Reviewed by Viviane Crystal - Crystal Reviews March 30, 2006

Masterfully plotted and told!

"Insanity Plea" is frequently one of the first defense tactics in a first degree murder case! It basically means that the alleged criminal was unable to control his or her behavior which resulted in the commission of homicide or murder. While this sounds very black and white, John Dicke has crafted a mystery novel in which a well-respected, former judge is charged with murder in what appears to be a very "open and shut" case. While the prosecutor is bound to prove only that a crime was committed, the defense counsel

must only prove the “reasonable doubt” of guilt or sanity. Avery Jackson walked into a court and shot a new sheriff dead in full view of multiple witnesses. End of story? Grounds for doubt? Not!

Jack Maine the Public Defender, his partner, Yolanda Crone, and Jack's wife, Marci, begin an investigation that will uncover some amazing responsibility but not necessarily that of the defendant. Why would a person forget such a vivid crime? Amnesia? Trauma? How much corruption and murder lie in Avery Jackson's past? Who is to blame for what has led to this outrageous crime and a highly questionable trial? How much money is involved? Just what thoughts and feelings pass through a “criminal mind?” Is it possible that another can so influence the human mind to create a disordered or dysfunctional personality without care for one's lethal acts? Since the public consensus has become cynical and suspecting over so many legal cases that seem obviously fraudulent or lacking in justice, this might be the perfect time to read this crime novel.

For, indeed, “all are to be presumed innocent unless proven otherwise.” John Dicke's novel is a **MUST READ** concerning the need for any jury member (and juries as a whole body) to realize his/her/their responsibility to balance the scales of justice based on “all” the facts in a case.

Reviewed by Barb Radmore of TCM Reviews

John Dicke has written a realistic courtroom thriller that is heads above any others to date.

The truth is not hard to prove when the newly elected sheriff is shot to death in full view of 150 Rotarians not to mention television cameras. There are endless witnesses to the fact that the murderer was Avery Jackson, a former long time, upstanding judge, current college professor. It is hard to imagine what defense attorney would think of accepting this case in which even an insanity plea does not seem like an option.

Jack Maine is the lawyer who not only accepts the case but also leaves the DA's office to open his own law firm to do it. Young, new lawyer Yolanda Crone, Maine's wife Marci and their PI friend Joe are the only ones who join him in his new firm and believe in his endeavor. Their search for the possible reason for Jackson's actions leads them to a strange and horrifying conclusion. But will they be able to convince a jury that a man with no history of mental illness could actually not know he has killed someone.

Soon Maine must not only worry about the survival of his client and his law firm but his own personal survival as well. He quickly realizes that the bad guys and the good guys are hard to tell apart. As more murders occur, the stakes get higher.

Based on true activities in mind control by the CIA, this novel is a vivid portrayal of what the results of these experiments could have been. The experiments had various purposes such as creating multiple personalities, inducing amnesia, implanting hypnotic access codes in the subconscious of subjects' minds and creating false memories.

John Dicke has advanced degrees in both Law and Psychology. His experience in both gives this thriller its edge of authenticity. It is deeply researched and gives readers a picture of a part of history that is not well known. The well defined characters and intense plot are proof evident of his skills as a writer.

New Mystery Reader
Reviewed by Karen Treanor

The liner notes of this book tell you the author holds advanced degrees in law and psychology and is an avid golfer. That should tell you something about the content of the book: it involves a crime, a trial, an insanity defense, and a long, wearying trail with barriers and traps for the defense team every step of the way.

What makes a middle-aged respected academic and former judge walk into a court and shoot the new sheriff dead in front of dozens of witnesses? There is no history of animus between the men, the sheriff is a cleanskin with no connections to any criminal activity (except professionally), and Avery Jackson has no memory of why he did it, or even that he did it.

Jack Maine, the Public Defender, partnered by novice lawyer Yolanda Crone, and backed up by his determined wife Marci, begins digging into his client's background, desperately seeking some explanation for the inexplicable crime. There's nothing in Jackson's past--no bad habits worth mentioning, no criminal connections, no allegations of corruption--to explain why he'd hate a man enough to kill him. And you have to hate someone to kill him, right?

Well, no, not if you've been an unwitting participant in an experimental program run by--guess who?

To tell more would spoil this excellent and complex story for the reader. You may have to badger your bookstore to get this small-press book in stock, but it will be worth the effort. (Somebody tell John Dicke to get off that golf course and back to the keyboard, we want more of Jack Maine's impossible cases.)

RebeccaReads.com
by Narayan Radhakrishnan

The blurb of this novel caught my attention at the outset - "sometimes the guy pleading insanity is the sanest person in the courtroom" - as a lawyer myself, I have often found myself wondering whether the defense of insanity in murder cases has been mis-utilized by lawyers & whether pucca guilty criminals/murderers have left scot-free on this ground of defense. & improvising on the insanity plea other grounds have cropped up - like using the battered wife syndrome or multiple personality disorder, etc., as a grounds of defense. (Remember the Richard Gere movie based on the William Diehl book *Primal Fear*). I was tilting towards the opinion that this ground of defense should be abolished.

Proof Evident convinced me otherwise, & proved why the insanity plea is important as a line of defense in criminal cases.

John Dicke, a lawyer & psychologist in his debut work provides a stunning & well-studied courtroom drama of the importance of the insanity plea in criminal law. Based on the famous **Hinckley Defense** theory (advanced by lawyer **Vincent Fuller** during his defense of **John Hinckley** -- accused of attempting to murder **President Ronald Reagan** in 1981), the theory has had its ups & downs. Some judges have accepted it, while some have discarded it. It is in this background **Dicke** bases his novel.

Avery Jackson, judge & law professor is accused of assassinating **Sheriff Gene Hardacre**. The only one who doesn't believe he pulled the trigger is the judge himself -- he doesn't remember anything. When lawyer **Jack Maine** comes to his defense, he doesn't expect much & believes the trial to be a formality before the judge is sentenced to death -- but investigating more deeply into the case convinces him otherwise & the lawyer discovers dirt, corruption & even more murders in the labyrinth of power in the **Ohio State**.

John Dicke's experience as a psychologist & as a lawyer is well revealed & showcased in **Proof Evident**, so much so that it proves to be an entertaining as well as informative read. The author's website informs that he is at work on another couple of books, (one tentatively titled **Fatal Dilemma**) & his debut thriller is something to go by -- he sure is gonna create competition for **Grisham**, **Turow**, **Buffa** & other lawyer author superstars.

I recommend this stylish thriller.

Westword.com
by **Patricia Calhoun**

John Dicke
Disorder in the Court

"**Proof Evident**...It's his first book, but given **Dicke's** background and way with words, it won't be his last.

Proof Evident is set not in **Colorado**, but in **Dayton, Ohio**, a location that wouldn't seem to promise too many thrills. But **Dicke**, who worked as a private defender there, packs in lots of convincing courtroom details."