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Letter from the Editor

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The way in which the public perceives the justice system has been a concern in this country since the founding of the democracy. In recent years, this concern has heightened to an obsession in the wake of several high profile trials. While many argue that these high profile cases are not a fair indication of the workings of the criminal justice system, they nonetheless continue to captivate the attention of both the media and the public.

On November 11, 1994, the Woodrow Wilson School Annenberg Washington Program held a Conference titled "The Appearance of Justice: Juries, Judges, and the Media." The issues raised at the Conference included the different perceptions of the judicial system by whites and nonwhites, the representative nature of juries, the privacy rights of jurors, and the ability of judges to limit adverse effects caused by publicity and media coverage of trials. While the questions that arose at the Annenberg Conference are discussed in the context of the Menendez and Simpson trials, they will continue to generate more debate in the upcoming trials of the alleged Oklahoma City bomber and the Unabomber. The variety of speakers and commentators at the Conference make their comments on these timely issues additionally relevant to the discourse of future high profile cases.

Those who participated in the Conference include Leslie Abramson, the defense attorney for Eric Menendez, a juror and alternate juror from the first Menendez trial, federal and state judges, members of juror reform commissions, juror consultants, a linguist, psychologists, sociologists, scientists, researchers on capital punishment, professors, and lawyers.

In addition to the edited version of the Conference proceedings, in this Issue you will find two articles which focus on the appearance of justice. The first of these articles, by Professor Peter Blanck, was generated by the discussion at the Conference. Professor Blank served as a Senior Fellow with the Annenberg Washington Program, and in these pages he explores what courts, judges, trial lawyers, and social scientists consider to be "the appearance of justice." Also in this Issue, Professor Christo Lassiter discusses the history of televising trials in American law and explores in depth the justifications and criticisms of media coverage of the criminal justice system. Professor Lassiter's

article is followed by a comprehensive statutory appendix which provides a thorough summary of limiters on camera access on a state by state basis.

As always, the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* is committed to bringing its readers the most timely and relevant topics in the field of criminal justice. In these pages we hope to build on the growing body of literature dedicated to the appearance of justice as portrayed by the media, topics which have been explored recently by the *Indiana Law Journal*¹ and the *American University Law Review*.²

THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

¹ *Symposium, Improving Communications in the Courtroom*, 68 IND. L.J. 1033 (1993).

² *Symposium Issue on the Selection and Function of the Modern Jury*, 40 AM. U. L. REV. 541 (1991).