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| |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Kandel G. Eaton  J.D. is ex-officio newsletter editor for the ABA Committee on International Arms and National Security     |  | | --- | | **Read other reviews:**  [Internet Movie Database](http://www.us.imdb.com/title/tt0382944/)  [All Movie Guide](http://www.allmovie.com/cg/avg.dll?p=avg&sql=1:307796)  [Readers' comments](http://docs.google.com/user_feedback.htm) |         It is our beleaguered system that has left us unsafe. We are insecure from within. We must change and adapt our laws to restore security, both physically and economically. | |  | | --- | | **The Proliferation of Massive Inroads of Corruption**  by Kandel G. Eaton  *Lex est ratio summa....*  *"The law is the perfection of reason*  *and cannot suffer anything that is inconvenient."*  Cicero (De Legibus, 1 at 18, 51 B.C.)  Lord Edward Coke (Commentary Upon Littleton, 1628 A.D.)  Justice Breyer (quotes both: "*Liberty, Security, & the Courts*," 2003 A.D.)  *Reversible Errors*, a successful CBS mini-series, is the latest legal thriller from international legend Scott Turow (still practicing pro bono in Chicago). He was a consultant during its production and witness to the hard work it took to bring his Kindle County residents to life. It retains the mystery and a tip of the hat ("The Law Offices of Marta Stern") to its predecessor, *Presumed Innocent*. We want more! Soon to be released in DVD, it is worth a second look just to figure things out. Both *Errors* and Turow are quickly traversing from legal metaphor to legal maxim.  Director Mike Robe refreshes the plot with straight angles of few good deeds and off-angles of frequent misdeeds, which allows the audience extra time to ponder its complications. The hyped previews and long  commercials make the movie hard to follow. The fabulously intense soundtrack and dialogue constantly compete against each other. Written by Rob Roy's Alan Sharp, the script reflects a standard nature, less compelling, than that of the book, but by focusing on the main relationships, the impact of the death penalty process is more intelligible.  As an updated film noir, *Errors* is further refined with easily recognizable actors imitating easily recognizable characters. These personalities in crisis, set in uncomfortable surroundings, are enough to make you squirm without the usual genre devices of quick edits, murders, violence, or car chases. Its one chase scene is on foot. The four bullets fired are from one man with a stolen gun. Sex is as distracting for the audience as it is for the characters. But it's their intentions that come across as nasty.  BUILDING UPON QUALITY DATA  The taedium vitae of ex-prosecutor Arthur Raven (William H. Macy as Perry Mason on valium) is subdued and renewed by enebriated Judge Gillian Sullivan(Felicity Huffman as Olivia De Havilland gone bad). Blindly ambitious prosecutor Muriel Wynn (Monica Potter as an emotionless Kate Capshaw) and Larry Starczek (Tom Selleck as Bogie with a moustache) also pair up professionally and personally. What they know and when they know it becomes a private war in the cause of death penalty convict Romeo "Squirrel" Gandolph(Glen Plummer as a dumbed down Chris Rock).  The infamous pairing of airport security chief Erno Erdai (James Rebhorn as a violent J.R. Ewing) and his "kin," druggie nephew Collins "Faro" Farwell (Shemar Moore as an angry young Morgan Freeman), merely plant the seeds of corruption. Starczek allows Muriel to accompany him to the crime scene, and she is assigned to her first big case. Louisa's best friend and Erdai lie to Starczek in the initial investigation. Erdai's nephew Farwell frames Squirrel for Erdai's murders by describing photos of Louisa's babies in a cameo necklace Squirrel had.  Both the deal and case hold up when Starczek retrieves the cameo from Squirrel's arresting officer despite his having ditched the photos. Starczek's murder theory is foisted upon Squirrel as a voluntary confession. Judge Sullivan hears his case at a bench trial. His conviction puts Muriel's career on a fastrack to be the next P.A. of Kindle County.  Seven years later, ex-judge Sullivan has served six years for bribery  and is out of jail. State-appointed to Squirrel's final appeal, "pro bono prince" Raven gets the case reopened through Sullivan from a letter written by the dying, jailed Erdai. Judge Kenton Harlow decides to hear the case. This jeopardizes Muriel's political campaign for P.A. Erdai dies of cancer not telling the whole truth, and has hired an attorney to protect his nephew.  Erdai was convicted for shooting, and almost killing Faro. Faro had dug up the gun and was threatening to tell everyone about the murders. Starczek has the gun fingerprinted and discovers Faro is Farwell and Good Gus owned the gun. To protect Muriel, he wipes the bullet casings with Gus's prints clean, and destroys the print card. This exculpatory evidence confessed to Muriel goes no further. Sullivan's past addiction and rehab is implied but she never reveals this to Raven.  He and Judge Harlow fail to convince Mureil to allow Farwell to testify in open court "I have to content myself with the law correctly applied, your Honor...the right to grant immunity is mine alone...morals are matters for conscience...," she says. Farwell is given immunity before a grand jury, which is adjourned, allowing him to free his conscience in his attorney's office before Muriel and Starczek off the record. Squirrel is innocent.  Ex-Judge Sullivan takes the fall for being a heroin addict during Squirrel's trial. He is released due to "reversible error." The careers of Muriel and Starczek are saved. Raven wins, quits his firm, and follows Sullivan to New Jersey. The many other errors committed here are ignored. Anything less would have been "inconvenient."  OF LEGAL SYSTEM INTERESTS  *Reversible Errors* scans the gamut of professional ethics to complete, albeit, debatable conclusions. The trial proceedings and prison scenes dispassionately connect a hidden culture that lives above the laws they are bound to enforce, greedily fueled by social climbing, bribery, and drug addiction. This thriller is a microcosm of art imitating life upon newly created inroads of corruption that breach equal justice from inside the legal system. A lot can be learned from it: their circumstances and after-thoughts grow into self-absorbed futures of the past due, looming consequences each character wants so desperately to escape from, but cannot. Each must ultimately face up to their regrettable lies, but they get away with most of them. In real life legally allowable lies appear to create more corruption against the public good.  This begs the question: Where does the public interest, pardon the pun, lie? Real life supplies much less given information and less secure decision-making. The tendency to convict people such as Squirrel as scapegoats, sacrifices to a system that cannot either find or has to immunize the guilty party. Oh, you can argue that the system worked because Squirrel was in fact exonerated. That argument is lame because Erdai and Farwell were never charged to cover up prosecutorial misconduct. In real life Squirrel would be dead, and a limited apology after this fact would take care of the loose ends (eg: he was innocent). To make continual excuses to retain such a flawed, unevenly applied process appears to directly violate fairness and the 8th Amendment. This politically expensive legal process is not the "perfection of reason."  Consider our present chaos and both its sources and results. Our legal system has fragmented and malfunctioned contrary to purpose. The foundation of "you are innocent until proven guilty" doesn't work anymore. The Law used to be the centralization of our society, and computers have hastened both the speed and bulk of cases at these uneven paces. The courts have not caught up to the inclusive capacity or potential from technology, presenting painful delays, legally delimiting accessibility (because of unchanged laws), closing markets and venues traditionally open to serve the public good. Hence it is more "convenient" not to act than to provide justice. There appears to be more dismissed and denied cases…and a proliferation of private law cases dividing our legal system into more segments. With the incorporation of the profit motive into public service, streamlining has come at the expense of individual rights.  Adversarial manipulation of rumors and gossip into legal facts becomes a disclaimer for truth and a scandal-mongering eagerness to convict. The death penalty process does not deter, instead it demoralizes and takes away years of life from all its participants; this helps undermine the credibility and authority of our legal system. It is a weapon as unwieldy as nuclear armaments. We have not learned our limitations from history.  PROBLEMS RESOLVE WITH TIMELY CHANGE  Legal lies have proliferated over decades, and have finally permeated entire legal system, elite inclusiveness causing the exclusion of the populace it was designed to serve, only symbolized by, the War on Terror. It is our beleaguered system that has left us unsafe. We are insecure from within. We must change and adapt our laws to restore security, both physically and economically. These are just some signs there are many symptoms (unresolved crises) that reveal we are not a super power anymore.  The conviction of Martha Stewart is one. She was convicted because she wouldn't sell out a friend. Her prosecutors wanted "to make an example of her." They picked on a self-made celebrity from a law that says if you claim innocence you are automatically guilty. Other Enrons out there have been ignored. The prosecution hasn't the capacity to prosecute them all. They rely on an honor system to self-regulate what never worked, and thus has been worked around by elites to keep out newcomers, when laws should have been modified for inclusiveness.  In and out of election seasons, both Republicans and Democrats have let us down. Neither has lived up to their promises, except to use any means to gain political control. The majority is not thrilled about their choices and tends to vote against a candidate, not for s/he. Voters haven't turned out in numbers large enough for a mandate to govern in decades, though the spin is otherwise. As a Reagan Democrat, I have utilized write-in options. It frees up the party spin that a vote not for their candidate is a vote against them and America.  Even vigilant stewards of our legal system have faltered. Known bad data and info, used anyway, is used for "convenience." Lies causing this proliferation of corruption are tolerated. The adamant refusal to reverse, correct, and/or change errors, even if the law provides for it, may be the undoing of democracy.  Wrangling delays of reform, and the unheeded festering of undone wrongs, have proliferated corruption in both our government and private sectors, to the disfavor our collective public interests, in forced conformity, via detrimental routinization. Bureaucracy must first change by reforming open access to digitally accommodate jurisprudence in our courts. Mr. Chief Justice Rhenquist, and all y'all Honors of the US Supreme Court, tear down this wall of red tape that divides our legal system and restore "equal justice under law."  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