2011

Editor's Note

Alan J. Tomkins
University of Nebraska, atomkins@nebraska.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ajacourtreview

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ajacourtreview/350

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the American Judges Association at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Court Review: The Journal of the American Judges Association by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
EDITOR’S NOTE

This special issue of Court Review focuses on media matters. One provocative question related to media is the purported impact of an iconic television show, Crime Scene Investigation (CSI), on the judicial process. In the past few years, it has been frequently suggested, especially in the media, that judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and jurors have become influenced by CSI. The allegation is that the “CSI-effect” has resulted in an expectation that forensic evidence is required for successful criminal prosecutions. But is there (apologies to Gertrude Stein) a there there? Three articles in the special issue examine the so-called CSI-effect. Professors Steven Smith, Veronica Stinson, and Marc Patry of Saint Mary’s University (Halifax, Nova Scotia) find evidence there is, but they wonder whether the effect is not a juror-problem but rather manifests itself in the ways that attorneys behave. Judge Donald Shelton (also an adjunct professor, Thomas Cooley Law School and Eastern Michigan University) and his colleagues, Professors Gregg Barak and Young Kim (Eastern Michigan University), have found something is going on, but suggest it is a “tech effect” rather than a specific effect of television shows such as CSI or Law and Order. Professors Cole (University of California, Irvine) and Dioso-Villa (Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia) are skeptical but provide valuable guidance for protecting the judicial system against any impacts from real or imagined effects.

Media issues are more than just reactions to TV shows, of course. Media are often the leading edge of the public in how they view or understand law and the courts. Judge Alsdorf (now jurist-in-residence at Seattle University School of Law and private practice arbitrator/mediator) offers a comprehensive view of how judges might think about handling cases, including communications in orders, decisions, and otherwise in working with the media. His tips stem from high-profile-case management, but are applicable as well for judicial interactions in many cases. Judge Leben offers 10 tips for judges culled from his time on the bench and his background and contacts in the communications field. Also relevant to the special issue is the book review of Courts and Judges on Trial by an Australian academic and jurist, Dr. Cannon; the book is authored by Pamela Schulz, an Australian scholar, and it analyzes judicial and media relationships, as well as judicial relationships with elected officials. The last item in the issue is an AJA bylaws amendment for membership to review.

Stay tuned!—Alan J. Tomkins, Co-Editor

Court Review, the quarterly journal of the American Judges Association, invites the submission of unsolicited, original articles, essays, and book reviews. Court Review seeks to provide practical, useful information to the working judges of the United States and Canada. In each issue, we hope to provide information that will be of use to judges in their everyday work, whether in highlighting new procedures or methods of trial, court, or case management, providing substantive information regarding an area of law likely to be encountered by many judges, or by providing background information (such as psychology or other social science research) that can be used by judges in their work. Guidelines for the submission of manuscripts for Court Review are set forth on page 45. Court Review reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject material submitted for publication.

Advertising: Court Review accepts advertising for products and services of interest to judges. For information, contact January Serda at (757) 259-1864.

Photo credit: Mary Watkins (maryswatkinsphoto@earthlink.net). The cover photo is the Charles Evans Whittaker United States Courthouse in Kansas City, Missouri. The 12-story, crescent-shaped courthouse is named for Justice Charles Evans Whittaker, who served on the United States Supreme Court from 1957 to 1962. Before that, Whittaker had been a federal district judge in Kansas City and a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

©2011, American Judges Association, printed in the United States. Court Review is published quarterly by the American Judges Association (AJA). AJA members receive a subscription to Court Review. Non-member subscriptions are available for $35 per volume (four issues per volume). Subscriptions are terminable at the end of any volume upon notice given to the subscriber. Prices are subject to change without notice. Second-class postage paid at Williamsburg, Virginia, and additional mailing offices. Address all correspondence about subscriptions, undeliverable copies, and change of address to Association Services, National Center for State Courts, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185-4147. Points of view or opinions expressed in Court Review are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of the National Center for State Courts or the American Judges Association. ISSN: 0011-0647.

Cite as: 47 Ct. Rev. ___ (2011).