

## 12 Angry Men

A teenaged Hispanic boy has just been tried for the murder of his father, and the case is now in the hands of the jury. A guilty verdict will send the boy to the electric chair.

The case looks, on the surface, cut and dried. But Juror number 8 ([Henry Fonda](#)), despite believing that the defendant is probably guilty, feels that the facts merit a cursory review before the jury hands in a guilty verdict. His insistence on a brief examination of the case seems to rub many on the jury the wrong way, as they continue to see the matter as open and shut.

Fascinatingly, as they examine the testimony and facts of the case, the experiences, personalities, limitations, and biases of the jurors weave in and out of the deliberation process, at times to its benefit and at times to its detriment.

To the benefit of the deliberation process, 1) the very elderly juror ([Joseph Sweeney](#)) is the only one who can see a possible motive explaining why an elderly witness may have misled the court in his testimony; 2) the one fellow ([Jack Klugman](#)) who grew up in a rough neighborhood, where he witnessed numerous knife fights, is the only one who sees a problem in assuming that the defendant made the stab wound found; and 3) the juror who had done contract work by the elevated subway ([Edward Binns](#)) was the only one in a position to question what one of the witnesses might or might not have heard.

To the detriment of the deliberation process, 1) one juror ([Ed Begley](#)) is so consumed by his personal prejudices that he sees value in ridding the streets of the Hispanic defendant whether or not he is guilty, and 2) another, Juror number 3 ([Lee J. Cobb](#)), is impervious to reason because he has been physically harmed by his teenaged son, and, consequently, views every teenaged boy, including the defendant, as capable of patricide.

The number of obstacles on the path to honest assessment of the facts is a constant threat to the deliberation process. If the jury fails to unanimously agree on a verdict of either "guilty" or "not guilty," it will become a hung jury (a jury that cannot reach a decision, and must retire from the case without declaring a verdict). Watching how this matter is resolved is a riveting study in the nature, and ultimate beauty, of the trial by jury process.

One by one the jurors change their minds and decide the boy is not guilty. Juror number 3, the man at odds with his teenaged son, is the last one to change his mind. The jurors, at last, are able to vote unanimously for acquittal. As the jurors leave the court building, Juror number 8 and Juror number 9, the elderly man, introduce themselves to each other as Davis and McArdle, respectively. McArdle says "so long" as he takes leave of Davis, knowing that they will never meet again, that their lives had crossed only for a single purpose.

## Cast

Complete credited cast:



[Martin Balsam](#) ... [Juror #1](#)



[John Fiedler](#) ... [Juror #2](#)



[Lee J. Cobb](#) ... [Juror #3](#)



[E.G. Marshall](#) ... [Juror #4](#)



[Jack Klugman](#) ... [Juror #5](#)



[Edward Binns](#) ... [Juror #6](#)



[Jack Warden](#) ... [Juror #7](#)



[Henry Fonda](#) ... [Juror #8](#)



[Joseph Sweeney](#) ... [Juror #9](#)



[Ed Begley](#) ... [Juror #10](#)



[George Voskovec](#) ... [Juror #11](#)



[Robert Webber](#) ... [Juror #12](#)

**Juror #6:** Well, I'm not used to supposin'. I'm just a workin' man. My boss does all the supposin' - but I'll try one. Supposin' you talk us all out of this and, uh, the kid really did knife his father?  
**the kid really did knife his father?** = il ragazzo ha davvero accoltellato il padre?

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**Juror #10:** Bright? He's a common ignorant slob. He don't even speak good English.

**Juror #11:** \*Doesn't\* even speak good English.

**slob** = sudicio pigrone

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**Juror #10:** I don't understand you people! I mean all these picky little points you keep bringing up. They don't mean nothing. You saw this kid just like I did. You're not gonna tell me you believe that phony story about losing the knife, and that business about being at the movies. Look, you know how these people lie! It's born in them! I mean what the heck? I don't have to tell you. They don't know what the truth is! And lemme tell you, they don't need any real big reason to kill someone, either! No sir!

*[Five gets up from his seat]*

**Juror #10:** They get drunk... oh, they're real big drinkers, all of 'em - you know that - and bang: someone's lyin' in the gutter. Oh, nobody's blaming them for it. That's the way they are! By nature! You know what I mean? VIOLENT!

**Juror #10:** *[Nine rises and crosses to the window]* Where're you going?

**Juror #10:** Human life don't mean as much to them as it does to us!

*[Eleven gets up and walks to the other window]*

**Juror #10:** Look, they're lushing it up and fighting all the time and if somebody gets killed, so somebody gets killed! They don't care! Oh, sure, there are some good things about 'em, too. Look, I'm the first one to say that.

*[Eight gets up and walks to the nearest wall]*

**Juror #10:** I've known a couple who were OK, but that's the exception, y'know what I mean?

*[Two and Six get up from the table. Everyone's back is to Ten]*

**Juror #10:** Most of 'em, it's like they have no feelings! They can do anything! What's goin' on here? I'm trying to tell you... you're makin' a big mistake, you people! This kid is a liar! I know it. I know all about them! Listen to me! They're no good! There's not a one of 'em who is any good! I mean, what's happening in here? I'm speaking my piece, and you...

*[the Foreman gets up and walks away. So does Twelve]*

**Juror #10:** Listen to me. We're... This kid on trial here... his type, well, don't you know about them? There's a, there's a danger here. These people are dangerous. They're wild. Listen to me. Listen.

**Juror #4:** I have. Now sit down and don't open your mouth again.

**what the heck?** = che cavolo!; **they're lushing it up** = bevono come spugne

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**Juror #8:** Here's what I think happened: the old man heard the fight between the boy and his father a few hours earlier. Then, when he's lying in his bed he heard a body hit the floor in the boy's apartment, heard the woman scream from across the street, got to his front door as fast as he could, heard somebody racing down the stairs and assumed it was the boy.

**Juror #6:** I think that's possible.

**Juror #3:** ASSUMED? Brother, I've seen all kinds of dishonesty in my day, but this little display takes the cake. Y'all come in here with your hearts bleedin' all over the floor about slum kids and injustice; you listen to some fairy tales; suddenly you start gettin' through to some of these old

ladies... well, you're not getting through to me, I've had enough! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU GUYS? You all know he's guilty. He's got to burn! You're letting him slip through our fingers.

**Juror #8:** Slip through our fingers? Are you his executioner?

**Juror #3:** I'm one of 'em!

**Juror #8:** Perhaps you'd like to pull the switch?

**Juror #3:** For this kid? You bet I would!

**Juror #8:** I feel sorry for you... what it must feel like to want to pull the switch.

[*baiting him*]

**Juror #8:** Ever since you walked into this room, you've been acting like a self-appointed public avenger! You want to see this boy die because you personally want it, not because of the facts! You're a sadist!

[*Three lunges wildly at Eight, who holds his ground. Several jurors hold Three back*]

**Juror #3:** I'll kill him! I'LL KILL HIM!

**Juror #8:** You don't \*really\* mean you'll kill me, do you?

**this little display takes the cake.** = questa scenetta le batte tutte

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**Juror #8:** Look, there was one alleged eye witness to this killing. Someone else claims he heard the killing, saw the boy run out afterwards and there was a lot of circumstantial evidence. But, actually, those two witnesses were the entire case for the prosecution. Supposing they're wrong?

**Juror #12:** What do you mean, supposing they're wrong? What's the point of having witnesses at all?

**Juror #8:** Could they be wrong?

**Juror #12:** What are you trying to say? Those people sat on the stand under oath.

**Juror #8:** They're only people. People make mistakes. Could they be wrong?

**Juror #12:** Well, no, I don't think so.

**Juror #8:** Do you 'know' so?

**Juror #12:** Oh, come on. Nobody can know a thing like that. This isn't an exact science.

**Juror #8:** That's right, it isn't.

**alleged eye witness** = presunto testimone oculare; **circumstantial evidence** = prove circostanziali;

**What's the point...** = a che cosa servono...; **under oath** = sotto giuramento

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**Juror #3:** What do you mean you want to try it? Why didn't his lawyer bring it up if it's so important?

**Juror #5:** Well, maybe he just didn't think about it huh?

**Juror #10:** What do you mean didn't think of it? Do you think the man's an idiot or something? It's an obvious thing.

**Juror #5:** Did you think of it?

**Juror #10:** Listen smart guy, it don't matter whether I thought of it. He didn't bring it up because he knew it would hurt his case. What do you think of that?

**Juror #8:** Maybe he didn't bring it up because it would of meant bullying and badgering a helpless old man. You know that doesn't sit very well with a jury; most lawyers avoid it if they can.

**Juror #7:** So what kind of a bum is he then?

**Juror #8:** That's what I've been asking, buddy.

**that doesn't sit very well with a jury** = non è che la giuria se la beva tanto facilmente; **bum** = (qui) tipo

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**Juror #3:** That business before when that tall guy, what's-his-name, was trying to bait me? That doesn't prove anything. I'm a pretty excitable person. I mean, where does he come off calling me a public avenger, sadist and everything? Anyone in his right mind would blow his stack. He was just trying to bait me.

**Juror #4:** He did an excellent job.

**Anyone in his right mind would blow his stack** = chiunque fosse sano di mente avrebbe cercato di fargli saltare i nervi; **He was just trying to bait me.** = stava solo cercando di farmi arrabbiare.

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[after Juror #10 explains that he believes the boy is guilty because of the testimony of the woman across the street]

**Juror #8:** I'd like to ask you something: you don't believe the boy's story; how come you believe the woman's? She's one of 'them', too, isn't she?

**Juror #10:** You're a pretty smart fella, aren't you?

**how come you believe the woman's?** = com'è che crede alla donna?; **You're a pretty smart fella, aren't you?** = Lei crede di essere proprio uno in gamba, vero?

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[after Juror #8 has established that the old man witness could not have heard the killing over the noise of the elevated train]

**Juror #3:** Why should he lie? What's he got to gain?

**Juror #9:** Attention, maybe.

**Juror #3:** You keep coming in with these bright sayings. Why don't you send 'em into a paper - they pay three dollars apiece.

**Juror #6:** What are you talkin' to him like that for? Guy talks like that to an old man really oughta get stepped on, you know. You oughta have more respect, mister. If you say stuff like that to him again... I'm gonna lay you out.

**I'm gonna lay you out** = ti sistemo io/ti concio io per le feste

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[after another vote is taken, the count is six to six]

**Juror #10:** Six to six... I'm telling you, some of you people in here must be out of your minds. A kid like that...

**Juror #9:** I don't think the kind of boy he is has anything to do with it. The facts are supposed to determine the case.

**Juror #10:** Don't give me that. I'm sick and tired of facts! You can twist 'em anyway you like, you know what I mean?

**Juror #9:** That's exactly the point this gentleman has been making.

[indicates Juror #8]

**I'm sick and tired of facts!** = Non ne posso più dei fatti!

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[Juror #9 has pointed out that the woman witness across the street had marks on her nose indicating she normally wore glasses]

**Juror #8:** [to Juror #4] Do you wear glasses when you go to bed?

**Juror #4:** No. I don't. No one wears eyeglasses to bed.

**Juror #8:** It's logical to assume that she wasn't wearing them when she was in bed. Tossing and turning, trying to fall asleep.

**Juror #3:** How do you know?

**Juror #8:** I don't know - I'm guessing! I'm also guessing that she probably didn't put her glasses on when she turned to look casually out of the window. And she, herself, testified the killing took place just as she looked out. The lights went off a split second later - she couldn't have had time to put them on then. Here's another guess: maybe she honestly thought she saw the boy kill his father - I say she only saw a blur.

**Juror #3:** How do you know WHAT she saw? How does he know all that? How do you know what kind of glasses she wore? Maybe they were sunglasses. Maybe she was far-sighted. What do you know about it?

**Juror #8:** I only know the woman's eyesight is in question now.

**Juror #11:** She had to be able to identify a person sixty feet away - at night - without glasses.

**Juror #2:** You can't send someone off to die on evidence like that!

**Juror #3:** Oh, don't give me that.

**Juror #8:** Don't you think the woman might have made a mistake?

**Juror #3:** No.

**Juror #8:** It's not POSSIBLE?

**Juror #3:** No, it's not possible!

**Juror #3:** [*Juror #8 goes to Juror #12*] Is it possible?

**Juror #12:** [*nods*] Not guilty.

**Juror #8:** [*#8 goes to #10*] Do you think he's guilty?

[*#10 shakes his head 'no'*]

**Juror #3:** I think he's guilty!

**Juror #8:** [*#8 goes to #4*] Do you?

**Juror #4:** No. I'm convinced. Not guilty.

**Juror #3:** What's the matter with you?

**Juror #4:** I have a reasonable doubt, now.

**Juror #9:** Eleven to one!

**Tossing and turning, trying to fall asleep.** = Girandosi e rigirandosi cercando di addomentarsi;

**The lights went off a split second later** = le luci si sono spente una frazione di secondo dopo; **Oh, don't give me that.** = non raccontare balle!

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[*first lines*]

**Man in corridor:** You did a wonderful job, wonderful job!

**Judge:** To continue, you've listened to a long and complex case, murder in the first degree.

Premeditated murder is the most serious charge tried in our criminal courts. You've listened to the testimony, you've had the law read to you and interpreted as it applies in this case, it's now your duty to sit down and try to separate the facts from the fancy. One man is dead, another man's life is at stake, if there's a reasonable doubt in your minds as to the guilt of the accused, uh a reasonable doubt, then you must bring me a verdict of "Not Guilty". If, however, there's no reasonable doubt, then you must, in good conscience, find the accused "Guilty". However you decide, your verdict must be unanimous. In the event that you find the accused "Guilty", the bench will not entertain a recommendation for mercy. The death sentence is mandatory in this case. You're faced with a grave responsibility, thank you, gentlemen.

**another man's life is at stake** = la vita di un altro uomo è in gioco; **in good conscience** = in tutta coscienza; **mandatory** = obbligatorio