

Deciding by Group

You Are the Jury

PART 1: THE CASE

Read the paragraphs below concerning a fictional criminal case. Then answer the questions in Part 2. Do not discuss your answers with your fellow jurors.

On October 12, an intruder broke into the town art museum, smashing through an office window sometime between the hours of 2 and 4 A.M. At 4 A.M. the museum security guard noticed that three paintings were missing from the museum. He immediately called the police, who searched the museum and found two other items missing: a pair of replica crowns from 15th-century France. The police found muddy footprints at each crime scene.

On December 14, Robert Smythe attempted to sell a replica 15th-century French crown to a pawnshop. The shop owner contacted the police, who searched Smythe's home and found a second replica crown and a large collection of swords and armor. They also found a pair of shoes that matched the muddy footprints found at the museum. They did not find any of the stolen paintings. Robert Smythe maintains that he is innocent and that he collects European antiques. He states that he bought the crowns on the Internet and later decided to sell them.

PART 2: JUROR NOTES

1. What evidence in the case indicates that Smythe is not guilty?
2. What evidence indicates that Smythe is guilty?
3. Based on the evidence, would you find Smythe guilty or not guilty?
4. Is there anything in the case that would change your decision? Why or why not?

PART 3: OFFICIAL JUROR FORM

Work together in groups of 12 to decide whether Robert Smythe is guilty. Everyone in the jury must agree before you can offer a final verdict. When you have reached a decision, answer the following questions.

1. Did the jury conclude that Robert Smythe was guilty or not guilty?
2. Was the jury verdict the same as or different from your individual decision?
3. If the jury verdict was different, what made you change your mind about the decision? If it was the same, did anyone with a differing opinion present any evidence that almost convinced you to change your mind?

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