

## Book Reviews

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**Confessions Of A Criminal Lawyer.** By Allen Lumpkin Henson. New York. Vantage Press, Inc., 1959. Pp. 233, indexed. \$3.95.

To those of the non-legal world, the spectre of the lawyer's memoirs may be difficult to explain. The author of the present book, a Georgia judge, has come close to explaining the trial which seems to impel almost every successful attorney to set down his own triumphs and more instructive failures — the lawyer, to be successful before a jury, must be a good story teller.

“To fashion a trial lawyer, the great Personality Designer must rise to the acme of his art. He may not use the pattern for any other type, but he must borrow from all. He will need a bit of the actor for dramatic flair. The propensities of the humorist he must use to lighten situations, and those of the satirist to punish with ridicule. And there must be a part of the mathematician for exactness, and some of the logician for reasoning. There must be a bit of the vocalist for gracious voice. A dash of the Pied Piper must go in, to lead and to charm. This personality creation must shift back and forth from the tenderness of the shepherd to the ferocity of the mandarin. The stern bearing of the deacon and the levity of the clown are needed too. And the story teller — since he must convince, and to convince the more easily he must entertain. All of these and more, for persons and situations are as unlike as fingerprints, and the trial lawyer must, at every trial, direct a new unrehearsed show. He may choose neither the theme nor the actors. His players, be they parties or witnesses, range from rogues to saints.” [Frontis piece].

Encompassed within its all too brief pages, Judge Henson, drawing on history, his broad knowledge of people and on cases through-out his career, weaves a loose fabric designed to show the importance of each of these elements he believes the trial lawyer should possess, and how they may best be used. Commencing with a sketch of the history of the county within which he, and generations of his ancestors before him, lived, he tells of his own early days at the bar, before World War I, riding circuit with the experienced practitioners in the “Big Court”. His tales of the justice courts and the 'Squires both amuse and in-

struct. In explaining his early entrance into politics, he tells of convention trickery and of the Frank case, the political implications of which remained a viable force in Georgia politics for over twelve years.

In successive chapters Judge Henson tells what he has learned about judges and juries. Since many of the cases recounted were attended by much publicity in the press the methods of obtaining the proper atmosphere in the courtroom, — one of sympathy usually —, as well as direct methods for winning acceptance by the press, were of often paramount importance, and may prove suggestive to the advocate in every jurisdiction. It is apparently the judge's view that trial judges are reached by the tenor of the court room spectators as by a personal appeal. It is a common place that this is also true of a jury. On the latter subject, Judge Henson includes chapters on the selection, amazement, and amusement of juries.

For the pragmatists of the profession, this book has little new to offer; but for those who enjoy reading a literate and intelligent man's observations on the law in action, with time along the way to listen to local history, anecdotes with meaning, and an inquiry into the causes of man's conduct, this book should definitely be considered. It is far above the usual for its genre, and merits attention.

NELSON REED KERR, JR.