

# LESSON 25

from **A Trial by Jury** (informational)  
By D. Graham Burnett

I have on my desk at this moment twelve five-by-seven ruled index cards. On each of them the same two words appear: “not guilty.” Eight are written in pen, four in pencil. On eight of them the words appear along a single line, on two the words are perpendicular to the ruling, and on two they are **scrawled** diagonally (one of these last has been written on an inverted card, turned so that the red top line and margin are at the bottom). Three are in all caps, three have only the initial letters capitalized, three are all lowercase, two others show the “N” capitalized but not the “g.” In the last of them the word “NOT” appears in all caps, but the word “guilty” is all lowercase.

By dint of these varied **inscriptions**, made in silence in a few tense moments, Monte Virginia Milcray walked out of Part 24 of the New York State Supreme Court, got into the elevator, and descended to the cold wetness of Centre Street a little before noon on February 19, 2000. I **preceded** him by several minutes, getting into a cab with my duffel bag and riding the dozen blocks home to my wife, with whom I had not spoken in four days. The cards were folded in the breast pocket of my navy blazer. I was crying.

The twelve cards represent the **potent residue** of the most intense sixty-six hours of my life, a period during which I served as the foreman of a jury charged to decide whether Monte Milcray was guilty of murdering Randolph Cuffee. During that period, twelve individuals of considerable

**diversity** engaged in a total of twenty-three hours of sustained conversation in a small, bare room. We ran the gamut of group dynamics: a clutch of strangers yelled, cursed, rolled on the floor, vomited, whispered, embraced, sobbed, and invoked both God and necromancy. There were moments when the scene could have passed for a graduate seminar in political theory, others that might have been a jujitsu class. A few came straight out of **bedlam**. Before it was over, we had spent three nights and four days continuously attended by armed guards (who extended their affable **surveillance** into all lavatories); we had been shuttled to outlying hotels, into rooms with disconnected phones and sinks in which we washed our clothes; we had watched one juror pulled from our midst and rushed to the hospital (a physical collapse, caused by some combination of missing medication and the **crucible** of the deliberations), another make a somewhat half-hearted effort to escape (he was apprehended), and a third insist on her right to contact her own lawyer to **extricate** her from the whole affair (she was threatened with contempt).

During significant stretches in this trying time, we considered two weeks of testimony in *The People of New York v. Monte Virginia Milcray* and struggled to understand two things: what happened in Cuffee’s apartment on the night of August 1, 1998, and what responsibilities we had as citizens and jurors.

## Exercise I: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

### Master Words

Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don’t know.

bedlam

diversity

inscription

precede

scrawled

crucible

extricate

potent

residue

surveillance

## Exercise 2: Using Context Clues

Fill in the form for each of the Master Words listed below with context clues (if any), your definition, and the dictionary definition. If you have difficulty writing a definition, try using the word in a sentence instead.

1. **bedlam** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **crucible** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **diversity** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **extricate** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

5. **inscription** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **potent** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

7. **precede** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

8. **residue** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

9. **scrawled** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

10. **surveillance** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

### • • • Exercise 3: Using Words in Context

True or False: Use your knowledge of the Master Word and the context in which it appears to determine whether the statement is true or false. Write **T** on the line if the statement is true; write **F** if the statement is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Something that is **scrawled** is easy to read.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Inscriptions** can refer to the words carved on a tombstone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Lunch usually **precedes** breakfast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A **potent** remedy would be strong and effective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The gunpowder **residue** on someone's hands is the amount left over after a gun is fired.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The United States is a country with little ethnic **diversity** among its citizens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Older mental hospitals were called **bedlam** because they were quiet places of relaxation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Smart phones can be used by parents to carry out **surveillance** on their teenage children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The Olympics are a **crucible** where elite athletes face an extreme challenge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Houdini was a great magician who was able to **extricate** himself from boxes and chains.

### • • • Exercise 4: Sentence Completion

From the Master Words, choose the appropriate word for the blank in each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided at the right.

- 1. My sister ...?... a hasty good-bye note before she returned to college. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Hours of practice usually ...?... a victory in a tennis match. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Joanne wrote (a, an) ...?... inside each copy of her novel she gave away. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Claire's chickens showed great ...?... in the color of their feathers. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Basic training is the ...?... that determines if someone has what it takes. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Having the whole football team over after a game creates ...?... in our kitchen. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Camera ...?... at intersections helps the police catch those who run red lights. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Thad wanted to ...?... himself from the study group once he realized the other members were not serious about preparing for the exam. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. By voting with their wallets, consumers can be (a, an) ...?... force in persuading companies to avoid using sweatshop labor. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. After chemistry lab, Alexis noticed that ...?... of a compound had stained her jeans. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 5: Related Words and Meanings

The italic words in the sentences below are synonyms of the Master Words. Write the matching Master Word from the list on the line following the sentence.

diversity

extricate

potent

scrawled

surveillance

1. The government keeps close *watch* over suspected terrorists.
2. Our debaters made a *compelling* argument in favor of election reform.
3. The *variety* of costumes among the dancers created a colorful spectacle.
4. The park ranger tried to *rescue* a pet dog that was caught in a trap.
5. The *scribbled* directions my friend had written were difficult to read.

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## Exercise 6: Analogy Challenge

Determine the relationship between the first pair of words in each item below. Then write the Master Word on the blank that would create a similar relationship with the second pair of words. Analogy types used in this activity are synonyms, antonyms, adjective/related noun, and producer/product. (See page 158 for a guide to analogy types.)

1. sculptor : statue :: writer : \_\_\_\_\_
2. restore : repair :: \_\_\_\_\_ : remove
3. private : investigation :: police : \_\_\_\_\_
4. riches : wealth :: trial : \_\_\_\_\_
5. ally : enemy :: peace : \_\_\_\_\_
6. wisdom : folly :: uniformity : \_\_\_\_\_
7. hasty : departure :: \_\_\_\_\_ : note
8. grant : refuse :: follow : \_\_\_\_\_
9. renter : tenant :: remnant : \_\_\_\_\_
10. spoiled : fruit :: \_\_\_\_\_ : weapon

## Write About It: Fiction and Nonfiction

In this unit, you have read two passages about lawsuits. Lesson 22 was based on a fictional passage. This lesson, in contrast, is built on a nonfiction passage. **Write a paragraph** explaining the differences between fiction and nonfiction using the two passages as examples. Use at least three Master Words or words related to the Master Words in your explanation.