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Jurismania: The Madness of American Law (Studies of the German Historical Institute, London)

Paul F. Campos

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In *Jurismania*, Paul Campos asserts that our legal system is beginning to exhibit symptoms of serious mental illness. Trials and appeals that stretch out for years and cost millions, 100 page appellate court opinions, 1,000 page statutes before which even lawyers tremble with fear, and a public that grows more litigious every day all testify to a judicial overkill that borders on obsessive-compulsive disorder. Campos locates the source of such madness, paradoxically, in our worship of reason and the resulting belief that all problems are amenable to legal solutions. In insightful discussions of a wide range of cases, from NCAA regulations of student-athletes to the Simpson trial, from our most intractable social disputes over abortion and physician-assisted suicide to the war on drugs and the increasingly fastidious attempts to regulate behavior in public spaces, Campos shows that the mania for more law exacerbates the very problems it seeks to remedy. In his final chapter, the author calls instead for a humbling recognition of the limits of reason and a much more modest role for our legal system.

Clearly written and laced with a delicious wit, *Jurismania* gives us a CAT-scan of the American legal mind at work. It reveals not only that the patient is even worse off than we imagined, but also clarifies the many reasons why.

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