



Distorting the Law: Politics, Media, and the Litigation Crisis (Chicago Series in Law and Society)

William Haltom, Michael McCann

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In recent years, stories of reckless lawyers and greedy citizens have given the legal system, and victims in general, a bad name. Many Americans have come to believe that we live in the land of the litigious, where frivolous lawsuits and absurdly high settlements reign.

Scholars have argued for years that this common view of the depraved ruin of our civil legal system is a myth, but their research and statistics rarely make the news. William Haltom and Michael McCann here persuasively show how popularized distorted understandings of tort litigation (or tort tales) have been perpetuated by the mass media and reform proponents. *Distorting the Law* lays bare how media coverage has sensationalized lawsuits and sympathetically portrayed corporate interests, supporting big business and reinforcing negative stereotypes of law practices.

Based on extensive interviews, nearly two decades of newspaper coverage, and in-depth studies of the McDonald's coffee case and tobacco litigation, *Distorting the Law* offers a compelling analysis of the presumed litigation crisis, the campaign for tort law reform, and the crucial role the media play in this process.

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