

THE PROBABILITY OF A GUILTY VERDICT IN CRIMINAL TRIALS

John S. Croucher, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

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ABSTRACT

The general role of a judge is that of having the responsibility for interpreting the appropriate law in question and on occasions in higher level cases of importance there will be a panel of judges, usually 3, 5, 7 or even 9. Sometimes the accused can even select for their case to be heard by a single judge or a jury. The first part of this paper deals with the change in a probability of the outcome based on the size of the judicial panel and whether it is in the best interests of an accused or plaintiff to go for a single judge, a small panel or the largest possible jury size. The second part considers some jurisdictions worldwide in which varying types of majority verdicts can secure a conviction, rather than unanimous verdicts, and the effect on the probability of the defendant being found guilty.

Keywords: *statistics, jury, judge, law, probability*