



# The Old Bailey: Eight Centuries of Crime, Cruelty and Corruption

*Theresa Murphy, T Murphy*

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This is the story of an arena of crime and degradation, of infamy and human suffering. It is the history of the Old Bailey, an institution as flawed as all man-made attempts at justice are doomed to be.

In the beginning there was barbarity and injustice. The court was packed with a restless, muttering mob, eager for the verdicts of 'Guilty' so they could enjoy public executions, hurling abuse and missiles at those with the noose around their neck. Today we fool ourselves that we have evolved beyond barbarism, but are made uneasy by the continuing exposure of miscarriage of justice. If we use the Old Bailey as a yardstick, it is possible to argue that mankind has not made much progress through the centuries.

In these pages, we tour the courts of long ago, meeting the Dracula-garbed court chaplains, drunken, brutal judges and cold-blooded hangmen. With wit and skill, Theresa Murphy brings to life a cast of hundreds, from the well-known to the less infamous, who together make up the harrowing history of the Old Bailey.

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