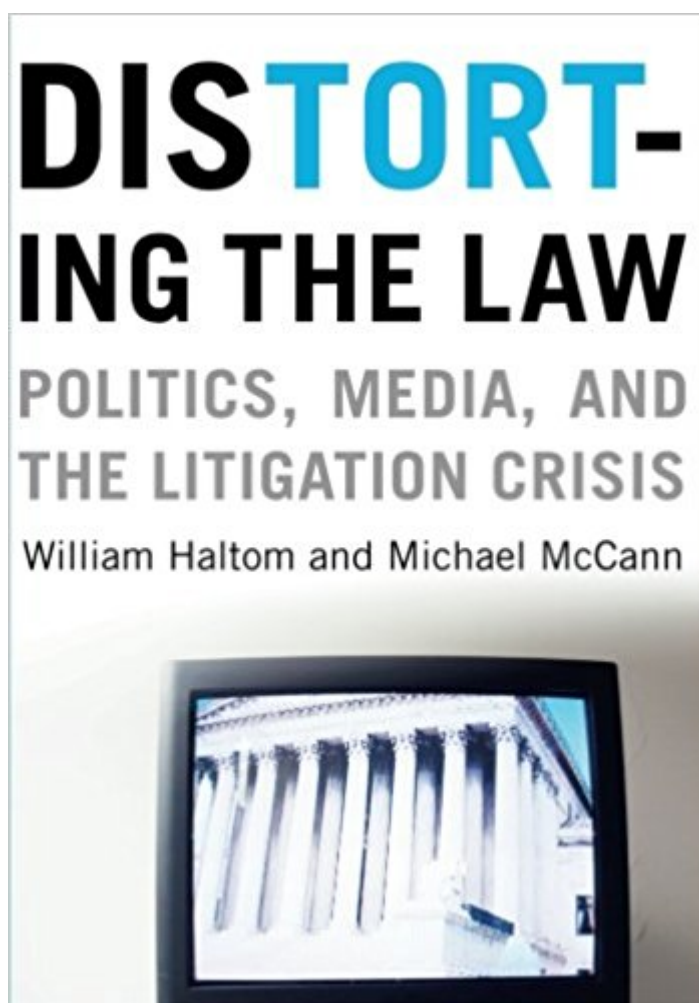


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# Distorting The Law: Politics, Media, And The Litigation Crisis (Chicago Series In Law And Society)



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is an excellent study and should assume its rightful place in the pantheon of law and society studies."--The Law and Politics Book Review (The Law and Politics Book Review)

William Haltom is professor in the Department of Politics and Government at the University of Puget Sound and the author of *Reporting on the Courts*. Michael McCann is the Gordon Hirabayashi

Professor for the Advancement of Citizenship at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is the author of several books, most recently the award-winning *Rights at Work*.

It is a good topic if you do not know anything about tort. The book gives good examples and is very well researched. Though given the choice I would prefer to watch the documentary "Hot Coffee" it is not as in-depth but it does cover the basic ideas. Over all it is a good read if you are interested in tort.

This book should be a must read for judges and reporters. It shows how propaganda, rather than fact, controls our lives, beliefs and behavior. It exposes the myths of litigation promoted by the ignorant and those in the sociopathic pursuit of profit. It is a hard read for the uninitiated and the writers assume that the reader has a basic understanding of law and sociology. It is essential reading for those who wish to reflect on the ills of post-modern societal and governmental organization.

great

After having read Stephanie Mencimer's "Blocking the Courthouse Door" I became more interested in the arguments against "tort reform." However, this book did little to enhance that interest. In defense of the authors, Haltom and McCann, they have presented a thorough discussion of the topic as it relates to politics, media and the litigation crisis, just as the subtitle says. There are chapters for pro-business tort reformers, plaintiffs and sociological scholars opposed to it, newspaper reporting and information selection, the story of "the McDonalds Hot Coffee Lady," tobacco litigation, and a final chapter, which I confess, I had no idea what they were talking about, mainly because I had lost interest. Their analyses are so in depth that they would probably even have John Stossel scratching his head. My hypnotic trance was due to the academic presentation of information. In fact it was so dry, it almost gave me the Heaves. I object to this for the person who wants to learn AND be entertained. The objection is overruled for the reader who wishes to pursue serious academic study of the tort misinformation from different directions. For the latter, it is at least four stars. Either one will be better informed, and may God have mercy on your soul! For me, it was a solid three, only because I wanted to find the information interesting. Can I sue for this?

It's good

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