



## ***The Innocent Man* by John Grisham**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What were your initial impressions of Ron Williamson? How did your attitude toward him shift throughout the book?
2. As you read about court proceedings, what reactions did you have to the trial-by-jury process? Have you served on a jury, or been a defendant before a jury? If so, how did your experience compare to the one described in *The Innocent Man*?
3. How does new crime-lab technology make you feel about the history of convictions in America? What might future generations use to replace lie-detector tests or fingerprint databases? What are the limitations of technology in solving crimes?
4. How did the descriptions of Oklahoma's death row compare to what you had previously believed? What distinctions in treatment should be made between death-row inmates and the rest of the prison population?

5. Discuss the aftermath of Ron's and Dennis's exoneration. How did you balance your reaction to the triumph of Ron's large cash settlement and the fact that it would have to be paid for by local taxpayers?
6. To what extent do you believe mental health should be a factor in determining someone's competence to stand trial, or in determining guilt or innocence?
7. In his author's note, Grisham writes, "Ada is a nice town, and the obvious question is: When will the good guys clean house?" What are the implications of this question for communities far beyond Ada? What can you do to help "clean house" in America's judiciary system?

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