

Viewers Decide Controversial Court Cases in Fox Reality Show *You the Jury*, Hosted by Jeanine Pirro

Hosted by Fox News Channel's Jeanine Pirro, the new prime-time, unscripted reality show lets the audience decide the verdict in real life, headline-grabbing civil cases

By KC Baker

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America will be casting votes again soon — this time on Fox's new reality show, *You the Jury*.

Hosted by Fox News Channel's Jeanine Pirro, a former TV judge herself, the new prime-time, unscripted reality show lets the audience be the jury and decide the verdict in a civil case in real time, in front of a former California judge.

Starting Friday night on Fox, the series will feature headline-grabbing, controversial and real-life civil cases tackling topical issues like online trolling and the limits of free speech and the constitutional question of gay rights versus religious freedom. The "biggest jury pool in history" will even decide a wrongful death suit.

"What you've got are hot-button issues that America is talking about at the water cooler, at lunch or over the fence," Pirro tells PEOPLE.

"I'm fascinated with the idea of America looking at these issues and rendering their own opinion about what is important," she adds.

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The lawyers representing the litigants are some of the most high-profile in the country, including Jose Baez, who defended Casey Anthony and Nick Gordon in the death of Whitney Houston's daughter, Bobbi Kristina, and is currently defending former NFL star Aaron Hernandez; Joe Tacopina, who has represented Jay Z and Alex Rodriguez; and civil rights lawyer Benjamin L. Crump, who represented the families of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown.

In another twist, closing arguments will be presented by the plaintiff and the defendant themselves, who sit across from each other and face off as the studio audience looks on.

Retired Superior Court of California judge LaDoris Cordell is the show's judge.

Pirro is the show's host, mediating between the audience and the proceedings.

"You think you know an issue, but when you have the best of the best in terms of the lawyers handling the cases, you can swing from one side of the issue to the other," she says.

In the first episode, viewers will decide its first ripped-from-the-headlines, highly-publicized case: whether Robyn Gardner died from accidental causes — or murder — when she vanished on a trip to Aruba in 2011 — in a wrongful death lawsuit against millionaire defendant Gary Giordano.

The vote will be revealed at the end of the show's broadcast in the East and Central time zones. But the final verdict will not be determined until after the West Coast votes hours later. Per a contract signed in advance by the litigants, the verdict is 100 percent binding.

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Pirro says she was particularly interested in doing the show since she has a long legal resume herself. A former judge and District Attorney from the state of New

York, she is the host of *Justice with Judge Jeanine* on the Fox News Channel and was also the host of a syndicated weekday court show, *Judge Jeanine*.

She has written four books, including her latest, *He Killed Them All: Robert Durst and My Quest for Justice*.

“For me it was a combination of a lot of issues I have kind of dealt with over the course of my career,” she says.

You the Jury will premiere on Friday (9 p.m. ET) on Fox.

- **By KC Baker**