Authors' Introduction to 2026-2027 Edition

The first edition of *Opening Statements: Winning in the Beginning by Winning the Beginning*, published in 2003, highlighted the then increasing importance of creating a compelling story for your trial.

This book's theme remains "*you can win in the beginning by winning the beginning*." I advocate in writing and teach advocates in the training programs that I direct that winning in the beginning is possible if the advocate learns and implements the principles of persuasion science, the foundation of winning advocacy and the starting point in creating powerful, winning beginnings. Human beings have always looked for the easiest and the quickest way out of an uncomfortable situation. Making decisions quickly is necessary to keep our sanity. After all, psychologists tell us that we make 35,000 decisions each day. That is why people, especially, people under stress and in a hurry, use heuristics, short cuts, to make decisions—and then move on. Dr. Daniel Kahneman, the world's foremost expert on getting it wrong, teaches us that our heuristic short cuts are influenced by cognitive biases. Unless we are aware of these subtle, silent processes, most will fall prey to error, confusion, skewed thinking and, Kahneman says, most of us will get it wrong!

The most significant responsibility of a courtroom jurors is the responsibility placed on them to decide who is liable, who is wrong, who should pay? This year's new chapter—Chapter 27, One Story, One Choice, One Moral: Threading a Theme From Beginning to End—focuses on threading a theme from the beginning including voir dire to create a simple coherent path to a verdict in favor of your client.

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