Great American Trials

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Apart from being terrific theater, great trials can shape history, Professor Linder notes. They can change attitudes and reinforce ideals. And they can provide a remarkably clear window for observing societies, both past and present. A harbinger of the American Revolution, the Boston Massacre trials (and the reaction to the verdict) reflected the heated partisanship of the times. Central to this story is the young attorney John Adams, who paid a price for his decision to represent the accused British soldiers and their captain.