

IDEAS 86

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Debate
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Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students



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THE 86th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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SMOOTH—AND NOT SO SMOOTH—CRIMINALS

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Everywhere we look, there will always be people bold and daring enough to flout the law.

Even when these individuals know they could be caught on closed circuit television while doing their dastardly deed, they still choose to do evil. I have even heard on the news of some insanely foolish criminals that don't bother with masks pulled over their faces to conceal their faces. Or people like Philip Brown, who broke into-SURPRISE! SURPRISE!-a Sheriff substation, of all places! Read accounts of the silliest criminals on the planet from http://www.truecrimereport.com/stupid_crime/. Your guess is as good as mine whether the articles are just there to pull our leg.

Why do criminals choose to disobey the law? Because they believe they can get away with it? Because they need to find out how far they can go before they get caught? Because of desperate need? A crime is still a crime, no matter what the reason.

But of course, there are those crimes that reek of pure evil. Take the bombing that occurred during the Boston Marathon last Monday. Photos and footages taken of that possible act of terrorism are graphic: bloodied people on the streets, mayhem everywhere, men, women and children crying and in panic. I even saw a man being carried to a waiting ambulance with ripped flesh from his upper thigh, showing what appeared to be a very large piece of muscle missing. The criminal mind that conceived this crime was merciless. Whoever the criminal was, what he did was unspeakable in its sheer evil and cruelty. The youngest victim was a very young boy, only eight years old. <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/16/us/boston-marathon-victims-profiles/index.html> reports that Martin Richard, a beautiful and fun-loving boy, was just there to give his dad a hug once his dad reached the finished line. Unfortunately, that was exactly where one of the two bombs was placed. Martin's mother and sister are still in hospital being treated for their own injuries sustained during the blast. Why indeed does the commission of a crime need to have collateral damage of an innocent nature? An 8-year-old boy?

It seems the most powerful nation in the world continues to be rocked by crimes and various acts of terrorism. Since 9/11, we have witnessed how many other criminal activities seem to have suddenly exploded. What has happened to observance of the law? Of upholding all that is just and good in the land of the free? This is a country where it's not quite easy to flout the law, but it is a country that has unfortunately had its share of criminals, some of the most diabolical minds there are in the world.

Let's pray that Crime Scene Investigators are able to take everything piece by piece and find the perpetrators of those crimes. It's the least they can do for the souls of those that perished, and the peace of mind of those that have been injured.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you like watching TV series, movies and documentaries about crimes? Why is crime so fascinating?
2. Why do people disobey the law? Which of those reasons are justified, in your opinion?
3. Why is anarchy never going to work?
4. How is the law enforced in your country? Do you think your government is strong enough to combat crimes?
5. Why is it necessary to have laws in any area? And who should control those who make or enforce the law?



STUDYING THE LAW AND DISPENSING IT—TWO DIFFERENT THINGS?

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Every year, hundreds of bright people complete their Bachelor of Laws degree (LL.B.) or their Juris Doctor (JD) degree. I referred to this forum I encountered online, <http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/archive/1960140>. A participant in that forum explained that Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor basically have the same structure of study, but those that conduct teaching in Juris Doctor expect students to be able to give higher quality responses compared to those in the LL.B. field.

I really don't understand the difference between the two. But that doesn't change the fact that in my country, the Bar exams taken by aspiring lawyers has got to be one of the most, if not the most, difficult licensure examinations there are in existence today. The Medical board exams are in the same league as the Bar exams, I believe.

A very close relative studied to complete her Bachelor of laws. She's married with children and has a good administrative job in the city where her family resides. I have seen how she toiled hard with very thick books and impossible-to-finish reviewers. She has completed her degree, but has yet to take the Bar exams. When she successfully graduated, I was all praises for her. I had often wondered how she could manage it all: work through the whole day; have people depending on her at the office and under her direct supervision; take care of her family; and still attend night school for her law degree. I could never do that!

She has told us she wants to make sure she's good and ready before she takes the Bar exams. She has remarked once that the laws are very difficult to study. We know they're there, but to be able to explain why they're there, to justify their existence, is another matter altogether. Sometimes there are laws that seem to oppose one another. Of course, it is always upon our lawyers to explain the implications of the law to us in such a manner that we begin to understand how the law benefits us or puts our interests in jeopardy. What may be lawful in my eyes might be lawless in another's. Ever notice how people say "Talk to my lawyer!" when they're confronted with a situation where they need to exercise due care? Someone who understands the law can help us get through the tightest situations. But of course, that all depends on what kind of law or what particular law we 'manage to disobey'.

Lady Justice, who carries the Scales of Justice in one hand and a sword in the other, has her eyes covered all the time. This signifies how law is to be dispensed: without bias and in complete impartiality, but with finality and force. Arguments abound that what is legal is not always moral. But there are also those who say that wide acceptance is not always proof of validity. So what will it be?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Have you ever had the ambition to become a lawyer? Why or why not?
2. Explain "What is legal is not always moral."
3. Why do you think people feel secure when they have a relative or a close friend who is a lawyer?
4. The law applies to all or none at all. Be able to expound on this concept.
5. Why is it important that a course on professional ethics be incorporated into any area of study?



NO MAN IS ABOVE THE LAW

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We always hear this saying that “No man is above the law,” but the question still lies if we really adhere to it. It is intermittently true and yet we still wonder if this can be applied to officials, who are both in private and public and those who occupy a high position. Does it really matter whether they do or they don’t do follow this rule? We often stand in awe when we see these officials break the laws that they try to enforce to everyone. But there is something deeper than comes into it, which is the law is there to protect the weak from the strong and does it really happen or is it visible enough for everybody to see?

Oh, yes it is very much seen nowadays when powerful men and women try to look down and crush anybody who actually gets on their way. A concrete example would be the affair of David with Bathsheba when he tried to cover-up and get away with his crime in eradicating the husband of the latter. Here we see that even when David was the king, he could also be a divine subject. As it is, he was subjected to the law of God. In this instance we can see that the law serves as a social and moral leveler, that everyone is accountable for their own actions.

Apparently, there’s a big difference between God’s law and man’s law wherein some laws can be either good or bad. We can clearly see that there is the relevance of situations when we see officials break the law for no good reason at all. But still we see that they increase in their power and are yet rewarded for the crimes they have committed. As it is, the law should be protecting us, ordinary citizens from those people who are in the government. Most often than not, this does not hold true.

We know pretty well that the sole function of the law is most likely to protect the ordinary citizens. But if in the process we can see bluntly that those who are in power or in position in the government wants to take advantage of those who are not in any way connected to the government, then it is obvious that the law will no longer serve its purpose. Subsequently, even when people ignore the law, it should still functions as such. In truth, we are all created equal. Therefore, we will all be fascinated to see that those in position or in power will still hold the rule of the law in such sacred regard. When all has been said and done, we should all follow the law and should not make any exceptions for no man is above the law.

Questions for discussion:

1. Should we take the law in our hands? Explain your answer.
2. Do you agree that no man is above the law? Why or why not?
3. Do officials follow the law and adhere to it? Justify your answer.
4. In what circumstances do you think that man is not above the law?
5. Should there be any exceptions to the rule of “No man is above the law?” Explain further.



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