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Opinion #12

What the newspapers won't tell you!

October 30, 2006

THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE

LAWYERS CAN BE SAVED

COMMON ATTORNEYS, WHEN EXPOSED TO A COMPASSIONATE TREATMENT PROGRAM, CAN OFTEN BE TURNED INTO PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

BY GLENN CAMPBELL

There's good news at last for the Family Court: We don't need to kill all the lawyers! Some can be rehabilitated through an intensive program of psychotherapy that treats them as unique, valuable and vulnerable human beings instead of slimy shyster scumbag sleazeballs.

The key is understanding. Lawyers may choose strange ways to express themselves, what with their Motions, Writs, Petitions, Stipulations, and Quashings of This or That, but their inner motivations are really quite simple.

Deep down, every lawyer just wants to be loved.

The way he or she has chosen to be loved is by generating and interpreting the rules of society. The law is a religion, and lawyers are the high priests. They attend seminary, are ordained with a Bar Number, then go forth to minister to their flock. They will tell us Right from Wrong, and for this service they'll take 10%—and sometimes 33, 40 or 50%.

Theirs is a powerful position, usually well-compensated, with little in the way of downside risk apart from losing ones soul to Satan.

Lawyers have always had an unsavory reputation among the parishioners, but Family Court Chronicles is the first to reveal the whole story. The lawyer's work is necessary to society but also fundamentally flawed. Initially seeking only to be loved and to serve humanity, the attorney is often seduced into quite the opposite.

The law, you see, is not true morality. It is a pale and shallow imitation of morality. The danger emerges when the law alone is seen as the ultimate test of Right and Wrong. That's when souls get sucked dry and shysters are born.

UNDERSTANDING LAW

Once upon a time, many centuries ago, leaders started writing down laws so that citizens would know exactly what they could and couldn't do. There had always been conflict among men, which was often settled by force. The creation of law promised an end to bloodshed. Henceforth, we would obey written rules, and disputes would be settled by civilized means.

This new technology carried great promise but also created its own set of problems. The law, it turns out, can be as brutal and tyrannical as marauding Vandal hordes, just in a different way.

A typical law is, "If you steal, your hand will be cut off." Okay, that sends a fairly clear message to the dimwits in the room, but it gets pretty messy in practice. The social benefit of reduced thievery is offset by the costs of all those handless citizens, who can no longer slave for the king as efficiently as before.

This illustrates the first defect of law: For every new rule you create, there are unintended consequences, which are sometimes worse than the original ailment.

The main problem with living by written rules is that you lose much of your flexibility

to adapt to the unique circumstances in front of you. Human fickleness is restrained, but so is human judgment and creativity.

Law must be specified in words, but real life is always more complicated than words can possibly anticipate. Words, once written, become tyrannical dictators, cutting off hands and forcing stupid compliance even when the circumstances are entirely different from what the authors intended.

So we try to refine the words, which is usually a futile endeavor. Great volumes of case law are published to fine-tune the crime and punishment. After a while, things may begin to look stable, but then lawmakers come along and screw things up again.

This brings up a second defect of law: It is only as wise as the people who write it. In the modern world, this is boneheaded legislators hired by dimwitted voters. Whatever the hysteria of the moment may be, that's what generates our laws.

Given its hysterical origins and the limitations of language, the law will never be a precision tool. It has only one way to solve a problem: Hit it with a sledgehammer.

If someone hurts someone else, then we hit him with a sledgehammer. If two people have a dispute, we drag them through court for a couple of years then hit one of them with a sledgehammer. If two people had been in love but are no longer, then we hit them both with sledgehammers. We hit their children with sledgehammers. We hit the mentally ill with sledgehammers. We hit criminals with sledgehammers, repeatedly, and hope by this action that we will turn them into better citizens.

The legal system doesn't build anything or create new resources. It cannot generate competence where none existed. It can only redistribute resources—by taking a pound of flesh from one party and giving it to another. Or it can destroy resources altogether—say, by throwing someone in prison.

The law, by its nature, is parasitic: manipulating and incidentally draining the product of others. It may be a necessary parasite, to protect us from even worse ones, but it is always best when we can operate without it.

What the law often steals from us is the freedom to anticipate and fine-tune the actual effects of our actions. If two people commit the same crime, the law is going to hit them with the same sledgehammer, even if the effect on each of them is entirely different. For some, the sledgehammer is the most appropriate and socially productive solution; for others, it is not.

Justice is blind, and therein lies the problem.

UNDERSTANDING LAWYERS

The danger of becoming a lawyer is that you may start to actually *believe* in the law and see it as a genuine morality instead of a fake

one. If a statute is on the books, then you assume that someone wise must have put it there—not just some bonehead legislator—and that somehow this law embodies “good”.

No statute is inherently good; it is just the legislation that happened to get passed.

Lawyers tend to believe that if they win their case, then they must be morally Right, and if they aren't violating any law, then they can't be morally Wrong. True moral reasoning is much more complicated. You also have to consider what is *actually going to happen* as a result of your actions.

In true morality, any notion of “justice” is irrelevant. All that matters is what happens next. If someone commits a crime, then boneheads are going to demand retribution, but in practical terms, all that is really important is that it doesn't happen again. The past can't be changed; only the future can.

The law is prepared to deal with all manner of human treachery, but it provides no insight into why the behavior happens and doesn't help us predict it in the future. The modeling of human behavior requires an entirely different mode of logic and investigation, which few lawyers are interested in.

Our observation of lawyers in the wild finds them, on the whole, strangely lacking in curiosity about the world around them and the inner life of their clients. Their field is law, they are fond of saying, not psychology, and there is powerful incentive for continued ignorance. Lawyers, at least those in private practice, get paid for fighting the fight, not for understanding the underlying conflict and quietly resolving the problem early on.

Accomplished shysters can be more effectively immoral than any burglar or con man because they know exactly what the law is and what they can get away with. In what other profession can you charge \$250 or more an hour with only modest education, no proof of competence and no medical equipment? Lawyers can extract this much because they are the priests who make the rules and because their clients are so vulnerable.

In our observations in Family Court, we are continually amazed by the ways that suffering clients, especially in the divorce arena, are taken for a ride by their scumbag attorneys, who both fail to grasp the underlying needs and charge obscene fees. Through fixed-rate scams, some unscrupulous attorneys often earn far more than \$250/hour, and it is totally legal because the client signed for it—without the benefit of a lawyer to protect them from the lawyer they were hiring.

Because they are deliberately clueless about human needs, many lawyers have difficulty recognizing the real source of their client's distress, which may be entirely different from the complaint first presented. The common cop-out is that the lawyer is supposed to represent the client's “expressed wishes” not his needs—a philosophy that is

easier to follow when you ask no probing questions. There is no incentive for lawyers to dig below the surface, so generally they don't. They prefer to be mouthpieces rather than counselors, because the former is much more lucrative.

TREATMENT

The source of hope lies in the fact that most lawyers are pretty smart, even when clueless. Surviving law school and passing the bar requires high objective intelligence. Thanks to their training, lawyers can process abstract philosophical arguments better than most other professionals. Their tools are words, and sometimes with the right words you can break through to them.

Due, however, to a sort of mild autism, lawyers have difficulty applying their prodigious intellect to real life. For example, family law judges and attorneys are no more successful in marriage than the rest of us, even though they are exposed to divorce every day and ought to have learned a thing or two about bad choices and how love can go wrong. The aim of therapy is to break through this block and teach the lawyer that people can be just as interesting and manageable as Writs and Motions.

Rehabilitation of the lawyer, in the context of a compassionate treatment program, requires capturing his native intelligence and redirecting it toward more useful purposes.

When lawyers talk about the wording of a statute and the expressed wishes of their client, you should gently nudge them toward investigating the client's needs. You don't have to make them publicly acknowledge any emotional sensitivity—that would be unlawfully—but you do want to make them feel it privately, as though the client were a member of the lawyer's own family.

Addicted as they are to ritualized modes of behavior, lawyers tend to freak out or go passive when exposed to raw human emotion. The therapist must calm them down and assure them that they are not going to lose control of the attorney-client relationship merely by inquiring below the surface of things. Psychological inquiry is not incompatible with limited intervention. Social workers don't go crazy when faced with needy clients, so lawyers shouldn't either.

The law, we should make them see, is a tool, not an end in itself. It should only be one device of many in the lawyer's toolbox, since his real job is the solving of human problems.

The law, more often than not, is the enemy of good, and the attorney's noblest mission is to fudge, finesse and outmaneuver it in support of a higher calling.

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