**Kant - Doesn't telling the murderer the truth undermine the categorical imperative? (7 votes)**

[BenChida](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1330541) a day ago

Posted by: WynterSun3

Hello Professor Sandel,

My name is Umran Haji. I just got through all the videos on Kant, and when you discussed the case of the murderer at the door and explained Kant's rationale for not lying to the murderer, an objection immediately came to my mind; It seems to me that not lying to the murderer flies in the face of the categorical imperative.

Consider this: What is the murderer's goal? To kill my friend, thereby using my friend as ameans to his bloodthirsty ends. Meanwhile, what is my goal when the murderer shows up at my door? My goal is to protect my friend, thus upholding his human dignity and treating him as an end in himself. The murderer is acting heteronomously out of a hypothetical imperative, while I am acting out of a categorical imperative.

If I refuse to lie to the murderer (even if I tell a misleading truth), I am running the risk of having my friend get killed as an indirect result of my actions. In paying homage to the principle of telling the truth, I will have undermined the categorical imperative and sacrificed my friend.

By Kantian principles, is the morality of telling the truth really worth the loss of my friend's life? What, if anything, would Kant say to this, and why?

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1. [0](javascript:void(0)) [EdSilha](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1032045)

a day ago

If it is wrong to lie to a potential murder, is it also wrong to injure him (injuring another law abiding citizen is wrong) if he attacks you?

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