

Short Essay 3

Prompt

Sigh. Another day. Another crime. Another victim. Another trial. Another person set for prison. I've done this court psychologist thing for too long now. I know why they did it. It's not their fault they are the way they are. Nobody ever asked them what kind of person they wanted to be. Here they are a victim to their upbringing, it causing them to do this terrible thing. And what do we do? We blame them for something they had no control over and leave them wasting in a prison. Enough. I'm making a stand. I'll convince this judge that the defendant had no control whatsoever. I don't care if I lose my job.

You are a psychologist for the NJ court system. Your job is to psychologically assess defendants. You must determine whether they committed the crime of their own free will. You primarily ask why the person has the character traits they have and ask whether their behavior is determined by those character traits. You interview their friends, family, and colleagues. You find out whatever you can about their upbringing and how it shaped the person they are today. You then write a short report to the judge outlining your findings. The odd twist is that today you are determined to prove that the defendant's character is responsible for their action and that they had **no control** over having that character.

Identify some **real** crime and prepare the psychological report of the defendant for the court. You can find a case by looking at old newspapers. NJ.com and nytimes.com are good places to start. Find out as many details as you can about the defendant. Make some up if you need to. Then prepare a report in which you (1) identify the main features of the person's character, (2) argue that the character arose from their upbringing (make sure to give details, anecdotes, etc), and (3) explain how their particular character explains the crime they committed.

Further Instruction

- This assignment is concerned with Compatibilism and an objection to it, namely, free will requires more than our actions flowing from our character.
- Write in very simple English prose.
- Give vivid, specific details.
- Write 400-600 words. No more. No less.
- Submit your responses by Mon. @ 1pm.