

1 Discuss these questions.

- a What kinds of punishments would be suitable for these crimes?
- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| blackmail | arson | computer hacking |
| manslaughter | shoplifting | fraud |
| libel | reckless driving | tax evasion |
- b Are there any crimes in your country that are currently receiving a great deal of attention from the media?
- c Can you think of any crimes that are seen as less serious now than they were in the past?

2 Read the text below and answer these questions.

- a What was Owen accused of?
- b Do you think his actions were justified? Why/Why not?
- c What do you think the jury decided? Turn to page 164 to see if you were right.

A crime of passion

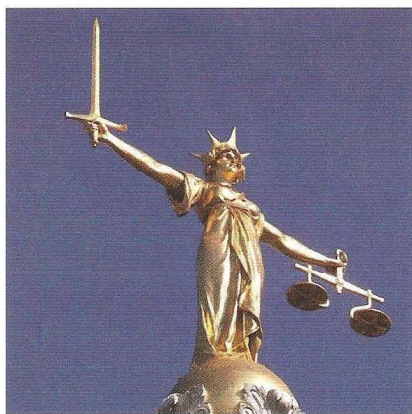
Reaching a verdict can be an extremely difficult and complicated process, and juries sometimes have to balance a sense of justice against knowledge of the law.

Take the case of Stephen Owen, whose twelve-year-old son Darren had been killed after being knocked off his bicycle and crushed by a lorry. Mr Taylor, the lorry driver, left the scene without reporting the accident. The police tracked him down, only to discover that he had never had a driving licence. Mr Taylor showed no remorse for what he had done, which greatly distressed the family. He was banned from driving and sentenced to eighteen months in prison for reckless driving, but served only twelve months.

Stephen Owen could not get over the death of his son. He was shaken by how quickly Taylor had been released from prison. When he discovered that Taylor had not stopped driving after his release, he wrote a letter to the Queen to ensure that the ban was

enforced. Owen let the event take over his life entirely, becoming unable to lead a normal existence. He traced Taylor to his home in Kent, and confronted him in the street. With a sawn-off shotgun he fired twice at Taylor at point blank range, hitting him in the back and his common-law wife, Alison Barratt, in the arm. They survived, but Owen was charged with attempted murder.

At his trial, the prosecution said that his shooting of Taylor had been premeditated, but Owen claimed to have fired the gun in a moment of near insanity. At the end of the trial, the judge told the jury: 'Any parent must feel sympathy, understanding and compassion for a father or mother who receives a phone call only to hear of the death of a child.' But he warned the jury not to be swayed by understandable sympathy for Owen, and advised them to concentrate on whether Owen had any intent to kill at the time of the shooting, regardless of what had happened beforehand.



Tip

If you don't manage to get the answer the first time you hear the recording, don't get distracted. You will hear the recording a second time.



- 1 Look at this statue which stands above a famous court of law in London. What is the symbolic significance of the sword and the scales?
- 2 Explain in your own words what *forensic science* means.

Exam practice

- 3 2.06 You will hear an interview with Dr Lafford, a leading expert in the field of forensic science. For questions 1–5, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which fits best according to what you hear.
 - 1 According to Dr Lafford, Sherlock Holmes was a good forensic scientist because of his
 - A psychological insight.
 - B unbiased approach.
 - C detailed observations.
 - D medical knowledge.
 - 2 Forensic scientists pay particular attention to
 - A evidence of mutual contact.
 - B items criminals have touched.
 - C a suspect's clothing.
 - D carpet fibres and human hair.
 - 3 Dr Lafford mentions the broken headlight to show that forensic science nowadays is
 - A more complex than it used to be.
 - B just as reliable as it was in the past.
 - C not as time-consuming as it once was.
 - D more straightforward than it was in the past.
 - 4 According to Dr Lafford, electron microscopes can
 - A produce conflicting results.
 - B sometimes damage evidence.
 - C provide a chemical analysis.
 - D guarantee total accuracy.
 - 5 Dr Lafford feels that the value of forensic science lies in
 - A how its significance to a case is explained.
 - B the use of advanced genetic fingerprinting.
 - C the possibility of eliminating human error.
 - D reducing the number of possible suspects.

Vocabulary

Word knowledge: law

- 4 What do the phrases in *italics* mean?
 - a She takes absolutely no notice of anything I say. She's *a law unto herself*!
 - b Ministers seem to regard themselves as *above the law*.
 - c By sticking to *the letter of the law*, the spirit of the law could be lost.
 - d If politics reflects *the law of the jungle*, beware of the tigers!
 - e She could have at least waited until tomorrow to *lay down the law* so heavily.
 - f When we *take the law into our own hands* we become little better than criminals.

Your views

- 5 Discuss these questions.
 - a Give a brief description of the system of justice that operates in your country.
 - b How confident are you that you would be acquitted if you were charged with a crime that you had not committed?