

2 Page Writing Assignment

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Due first class meeting after Thanksgiving Break

Transforming a Newspaper Article into an Episode of *Law & Order*

Law & Order has become famous for using real life court cases as inspiration to create fictional stories. *Law & Order* writers work by the 50/50 rule, where they know they will be legally protected if they change 50% of the information in the news story.

Section #1) Find one current news article (in either a newspaper or on the internet) and summarize it in one paragraph. Then, as a concluding sentence (or maybe two), evaluate the article and see if it has a crime in it. If it does not have a crime, explain what crime you would insert into the article in order to make it an episode of *Law & Order*.

Section #2) Now, explain in one paragraph why the news article would be an interesting *Law & Order* episode. In your pitch, pretend that I am a producer and persuade me by explaining how interesting the story will be.

Section #3) Each episode of *Law & Order* must be “fiction,” so you must change the details about the real life event so it does not sound like real people were part of it. What would you change to make it legal? Remember, you must change over 50% of the details to avoid getting sued.

Section #4) What would be the plot of your episode in detail? You may describe the plot in 1 – 2 paragraphs.

Section #5) Would there be any backlash because of your episode? Would the real life people be upset to see themselves portrayed in the show? Anticipate the effect your show might have and what you can do to prevent any problems in one paragraph.

Section #6) On a separate sheet of paper, write an MLA bibliography for the article you are citing. You may use EasyBib.com to look up how to structure the bibliography. Please attach the original article as well. If it is from the newspaper, please clip it and attach.

Notes: The episode does NOT have to be about murder. It can be ANY crime!

Examples of Newspaper Articles from November 20, 2013

- International peace activist Jon Beauchamp has been arrested in Russia for trying to board an oil platform and protest dangerous drilling conditions.
- George Zimmerman is back in jail after threatening his girlfriend, Samantha Scheibe, with a shotgun. She asserts that he has been threatening to commit suicide, taking pills, and abusing her.

- Chris Brown has been ordered to return to rehab, submit to monthly drug tests, and take anger management classes after his most recent meltdown.
- *People* magazine names Adam Levine “Sexiest Man Alive” for 2013.
- A small meteor from Mars has fallen in Africa and reveals secrets about the age of Mars.