



Is Claiming Insanity a Loophole for Criminals in the UK?

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION BETSY - UPPER SIXTH

I have been interested in Law for a number of years and am set to study Law and Criminology at Cardiff in September, however my EPQ title was particularly influenced by a talk I attended at the Old Bailey in London, which was led by the Head of the Metropolitan Police as well as some top barristers. It looked at the increasing strain that the UK judicial system was under, as well as the problems lawyers and the Police Force were faced with during their everyday working lives. It was from this talk that I knew I wanted to focus my topic title on one of the most controversial defences within UK law, the Insanity Defence.

From the start of my project I had the strong mindset that the outcome of my project would result in the findings that the defence could, in fact, be used as a loophole. On superficial investigation, it does appear an easy way out of punishment. However, it wasn't until I started to look at particular case studies that I realised how difficult it was to gain the defence. In the end, there was a very clear conclusion that the defence is practically impossible to use as a 'loophole' and I would even go so far as to say, it is too confined, meaning those who should be granted it, aren't always.

The research stage of the project was perhaps the most interesting part for me. It allowed me to read into a number of real-life cases which, as well as increasing my understanding, also allowed me to begin to form my own judgement and argument on each individual case. This was particularly interesting as it allowed me to almost play an active role in each case, as I had to decide my own personal judgement for the purpose of my project.

I personally did an EPQ to look further into a field of study that I don't do at school, yet am planning to do in the future. It was a great way to increase my interest whilst also developing my understanding in that area, as well as being beneficial to my grade requirements for my university course.