Dangerous Occupations
Submitted by Dave Bareiss, May 28, 2023

Many dangerous occupations, practices, and functions in society may result in injury or death. To control this problem, laws, rules, and conventions are adopted by governments, institutions, and other organizations that restrict who can participate. You must be of a certain age to drive a car or consume alcoholic beverages. You must be at least a specified minimum height to ride some amusement attractions. You have to be of a certain age to sit in the front seat of a vehicle.

Some recent rules regarding who can compete in women's sports are dangerous and just plain stupid. By employing the current logic, shouldn't minors be able to declare competency and the right to drive a car simply by passing the driver's test and demonstrating their ability?

But let us leave that argument for another time and consider the consequences of engaging in dangerous occupations when individuals, in exercising their freedom of choice, elect to do so.

Race car driving is a prime example, and despite the advances in safety equipment, the risk of significant injury or death is apparently balanced by the rush of competition at 200+ miles per hour. Death and injury are not unknown in contact sports like football and boxing. Skydivers take a risk, and some circus occupations are dangerous. Serving in the military, police, or firefighting is not guaranteed to be a safe occupation.

But in all occupations listed above, individuals freely participate and accept the risks. When bad things happen, society generally grieves their injury or death but pretty much universally agrees that the participants 'knew the risks beforehand' and life moves on without blame.

There is one occupation in our present society where this general rule does not always apply - Criminality. Criminality is a strange profession in that while it exists, it is hardly a recognized legitimate profession even though many people are career criminals. For many people, it is a way of life. It is how they support themselves by preying on law-abiding citizens as parasites prey on non-parasites.

No one is forced to be a criminal. Extreme poverty, unfair treatment, racism, or bad luck are all poor excuses for engaging in criminality. No matter the hardship forced upon you by the vagaries of life, society generally abhors criminality. Laws against criminal behavior are in place because the majority in 'our democracy' voted to create those laws. Like any other occupation, engaging in criminality is a matter of choice.

Like many other occupations listed above, engaging in criminality is dangerous. Criminals may sustain grave injuries or death caused by individuals in preventing criminal activity. You may crash the vehicle you stole, get shot by rival drug gangs or police, or be maimed by a homeowner when you've broken into his home.

What I do not understand is why so many people are upset when criminals are harmed in the pursuit of their activities. Criminals seem to get a pass regarding the consequences of their choice of profession. It is absurd to blame society for the consequences of poor choices. Like any other dangerous activity, 'you made the choice, you knew the risks.'

So, when discussing the ever-present daily new media stories about the death and maiming of society's growing criminal class, do not expect any hint of sympathy from this writer. You will only engender disdain.

Please email your comments to dave@booksbybareiss.com