

# Ethical dilemma



**Ethical Dilemma** An ethical dilemma refers to a complex situation which involves choice between two conflicting courses of action. Choice of one alternative mostly results to breach of another. (Reamer 7). The case is that of Alexis Hutchinson a 21 year old mother of a 10 year old son. Alexis was serving in the army and was due to be deployed in Afghanistan on November 5. Alexis however refused to join her colleagues when they were leaving claiming that she had not found someone she could trust to take care of her son while she was away. Her mother who had initially accepted to take care of the baby backed out claiming that she was already overwhelmed as she was taking care of some other ailing relatives. She also runs a daycare center hence her hands were pretty full. After refusing the deployment orders Hutchinson was subsequently arrested and is currently held at Fort Stewart, GA as investigations continue.

The young mother faced a dilemma of leaving her ten month old son with a relatively unknown person or possibly the child protection service and obeying military orders or ignoring the orders and remaining behind until she sorted out the issue. She chose the latter and that is why she was arrested for ignoring military orders. The consequence of her action is that she could lose her job and be jailed for up to one year.

Deontological theory on ethics holds that one should do what is right the consequences notwithstanding. It further argues that there are some actions which are considered morally wrong and should be avoided. Such acts include cheating, murder or punishing the weak and innocent.

Theological theory on the other hand refers to dilemmas which mostly have a religious perspective. For instance a Christian soldier who is forced to go to war where there is a possibility of killing the enemy. This certainly goes

against the Christian teachings. (Reamer 26).

In my view the case of Hutchinson falls under a deontological dilemma since she just wanted to do what she believes is right for her innocent child. She didn't refuse to go to war because it is against her religious beliefs.

According to Reamer a case of some Israel soldiers who refused to bomb unarmed Palestine youth because of their Christian beliefs would appropriately fall under a theological theory dilemma. (31).

The matter is currently being investigated by the military to determine the correct position. Kevin Larson a spokesman for Hutchinson's unit says that the army cannot deploy a single mom with no child care plan. I agree with the position taken by the army since military rules state that a soldier cannot be excused from deployment, duties or re-assignment just because he/she does not have a child care plan. The military had also given her a 30 day extension to make child care arrangements. Since there could be mischief of a soldier who does not want to go to a battle zone due to emotional attachment to her child, I agree that the military took the right step. Put the soldier in confinement and try to get to the bottom of the matter since Hutchinson also has an arguable case.

Reference:

Reamer, Fredrick. Ethical dilemmas in social service. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.