

Criminal justice



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The paper "Training Day - American Crime Thriller Film Directed by Antoine Fuqua" is an excellent example of a movie review on visual arts and film studies. The movie "Training Day" brought into focus the issue of law enforcement in many societies across the world. The lead character in the film is Denzel Washington. He portrayed the life of a crooked police officer throughout the movie. The protagonist, as portrayed by Denzel, used various means that are unconventional to reign in on the crime. The methods that were used involved extortion, bribery, and other illegal ways through which he made his witnesses and suspects submit to his demands. The protagonist, being in an advantageous position as a law enforcer, abuses his privileges as a police officer. He enriches himself through the proceeds from crime without any regard for the oath of office he is bound by (Samudrala 12).

The movie brings out the issues that many law enforcement systems have to deal with, especially, regarding the ethical conduct of officers carrying out their duties. The movie shows the dangers that justice faces if the people who are supposed to enforce it are involved in the activities of crime without any regard for the duties that they are supposed to discharge. More importantly, the line between law enforcement and criminal activities is likely to be blurred resulting in a situation where the rule of law that is supposed to bring sanity to society is not respected at all. In such a situation, therefore, the law enforcement organs and officers are not well equipped to handle the effects of high crime rates that can end up having negative consequences for the society (Samudrala 20).

Alonzo Harris is able to capture the predicament of a police officer who is faced with the dilemma of combating criminal activity within a dangerous

urban environment (Samudrala 21). He also has an option of being part of the vices in the society. Harris chooses the latter because the temptation of receiving frequent bribes and other forms of inducements by drug dealers and other social misfits becomes too hard for him to resist. Renford contends that within many urban settlements with densely populated settlements, the temptations of crime are very rife because of the limited opportunities for the youth to advance themselves career-wise. The disenchanted youth find solace in committing criminal activities for gang leaders who control several territories within these urban settlements and collude with law enforcement officers within those areas.

Harris brings out the level of rot that pervades many law enforcement agencies that have a mandate to tackle crime. The infiltration of law enforcement agencies by officers who are not ready to protect and serve is one that creates serious challenges in the upholding of law and order within any given society. This becomes critical in situations where the higher cadres of law enforcement do not take an active approach in combating the activities of organized criminal groups within their jurisdictions. The leaders of such law enforcement agencies are likely to be actively involved in the activities of crime lords and block any meaningful efforts to rein in on high crime rates. Such senior police officers are likely to make their juniors shield criminals from arrest or prosecution.

The movie highlights the challenges police officers are likely to face within environments where there is near-collapse of public order and harmony. Harris' character is symbolic of many police enforcement institutions the world over which has fallen into the hands of vicious criminal gangs and cartels whose authority transcends any form of legal authority within such

jurisdictions. As we learn from the movie, the consequences of a police officer engaging in criminal activities can be fatal and many innocent victims can be caught up in the crossfire. Law enforcement officers, therefore, should not waver in their cardinal responsibilities of enforcing law and order, no matter the situations that they may confront them (Renford 23).

Court System

The court system is one that offers a lot of faith and confidence among many people concerning the observation of the rule of law. Therefore, the court system must have the ability to deal with challenges that are likely to occur within the judicial system in any particular society. The court system must have the ability to inspire confidence, trust, and solace within the people who live in a particular society whose only defense lies in the law. The court systems, therefore, must be able to protect vulnerable groups who are likely to be disadvantaged if there is very little protection offered to them through legislation. These disadvantaged groups need to be able to access justice within the court system promptly for them to feel that their personal dignity and rights are not infringed upon (Mauer 99).

My observations regarding judicial proceedings that involve minors, the poor, women, and other minority groups reveal that there has been a disturbing trend regarding how the various cases are tried and determined. The issues that are prevalent in these courts mostly involve violence, abuse, and discrimination whereby disadvantaged and vulnerable people mostly feel these. These groups usually face challenges that stem from long-held stereotypes, inability to access justice, prohibitive legal costs, and little public information regarding law and justice. For instance, most violent crime suspects within the courts are mostly of African American origin and are

aged 18 to 25. This creates a perception within the society that black people commit violent crimes resulting in racial and ethnic profiling by the law enforcement agencies (Irwin, Schiraldi and Ziedenberg 39).

The court system needs to address the issues that make it difficult for people of African American origin to have confidence in the court's system and the way they dispense their mandate. Mauer argues that the current view within the African American society is that the court's system in America is one that serves the interests of rich white Americans to punish African Americans (34). Measures should be put in place to ensure that there is more information that is given to people regarding the legal system and how it works to ensure that they are well equipped in dealing with issues that relate to law enforcement. The court system should strive to eliminate barriers that make it difficult for disadvantaged groups to access legal aid that can be of help in their quest to get justice.

There should be reforms within the court systems that grant more rights to disadvantaged groups within any particular society for them to feel represented by the justice systems. The court system should strive to give remedies to situations whereby certain sections of the population feel that the law is applied selectively to punish them because of their weak and vulnerable state. The laws that exist should be able to make people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds aware of the procedures that are to be followed when presenting the cases before them to make them comfortable on all the areas that are supposed to be covered by the law.

Corrections

The correctional services within any society serve as means through which those who commit deviant behavior that does not conform to the law can get

to be transformed so that they can become law-abiding citizens of the society. There is an urgent need for correctional services that highlight the unique situation that faces juvenile delinquents when they commit crimes and how to punish and correct such delinquents (Morris 2008). A social services worker that I talked to laments that the juvenile offenders who commit serious crimes are given the same treatment before the law as adult offenders who have committed serious offenses. The social worker highlights the defaults that exist within the law that subject underage offenders to penalties similar to those given to adult offenders when they commit serious crimes.

Morris argues that there has been a large increase in the number of juvenile offenders who are sentenced to adults' correctional facilities (28). The teenagers who, at the time of committing the crimes, could have been below the legal age of 18, are taken to adult courts from where their sentences are heard and determined. This makes the legal system only focused on incarceration as a means of reforming juvenile offenders thereby disregarding other alternative remedies that can help reform the offenders. The criminal justice systems, together with the correctional departments, have failed to arrest the situation. It is estimated that in the year 2000, more than 2225 underage offenders received sentences of life without parole in the US (Austin, Johnson, and Gregoriou, 20).

The social officer argues that the justice system has failed to look into the likely causes of juvenile crime when sentencing these underage offenders to jails which incarcerate adults. The correctional facilities that house such underage convicts are not ideal in reforming the convicts to become model citizens of the future. Confining under age offenders together with adults in

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prison facilities opens up the possibility of such minors being subjected to abuse either in forms of sexual or physical violation, which may make it difficult for such a minor to be reformed in the end. The social worker concedes that there is a direct relation between abuse and crime; people who face sexual or physical abuse while they are young are likely to exhibit criminal tendencies once they become adults.

There has also been the issue of making juvenile offenders who have committed capital offenses to undergo the same penalties as prescribed by the penal code regardless of their age when the crime was committed. The social worker contends that some juvenile offenders have been sentenced to death even though they were underage when they committed the offenses. The judicial systems need to be proactive in dealing with the threat of criminal behavior by underage offenders and the suitable ways through which they can reform. The judicial services should establish programs that can make juvenile offenders to become good citizens of the society as opposed to criminals after they finish their prison terms.

In conclusion, the law enforcement bodies, the courts, and the correctional services have a crucial role to play in maintaining the rule of law within any given society. Therefore, the authorities must ensure that they help bring about more respect for the rule of law among ordinary citizens within society.