

No heros no villians essay sample

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Sociology 461 Criminal Justice Systems Edward M. Stern No Heroes, No Villains; by Steven Phillips In the book No Heroes, No Villains the author Steve Phillips describes a story of a single dramatic trial of murder it offers a thoughtful and balanced presentation of the problems besetting our criminal courts, lays bare the mechanics of justice, and explains in graphic detail just what is wrong and right about our criminal justice system.

Throughout this book there are many important details leading up to the trial of James Richardson. James Richardson was the accused in the case of the deceased NY Police Officer John Skagen. John Skagen was shot to death in a NY subway station on June 28, 1972. The Facts in this case are clear; Officer Skagen was coming home from court that day, he was in plain clothes at the time of the incident in question. He was off duty. As he went into the subway he had noticed a tall black male, with short hair, a dark complexion and a round face. Richardson was wearing dark pants and a waist-length green dashiki. Tucked in his waist was a nickel-plated, snub-nosed, . 32 caliber revolver.

On June 27, 1972 Richardson was on his way to work at Lincoln Hospital. Something about Richardson caught Officer Skagens attention that day and officer Skagen reacted by drawing his off duty revolver and his badge, as he approached Mr. Richardson yelling, “ I’m a cop! Get your hands up! Get Against the wall! Again he yelled get against the wall! (Chapter 7 , The Subway Station) At this point Richardson complied, At that point a blur”! And suddenly the two men were facing each other with their guns pointed. Four shots were fired. Two hit Skagen’s shoulder. An third hit Richardsons groin. The fourth ricocheted around the station causing a chip of the cement to

lodge in Sylvester Farish's (an innocent bystander in the subway station) forearm.

James Richardson then fled the station yelling; " He is shooting!" " A crazy man is shooting!" John Skagen was then staggering with his gun injuries gave chase. At that point Skagen was at the bottom of the stairs he raised his gun aimed and fired a single shot with hit James Richardson in the shoulder blade he still kept running. At this point two officers that were working out side the station that day heard the shots ring out and ran toward the T-station to find out what had happened. When they got to the top of the stairs, they observed James Richardson running by them yelling there is a crazy man shooting down there"; he kept running. At that point Officer Weiber began to hear the last shot fired by Officer Skagen at the bottom of the stairs in the subway. At which point Officer Wieber shot in the direction of the officer John Skagen in the subway and kept on firing his revolver till it was empty.

James Richardson kept on running until he ran right into Police Officer, Jacobson's arms at which point they both fell over Richardson then pulled the gun on Officer Jacobsen. At which point Officer Jacobson then began to chase Richardson joined by plain-clothes officer John Pade (who had been working across the street from the incident with his partner) by now Richardson was running away with a limp. Richardson then threw his gun as he crossed the shrubs that boarded the railroad tracks. He was then arrested and taken into custody.

Meanwhile back at the subway station Officer Wieber and Officer Rath ran down the stairs to where Skagen's body layed. John Skagen then pulled his badge out of his pocket, and said, "I am a cop." Then he fainted.

On June 27, 1972 John Skagen died.

Once the other officers found out what heard what had happened in the subway the alarm went out, dozens of police officers came to the scene. Areas were cordoned off, photos were taken, witnesses were interviewed and a full investigation was launched on June 27, 1972.

Back at the station the police officers and detectives began to search for clues or evidence from the scene. The search of the station revealed a blue leather case, inside the case were identification papers and a social security card belonging to James Richardson. Pinned to card was a gold Correction Officer's Badge. After the investigation it was revealed that the badge was issued to a May Elaine Williams.

In the beginning of the book Miss William's was the victim of a robbery on March 2, 1972 at Marzan's pub. At that time her pocket book was stolen. Her badge was in her bag at the time it was stolen. The bag was found and later returned to her by James Richardson, but the badge was never returned. The robbery remained unsolved.

The facts were not at all clear to the Police Officers or the attorneys who will soon face this case. The players involved where many, but to name just a few: William M. Kunstler, a very popular and well-liked lawyer, he represented James Richardson. The Author of the book was the prosecutor in

this case; he was young and unprepared to becoming an assistant district attorney for this case. But I do have to add that the work he did performed was excellent, but again William Kunstler he was a well-seasoned attorney.

The fact that it was a well-known case from all the media outlets already put even more pressure over this new district attorneys head. John Skagen's case had no real chance, because of this fact. Sad but true fact The accused James Richardson had the well know William Kunstler, who was very popular, well-liked lawyer with well-known cases. Mr. Kunstler knew exactly how to work the jury. He had the upper hand to begin with in this case. As for the outbursts throughout the trial, I feel those were unfair acts by Mr. Kunstler. He knew he was damaging the case and there was nothing anyone could say. You can not erase outbursts from the jury's minds.

I believe that Police Officer Wieber was wrong. Police Officer Wieber fired all six rounds out of his gun without stopping. He clearly did not know what or whom he was shooting at the time. He could have killed or injured many adults or children within the station that evening. I feel that his actions were reckless and out of control. "As the Police Officer Wieber, is concerned" I believe that serious consideration should be given to the question of whether our police officers are adequately prepared for their jobs.. Should our police officers be periodic stringent examinations to assure that the officer maintains himself in such condition as to fully protect himself and the public, particularly in his handling of his Revolver?" (Chapter: Sentence Page 235) I also feel that Officer John Skagen should of just left well enough alone and called into the nearest district to report a man within the sub way with a

concealed gun. With no uniform to identify himself, he should have taken a different approach. I feel the way he went about it put his life in jeopardy in the beginning. This is not stating what happened is justified in any way, but I feel that the incident could have been avoided.

I also would have to say that James Richardson is just as guilty for shooting a Police Officer and fleeing the scene, pointing the gun at other officers as he ran. I believe that James Richardson is a dangerous man who caused the death of John Skagen on June 27, 1972, in the New York Subway that evening.

Throughout out this book I feel the author Steven Phillips, explains in great detail all the incidents leading up to the death of John Skagen on the evening of June 27, 1972. I also felt the author depicted the scenic so good that it felt like I had been watching the whole ordeal take place. I thought it was a great depiction of the occurrences throughout that day on June 27, 1972. I felt the author did not choose to take sides, he states those facts as they occurred throughout the book and that was that.

The Judges throughout the trial were I though fair all and all, but I did not like the fact that the stolen badge was not let into the evidence in the case. I also did not like the fact that the judge was a former student of attorney Kunstler.

All and all the judges followed the procedures writing by the law.

In Conclusion I feel Justice was not served. Police Officer Skagen is gone and I felt that James Richardson is responsible for the murder. He was let off and for that the public would pay once again. Because people like Richardson are

more than likely to commit many more crimes if they are not properly punished.