

Insanity



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The patient may not be considered insane for the purpose of acquittal if the M'Naughten rule is applied. The M'Naughten test was a set of guidelines developed in 1843 by the British courts for the trial of Daniel M'Naughten (The " Right/Wrong" M'Naughten Test; Brite, 2002). M'Naughten was tried for the murder of the Prime Minister's secretary. However, M'Naughten was acquitted on the ground of insanity, after nine witnesses testified that M'Naughten believed the Prime Minister to be the mastermind of all the misfortunes he encountered in his life.

Upon review of the decision, the House of Lords formulated the M'Naughten rule, which states that " a defendant should not be held responsible for his actions if he could not tell that his actions were wrong at the time he committed them" (The " Right/Wrong" M'Naughten Test). The M'Naughten rule has been criticized for its overt focus on cognition and its inattention on the issue of control.

Thus, some versions of the M'Naughten rule were revised to include an " irresistible impulse" provision, which would entitle a defendant to an acquittal when, despite knowledge of right and wrong, he is unable to stop himself from committing the criminal act (The " Right/Wrong" M'Naughten Test). However, the general rule under the M'Naughten rule remains to be based on the capacity of the defendant to know whether his action is right or wrong, without considering the presence of an irresistible impulse which influenced his action (The " Right/Wrong" M'Naughten Test; Brite, 2002).

In the given scenario, the defendant himself acknowledged that he knew the moral implications of the act of killing his wife. He knew the difference between right and wrong. The only defense he invoked was the presence of

an irresistible impulse. However, as discussed above, an irresistible impulse is not considered under the M'Naughten rule. This rule is more stringent, because the ground of irresistible impulse would be sufficient if other tests of legal insanity were applied, such as the standard proposed by the American Law Institute (A. L. I.) (The " Right/Wrong" M'Naughten Test).