

Founder's Forum: Crime and Questions

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I write this column in the days following the tragedy at West Virginia Tech. Words cannot adequately express the deep sorrow we all feel for the victims and their families. In addition, many of us have a profound sense of anger at the perpetrator and wonder how our society has come to where we are today. Those of us with children at college, or any school, have another reason to lose sleep at night.

Has the world really changed? My view of our current situation is that the world has evolved in one major way; our population has grown dramatically over my lifetime. If the percent of the population that has severe anti-social conditions remained the same over that period of time, there is still a growing number of people with serious issues out there. With our up to the second, ever present news coverage delivering any sliver of bad news instantly to the whole planet, the perception is that our world has gone to hell in a hand basket. Yet, the reality I see on a daily basis shows something different.

Perhaps I am an optimist. I meet wonderful people everyday. People who barely know you but would help you in a heartbeat if only asked. This Association exposes all of us to people from all over our country and the world. There are all kinds of people out there. My experience is that the vast majority are a pleasure to be around. The moral of this tragic incident seems to be an old one; keep your eyes and ears open to look out for those who are troubled and in need of help. We all can do a better job identifying those around us desperate for help

So how does any of this relate to our profession? On many different levels it does. I have been involved in multiple subrogation efforts involving criminal acts. In every single one of those cases I felt like I was given an opportunity to not only help my clients but to also provide a service to society. Whether I was recovering on a fidelity case where an employee stole money, or dealing with a security company that allowed an ex-employee to break in and burn down a building, I played a small role in making things right.

Some of our members are involved in litigation over the World Trade Center attack. We don't know if they will be successful. We do know the questions they ask and issues they pose will have an effect on others future conduct. Ultimately this may end up in someone being punished for wrongful conduct or more importantly it may result in conduct changing in the future providing a safer world for the rest of us. We are the experts in asking tough questions. Even though some may be offended by our questions, they still need to be asked. It is these questions that open everyone's eyes to the potential solutions to the risks we all face.