

8-27-13

Handwritten scribble

Did Omar's friend commit a crime? Remember the story of Omar and his friend who were watching TV? The law said that Omar's friend did not commit a crime. The friend was young, and, more important, the killing was an accident. However, Omar's parents were very upset. They did not think the law was fair. They wanted the friend's parents to be responsible for the accident.

What did Omar's parents do to make things better for society? They worked to change the law so that parents would be responsible for having loaded guns in the house. At first, they did not succeed. It was not easy. Soon after their son's death, three more children were killed in gun accidents. Finally, the state passed a law making parents responsible for gun injuries caused by their children. This seemed to be more fair for everyone.

Too Young for Adult Court

What if you are too young to be tried in adult court? You have already learned that when someone who is too young to go to adult court commits a crime, that person goes to juvenile court. In juvenile court, youths do not have the exact same rights that adults have in adult court. (See Chapter 4 on the courts.) Also, juvenile court records are kept private, or **confidential**. This means that you do not ever have to tell anyone if you have been convicted in juvenile court. Usually, no one can find out this information.

EYE OPENER In the past, at any given moment there were hundred of thousands of juveniles in adult jails. In the 1990s, those numbers are being greatly reduced.

If you are convicted in juvenile court, you will be sent to a training school. A training school is supposed to be more like a school than a jail. You could be **sentenced** to stay there until the age of twenty-one. For example, Gerald G. was a fifteen-year-old who made nasty, obscene phone calls to a neighbor. The neighbor became very angry and asked the police to arrest him. Gerald was taken to juvenile court and was sentenced to six years in a training school.

If an adult had committed the same crime as Gerald, the adult might not have gone to jail. Gerald fought the juvenile court decision. His case went up to a higher court called the **U.S. Supreme Court**. The Supreme Court said that a juvenile could not be given a longer sentence than an adult for the same offense.

Can juveniles be sent to adult court? This may seem like a puzzle more than a question. However, the answer is yes. More and more juveniles are being sent to adult court. There have even been cases of twelve- and thirteen-year-olds being sent to adult court for committing crimes such as murder and rape. Juvenile justice and adult justice try to be equally fair. Some of the rules and results for criminals are different.



CRITICAL THINKING

One night, a sixteen-year-old foreign exchange student knocked on the door of the wrong house looking for his friend's party. The owner thought he was a robber and shot him dead. The owner was not convicted of a crime. The jury said that he had acted in self-defense. What do you think?

DID YOU KNOW? Many violent crimes are committed by people who are acquainted with their victims.

Understanding Chapter 2

1. How does the law decide a crime has been committed?
2. Who not held responsible for committing a crime, and why?
3. Can juveniles be sent to adult court? Explain.



Workbook

Self-Check p. 6

Reality-Check p. 7



1. What did the law say about Omar's friend? _____

2. What was the most important factor in the killing? _____
3. What did Omar's parents want? _____

4. What did Omar's parents do? _____

5. What happened soon after their son's death? _____
6. If someone is too young to go to adult court, where do they go? _____
7. What happens to juvenile court records? _____
8. Do you have to tell anyone if you have been convicted in juvenile court? _____
9. Training schools are supposed to be more like what? _____
10. How long can you be sentenced to stay there? _____
11. What did Gerald do? _____
12. How long a sentence did he get? _____
13. Would an adult have received the same sentence? _____
14. What did the Supreme Court decide in Gerald's appeal? _____

15. Can juveniles be sent to adult court? _____
16. At what age have juveniles been sent to adult court? _____
17. What crimes have they been accused ? _____
18. Many violent crimes are committed by people who are what? _____
19. In the past how many juveniles were in adult jails? _____
20. In the 1990's those numbers were being _____.

Critical Thinking

(pages: 8 & 9)

1. Juveniles usually are not housed in adult jails, do you believe this is a good idea? Why?
2. What did Omar's parents do to change the law concerning the accidental death of their son?
3. If you are convicted in a juvenile court, what happens to the court records? Do you have to tell anyone about this conviction?
4. Someone mistakenly knocks at a door and the owner thinks they are a robber and shoots them. Is the owner guilty of a crime?
5. Why are many violent crimes committed by people who are

acquainted with their victim?

6. A juvenile committs a crime and is sent to jail but an adult that does the same thing doesn't get jail time, what did the Supreme Court say about this situation?

7. Can juveniles be sent to adult court? Why?