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Quotes about Law and Lawyers

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Written laws are like spider's webs; they will catch, it is true, the weak and the poor, but would be torn in pieces by the rich and powerful.

- Anacharsis

Law is a bottomless pit.

- Arbuthnot, John

No civilization would ever have been possible without a framework of stability, to provide the wherein for the flux of change. Foremost among the stabilizing factors, more enduring than customs, manners and traditions, are the legal systems that regulate our life in the world and our daily affairs with each other.

- Arendt, Hannah

The law is reason, free from passion.

- Aristotle

I have enforced the law against killing certain animals and many others, but the greatest progress of righteousness among men comes from the exhortation in favor of non-injury to life and abstention from killing living beings.

- Asoka

Laws are not invented. They grow out of circumstances.

- Azarias

Judges ought to be more learned than witty, more reverent than plausible, and more advised than confident. Above all things, integrity is their portion and proper virtue.

- Bacon, Francis

Our law very often reminds one of those outskirts of cities where you cannot for a long time tell how the streets come to wind about in so capricious and serpent-like a manner. At last it strikes you that they grew up, house by house, on the devious tracks of the old green lanes; and if you follow on to the existing fields, you may often find the change half complete.

- Bagehot, Walter

Laws are not masters, but servants, and he rules them, who obeys them.

- Becker, Ward

Laws and institutions, like clocks, must occasionally be cleaned, wound up, and set to true time.

- Beecher, Henry Ward

Every law is an infraction of liberty.

- Bentham, Jeremy

Lawyers are the only persons in whom ignorance of the law is not punished.

- Bentham, Jeremy

The law is light.

- Bible

Where there is no law there is no transgression.

- Bible

Laws are like sausages. It is better not to see them being made.

- Bismarck, Otto Von

The law was made for one thing alone, for the exploitation of those who don't understand it, or are prevented by naked misery from obeying it.

- Brecht, Bertolt

A lawyer starts life giving \$500 worth of law for \$5 and ends giving \$5 worth for \$500.

- Brewster, Benjamin

A lawyer is a gentlemen that rescues your estate from your enemies and then keeps it to himself.

- Brougham, Lord Henry P.

People crushed by laws, have no hope but to evade power. If the laws are their enemies, they will be enemies to the law; and those who have much to hope and nothing to lose will always be dangerous.

- Burke, Edmund

Bad laws are the worst form of tyranny.

- Burke, Edmund

In effect, to follow, not to force the public inclination; to give a direction, a form, a technical dress, and a specific sanction, to the general sense of the community, is the true end of legislature.

- Burke, Edmund

Laws, like houses, lean on one another.

- Burke, Edmund

There is but one law for all, namely that law which governs all law, the law of our Creator, the law of humanity, justice, equity -- the law of nature and of nations.

- Burke, Edmund

A lawyers dream of heaven; every man reclaimed his property at the resurrection, and

each tried to recover it from all his forefathers.

- Butler, Samuel

In law, nothing is certain but the expense.

- Butler, Samuel

As soon as you begin to say We have always done things this way -- perhaps that might be a better way, conscious law-making is beginning. As soon as you begin to say We do things this way -- they do things that way -- what is to be done about it? men are beginning to feel towards justice, that resides between the endless jar of right and wrong.

- Cam, Helen M.

Even an attorney of moderate talent can postpone doomsday year after year, for the system of appeals that pervades American jurisprudence amounts to a legalistic wheel of fortune, a game of chance, somewhat fixed in the favor of the criminal, that the participants play interminably.

- Capote, Truman

When the severity of the law is to be softened, let pity, not bribes, be the motive.

- Cervantes, Miguel De

Some things are easier to legalize than to legitimate.

- Chamfort, Sebastien-Roch Nicolas De

The law isn't justice. It's a very imperfect mechanism. If you press exactly the right buttons and are also lucky, justice may show up in the answer. A mechanism is all the law was ever intended to be.

- Chandler, Raymond

The kind of lawyer you hope the other fellow has.

- Chandler, Raymond

The magistrates are the ministers for the laws, the judges their interpreters, the rest of us are servants of the law, that we all may be free.

- Cicero, Marcus T.

The good of the people is the greatest law.

- Cicero, Marcus T.

Law and equity are two things which God has joined, but which man has put asunder.

- Colton, Charles Caleb

I sometimes wish that people would put a little more emphasis on the observance of the law than they do upon its enforcement.

- Coolidge, Calvin

The law is simply expediency wearing a long white dress.

- Crisp, Quentin

The trouble with law is lawyers.

- Darrow, Clarence

If there were no bad people, there would be no good lawyers.

- Dickens, Charles

Keep out of Chancery. It's being ground to bits in a slow mill; it's being roasted at a slow fire; it's being stung to death by single bees; it's being drowned by drops; it's going mad by grains.

- Dickens, Charles

The decisions of law courts should never be printed: in the long run, they form a counter authority to the law.

- Diderot, Denis

I haven't committed a crime. What I did was fail to comply with the law.

- Dinkins, David

When men are pure, laws are useless; when men are corrupt, laws are broken.

- Disraeli, Benjamin

We may not all break the Ten Commandments, but we are certainly all capable of it.
Within us lurks the breaker of all laws, ready to spring out at the first real opportunity.

- Duncan, Isadora

The clearest way to show what the rule of law means to us in everyday life is to recall what has happened when there is no rule of law.

- Eisenhower, Dwight D.

When one wanted one's interests looking after whatever the cost, it was not so well for a lawyer to be over honest, else he might not be up to other people's tricks.

- Eliot, George

Good men must not obey the laws too well.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

The laws of each are convertible into the laws of any other.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

The wise know that foolish legislation is a rope of sand, which perishes in the twisting.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

The good lawyer is not the man who has an eye to every side and angle of contingency,

and qualifies all his qualifications, but who throws himself on your part so heartily, that he can get you out of a scrape.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my own constitution; the only wrong what is against it.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Some laws of state aimed at curbing crime are even more criminal.

- Engels, Friedrich

Here lies one believe it if you can, who thought an attorney, was a honest man.

- Epitaph

Amongst the learned the lawyers claim first place, the most self-satisfied class of people, as they roll their rock of Sisyphus and string together six hundred laws in the same breath, no matter whether relevant or not, piling up opinion on opinion and gloss on gloss to make their profession seem the most difficult of all. Anything which causes trouble has special merit in their eyes.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Where the law ends tyranny begins.

- Fielding, Henry

God works wonders now and then; Behold a lawyer, an honest man.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Laws too gentle, are seldom obeyed; too severe, seldom executed.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A successful lawsuit is the one worn by a policeman.

- Frost, Robert

The jury consist of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer.

- Frost, Robert

Our human laws are more or less imperfect copies of the external laws as we see them.

- Froude, James A.

An unjust law is itself a species of violence. Arrest for its breach is more so.

- Gandhi, Mahatma

A fox may steal your hens, Sir, a whore your health and pence, Sir, your daughter rob your chest, Sir, your wife may steal your rest, Sir, a thief your goods and plate. But this is all but picking, with rest, pence, chest and chicken; it ever was decreed, Sir, if lawyer's hand is feed, Sir, he steals your whole estate.

- Gay, John

The laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular.

- Gibbon, Edward

Good laws make it easier to do right and harder to do wrong.

- Gladstone, William E.

We eagerly get hold of a law that serves as a weapon to our passions.

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang Von

No great idea in its beginning can ever be within the law. How can it be within the law?

The law is stationary. The law is fixed. The law is a chariot wheel which binds us all regardless of conditions or place or time.

- Goldman, Emma

The English laws punish vice; the Chinese laws do more, they reward virtue.

- Goldsmith, Oliver

Law grinds the poor, and rich men rule the law.

- Goldsmith, Oliver

In a democracy -- even if it is a so-called democracy like our white-litist one -- the

greatest veneration one can show the rule of law is to keep a watch on it, and to reserve the right to judge unjust laws and the subversion of the function of the law by the power of the state. That vigilance is the most important proof of respect for the law.

- Gordimer, Nadine

I know of no method to secure the repeal of bad or obnoxious laws so effective as their strict execution.

- Grant, Ulysses S.

Christianity is part of the Common Law of England.

- Hale, Matthew

If the laws could speak for themselves, they would complain of the lawyers.

- Halifax, Edward F.

The law is only one of several imperfect and more or less external ways of defending what is better in life against what is worse. By itself, the law can never create anything better. Establishing respect for the law does not automatically ensure a better life for that, after all, is a job for people and not for laws and institutions.

- Havel, Vaclav

Lawyers spend a great deal of their time shoveling smoke.

- Holmes Jr., Oliver Wendell

This is a court of law young man, not a court of justice.

- Holmes, Oliver Wendell

The United States is the greatest law factory the world has ever known.

- Hughes, Charles Evans

We should have learnt by now that laws and court decisions can only point the way. They can establish criteria of right and wrong. And they can provide a basis for rooting out the evils of bigotry and racism. But they cannot wipe away centuries of oppression and injustice -- however much we might desire it.

- Humphrey, Hubert H.

Young lawyers attend the courts, not because they have business there, but because they have no business.

- Irving, Washington

Rulers were made to be broken.

- Isenberg, Michael

Certainly one of the highest duties of the citizen is a scrupulous obedience to the laws of the nation. But it is not the highest duty.

- Jefferson, Thomas

It is the trade of lawyers to question everything, yield nothing, and talk by the hour.

- Jefferson, Thomas

Laws teach us to know when we commit injury and when we suffer it.

- Johnson

Lawyers know life practically. A bookish man should always have them to converse with.

- Johnson, Samuel

I would be loath to speak ill of any person who I do not know deserves it, but I am afraid he is an attorney.

- Johnson, Samuel

Anybody who thinks talk is cheap should get some legal advice.

- Jones, Franklin P.

The only road to the highest stations in this country is that of the law.

- Jones, Sir William

I think we may class the lawyer in the natural history of monsters.

- Keats, John

Whenever men take the law into their own hands, the loser is the law. And when the law loses, freedom languishes.

- Kennedy, Robert F.

Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Avoid lawsuits beyond all things; they pervert your conscience, impair your health, and dissipate your property.

- La Bruyere, Jean De

The court is like a palace of marble; it's composed of people very hard and very polished.

- La Bruyere, Jean De

Laws are felt only when the individual comes into conflict with them.

- Lafollette, Suzanne

Lawyers I suppose were children once.

- Lamb, Charles

He is no lawyer who cannot take two sides.

- Lamb, Charles

It is unfair to believe everything we hear about lawyers, some of it might not be true.

- Lieberman, Gerald F.

A jury too often has at least one member more ready to hang the panel than to hang the traitor.

- Lincoln, Abraham

Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges. Let it be written in primers, spelling books, and in almanacs. Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in the courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.

- Lincoln, Abraham

A country survives its legislation. That truth should not comfort the conservative nor depress the radical. For it means that public policy can enlarge its scope and increase its

audacity, can try big experiments without trembling too much over the result. This nation could enter upon the most radical experiments and could afford to fail in them.

- Lippmann, Walter

Laws are the sovereigns of sovereigns.

- Louis XIV

The law is a sort of hocus-pocus science, that smiles in yer face while it picks yer pocket: and the glorious uncertainty of it is of more use to the professors than the justice of it.

- Macklin, Charles

The business of the law is to make sense of the confusion of what we call human life -- to reduce it to order but at the same time to give it possibility, scope, even dignity.

- Macleish, Archibald

Laws and customs may be creative of vice; and should be therefore perpetually under process of observation and correction: but laws and customs cannot be creative of virtue: they may encourage and help to preserve it; but they cannot originate it.

- Martineau, Harriet

The only laws of matter are those that our minds must fabricate and the only laws of mind are fabricated for it by matter.

- Maxwell, James Clerk

Who thinks the law has anything to do with justice? It's what we have because we can't have justice.

- Mcilvanney, William

Lawyers are like rhinoceroses: thick skinned, short-sighted, and always ready to charge.

- Mellor, David

A judge is a law student who grades his own papers.

- Mencken, H. L.

Say what you will about the Ten Commandments, you must always come back to the pleasant fact that there are only ten of them.

- Mencken, H. L.

All that makes existence valuable to any one depends on the enforcement of restraints upon the actions of other people.

- Mill, John Stuart

It is impossible for us to break the law. We can only break ourselves against the law.

- Mille, Cecil B. De

Ignorance of the law excuses no man from practicing it.

- Mizner, Addison

It would be better to have no laws at all, than to have too many.

- Montaigne, Michel Eyquem De

Useless laws weaken the necessary laws.

- Montesquieu, Charles De

There is no nation so powerful, as the one that obeys its laws not from principals of fear or reason, but from passion.

- Montesquieu, Charles De

The spirit of moderation should also be the spirit of the lawgiver.

- Montesquieu, Charles De

The severity of the laws prevents their execution.

- Montesquieu, Charles De

I would uphold the law if for no other reason but to protect myself.

- Moore, Thomas

Lawyers -- a profession it is to disguise matters.

- More, Thomas

In cross examination, as in fishing, nothing is more ungainly than a fisherman pulled into the water by his catch.

- Nizer, Louis

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed.

- Ostman, Virginia

Petty laws breed great crimes.

- Ouida

Courts of law, and all the paraphernalia and folly of law cannot be found in a rational state of society.

- Owen, Robert

Law, without force, is impotent.

- Pascal, Blaise

Law school taught me one thing; how to take two situations that are exactly the same and show how they are different.

- Pomerantz, Hart

Curse on all laws, but those that love has made.

- Pope, Alexander

The law helps those who watch, not those who sleep.

- Proverb

The more laws the less justice.

- Proverb

Where the law is uncertain there is no law.

- Proverb

Lawyers and woodpeckers have long bills.

- Proverb

Lawyers and painters can soon make what's black, white.

- Proverb

Fools and obstinate men make lawyers rich.

- Proverb

Possession is nine tenths of the law.

- Proverb

A good lawyer is a bad neighbor.

- Proverb, French

He who goes to law for a sheep loses his cow.

- Proverb, Spanish

A lawyer with his briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns.

- Puzo, Mario

Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty.

- Robert, Henry M.

It is difficult to make our material condition better by the best law, but it is easy enough to ruin it by bad laws.

- Roosevelt, Theodore

Are not laws dangerous which inhibit the passions? Compare the centuries of anarchy with those of the strongest legalism in any country you like and you will see that it is only when the laws are silent that the greatest actions appear.

- Sade, Marquis De

Those laws, being forged for universal application, are in perpetual conflict with personal interest, just as personal interest is always in contradiction with the general interest. Good for society, our laws are very bad for the individuals whereof it is composed; for, if they one time protect the individual, they hinder, trouble, fetter him for three quarters of his life.

- Sade, Marquis De

The law often permits what honor prohibits.

- Saurin, Bernard Joseph

Lawyers enjoy a little mystery, you know. Why, if everybody came forward and told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth straight out, we should all retire to the workhouse.

- Sayers, Dorothy L.

Law cannot persuade when it cannot punish.

- Saying

A lawyer without history or literature is a mechanic, a mere working mason; if he possesses some knowledge of these, he may venture to call himself an architect.

- Scott, Sir Walter

The first thing we do, let's kill the lawyers. [Henry IV]

- Shakespeare, William

Whenever you wish to do anything against the law, Cicely, always consult a good solicitor first.

- Shaw, George Bernard

I have spent all my life under a Communist regime, and I will tell you that a society without any objective legal scale is a terrible one indeed. But a society with no other scale but the legal one is not quite worthy of man either.

- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander

A jury consists of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer.

- Spencer, Herbert

Under any conditions, anywhere, whatever you are doing, there is some ordinance under which you can be booked.

- Sprech, Robert D.

Our demands are simple, normal, and therefore they are difficult to satisfy. All we ask is that an actor on the stage live in accordance with natural laws

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

To make laws that man cannot, and will not obey, serves to bring all law into contempt.

- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady

The state calls its own violence law, but that of the individual crime.

- Stirner, Max

All breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away. This is the pure unchangeable law.

- Sutakritanga

I said there was a society of men among us, bred up from their youth in the art of proving by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black, and black is white, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are as slaves.

- Swift, Jonathan

The judge is found guilty when a criminal is acquitted.

- Syrus, Publilius

In a state where corruption abounds, laws must be very numerous.

- Tacitus, Publius Cornelius

The more corrupt the state, the more laws.

- Tacitus, Publius Cornelius

Fish die when they are out of water, and people die without law and order.

- Talmud, The

Going to trial with a lawyer who considers your whole life-style a Crime in Progress is not a happy prospect.

- Thompson, Hunter S.

It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for law, so much as a respect for right.

- Thoreau, Henry David

Whatever the human law may be, neither an individual nor a nation can commit the least act of injustice against the obscurest individual without having to pay the penalty for it.

- Thoreau, Henry David

The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency.

- Thoreau, Henry David

I say, break the law.

- Thoreau, Henry David

Scarcely any political question arises in the United States that is not resolved, sooner or later, into a judicial question.

- Tocqueville, Alexis De

The best laws cannot make a constitution work in spite of morals; morals can turn the worst laws to advantage. That is a commonplace truth, but one to which my studies are always bringing me back. It is the central point in my conception. I see it at the end of all my reflections.

- Tocqueville, Alexis De

The due process of law as we use it, I believe, rests squarely on the liberal idea of conflict and resolution.

- Trapp, June L.

We enact many laws that manufacture criminals, and then a few that punish them

- Tucker, Benjamin Ricketson

To succeed in the other trades, capacity must be shown; in the law, concealment of it will do.

- Twain, Mark

We have a criminal jury system which is superior to any in the world; and its efficiency is only marred by the difficulty of finding twelve men every day who don't know anything and can't read.

- Twain, Mark

I was never ruined but twice; once when I lost a lawsuit and once when I won one.

- Voltaire

The laws and the stage, both are a form of exhibitionism.

- Welles, Orson

Somebody figured it out -- we have 35 million laws trying to enforce Ten Commandments.

- Wilson, Earl

I want to live perfectly above the law, and make it my servant instead of my master.

- Young, Brigham

An incompetent attorney can delay a trial for years or months. A competent attorney can delay one even longer.

- Younger, Evelle



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